



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday, 11 August 2016**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Bills .....	1
Greyhound Racing Prohibition Bill 2016 .....	1
First Reading.....	1
Motions .....	1
Centenary of Anzac.....	1
Bills .....	1
Greyhound Racing Prohibition Bill 2016 .....	1
Second Reading .....	1
Greyhound Racing Amendment (Greyhound Racing Integrity Commission) Bill 2016 .....	6
First Reading.....	6
Second Reading .....	6
Hurlstone Agricultural High School Site Bill 2016.....	8
Second Reading .....	8
Motions .....	17
Riverstone Police Station.....	17
Women's Refuges .....	19
Visitors.....	22
Visitors.....	22
Motions .....	23
Champion Herdsman Bailey Gardiner.....	23
Wyang Hospital .....	26
Visitors.....	29
Visitors.....	29
Question Time.....	29
Ausgrid Lease .....	29
Regional Freight Rail Services .....	30
Ausgrid Lease .....	31
Ausgrid Lease .....	33
Regional Education Facilities .....	34
Regional Jobs Growth and Business Confidence .....	36
Transport Access Program.....	37
Regional Industries Investment and Employment .....	38
Affordable Housing .....	39
Service NSW.....	40
Liquor Laws Review.....	40
Documents .....	41
Variations of Receipts and Payments Estimates and Appropriations 2015-16.....	41
Tabling.....	41
Petitions.....	41
Petitions Received.....	41

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Committees .....	42
Legislation Review Committee.....	42
Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 21/56.....	42
Legislation Review Committee.....	43
Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 22/56.....	43
Matter of Public Importance .....	44
National Missing Persons Week .....	44
Community Recognition Statements .....	46
The Hills District Historical Society.....	46
Help Astrid Pay it Forward.....	46
Tuncurry Forster Jockey Club .....	46
Victims & Witnesses of Crime Court Support .....	47
Southern Art Connections.....	47
Autism Care Services.....	47
Anzac Commemoration .....	47
Tara Moss.....	48
Chloe Dalton, olympic champion .....	48
Cambodia Vision .....	48
Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Association .....	48
Greystanes High School.....	48
Tribute to Peter Riley.....	49
Lakeside Leisure Village .....	49
Lindsay Kaul.....	49
Parramatta Women's Rugby Team .....	49
Albury Wodonga Eisteddfod .....	50
Life Education Gold Harold Dinner .....	50
Epping Club Twentieth Anniversary .....	50
Australian Taiwan Women's Association .....	50
Sculpture at Barangaroo.....	50
Alexandria Hotel.....	51
Sydney to Gold Coast Yacht Race.....	51
Tribute to Bob Dunn .....	51
Pastor Pete Boughey .....	51
Domestic Violence.....	52
Taree Rotary Club.....	52
Taree High School NAIDOC Week .....	52
Galleries in the Gardens Art Show .....	52
Tribute to Glenn Stevens .....	52
Iftar Dinner.....	53
Green Globe Awards.....	53
National Zakat Foundation Toy Drive.....	53
Genevieve Horton, Olympic Rower .....	53

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Serbian Folkloric Festival .....	53
Mountain Bike Riders Charlie Mccabe and Max Richardson .....	54
St Peters College .....	54
Charles Sturt University.....	54
Summerland Point Gwandalan Netball Club Sporting Grant.....	54
Photographer Helen Trenerry .....	54
National Tree Day.....	55
Committees .....	55
Staysafe (Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety) .....	55
Membership .....	55
Petitions.....	55
Greyhound Racing NSW .....	55
Discussion .....	55
Private Members' Statements.....	58
Liverpool Electorate Infrastructure.....	58
Evans Head Air Park Development .....	60
May Chester 105th Birthday.....	60
Waterfall Public School .....	60
Compulsory Property Acquisitions.....	61
South Coast Emergency Services Storm Responses.....	62
Make Healthy Normal Campaign .....	63
Foster Carers .....	64
Tribute to Sharon Bishop.....	65
Tick Toxicity.....	65
Baird Government and Rockdale Community.....	66
Myall Lakes Tourism .....	67
St Mary's High School Gateshead Landcare Group .....	68
Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church Fiftieth Anniversary.....	68
Hunter Electorate Public Transport .....	69
Central Coast Palliative Campaign .....	70
Vision Australia .....	70
Khalsaaid.....	71

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 11 August 2016

**The SPEAKER (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock)** took the chair at 10:00.

**The SPEAKER** read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

### *Bills*

#### GREYHOUND RACING PROHIBITION BILL 2016

##### First Reading

**Bill received from the Legislative Council, introduced and read a first time.**

**The SPEAKER:** I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later hour.

### *Motions*

#### CENTENARY OF ANZAC

**Debate resumed from 10 August 2016.**

**Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (10:09):** Stories of families farewelling their loved ones for the last time as they sailed off to foreign lands highlight the pain and sadness of war but they also make us appreciate even more the freedom and quality of life that we all enjoy today. This year, in 2016, we recognise 100 years since 25 April 1916, the first Anzac Day; 1 July 1916, the Battle of the Somme; 19 July 1916, the Battle of Fromelles; 23 July 1916, the Battle of Pozieres; 4 August 1916, the Battle of Romani; 10 August 1916, attacks on Mouquet; and 19 November 1916, the end of the Somme Offensive. Lismore lad Joe Stratford was the first Anzac to charge onto the beach at what would later be called Anzac Cove on that fateful dawn of 25 April 1915. Private Stu Gahan told a local newspaper in 1916:

Joe Stratford was the first of Australia's troops ashore at Gallipoli. Lieutenant Jones was second and I was third.

In Roll of Honour documents held by the Australian War Memorial [AWM] in Canberra, a notation authenticates his place in history. It says:

Stated by eye witnesses to be first Australian ashore on Gallipoli.

Letters and records reveal Corporal Stratford claimed two of the enemy before falling over them dead, riddled with bullets. It is claimed one officer at the time said Corporal Stratford was worthy of a Victoria Cross [VC] medal for his bravery on that morning. He was not alone. The rising sun over the peninsula that morning revealed the horrors of war and the first hours of an eight-month campaign that would claim thousands more lives. Private Gahan also wrote a letter to Joe's parents, Thomas and Alice Stratford, who lived in Conway Street, Lismore. He wrote:

There was not a man amongst us who did not love and look up to him. He was fair and straight. I felt when he did not answer the roll call that I had lost an elder brother.

According to AWM particulars, Joseph Stratford was a 32-year-old grocer who was born at Goolmangar about 20 kilometres north-west of Lismore and attended school at Goonellabah. He was a sergeant in the New South Wales Scottish Rifles and enlisted with Queensland's 9th Battalion Australian Imperial Force [AIF] soon after the outbreak of World War I. Like many of his colleagues at Gallipoli, the people of Lismore hold Joseph Stratford in the highest regard. He is truly a local hero who never made it home but whose name has been etched in stone at the Lone Pine Memorial which honours the fallen at Gallipoli. Without doubt he was one of the bravest among the brave.

**Debate adjourned.**

### *Bills*

#### GREYHOUND RACING PROHIBITION BILL 2016

##### Second Reading

**Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) (10:14):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It is with a heavy heart that I introduce the bill to the House today. At the outset I want to make it clear that it is not a decision the New South Wales Government has taken lightly, nor is it one that it has taken quickly without due consideration of the significant evidence before it. I acknowledge that this issue has been the subject of considerable debate across the communities of New South Wales, within The Nationals party room and the Liberals party room, and rightly so. Make no mistake, this is a very significant decision. I thank all members of my party for the way in which they have been able to come together over a series of lengthy and robust debates, ventilating and acknowledging all the issues that surround this decision. Those debates have had a significant impact on this bill, which has opened the way for a more considered and staggered industry shutdown period with the hope of smoothing the transition for industry participants and achieving better animal welfare outcomes.

Although it has been a difficult decision, it is based on the evidence from the most informed and extensive examination of the greyhound industry in our history, which was supported by two upper House inquiries in 2013 and 2014 into that industry. I believe it is the right decision. I urge all members, if they have not already done so, to read the report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Greyhound Racing Industry in New South Wales and they will appreciate why this Government is making the difficult choice to shut down the greyhound racing industry in New South Wales and to protect innocent animals from unnecessary horrific injuries and death.

Following exposure of widespread live baiting practices and animal cruelty, the New South Wales Government established the special commission to investigate animal welfare and integrity issues. The special commission, conducted by former High Court Justice Michael McHugh, has undertaken an extensive examination of the industry. A final report was handed to Government by the special commission on 16 June 2016, making recommendations about the future of greyhound racing in New South Wales. The special commission heard of barbaric practices of live baiting, or blooding, as it is known. While live baiting is a horrendous practice in itself that has been outlawed in this State since 1953 and that was the catalyst for the special commission of inquiry, the inquiry also heard of a significant number of dogs being killed because they were deemed uncompetitive as racing dogs. We heard of the underreporting of deaths and injuries of dogs at racetracks and the deception by the controlling body to cover up the extent of deaths and injuries of dogs to avoid public criticism.

The inquiry findings have far-reaching implications, and the report's recommendations focus essentially on two options—to no longer permit greyhound racing in New South Wales and close the industry down, or to allow the continuation of the industry but with extensive reforms to improve transparency and governance and reduce greyhound deaths. However, Justice McHugh's findings concluded that there was a very real risk that practices such as live baiting would continue despite any further reform. In coming to that conclusion, Justice McHugh examined, in detail, evidence from the industry itself, and looked at the many similar reports conducted in the past year in other States. Justice McHugh presented a forensic, detailed and balanced set of reasons for his conclusion—reasons that ultimately persuaded the Government.

When considering the findings of the report the Government considered whether the industry could or should continue. It is clear that despite a number of reports, including a report of the Legislative Council Select Committee on Greyhound Racing in New South Wales that directly identified that the killing of healthy dogs for not being fast enough was an issue in 2014, we are dealing with an industry that, ultimately, relies heavily on the overbreeding of these animals, and that has been systematically hiding the truth from the community. We have also seen clear evidence that in the industry the problems run deep and there is an endemic culture of animal cruelty and deception at all levels. The incomplete records mean that there is no accountable tracking of animals from birth throughout their lives; or that the records were being kept from public scrutiny; or, worse still, the facts were covered up.

This Government considers that the level of reforms necessary to make the industry accountable, transparent and ethically responsible would require such significant and generational change that it would render the industry unsustainable, even if the incentives that maximise profits over animal welfare could be overcome. Also, to continue the industry would still see an unacceptable level of deaths of healthy greyhounds, which could not be tolerated. From either an economic or welfare perspective it just does not add up. The industry itself has said, in its plan for viability, that it can only be sustainable if it continues to kill thousands of dogs a year.

The industry has failed community expectations but, worst of all, it has failed these animals, especially the many thousands of greyhounds that have been horrifically injured or killed. Dumping greyhound bodies in pits after caving-in their skulls with a hammer is simply not acceptable. When confronted with the longstanding pattern of disturbing and cruel behaviour throughout the industry the Government considered that it was left with no choice. The barbaric, wasteful and cruel behaviour evidenced in the report should be repudiated by all. It is anathema to the very high standards of animal husbandry practised throughout New South Wales farming communities.

A lot has been said about this decision in the weeks since the Government's announcement. Much of the talk has concerned issues beyond the greyhound racing industry. Let me be clear about what this decision is. It is a specific response to a specific issue in a specific industry that has been uncovered in a detailed report prepared by a special commission of inquiry led by an eminent former High Court judge. Let me tell members what this decision is not. It is not a response to issues in our food and fibre industries or the other racing codes. In fact, it has no bearing whatsoever on our food and fibre industries, which are examples of world's best practice in their animal welfare standards.

It has no bearing whatsoever on the other racing codes that have a strong focus on animal welfare in governance and in all their activities. This bill deals specifically with an industry that has an appalling track record when it comes to animal welfare issues and has shown reluctance, at best—if not outright recalcitrance—when it comes to improving its standards. The suggestion that this bill represents a slippery slope simply does not hold water. The Government agrees with the special commission's findings that the industry has lost community support and the industry cannot be allowed to go on. That is why the Government made the incredibly hard decision, which was announced on 7 July 2016, that it would seek to shut down the greyhound racing industry in New South Wales and ban greyhound racing from 1 July 2017. I truly appreciate this decision has caused stress and angst for many people. Consequently, a transition plan is being developed and a transition task force already has been established to plan an orderly shutdown of the industry.

Dr John Keniry, AM, has been appointed as the Coordinator General to head the Greyhounds Transition Taskforce, which is consulting with the greyhound industry and animal welfare organisations. I am advised that Dr Keniry is actively consulting with the industry and is building a clear picture of the types of measures that will assist people to make the transition away from greyhound racing. The task force will work with the industry to ensure that a suitable and appropriate range of assistance and support services are available to industry participants and other supply chain businesses that will be affected by the shutdown. The bill before the House is the first step in helping to facilitate the shutdown and the transition process. The alternative, if the industry were allowed to continue, would be the closure of most country tracks with no government assistance available.

While industry advocates claim to have KPMG modelling that shows a way forward with country racing continuing, it was KPMG modelling that suggested there should be only six to 11 tracks across the entire State—and KPMG was far from the only group to model a reduction in tracks. Greyhound Racing NSW itself advocated a reduction of from eight to 14 tracks under a centres of excellence model. A joint working group that is dominated by industry participants suggested that centres of excellence should host only TAB racing to bring New South Wales into line with Victoria, which has no non-TAB racing, unlike country New South Wales. Urbis modelled options for as few as four tracks to operate across New South Wales. PricewaterhouseCoopers [PWC] financial analysis suggests that financially the industry could afford to upgrade only 12 tracks.

All of that points to a very clear fact: That across most of the State greyhound racing would come to an end, regardless of the decision taken by the Government. What is different, and what makes the action the Government is taking better for regional communities, is that under the Government's plan of transition to closure of the industry, there will be an assistance package to provide financial and other support to affected industry participants. This bill implements the legislative component of the Government's announcement to shut down greyhound racing in New South Wales. I will now turn to the details in the bill.

The bill defines the greyhound racing closure date as 1 July 2017 and prohibits greyhound racing in New South Wales from that date. This will enable the industry to continue to operate for the immediate future and allow participants to consider their options as an assistance package is rolled out later in the year. The bill authorises the Minister to appoint a greyhound racing administrator whose role is twofold: to wind up greyhound racing in New South Wales, including the affairs of Greyhound Racing NSW, and to manage the continued operation of greyhound racing in New South Wales until the closure date. The administrator will have the powers and functions of Greyhound Racing NSW.

Amendments to the Act contained in this bill will immediately remove members of Greyhound Racing NSW and the position of chief executive officer, allowing the administrator to manage the affairs of Greyhound Racing NSW until its dissolution. During the transition to the closure date of 1 July 2017, one of the first key tasks for the Greyhound Racing NSW administrator will be to develop a business plan. This plan will provide a road map for winding up greyhound racing in New South Wales and the affairs of Greyhound Racing NSW. The bill provides a framework for the Minister to approve the plan and any changes to the approved plan. The Minister will consult as necessary in determining whether to approve or modify the plan. The administrator is to make the plan publicly available, ensuring full transparency over this process.

In regard to industry closure from 1 July 2017, greyhound racing in New South Wales will be banned with strict penalties applying. The bill makes it an offence for any person to conduct a greyhound race meeting or to officiate at a greyhound race. It will also be an offence to provide betting services for greyhound racing that is

conducted in New South Wales. Placing a bet in New South Wales on a greyhound race conducted in another jurisdiction will not be prohibited. The keeping of greyhounds for racing in New South Wales will be prohibited from 1 July 2017. This will not prohibit people owning greyhounds as companion animals, nor will it stop people from keeping greyhounds for the purpose of racing interstate.

A regulation-making power will enable the keeping of greyhounds that race in other jurisdictions. How long people will be able to own greyhounds for racing interstate is open and for consultation with industry by Dr Keniry but the Government in our various party rooms has discussed this at length and we are keen to see a smooth transition on this important point. The cessation of training is also similarly to be dealt with by a regulation. As the industry is wound up in New South Wales, how long trainers can continue their business after the cessation of racing in New South Wales, if at all, is open for consultation with Dr Keniry and his task force, who will provide further advice to government. I acknowledge this is an important issue which my Liberal and Nationals parliamentary colleagues have held preliminary discussions about.

We have dealt with owning and training and now on to the issue of breeding of greyhounds. Breeding is the part of the industry that unfortunately has contributed to the biggest proportion of healthy dogs being deemed surplus to requirements and meeting untimely deaths. The breeding of greyhounds in New South Wales for racing will be prohibited from a date to be proclaimed. Again, the date of an end to greyhound breeding in New South Wales is open to consultation with industry, the RSPCA and community. Allowing a staggered wind-up for the industry will provide the best possible chance for greyhounds to continue on as pets with their owners following the cessation of racing or be re-homed or be appropriately transferred interstate to race there.

It is the Government's intention to determine an appropriate time frame, in conjunction with the development of an industry adjustment package, to achieve this aim. This will be done in consultation with industry to ensure the welfare of greyhounds is protected and the pain caused to industry and the people within that industry is minimised. The passage of this bill will see a definitive end date to greyhound racing in New South Wales and a strong range of levers still available to government, industry and welfare agencies to work together to ensure the transition causes the least amount of damage to the dogs themselves and employment in greyhound racing communities. Owning, breeding, training and industry and community assistance are still on the table to be discussed and agreed to over the coming months.

Turning to the welfare of the greyhounds themselves, the welfare of these greyhounds is a significant consideration for government, particularly during the immediate future, as the industry is shut down. It is our strong preference that greyhounds can remain with their current owners or, alternatively, be re-homed through an adoption program or transferred to another jurisdiction with appropriate animal welfare standards. Registered greyhound owners must notify Greyhound Racing NSW before retiring a greyhound from racing or before transferring the greyhound to a greyhound adoption program. In regard to the repeal of the Greyhound Racing Act, the bill will repeal the Greyhound Racing Act on a future date when the industry is wound down. Importantly, the bill will continue the regulatory and disciplinary functions of the Act, ensuring any matter that comes to light in future may be fully dealt with using the full force of the law.

In the meantime, the Greyhound Racing NSW administrator will have the same powers as Greyhound Racing NSW. The Government recognises the need for an orderly transition and the task force is working hard to ensure it does not create a situation where a participant considers the only option is to euthanize their dogs. With regards to section 29(1) and compensation, the clause deals with standard compensation matters and does not prevent the Government from providing a financial assistance package as I have committed, as it would for any industry in transition. The Government has indicated an initial commitment to provide the taxation revenue stream of greyhound racing received by the Government for both local and interstate racing—approximately \$30 million this year—to commence to transition dogs and people out of the industry.

We have also committed to putting the tax the Government gets from interstate greyhound racing towards the cost of keeping the current crop of dogs for their natural lives. The package will include training programs, business advice, linkages with other government services and, importantly, financial assistance to help mitigate transition costs. To inform the development of the assistance package Dr Keniry will consult widely with the industry to hear its concerns and ideas, and on how to address them. I reiterate that the Government has committed the revenue from wagering taxes will be used to fund a transition plan. The plan is under development and Dr Keniry will continue to consult extensively with the industry to ensure that he hears from direct participants and the supply chain businesses that support them.

The Government has made the commitment that training and skills programs will be available to help affected people find new jobs. Businesses affiliated with the greyhound industry will be given access to business advice and assistance through an expanded Small Biz Connect program. Direct financial assistance will be made available to support those who are affected in their transition out of the industry. Dr Keniry has advised that he is

also actively working towards developing a specialised mental health service to support people as the transition occurs. The Government is working genuinely on this issue.

Animal welfare will be a significant part of the transition package. We are consulting on options such as payments related specifically to the costs of moving dogs out of the New South Wales industry, supporting the RSPCA and other animal welfare services in the re-homing and fostering of greyhounds, and creating incentives in the long run for people to care for their own dogs. We recognise that the people who are affected need to know what will be available to them so they can plan for the future. To that end, the Government commits that it will announce its package of measures of help and support within three months from the passing of this legislation. We also commit to tabling the transition plan in both Houses of this Parliament. In regard to interstate racing, just on this issue, I want to make it abundantly clear that the Government does not have a position on whether other States and Territories should continue greyhound racing; it is a matter for each of those States and Territories.

They were not the subject of the findings of our special commission of inquiry and may have entirely different integrity and oversight systems and, in fact, a different culture in their industry. It is entirely a matter for each jurisdiction to appropriately control greyhound racing as they see fit. As such, the current long-term agreement between the Government and the TAB, which I remind members has bipartisan support across this Chamber, will not be impacted in so far as the continuation of betting on greyhound racing that occurs in others jurisdictions being a product that is offered in New South Wales through the TAB network.

With respect to Crown lands, which have been subject to much speculation, the Government will ensure that they are used, as we have committed publicly, for open public space, alternative sports facilities or other community use. It is clear that the Government's only intent is to make sure that the myriad other community and sporting groups that currently use or want to use the facilities will be able to do so after the closure date for the industry. Dr Keniry, the Coordinator General of the Greyhounds Transition Taskforce, will engage with industry on a club-by-club basis to establish proper arrangements that meet the Government's intent. The Minister responsible for Crown land, the Hon. Niall Blair, is working on a detailed review of Crown land in New South Wales. That is the best place to integrate the output from Dr Keniry on that matter. Amendments to Crown land matters should be contained within the Crown Lands Act.

So, that is it. That is the collective position of the Government. It is clear, it is honest and it is there for all to see. I will leave it to the community to judge us on our position. Whether individual members of the community agree with us, at least they know where we stand and they can exercise their democratic rights accordingly. In a similar vein, though, I call on those opposite, members of the Labor Party, the Luke Foley team to also be honest with the community and their constituents on their position on this important issue. Yes, they have clearly indicated they do not support the ban, and I will be watching and waiting for the contributions to this debate from all members of the Opposition, in particular the member for Summer Hill and the member for Blue Mountains, so that their communities know why they support or do not support the continuation of greyhound racing in this State. It is only fair, and their communities should expect and demand this of their representatives in this place. [*Extension of time*]

I also will be waiting to hear from those opposite about their plans to bring greyhound racing back to New South Wales should they win the 2019 general election. That is the clear and unequivocal position stated numerous times by the Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, and the shadow Minister, Michael Daley. I do note that on this, despite a lengthy 8½ hour debate and contributions from seven members of the Labor Party in the other place yesterday, not one of them made the commitment that a Labor Government would return greyhound racing in 2019—not one. Not even the Leader of the Opposition in the other place gave that undertaking. So, is this the Labor Party's position or is it not? It is their leader's position. I encourage all Labor Party members in this House to place on the record in this debate their steadfast commitment to the Leader of the Opposition's pledge to bring back greyhound racing in 2019.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Cabramatta that he will have his opportunity to make a contribution to debate on this bill.

**Mr TROY GRANT:** Silence from those opposite on this key part of the Labor Party's platform is just not good enough. We on this side of the Chamber—Liberals and Nationals—are happy to be held to account for our actions and the decisions and commitments we make. The community deserves and demands this of all parliamentarians. I look forward to Labor Party members in this place standing up and in an open and transparent way taking the Foley 2019 pledge. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

**GREYHOUND RACING AMENDMENT (GREYHOUND RACING INTEGRITY COMMISSION)  
BILL 2016**

**First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Michael Daley, read a first time and printed.**

**Second Reading**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (10:46):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

One of the glories of the bearpit is that with the short distance between us and our political foes we get to judge our enemies from seeing the whites of their eyes, their body language and their demeanour. The Greyhound Racing Prohibition Bill 2016 was delivered by the Deputy Premier with his hands trembling, trepidation in his eyes and a doubt about what he was doing—make no mistake about that. And well might he have delivered the bill in that frame of mind because it is a stain on this Government, a stain on The Nationals, that will never be erased.

The Greyhound Racing Amendment (Greyhound Racing Integrity Commission) Bill 2016 provides for Labor's response to the report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Greyhound Racing Industry in NSW undertaken by Commissioner McHugh. I admit that this bill is not a perfect response. The Government will not allow for a considered response—in fact, it will not allow for the response to these difficulties in the greyhound industry that was recommended by Commissioner McHugh. Commissioner McHugh's recommendation 1 stands out above all 80 recommendations. Indeed, the commissioner put this recommendation alone in a box in his report to highlight it. The recommendation says:

Given the findings of the Commission concerning the management and governance of the greyhound racing industry, the Parliament of New South Wales should consider whether the industry has lost its social licence and should no longer be permitted to operate in NSW.

The salient word in that recommendation is "Parliament". Commissioner McHugh, a former High Court judge, is one of Australia's most eminent jurists and he uses language with precision. When he said "the Parliament" he meant the Parliament. His primary recommendation was that his comprehensive report, which is not without flaws and has been criticised, be delivered to the Parliament, the people's House, so that the people's representatives could consider its voluminous detail and its significant recommendations—all 80 of them.

Mr McHugh recommended that the Parliament then conceive a response and that response would have been and should have been—if we had a mature, responsible and less sanctimonious Government ruling the State—that a joint select committee be formed to receive the report that was addressed to the Parliament and consider it in detail. The committee would seek advice and submissions from all of the citizens of New South Wales who have to date been deprived of an opportunity to be heard. This is a polarising debate, issue and report. The views are extreme and held deeply. There are few who hold to the middle ground. All of those people who hold all of those polarised views in their heart should have an opportunity to give evidence before a committee, to consider McHugh's special commission report, and for the joint select committee to report to the Parliament in the way that the special commission of inquiry recommended.

Nowhere in the 850 pages of the McHugh report will members see any recommendation or words that state: I, Commissioner McHugh, recommend that the Executive Government of New South Wales forthwith and without any further deliberation or consultation with the people of New South Wales or the industry immediately extinguish the greyhound racing industry in New South Wales forever. Nowhere will members find that. But yesterday and today that is exactly what this weak, sanctimonious, lecturing Premier and the weak-kneed Deputy Premier have done to the people of the greyhound industry.

That considered response cannot now occur because under the cover of darkness, without forewarning or notice of the content of that atrocious bill, the upper House has voted to get rid of the greyhound industry. We cannot have a perfect response. This bill does what Labor and the Leader of the Opposition promised to do. Labor has consulted with the good people of the greyhound industry and, in response to their feedback, promised it would give the industry a second chance, it would introduce standards of the highest behaviour and rub out the undesirables in the industry. That is what this bill does. It stands in stark contrast to the exterminatory bill that yesterday passed through the upper House and that has been shamefully introduced to this place.

There has been terrible behaviour in the greyhound industry, as there is in a great many industries. We all abhor that. No doubt there are people in the greyhound industry who should be banned and prosecuted. Labor wants to root them out and expel them from the industry. This is a complex and difficult situation. No-one denies that. That is what government is about. I recall sitting in Cabinet when difficult considerations presented such as how to handle legal rights in response to terrorist acts. I recall during the global financial crisis Treasury walked

into Cabinet and advised the Government that \$2 billion of recurrent revenue had fallen out of our budget. That is what difficult decisions are about in government.

When difficult decisions present themselves you see the strength of a government through its response to that situation. The Government's response to the McHugh report is immature, ill-considered, hasty, sanctimonious and weak. The Government knows it is a mistake. It should have changed its mind. It should have reconsidered and given people a second chance but it has not. All it has done is to augment and compound its ignorant and superior attitude with arrogance. That is bad governance. The simple fact is that in Australia in 2016 the right to be heard is a privilege. It is not a gift. It is a right. The right to defend oneself, to challenge decisions, to elicit facts and find fairness is inherent in so many aspects of our modern life. Procedural fairness and natural justice have become bywords entrenched in the legal system that protects our society.

They are entrenched in the field of employment. If a government worker bullies a fellow worker or steals a stapler from the stationery room he or she will be charged with misconduct, go before a panel and have the right to defend themselves, to be heard and appeal. If you are one of the thousands of good people, the overwhelming majority in the greyhound industry, those rights do not exist. They have yesterday and today been torn up and extinguished by this Government. Labor thinks those rights should continue to exist. This bill is Labor's response to the McHugh report and to the Government's assailing of good people, many of whom will now have no future. Many will be bankrupt, many will be ruined and all of them will be changed forever for the worse. This bill does what Labor promised it would do.

I turn to some of the provisions of the bill. The bill constitutes the Greyhound Racing Integrity Commission [GRIC] as a New South Wales Government agency. It provides for the appointment of a commissioner and a board of persons who, in the opinion of the Minister, have skills and experience relevant to the matters arising under the Act and who will assist the greyhound industry in obtaining their objectives. The principles and objectives of the GRIC in exercising its functions are in pursuit of many of the recommendations of the McHugh report.

They are: to ensure and protect the integrity of greyhound racing in this State; to maintain, protect and enhance animal welfare standards in the greyhound racing industry; to maintain transparency in the greyhound industry, including ensuring that records relating to greyhounds bred for the purposes of racing are publicly available; and it provides that if the GRIC, a member of staff of the GRIC or staff appointed by the GRIC become aware of any serious or repeated contravention of any legislation relating to the welfare of greyhounds that contravention must be reported to the RSPCA or the Animal Welfare League. For the first time in many years this bill provides a proper and considered administrative structure for the greyhound racing industry and for the separation of the commercial and probative functions of those aspects of the industry.

The bill provides for the establishment of an animal welfare committee and for the appointment by a Minister of people who in the opinion of the Minister have the relevant experience and knowledge related to the ethics of animal welfare. It provides for the appointment of people nominated to the board who have extensive knowledge of animal welfare at a senior level and for the appointment of a person registered under the Veterinary Practice Act 2003 as a veterinary practitioner working in private practice. As the Leader of the Opposition promised, clause 22A provides for a life ban for persons who are found to have committed live baiting offences. It provides for the annual report of additional matters, including matters relating to breeding; for disciplinary action; for testing for prohibited substances; and prosecutions. You would expect that a sensible and considered administrator of the sport would take all that into account. Clause 41D states:

Any public land used for greyhound racing cannot be sold, leased or disposed of except with the approval of both Houses of Parliament. Bring it back to the people's House. That is a provision that is completely and utterly lacking in the Government's bill. In fact, the Government's bill liquidates the assets held in the greyhound racing industry and converts those assets into Crown land so they can be disposed of at whim. We have heard the Deputy Premier say in this place, "We will not allow that to happen." If there is one thing this Premier has proven in the five years he has been in office it is that he is the developers' friend. He is more interested in developers and overseas investors than he is in the welfare of the people of New South Wales. We on this side do not trust him in that regard. If he wants to put his money where his mouth is he will agree to our amendment or better still he will instruct his troops to vote for our bill when it comes before the House on the next sitting day. In my 11 years in this place I cannot recall a more extraordinarily rash and ill-considered law. It is utterly without precedent.

**Mr Ray Williams:** Nothing like proroguing Parliament.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I notice Parliamentary Secretary Williams at the table, a man who is well known in the racing industry. He is trying to intimidate and big mouth while this debate occurs. There are people who will be eyeing off his industry—the Saracens are not at the gates of the racing industry; they are scaling its walls. You, my friend, should put your money where your mouth is, because in this game you cannot have two bob each way. There have been industry transitions in the past decades in New South Wales that were monumental at the time—in the prawning and fishing industries, in the forestry industry and now with Uber. What has characterised all of those industry transitions is that the debates, deliberations and considerations proceeded. They

proceeded without being presumed. They proceeded in good faith. They proceeded in cooperation. They proceeded over a great period of time with financial assistance, and industry transition packages upfront and done in collaboration before legislation was rammed through the Parliament. But not when it comes to greyhounds.

What Premier Baird is saying to the good people in the greyhound racing industry is a very simple three-word response, "Go to hell." And we think that is a disgrace. Over recent weeks the Leader of the Opposition and I have been around the State visiting people in the greyhound racing industry. They are all battlers. They love their dogs. They hate more than anyone the wrongdoers in the sport. They want them rubbed out more readily than anyone else. The Premier does not know these people but, worse, he does not want to know these people, makes no attempt to know them and holds them in disdain. That is bizarre behaviour for a Premier who so wants to be loved. We want to give these people a chance. We do not want to criminalise them.

I note the introductory words of the Deputy Premier when he introduced the legislation today. He used phrases such as "It is with a heavy heart", "not lightly", "We have not proceeded quickly on this", "There has been considerable debate", and "It has been difficult". They are just weasel words. If they are not accompanied by action, they are hollow words. And he concluded his speech by talking about wanting to protect innocent animals. So do we, but what about innocent people? He is rubbing them out and destroying their future. That is not good government. I conclude by speaking to the members of The Nationals who will be asked to come into this place in a fortnight and have a choice between two bills—one a bill for hope and the future, and the other a bill for the extinguishment of people's economic futures.

I say this to The Nationals: If you do not stick up for your own people in public life, they will lose faith in you. The Nationals have made a mistake. I feel sorry for many of The Nationals members in this place because they have been misled. Their leaders have let them down. Many of The Nationals are disappointed in their leaders' decisions; they are standing in nooks and crannies, lift wells and corridors, saying so to anyone who will listen. But they should mark this: The disappointment they feel in this erroneous decision of their leadership pales into insignificance against the disappointment that The Nationals constituency in the bush feels about them. A lack of principle and bravery in politics will bring you to that place in due course every time. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## HURLSTONE AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL SITE BILL 2016

### Second Reading

**Debate resumed from 4 August 2016.**

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI (Murray—Minister for Education) (10:05):** Ironically it is with great pleasure that I debate a bill introduced by the Opposition, because it is a great opportunity to further and again explain one of the most elegant policy outcomes for western and particularly south-western Sydney that this Government has made. It is also a great opportunity to highlight the reason why the former Labor Government lost the election so comprehensively in 2011 and to again remind people of Labor's contempt for agriculture and agricultural education in New South Wales.

I remind the House about what happened in 2008. Those in the previous Labor Government said, "We are going to sell the farm at Glenfield, the Hurlstone Agricultural High School. We are going to sell all of the land. We are going to keep six hectares." There are four schools there. There is the selective high school, one of the best in the State, then there are three schools for specific purposes [SSPs]. Those opposite were going to sell all of the agricultural land. They said, "You do not need that. You only need a few hectares to run an ag plot. That is all you need in agriculture." The Opposition at the time, The Nationals, including me and the leader at the time, Andrew Stoner, objected to that because we wanted to make sure agricultural education continued in the Sydney Basin. There is Yanco Agricultural High School in Yanco near Leeton and Farrer in Tamworth—they are two great institutions in regional New South Wales, but the Sydney Basin is very important for agricultural production in New South Wales.

**Mr Anoulack Chanthivong:** That is not what you said.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** That is exactly what I said. The Nationals wanted agriculture to remain. So this was the plan of those opposite: to sell the farm so there would be no more broad-scale agricultural education in the Sydney Basin. This was all going to be residential development. The other thing was what they were going to do with the proceeds. As a reminder to the House of what they proposed to do with it, the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 3 February 2009 reported the Director-General at the time saying:

... the sale ... was expected to generate \$240 million ...

... half the money would fund extra capital works for public school over the next three years.

Great—that is half. The article continued:

The remaining \$120 million would be used to "fund front-line services such as police officers and nurses" ...

So half the money from the sale was going to pay recurrent. That may well have paid some recurrent salaries for a year, but once you have used capital to pay recurrent, that is it—it is gone like a puff of smoke. How do you pay that salary the year after that, the year after that or for the next 10 years? You cannot. The decision those opposite made in 2008 was completely wrong. It was wrong to sell off the land with no plans for broadscale agricultural education in the Sydney Basin and what they proposed to do with the money was also wrong. That is why the New South Wales Opposition at the time—now the New South Wales Government—strongly opposed what those opposite were proposing.

Let us fast forward to 2015 and the announcement that the New South Wales Government made. Yes, it is a valuable site. We made a decision and then we made an announcement that we would sell a large proportion of the site at Glenfield. It will generate a significant amount of money and, as per Labor's proposal, it will go to residential development. It makes a lot of sense. The site is wedged between the intersection of the M5 and M7, so it has access to main arterial roads. Every future resident who lives there will be within walking distance to Glenfield train station. In respect of delivering infrastructure to residential developments in the south-west, the infrastructure is already there. One of the complaints about residential development in parts of Sydney is that the infrastructure comes down the track. This is an elegant solution because in this case the road and rail infrastructure is already there. The site is placed at the link of the South West Rail Line out to Leppington, which is a major rail station.

Using the proceeds of the sale the Government will complete some renovations and expand the capacity of the Hurlstone Agricultural High School. We will spend millions of dollars renovating, upgrading and expanding the capacity of the school. The school achieves fantastic results and has one of the best reputations in New South Wales, which will be great for south-western Sydney. Labor never proposed to expand its capacity, nor did it propose to spend a cent of sale proceeds on the school. This development will have a positive impact on the school. A significant amount of money will go into the renovation of the three special schools on the site. The selective school will be renovated as well as the site for the three special study programs. We will also set aside land in that area for an additional primary school because when we initiate residential development we have to provide the capacity for future school development.

The Government has already provided roads, rail and education. Local government services are also there. Labor proposed to end agricultural education in Sydney; this Government's proposal is to expand it. We go from having 200 acres of agricultural land at Hurlstone to having 2,000 acres of agricultural land at that University of Sydney site at Hawkesbury. The land available for agricultural education will be expanded 10 times. Notwithstanding that, we are using a portion of the sale proceeds to build a brand new school at Hawkesbury. The brand new purpose-built high school will be located on the university campus at Western Sydney along with the existing educational infrastructure such as the science labs and research facilities for photovoltaic systems, which also has an apiary institute.

The campus conducts carbon sequestration, carbon research and climate research. A brand new school on a university campus that has a focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] as well as agriculture will be available to students. Essentially they will have 2,000 acres to play with. It is next door to the TAFE, which has an equestrian centre. It will be the best agricultural education facility in the world. It provides a substantial solution. Agricultural education in Western Sydney will be significantly enhanced. As I said, the infrastructure is already in place for the residential component of the Hurlstone site at Glenfield.

The third element is what to do with the rest of the proceeds. Some of the proceeds will be used to upgrade the four schools at Glenfield and to build a new agricultural high school at Hawkesbury, but money will be left over. We are not foolish like Labor. We are spending the money on infrastructure, not salaries. Oran Park will have a new high school; Gledswood Hills will have a new primary school; and William Stimson Public School, Cecil Hill Public School and Preston Public School will have additional classrooms. Those are the things that the money will be spent on. We have made it clear that we have made a lot of money and we will build a residential development, a brand new agricultural high school and, with the remaining funds, we will invest in schools in and around the electorate of the member for Macquarie Fields.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Macquarie Fields will have his opportunity to contribute further in his reply to the second reading debate.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** If Labor is serious in proposing that we do not do this, those things will not happen. Opposition members will have to explain to their electorates, such as Campbelltown and other places, what they will do. We have made some tough decisions, which is why Labor is hopeless; it did not know how to make tough decisions. [*Extension of time*]

If I get the chance in question time, I will remind the remainder of the Labor Party of their inability to make difficult decisions. Opposition members certainly know how to make stupid decisions, but not difficult ones. They know how to make short-term decisions such as using sale proceeds to pay salaries. Members will have to explain to their electorates how they will fund the expansion and construction of those schools in south-western Sydney that I have talked about. We have financial pressures because of enrolment growth in the inner west, Parramatta, the eastern suburbs, the North Shore and the north-west. With those existing pressures, how will Labor fund the expansion? Opposition members can tell us what they will do, but they are not prepared to tell us the decisions they must make to pay for it. Essentially they will give up the places that are available at Hurlstone. There is a lot of demand for places at Hurlstone because it is a great school. How will they fund the expansion at Hurlstone and how will they upgrade the three special schools at Glenfield? Will they give up an opportunity to have a brand new high school at Hawkesbury?

The Government is keeping the school at Glenfield as a selective school. Labor is giving up the opportunity for us to have the best agricultural and STEM high school in the world in Western Sydney. I understand it is not easy. There is lots of history at Hawkesbury and people will not be happy about it, but we have to look at the full picture. This is one of the most elegant solutions that this Government has come up with to tackle the problem in education. Everybody is a winner. I get the sense that the member for Macquarie Fields is on his own. I am not sure if other Opposition members will make a contribution to this bill. This is a fantastic education opportunity in Western Sydney. Labor tried to do it in a bungling and hopeless way—

**Mr Anoulack Chanthivong:** And you said we should not.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** That is right, because the proposal that Labor put up was a bad idea. It was not thought through. It was a knee-jerk reaction to the need for cash, which was needed for recurrent expenses. The Labor Government was not prepared to make difficult decisions, particularly in its last seven or eight years in office. When the Coalition was elected in 2011 it was prepared to make difficult decisions. When people voted at the ballot boxes in 2011, they knew the Government needed to be fixed. The Liberals and Nationals put their hands up, and the public voted for us.

We made those difficult decisions about wages caps, reducing the size of the bureaucracy and asset recycling. Then, at the last election, we made decisions about the long-term lease of the poles and wires. Those were difficult decisions and, yes, we know that people were unhappy about them, as they are with the decision we had to make on greyhound racing. The Government has to make decisions in the broad best interests of the people of New South Wales. A government cannot be populist and effective. A government must choose whether it is going to be populist or effective, and this Government has chosen to be effective.

So the member for Macquarie Fields is right: I disagreed with the 2009 decision about Hurlstone Agricultural High School because it was a bad idea. No thought had been put into it. I showed the House the beer coaster on which members of the Labor Party had developed their plan. They thought, "Let's just sell it. We'll flog it off. We'll get a few dollars and we'll put some into schools and the rest can pay salaries. We'll forget about agricultural education." Why would we have supported that? If this Government had put up the same proposal I am sure that Cabinet would not have supported it, because it is a bad idea.

The Government put together a comprehensive plan for better agricultural education and a better selective high school at Glenfield, which will be upgraded and will provide more places for people in south-west Sydney. Students from south-west Sydney do not have as many selective places as students in other parts of Sydney. The Government is expanding and renovating those three schools for specific purposes [SSP]. This decision will be good for New South Wales and good for Sydney, and it is particularly good for agricultural education. I will back this decision every day and oppose the bill.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (11:21):** I acknowledge the presence of the Minister for Education in the Chamber. I am delighted that he is here to hear what I have to say. I was at the Sydney Theatre Company last week and I must say that the Minister's performance today shows that he has a very bright future. The only problem with his performance is that the Minister has started to believe himself. The Labor Party does not believe him, of course, and nor does anyone else, but I think the Minister is starting to believe himself.

I am delighted to speak to the Hurlstone Agricultural High School Site Bill 2016 introduced by my colleague the member for Macquarie Fields. What a beacon of representation he is—a relentless, unwavering, passionate member of his community. The member for Macquarie Fields is particularly passionate about this issue, on which he has the Opposition's full support and his community's support. The Minister may wonder why the member for Macquarie Fields has the support of everyone on this side of the Chamber. The answer is that that is the way the Labor Party works: We are bound by solidarity and we stand together against bad decisions.

In his speech the Minister spoke about difficult decisions. I can confirm for the Minister that there is a big difference between a difficult decision and a bad decision. The Minister's decision to do what he is doing at Hurlstone is a bad decision. He knows it because, rightfully, in 2009 he said, "As a country MP I know the importance of agriculture, and the kids will tell you that you can't teach agriculture on 10 hectares. I would have thought supporting schools in south-west Sydney would have been a priority." I agree with the Adrian Piccoli who said those words. Can we get that other Adrian Piccoli and bring him back? I do not know where the Adrian Piccoli who spoke earlier in this debate came from, because the Adrian Piccoli whom I have just quoted was a delightful, intelligent fellow standing up for education and fighting for the prosperity of students, particularly agriculture students.

Members know that I, too, originally came from the country—Dubbo, central-west New South Wales. So I, too, have an understanding of the importance of agriculture and the role it plays in our society and, most importantly, in our economy. Agriculture is something that we cannot overlook; I think everyone in this place agrees on that. That is why we should all agree to support this bill. A strong agricultural network driving the economies in country regions can only occur if we have education. That is why the Government needs to keep its hands off Hurlstone Agricultural High School.

A lot was said about this issue in 2009, and I will clarify a couple of things for the House. The last Labor Government was wrong. We have talked about bad decisions and difficult decisions. That Labor Government listened to the community. That Government made a decision. That Government consulted with the community about that decision and members of the community said, "No, we don't want this." This had nothing to do with the then Opposition—irrelevant as they were. This was all about a community speaking up. Thankfully for the people of New South Wales, the last Labor Government listened and made the right decision—not the bad decision. Yes, it was a difficult decision, but, ultimately the then Labor Government did what Labor governments do—it put people first, supported education and provided enhanced resources.

I agree with the Minister wholeheartedly that we need to invest in our schools. We need new schools because we have a growing population and urban growth enrolments are growing, but let us not build those new schools at the cost of another educational institution. No-one is saying that we do not want to see the upgrades and enhancements that the Minister enumerated. I welcome them, but let us not make those improvements at the cost of another school. The Minister also raised the question of how the Labor Party can make those enhancements. First, we would not squander more than \$700 million on the Learning Management and Business Reform [LMBR]. That has been a mess. Imagine what could be built with \$700 million.

This Government is happy to sell off taxpayer assets, but it cannot even manage the coffers. That is its failing. The Government's failings should not come at the cost of public education in this State. Its failings should not come at the cost of Hurlstone Agricultural High School. Yes, we need to have residential development. We all know that; it is stating the obvious. If we do not want to live in trees we need to build houses, but good planning means putting good provisions in place. But the plans for residential development should not come at the cost of an educational institution.

Hurlstone has operated on its current site in Glenfield for more than 90 years. It is an age-old institution that has produced some fine students who have succeeded in many arenas. Each of the students leaving that institution has merit, but I draw the attention of the House to former students such as Jim Lees, New South Wales Commissioner of Police between 1979 and 1981; the Hon. John Kerin, a Labor hero and a good man, who was the Federal member for Werriwa and the State member for Macarthur; all four members of Human Nature—I am not familiar with their music, as enjoyable as it may be—would be happy to recognise the merits of attending Hurlstone; Kate Ritchie, Gold Logie winner; Defence Force Chief Mark Binskin, who worked in his father's service station; and none other than John Edmondson, VC, World War II. They are only a few of the many distinguished former students of the school. Throughout our region you will hear stories of Hurlstone's legacy and how it has benefited the lives of its students.

The fundamental point—the core point—is about values. It is about what we value in a society or a community. We need to value education. We know—we hear it a lot—that education is the greatest equalizer because it provides opportunity and prosperity. I reiterate that I welcome the Minister's announcement about the enhancements. I have spoken to the Minister about other matters in my electorate and I am grateful that he has helped out with those matters. However, on this issue I am sorry to say that the Minister is wrong. This is the wrong decision. In 2009 the then Labor Government made a similar decision. That Government was wrong and today the Minister is wrong. I urge the Minister to support this bill and to put this age-old institution and its students first. Perhaps some changes are necessary. We all know that reforms are needed to ensure viability, but that is not what this bill is about; it is about protecting the age-old Hurlstone Agricultural High School as part of our education system. With the values of agricultural education in mind, I cite a statement made in 2009 by the Hon. Kevin Humphries during debate. He put it correctly when he said:

Hurlstone Agricultural High School is not just a site; it is a precinct. It was established to provide education and training—it is not a single facility but co-located facilities—in agriculture and other subjects. The site was developed as a precinct ... the open space at the Hurlstone Agricultural High School precinct must be preserved.

I emphasise what was said by the Hon. Kevin Humphries at that time: The open space at the Hurlstone Agricultural High School precinct must be preserved. He is right and I am sure he would agree with the Labor Opposition today. He is a very honourable man. He also was right when he said:

It is refreshing to see young city people wanting to engage in food and fibre production ...

As well as other things that agricultural education brings to our system and indeed to our community. The Hurlstone Agricultural High School has existed for 90 years, which speaks for itself. Hurlstone's reputation and the merits of that school speak for themselves through the achievements of students and the merit that the school has brought to many communities. I urge the Minister for Education to reconsider this decision. I would be very happy to sit down and discuss the matter with the Minister to achieve a balanced outcome. Ultimately, that is what Parliament is about. [*Extension of time*]

I thank Government members for their support in consenting to the extension of time. I urge the Minister for Education to reconsider his decision. If there is an issue that needs to be resolved, let us talk about it, but only after consultation with our community. I note the presence in the House of Minister Perrottet and in the context of this debate I also note the position he adopted in taking away the Campbelltown, Ingleburn and Narellan motor registries to open Service NSW. I cite that as an example of yet another bad decision that has outraged our community. I urge the Minister for Education not to make a similarly bad decision of the type made by Minister Perrottet in removing motor registries. We need more and better services and more provisions in place for our growing region.

Earlier the Minister for Education said that the member for Macquarie Fields is on his own, but I assure the Minister that the member certainly is not. Rhetorical statements made by the Minister during the course of his contribution to this debate are not only inaccurate but also unjustified. As I have said previously, the member for Macquarie Fields is a beacon of representation in his community and a passionate advocate for attending to the needs of his local community—and so he should be. Even if the member for Macquarie Fields was not a mate of mine, which he is, that is what local members do: They represent their local communities and they do what is right for their local communities and put their community's interests first. That is why the member for Macquarie Fields has adopted such a passionate position in relation to the future of the Hurlstone Agricultural High School. He did not go to the school, but he certainly grew up in a region that values the elegance of quality education.

When I look around this House I see many people who could be poster boys to illustrate the importance of obtaining a good education. One only needs to listen to contributions to debate made by Government members to appreciate the importance of a good education in avoiding the common occurrence of embarrassing participation that reflects no preparation effort having been made. In conclusion, I cite the chorus of Hurlstone's school song, which speaks volumes and adds much merit to this debate. Although the Minister for Education has left the House, I am sure he is aware of it:

And here's to those who've gone before  
To fortune and to fame,  
All fiercely proud Hurlstonians  
Who've won for us a name  
And in the years that are to come,  
We hope to do the same,  
For the honour of our great school, Hurlstone.

I thank the House for its indulgence and I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (11:34):** I contribute to debate on the Hurlstone Agricultural High School Site Bill 2016 in two capacities—as the Minister for Finance, Services and Property and as the member for Hawkesbury. The decision made by the Minister for Education in relation to the Hurlstone Agricultural High School demonstrates everything that is great about the Baird-Grant Government. We must bear that in mind because all governments—State and Federal—are facing budgetary pressures, we must make more and do more with what we have. The decision of the Minister for Education—to not only maintain the school at Glenfield and increase its enrolment to more than 1,000 students but also bring an agricultural school to the Hawkesbury electorate—is great. The Hawkesbury electorate will go from having one school to having two schools.

Labor Opposition members continue to say that the Government is selling off properties whereas the reality is that the asset base is growing, which demonstrates Opposition members' naiveté. An example of Labor's approach is when the member for Maroubra was replaced as the shadow Treasurer. He commented on the sale of a property in Hawkesbury. He said that the Government was selling off the Windsor fire station, but failed to

mention that the Government previously had opened a \$3 million state-of-the-art fire station nearby. The member for Campbelltown referred to balance. In my view, the decision regarding the agricultural school is the type of decision that gets the balance right.

Like much of New South Wales, the story of the Hawkesbury electorate has been one of agriculture. Since the first settlers arrived to farm there over 200 years ago, the Hawkesbury has clothed and fed the people of Sydney with everything from fruits, meats, fleece and wool. But while the Hawkesbury's economy has diversified enormously since the days of the horse and plough, the region's agricultural output still stands at an immense \$305 million. The area is producing more vegetables, mushrooms and cultivated turf than any other area in the State.

The only way a region can continue to yield such enormous quantities of crops and produce is by studying the land, educating its farmers and researching evermore modern methods to cultivate its harvests and protect them from disease. The Hawkesbury has long been at the forefront of agricultural education and research ever since the State's first agricultural college was built there over a century ago. With this legacy in mind, it is with great pride and excitement that I welcome the next chapter in this story—the relocation of Hurlstone Agricultural High School from Glenfield to the Hawkesbury campus of the University of Western Sydney at Richmond.

We must not fail to realise what the bill introduced by the member for Macquarie Fields is really about. Labor is attempting to stop the Hawkesbury receiving a world-class agricultural school. This bill is about Labor putting partisan politics before the people and the future of students of Hawkesbury. But this should come as no surprise to members of this House and to people in the gallery because for 16 years, Labor neglected and rejected the people of Hawkesbury and those in greater north-western Sydney. Under Labor, the Hawkesbury choked and spluttered along—starved of desperately needed investment, services and infrastructure.

But now, thanks to the Baird-Grant Government, Hawkesbury is realising the benefits of record investments in new and upgraded roads. We are seeing an increase and a renewal in services provided, such as our new \$3 million fire station at South Windsor, which I mentioned earlier, and the transformation of Service NSW. The member for Campbelltown would be probably one of the only members of this House who does not like Service NSW. He is an outlier because 98 per cent of people across the State absolutely love it. Also in Hawkesbury we are seeing an improvement in the protection of its residents. Recently the Government decided to raise the wall of Warragamba Dam, with funding included in the budget. All of those improvements are vital initiatives for which Hawkesbury has been crying out and they were ignored for many years by Labor.

Labor is back at it again, this time in opposition, trying to oppose the establishment of a state-of-the-art agricultural school in the Hawkesbury electorate. Naturally, the people of Glenfield will be sad to see Hurlstone Agricultural School relocated as it has served the community of Glenfield well since it first moved from Hurlstone Park almost a century ago. Just as with Hurlstone Park before it, growth and development have changed the face of Glenfield. The semi-rural environment that made it so suitable in the 1920s has given way to suburbia and to many different needs and opportunities. This Government is acutely aware of those needs. As such, the people of south-western Sydney need not fear that they are being forgotten by this Government. Indeed, the people of south-western Sydney are profiting more from this relocation than the people of Hawkesbury.

No doubt Labor members failed to mention that this Government has allocated more than \$30 million for a new education precinct in Glenfield and, as the Minister said, this precinct will have an increased enrolment of more than 1,000 students at the school. It will include a major upgrade to the existing high school and more than 1,000 selected places for the area, in addition to three schools for specific purposes. Additionally, \$100 million has been allocated for 180 additional classrooms in south-western Sydney, including new schools at Oran Park and Gledswood Hills, as well as upgrades to William Stimson, Cecil Hills and Prestons public schools.

To help foster the continued growth of south-western Sydney, around 140 hectares of surplus land at the Glenfield site will be made available for housing, with land reserved for a new primary school to cater for planned growth. This land is perfectly located close to Glenfield railway station and as such productive use and development will play an essential part in the Government's south-west priority growth area strategy, which includes the development of 110,000 new dwellings. Transitions such as these may be difficult to bear for some, but that is what will define Sydney. Labor members failed to mention these incredible education investments in Western Sydney because it destroys their narrative that the Government is neglecting south-western Sydney, when the exact opposite is the truth. That is the difference between both our parties. While Labor members focus purely on their electorates and areas of support, the Baird-Grant Government continues to govern for all people in New South Wales.

This great decision by the Minister for Education will transform Hawkesbury into a national hub for agriculture, science and education. The new Hurlstone Agricultural High School will be fully academically selective for up to 1,500 students and include boarding facilities, as well as access to 1,400 hectares of agricultural

land to help students learn about modern day farming practices. The school will not only focus on agriculture but also there will be further specialisation in the important fields of science, engineering, technology and maths. What is most exciting about this project, however, is that the school will be located on the campus of the University of Western Sydney, giving students access not only to extremely qualified academic staff but also to world-class facilities, including laboratories, lecture halls, three greenhouses, six carbon fibre rings and much more.

The Government has allocated more than \$35 million for the relocation of Hurlstone Agricultural High School; a modest investment compared to the benefits that generations of world-class engineers and agricultural scientists will bring to this State. As our city continues to grow at an historic rate, the character of suburbs will continue to change. Refusing or resisting this inevitable growth will only leave us with a senseless and unplanned sprawl that defines dysfunctional cities. This relocation both anticipates and promotes the growth of Glenfield as a suburban centre of south-western Sydney and the Hawkesbury as the agricultural hub of north-western Sydney. With great optimism we look forward to the outstanding reputation of Hurlstone Agricultural High School thriving at its new home in the Hawkesbury.

The decision to relocate the high school is more than just about education. Whilst we have a great educational result—going from one school to two schools, supporting more students and supporting agriculture—we are also doing more as a Government with what we have when we find ourselves, as all governments do, under budgetary pressures and restraints. Making more of what we have with our asset recycling program is one of the hallmarks of this Government. It will be seen down the track as one of the great successes of the Baird-Grant Government in ensuring that we are able to use our assets for the people of this State. Whether that is in schools or other buildings across the State, we are doing a great job. I praise the Minister for the great work he has done and for the vision that he has. As the member for Campbelltown said earlier, we need to have balance. This bill does exactly that.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (11:43):** I contribute to debate on the Hurlstone Agricultural High School Site Bill 2016, which was introduced by my colleague the member for Macquarie Fields and remind members—I am sure they are cognisant of the fact—that last week was Education Week when we celebrated everything that was fantastic about public education in New South Wales. Like many of my colleagues in the Chamber I have spoken about this issue on many occasions. The greatest joy for me is when I visit the schools in my electorate and I see at the coal face the things that contribute to a better society. We spend a great deal of time talking about things such as National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN] and the Higher School Certificate, but I want to talk about the hidden curriculum or invisible backpack that makes schools so terrific—whether it be the contribution they make to building a greater community or a better society and the things that happen behind the scenes.

Sometimes kids come to school without having had breakfast but the teachers manage to find breakfast for them. Sometimes kids need assistance to pay for their excursions. There is a sense of community in our schools that comes from the natural goodwill of teachers who try to make things the best they can for our communities. I contribute to debate on this bill because of the ironies within it. This bill is a replica of a bill that was introduced in 2009 by the Liberal-Nationals Coalition when it was in opposition. The Liberal-Nationals Coalition criticised the Labor Government for not introducing similar legislation. At the time the Labor Government had considered introducing similar legislation but it decided not to do so as it was not the right approach. Clause 6 (1) of the bill is as follows:

- 6           **Development of the site restricted to government school purposes**
- (1)           Development of the Hurlstone Agricultural High School site may only be carried out for the purposes of a government school.

A big parcel of land that was used for the agricultural element of the school is being sold off so that we can build more houses. One thing that this Government does really well is look after developers. We have been told that a new school will be built in Hawkesbury. I am sure all members are in support of the building of new schools. Yesterday I invited this Government to debate the issue but it was not prepared to do so. It is all good and well for the Government to say that it wants to be heard and that it wants to debate issues, but when it is challenged to do so it does nothing.

Earlier the Minister said that agricultural education in the Sydney Basin was important. I agree wholeheartedly with that sentiment. The best education system is one that provides opportunities not only in science and technologies but also in humanities—the things to which I referred earlier that are in that invisible backpack. The question that we as legislators must ask ourselves is: What sort of an education system do we want? We want an education system that provides the most opportunities for children and enables societies to succeed. It does not matter where they live, what their parents earn, what language they speak or what their religious beliefs are. Everyone should be given an opportunity to do their best.

The Minister said that the proceeds of this sale will go towards school infrastructure and he made reference to a number of schools. He referred also to the refurbishment of Hurlstone Agricultural High School and existing special schools which provide assistance for students who might need it—students with disabilities or learning difficulties, or students who require any other assistance. Any investment in schools is a good investment. I stand by what I said in this House yesterday: The more money we invest in our schools the better they will be. We must ensure that we best utilise the proceeds from the sale of this site. We know how much money is going to certain schools but I do not know whether that necessarily translates into the best use of that money. I am not a real estate agent but I imagine that that parcel of land would sell for hundreds of millions of dollars.

We have been told that some money will be spent on the existing site to refurbish and expand buildings and to construct new buildings on the site. The biggest issue is that we do not have an indication of a comprehensive high school being built in the area. A selective school is a school for which students sit a test and if they are successful they get a place in that school. More often than not the selective school does not serve all the students from the local community. The Government plans to put up all these new residences in this part of the world and to build a primary school, but the truth is that the local kids who do not qualify for a selective school will not have a local school. It is all well and good to hear stories about building a new school for the community but is it accessible to the community? Is the selective school specifically for the community in which it is located?

We have found that there has been a drop in public school places for students transitioning from primary school to high school. That means that this huge development will take place and attract thousands of new residents, including families with children who need learning facilities. They have every right to go to a local high school, as everybody has. However, there is no provision for a local comprehensive high school in the proposal that has been put forward. Instead, there is a proposal to build a technology high school in the Hawkesbury, which is fantastic, and upgrades to the local selective school.

The member for Campbelltown and the member for Macquarie Fields have spoken about the many luminaries who have graduated from that school. It is a jewel in the crown of public education. It has an outstanding reputation for making an enormous contribution to building this great nation. But what about the kid who does not qualify for enrolment at a selective school? Is he or she expected to jump on a train and attend another school? This Government is building housing infrastructure but infrastructure is not just roads, rail and housing. There is also the social infrastructure that includes schools, hospitals and so forth. It is well and good to attract new residents, but their children must be given an opportunity to get a local education.

Government members are keen to talk about the past, but I note that they have now been in office for five years. It is now time for them to take responsibility for the decisions that this Government has made, instead of constantly talking about what happened when the Labor Party was last in government. The Minister said that there is a need for a school on the Hurlstone Agricultural High School site. The member for Macquarie Fields and the member for Campbelltown made it clear that we represent our local communities on all matters, including developments such as the one that has been proposed. The local member has initiated a campaign to highlight this issue.

However, this is yet another example of this Government's obsession with selling public property and public assets. Another example is the sale of the electricity poles and wires last year to fund WestConnex, which is now \$7 billion over budget—and counting. I would be very surprised if it does not go further over budget as the project proceeds. The massive windfall the Government received from the sale has only resulted in a few crumbs being thrown at the local community, whose members are meant to be very grateful for whatever comes their way from the hundreds of millions of dollars that the Government has made. However, the Government only invests a small proportion of that windfall in local communities.

The Minister talked about recurrent funding. He knows as well as I do that if the Government is going to build a school, it needs to staff that school and that means paying recurrent salaries. Where will that money come from? The Labor Party has a capital program that I spoke about yesterday. If those opposite want to invest in schools, they should do it properly and fairly. They should invest in schools not by selling assets, which is robbing Peter to pay Paul. That is what this Government has done over and over again. It is a sad indictment of this Government that has spoken about the legacy it will leave behind. Its legacy will show that it has sold off everything it can sell. [*Extension of time*]

I turn to some of the things that have been offered to local communities. Fundamentally, when everything is weighed up, communities want local facilities. We may work in a global environment, but we want local facilities and services. This local community will lose a huge amount of green space. Why does the Government not create recreational areas or something that could be used by the whole community? The Government proposes that new properties will be built, but there are no facilities for the new residents. All of the space will be replaced by up to 8,000 new dwellings. I am sure some developers are rubbing their hands with glee about this prospect.

More than that, many of the kids in south-western Sydney, including those who will move into some of these 8,000 new dwellings, will not be accepted into this school, so it will not be their local school. Their local school will be a comprehensive high school. The Minister has spoken about building a local primary school. He should match that with building a local comprehensive high school.

We know that schools in the area are at or above capacity and by 2031 there will be up to 225,000 new students in the New South Wales education system, attending public or private schools. Of those new students, probably 165,000 will be in the public education system. The proposed site is such a valuable green space that in 2009 the now Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli, swore that the land would never be sold off. He stood shoulder to shoulder with the people of Campbelltown—a photo opportunity—and said the Government would never sell off the land. Since winning the election, the Government plans to sell the land and dress it up as a good thing for the community. Then those opposite have the hide to look at us and say, "This is what you were going to do." Yes, we raised it but we did not do it having thought it out properly.

I agree that we need an expansion of housing developments, but we also need an expansion of places in comprehensive high schools for local kids. We cannot create new development areas and not build schools. The same is true for the Bankstown to Sydenham corridor, Green Square and Wentworth Point. There are all these developments but no schools to support them. The Government needs to question its track record and ask whether it believes that what it is doing is in the interests of the people as a whole or just property developers when it proposes to sell off such valuable land. In 2009 the Minister stood staunchly defending the precious land that Hurlstone Agricultural High School stands on, and yet he is now driving this action.

The greatest irony is that this bill is the exact same bill that was introduced in 2009. At that time the Minister, then in opposition, was passionate about the bill. It is amazing what a difference a few years and coming to power make. The Minister now has the power to do what he said he would do back then. Who are the winners from this development proposal? Certainly not the people of the greater Campbelltown and Macquarie Fields areas. If those opposite talked about building more schools then everybody in this place would be all for that proposal. But we must always be conscious of education as an investment. We should not be selling assets to fund education. Before too long we will not have anything left to pass on to future generations. I commend this bill to the House.

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (11:58):** I am happy to speak in debate on the Hurlstone Agricultural High School Site Bill 2016 because I have witnessed first-hand in my electorate of Coogee the investment taking place in public education. This investment did not take place for years under the Labor Government. Under that Government there was not only no investment but also a divestment of public education facilities. Maroubra Junction Girls High School was sold, Randwick North High School was closed down and no money was expended on senior schools such as Randwick Boys High School—my old school—and Randwick Girls High School. In fact these schools are only getting the required funding now under this Government.

Last week I was at Randwick Girls High School celebrating the new science labs paid for by the Minister for Education. The science labs dated back to the 1960s; nothing had changed. I am happy to talk about investment in public education. The pressure is felt in Coogee. Our public schools are much loved. Because Coogee is on the coast it can only expand in one direction, and that is west. The sites that we have are very constricted. The Government is spending over \$14 million this financial year to build 10 new classrooms at Randwick Public School and 20 new classrooms at Rainbow Street Public School to accommodate demand. There will be 30 new classrooms in the electorate of Coogee to accommodate the expansion in student numbers.

People are voting with their feet. They are saying, "We want to put our kids through primary school public education." It is not only the increase in population creating pressure but the popularity of the great quality schools in the electorate. I have heard it argued in this place that demountable buildings are a failure of the education Minister, the department and the system. Demountables were part of schools when I was a kid. I am a little older than the member for Lakemba. Demountables are a fact of life in schools because it cannot be predicted when schools will expand rapidly or contract. Demountables smooth out the bumps and troughs in student numbers. If the trend continues then it requires significant investment from the Government for the bricks and mortar, as is happening in Coogee.

I believe, as do many of the parents, teachers and principals in my electorate, that Adrian Piccoli is the best education Minister that this State has seen in living memory. The former Premier of New South Wales, Professor Bob Carr, recently stated that he agrees with asset recycling. The approach of the Baird-Grant Government and the Minister for Education to recycling assets receives a tick from Professor Carr. That is what is happening at Hurlstone Agricultural High School. I know the site. I do leave my privileged world of Coogee and visit the suburbs of Sydney and explore. There will be \$35 million invested in a new Hurlstone agricultural school at the Western Sydney University Hawkesbury campus.

There will be \$30 million invested in the new education precinct in Glenfield, where Hurlstone Agricultural High School currently resides. The \$30 million will include a major upgrade of the existing high school and three schools for specific purposes. My colleague opposite will understand the importance of specific purpose schools. There are many young people who need extra attention and that is what the specific purpose schools will provide. For recognising that the Minister receives a big tick. There is over \$100 million allocated for 180 additional classrooms in south-western Sydney. It will include new schools, upgrades to existing schools and land for a new primary school reserved in Glenfield. This Government is delivering on its commitments and promises. When I was selected as a candidate in 2010 every election commitment and promise I made had to be costed and was written down in my blood.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Motions*

**RIVERSTONE POLICE STATION**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:06):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Commends the Government for providing a new, enlarged police station at Riverstone for the Quakers Hill Local Area Command.
- (2) Congratulates the officers of Quakers Hill Local Area Command on their diligent service on behalf on the community.
- (3) Welcomes the news that the existing Quakers Hill police station will remain as an operational police facility.

This is an important motion because it is one of the highest priorities of any government to take all the measures it reasonably can to keep the citizens of the State safe. In meeting this responsibility all of us in this place recognise the critical role played by members of the NSW Police Force, who are on the front line in maintaining community safety, not only against crime and antisocial behaviour but sadly against the growing threat of terrorism. This Government respects the service of police officers and is committed to providing the powers, resources and facilities needed for them to do their job. It is entirely appropriate to take note of the official opening of the new police station at Riverstone on 3 August 2016 and to use the occasion to send an unequivocal message of support and appreciation both to the officers in the Quakers Hill Local Area Command and to all members of the NSW Police Force across the State.

Police have been stationed at Riverstone since the second half of the nineteenth century when a single officer used a one-room timber office. This first police station building has been relocated and is today on display at the Australiana Pioneer Village at Wilberforce. Subsequently a cottage was built on the current site as both accommodation and station office for the single officer posted there. Until the 1980s that was the home of the Riverstone police. It gradually grew in size. In the 1980s, with the reorganisation of police areas, a new police station was built at Quakers Hill for a complement of about 70 officers. In the twenty-first century, with the locality now falling within the North West Growth Centre and local area command strength reaching 100, it was widely recognised that the local area command had outgrown the building and a long-term solution was required.

The current Liberal-Nationals Government provided the funding for the new Riverstone police station adjoining the nineteenth century cottage, which has been retained as part of the overall site development. While Riverstone police station is the most recent project to be completed, it should be noted that this Government has committed to new stations or major upgrades at Gunnedah, Queanbeyan, Bay and Basin, Taree, Mount Druitt, Waverley, Walgett, Belmont, Morisset, Liverpool, Bowral, Coffs Harbour, Deniliquin, Tweed Heads, Moree, Raymond Terrace, Burwood, Parkes and Wyong. Some of these projects have been completed, others are in progress and more are in the pipeline. Whatever stage the work is at, it is to the credit of this Government that these commitments have been made and that police in all of those regions are receiving the support that they deserve.

An exciting part of this development for my community is the news that the old Quakers Hill station will remain in police hands and is already being used for police operations. A component of the Police Transport Command moved into the building recently and already officers are coming and going from the police station to the immediately adjacent railway station on a regular basis. This is great news for travellers on the Richmond line and the main western line. It is also great news for the shopping precinct near Quakers Hill station. Others groups from the North West Metropolitan Region will also operate out of Quakers Hill, including the regional operation support group or riot squad. As a result, there are now more New South Wales police based in the electorate of Riverstone than ever before.

The official opening conducted last week by the Deputy Premier and Minister for Police, Troy Grant, was attended by many senior police officers including Deputy Commissioner David Hudson, Deputy

Commissioner Catherine Burn, Deputy Commissioner Jeffery Loy, the North West Metropolitan Region Commander, Assistant Commissioner Denis Clifford, the host of the event, Superintendent David Jones of Quakers Hill Local Area Command [LAC] and many neighbouring LAC commanding officers. A special tribute was paid by the Minister to two long-serving officers at Quakers Hill LAC, Inspector David Legats and Detective Inspector Brett Guyatt, whom he invited to join in the unveiling of the plaque. These two officers are great examples of the dedicated, loyal and hardworking men and women who serve our community around the clock and throughout the year.

The opening of the new police station at Riverstone also underlines the commitment of this Government to Western Sydney and to the need to match population growth in new suburbs with the infrastructure and services needed for new communities. Throughout Western Sydney there is a buzz of activity in infrastructure development in police facilities, schools, ambulance and fire stations, roads and of course the Sydney Metro North West Rail Link. In keeping with this approach of matching population growth with appropriate services and facilities, the new Riverstone police station has been built large enough to accommodate many more officers in the future. This will allow the LAC's strength to increase to meet the needs of the region for years to come.

Not only is the facility much larger than the previous cramped quarters at Quakers Hill but it is also designed to provide the most up-to-date, efficient and safe operating conditions for the personnel accommodated there. It is far more comfortable too. This is entirely appropriate as a mark of respect to these officers and the work they do on behalf of the people of New South Wales. As we know, every working day—or evening, depending on their shift—a police officer gets up and dons that uniform and they do not know what will face them on that shift. They can confront any one of a number of dangerous scenarios on our behalf and they do so knowingly, deliberately and willingly to protect the community. It is incumbent upon all of us in this place to let those people know that they have our full support by providing the resources, the backing and the wherewithal to do their jobs on behalf of our community, which we know they do so devotedly. I therefore urge members to support this motion so that this House takes this opportunity to recognise the courageous and valuable service provided by the NSW Police Force to our community every hour of every week of every year.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (12:13):** It is an absolute pleasure to support the motion moved by the good member for Riverstone. It is a motion that is certainly close to my heart as I was a police officer for more than 25 years in New South Wales. This motion talks about the Riverstone police station being opened. What a fantastic example of infrastructure being provided not only to Western Sydney but also to the growth areas of our great State. Riverstone and its surrounding area is growing rapidly and a large amount of housing is being built there. The member for Riverstone also talked about other stations being built around the State. He listed those locations, which included Mount Druitt. Further infrastructure is being put in place to service New South Wales and, importantly, house the police as they do an outstanding job for our community.

The provision of these facilities is not only about the police who work inside them but also they have a common layout to them which provides efficiency in their building and a very important operational base for the police. It means that the police are familiar with the environment they are in and if they go to a different police station—if large numbers of police need to be moved to different areas of the State for some reason—they readily know where everything is when they walk into these new structures such as Riverstone police station. That may sound quite a small thing but it is very important when running operations and large numbers of police are needed at short notice.

The community also benefits from this new infrastructure. Victims of crime attend police stations. They are distressed. They have had terrible experiences. The last thing they want is to be placed in an old, drab, falling-down waiting area in a mishmash of a building that has been patched together over numerous years and in some cases even decades. This Government is proud to provide them with the environment, the facilities and the atmosphere that they deserve and require in their time of need.

Riverstone police station, a \$19.8 million build, is an example of the Baird-Grant Government providing the community with the services and facilities it needs and, in particular, providing operational police with the facilities they require to do their job. It goes together with the new equipment recently provided, including the body-worn cameras to assist police in their operational duties, and the greater support provided by this Government. The Deputy Premier spoke yesterday in the Chamber concerning the BACKUP for Life program, which supports police in the way they do their job and provides extra funding to support their mental health and other stress-related issues that arise from operational policing.

Importantly, the Government also honours its commitment to reducing red tape, untying the hands of those police so they can get out of the office and do the operational job they wish to do and that the community wants them to do—protecting life and property. As the member for Riverstone said, the police men and women go to work each day and each night to do their job of protecting us in the community. They wish to do that job and they are keen to do that job, but we owe them the community's support and whatever we can provide to help

them do that job in the most effective and efficient way. I commend this motion about the building of Riverstone police station to the House. It is an outstanding piece of infrastructure not only for Western Sydney but also for the growth areas of this great State. I echo the sentiments of the member for Riverstone.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:18):** In reply: I acknowledge the contribution and support of the member for Seven Hills for this motion. We have quite rightly acknowledged the very significant investment the Government has put into this police station and many others to provide support for those who support us and our community out on the front line. I want to elaborate on a couple of areas in which that is occurring. The technology that is now available to support the police in doing their job on our behalf means, for instance, that we can reduce the paperwork and the downtime an officer spends at the station entering reports and so on. We can provide them with handheld devices on which they can directly download reports and data in the field, from the car.

There is then no need to return to the station and no dead time while the information is processed. There is, therefore, more reaction time and more opportunity for those officers to be out and about responding to the needs of the community. We are grateful that that technology is now available and being rolled out by the Government. Similarly, cameras in cars and body-worn cameras provide opportunities to support police in their role and to protect them in ways that were not available previously. That emerging technology is also being rolled out to support our police, for which I commend the Government. The big investment we put into these facilities is for the benefit of the community and the police who serve us. I commend the Government for this investment. I commend the Quakers Hill Local Area Command and I congratulate police across New South Wales on their diligent service.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **WOMEN'S REFUGES**

**Debate resumed from 4 August 2016.**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (12:20):** I congratulate the member for Blue Mountains on her extensive work in the area of domestic violence. From her first speech in this place she has worked diligently and effectively in raising awareness and calling for more action from the Baird-Grant Government on this issue. She has worked on it as a community advocate, a member of Parliament and also in her capacity as the Deputy Chair of the Parliamentary Friends for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. The member for Blue Mountains has a constructive and inclusive manner. She wants to work with women on this issue, which is evident by the number of speakers who are seeking to join her calls for more refuges. Let us contrast her with the Minister who last week heckled the member for Blue Mountains in this Chamber throughout the debate. The Minister refused to participate in the second debate and provide a small target on this issue because she knows the Government has got its priorities wrong.

I say in this Chamber, and have said outside, that the Government's approach from a legislative and policing perspective has had some good results. However, we have a long way to go when it comes to services for victims. If the Government truly wanted a bipartisan approach it would support this motion, but of course it will not. The Government cannot admit its mistakes and it will not even support an amendment. In its much touted It Stops Here reforms in September 2014, the Government promised a domestic and family violence framework. It called for us to stand together to end domestic and family violence in New South Wales. It noted staggering statistics such as 125,000 incidents of domestic violence are reported each year; 300,000 further incidents go unreported; three-quarters of female homicides are domestic; one-third of people seeking assistance from homelessness services in New South Wales identify domestic and family violence as an issue; Aboriginal women are six times more likely to be victims of domestic and family violence than non-Aboriginal women; and the cost of domestic and family violence to the New South Wales economy is more than \$4.5 billion annually.

Eighteen months after promising bipartisan reforms that would stop domestic violence, the Government has failed time and again to protect women. Since the latest budget was announced we still have no coordinated or comprehensive timeframe for the rollout of safety action meetings and Safer Pathway across the State. Rather, we have bitsy media opportunities that are done in a partisan and random manner. For instance, none of the local members were invited to the most recent announcement in the Newcastle and Port Stephens electorates. I asked the Minister's office twice for a copy of the media release so I could comment on the great announcements the Government was making. Even though I am generally supportive of any new Government initiative, it is important to know what it is announcing. The request was refused on three separate occasions, which is not evidence of bipartisanship. It is yet another example of the Government treating the Opposition and the community as accessories after the fact.

The Government is still not funding refuges adequately and women and children are being turned away from centres every day. Importantly, it is not putting the victims at the centre of its policies, as it promised to do. A central plank of the It Stops Here Safer Pathway reform was the referral of a victim identified as facing a threat or serious threat of violence to a statewide central referral point. This was to be done through the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, but it has not been funded. We need beds for women in refuges in New South Wales and this Government is failing to provide them. I urge all members in this place to act in a bipartisan manner and support the motion of the member for Blue Mountains.

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (12:25):** In 2014 the Minister for Women, who is Australia's first Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, launched It Stops Here: Standing together to end domestic and family violence in New South Wales. The five-year program of reforms is about improving the way that the Government prevents and responds to domestic violence, including changing the way that victims receive help and are supported to recover. For the first time in New South Wales, the Government is creating a system that responds in a consistent and effective way to domestic and family violence. The 2016-17 budget doubles the investment in specialist domestic violence initiatives to more than \$300 million over four years, which is up from \$148.5 million in last year's budget. That is a doubling of the budget for specialist domestic violence initiatives. It is an enormous improvement. This is in addition to the hundreds of millions of dollars the Government spends each year to combat domestic and family violence through mainstream services in justice, police, health, child protection, social housing and homelessness services.

For the first time in New South Wales the Government is creating a system to deal with domestic and family violence that works and pulls together the patchwork of services that existed previously. Safer Pathway is an integral part of this system and will be rolled out across New South Wales over four years. This year's budget allocates \$53 million over four years for a statewide rollout. This year \$7.8 million is allocated to roll out 21 new sites and to expand two existing sites. Another critical part of the system is the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program, which responds to every police referral after a domestic violence incident. It is an amazing system. This budget locks in \$34 million over four years plus an additional \$6.3 million over four years to meet the unmet demand.

Another major initiative is the \$20 million Innovation Fund for prevention, early intervention and crisis responses that support domestic and family violence services, including refuges. The budget adds to a number of reforms that are already underway. New South Wales was the first State to establish a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme so that people at risk can find out if their partner has a violent history, and \$1.7 million has been allocated to continue police and non-government partnerships for early intervention support and crisis response to applicants of the scheme. New South Wales is the first State to introduce laws that allow for the enforcement of domestic violence orders made in another Australian State or Territory; statewide use of innovative policing tools such as domestic violence video evidence-in-chief and suspect target management plans; extension of fee-free TAFE scholarships under the Smart and Skilled program for survivors of domestic violence; and an update to the mandatory New South Wales K-10 personal development, health and physical education syllabus to explicitly include domestic and family violence.

The Government is committed to addressing homelessness, with a specific focus on young people and women who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless. As this Government has repeatedly said from the outset, the reform of the specialist homelessness services system has not resulted in less funding for services, particularly services for young people and women. The reform sought to ensure better outcomes for people by strengthening the capacity of homelessness services and achieving a better balance of prevention, early intervention and crisis support. Through the reform, 159 new specialist homelessness services packages were developed and implemented across the State. The Service Support Fund was established to deliver an additional 30 services that complement specialist homelessness services and the wider approach to reducing homelessness.

It is critical to recognise that the current specialist homelessness services packages do not equate to pre-reform homelessness services. Service packages include multiple service outlets and can include multiple discrete specialist responses with a specific focus such as a domestic and family violence specialist response, a youth specialist response, or a mental health specialist response. Funding for specialist homeless services has continued to grow since the reforms. The Government has done outstanding work in this portfolio—much more than was ever done under the Labor Government. The Minister deserves hearty congratulations for all she has achieved in this difficult and trying portfolio.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:29):** I speak in support of the motion of the member for the Blue Mountains and I thank her for bringing it to the House today. During my time as the shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, I was fortunate to attend the Blue Mountains Domestic Violence Roundtable mentioned in the motion. While those responsibilities are now held by the very

capable member for Maitland, I have always been, and will always be, keenly interested—as are all members on this side of the House—in seeing a reduction in domestic violence in all of our communities.

At the Blue Mountains Domestic Violence Roundtable I heard directly from workers who are at the coalface, who have lived through the Government's heartless Going Home Staying Home program, and who have personally borne the strain of reduced resources in a sector in which we can least afford fewer services. The biggest and strongest message shared by all of the workers who were at the roundtable, who were representing numerous agencies and services, was that there are not enough services and supports to meet the need.

I thank the member for Blue Mountains and her staff for hosting and coordinating the roundtable. I also thank the women and men who attended the roundtable, and everyone who works in the sector, who continue to support women and children when they need it most, when their darkest days seem insurmountable. I thank them for their passion, hard work and commitment to making do with the few resources they have, and to doing all that they can to make women and children safe, and give them the hope they so desperately need.

I have recently welcomed the Government's announcement that the It Stops Here Safer Pathway program will be available in Port Stephens and Newcastle. I acknowledge that this program has been well received at trial sites around New South Wales, and I am cautiously optimistic about its rollout in Port Stephens. My caution is because for this program to be effective it must be adequately resourced. Both Government and non-government agencies involved in the program will require additional and appropriate resources to participate.

My caution is not without foundation, given that the organisation coordinating the safety action meetings that are at the heart of the It Stops Here: Safer Pathway program, the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service [WDVCAS], had a 45 per cent increase in calls in a one-month period during the trial of this program. WDVCAS was not even funded to participate in the program until earlier this year and, even then, only for around 20 per cent of its increased workload. WDVCAS is struggling to support the program, which, on paper, looks fantastic. The It Stops Here: Safer Pathway program is a good model to break down barriers to services for people escaping domestic violence who are considered at risk of harm. But if there are no services to refer people to, or if those services are already overwhelmed with demand and are not additionally resourced, then too many women and children will remain at risk.

For the sake of our communities, we must all do more to change the culture of violence towards women. Far too many lives are being lost and too many children are being permanently harmed by those whom they love the most. The Government must start making amends for its previous cuts to services and ensure there are adequately funded supports and services in communities across New South Wales to turn this epidemic around. Again, I thank my good friends and colleagues, the member for Blue Mountains, the member for Maitland and shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, for their strong and continued advocacy for women and children who face the horrors of abuse within their own homes.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (12:33):** In reply: I thank the member for Oxley, the member for Cootamundra, the member for Maitland and our fabulous, hardworking shadow Minister, the member for Port Stephens, and the member for Mulgoa for their contributions. I also acknowledge the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence for her input today. I will address a couple of matters that were raised by the member for Oxley, who said that in this State we had a patchwork of services that were in silos. That was not the case. A fantastic system had been built up by the women's movement over many years, but they needed more money to deal with the demand that was generated once we started speaking about domestic violence in this country. We had hoped that the demand for services would increase when women and their families asked for help. We needed to apply the money where that help was required.

In thanking those who have made a contribution to this debate I call on the Baird Government to urgently reinstate the network of specialist women's domestic violence services and fund specialist women's refuges. Those beds are desperately needed. We must establish and fund Aboriginal women's programs, including reinstating funding for West Connect's Wirrawee Gunya service, which has been operating for almost a year without funding. I call on the Government to mandate and fund the provision of 24-hour coverage of women's refuges and homeless people's services, and to increase and sustain funding for the network of WDVCASs across the State so that they can deliver what the Government has promised. The Government must provide specialist training for Link2home phone operators who respond to domestic violence. I call on the Baird Government to ensure local police forces are empowered and trained to respond to domestic violence at the local level, and to carry out an audit of all specialist homelessness services' contractual obligations to ensure that they are providing the services they were contracted to provide.

The Government must develop a standardised set of agreed protocols and practices for mainstream services to work with victims of domestic violence, and an accreditation process to ensure compliance with agreed standards and responses. The Government must liaise with services on the ground to ensure that the gap in the

policies of It Stops Here: Safer Pathway are addressed. The Government must address the gaps. The Government must establish a domestic violence unit within Housing NSW to ensure appropriate responses to domestic violence. Finally, I thank those who work in this space—those people who deal with domestic violence every day. Thank you; you are my inspiration.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....32  
Noes .....47  
Majority..... 15

**AYES**

Aitchison, Ms J  
Catley, Ms Y  
Daley, Mr M  
Finn, Ms J  
Harrison, Ms J  
Hornery, Ms S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D  
Park, Mr R  
Robertson, Mr J  
Watson, Ms A

Atalla, Mr E  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Dib, Mr J  
Greenwich, Mr A  
Haylen, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
McDermott, Dr H  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Parker, Mr J  
Warren, Mr G (teller)  
Zangari, Mr G

Car, Ms P  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Doyle, Ms T  
Harris, Mr D  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Piper, Mr G  
Washington, Ms K

**NOES**

Anderson, Mr K  
Barilaro, Mr J  
Brookes, Mr G  
Coure, Mr M  
Elliott, Mr D  
Gibbons, Ms M  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Maguire, Mr D  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Provost, Mr G  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tudehope, Mr D  
Williams, Mr R

Aplin, Mr G  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
Conolly, Mr K  
Crouch, Mr A  
Fraser, Mr A  
Goward, Ms P  
Henskens, Mr A  
Kean, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Patterson, Mr C (teller)  
Petinos, Ms E  
Roberts, Mr A  
Skinner, Ms J  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Ms L

Ayres, Mr S  
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)  
Constance, Mr A  
Dominello, Mr V  
George, Mr T  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Hodgkinson, Ms K  
Lee, Dr G  
Notley-Smith, Mr B  
Pavey, Ms M  
Piccoli, Mr A  
Rowell, Mr J  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G

**PAIRS**

Barr, Mr C  
Foley, Mr L  
Hay, Ms N  
Smith, Ms K

Baird, Mr M  
Davies, Ms T  
Grant, Mr T  
Humphries, Mr K

**Motion negatived.**

*Visitors*

**VISITORS**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I welcome to the Chamber the Leader of the Opposition of South Australia, Mr Steven Marshall, his chief of staff, James Stevens, and Sally Zou.

*Motions***CHAMPION HERDSMAN BAILEY GARDINER**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (12:44):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates teenager Bailey Gardiner of Inverell on being awarded the Northern Hereford Australia Youth Heifer Show Grand Champion Herdsman in early January.
- (2) Notes the national show attracted 120 competitors and 130 Hereford cattle, with all competitors involved in junior judging, paraders and the cattle judging.
- (3) Further notes Bailey's love and passion for cattle, and ability to learn from all those around him at these events.
- (4) Acknowledges Bailey's career plan of being a stock and station agent, and continuing to run his own Angus stud.

Today I commend to the House a young man with a massive future in the beef cattle industry. Bailey Gardiner, as members know from the motion, is from Inverell. He is a 17-years-old student at the Macintyre High School. He has enormous passion for cattle—breeding them, caring for them, showing them, promoting the beef cattle industry and running his own Angus cattle stud. He is a wonderful representative of the Inverell community and the stock industry in which he is planning to make his career as a stock and station agent. Currently he is undertaking work in an apprenticeship with Bob Jamieson Agencies in Inverell. Simultaneously, he is developing his own Angus stud on his parents' property, which is near Inverell.

In January this year Bailey lined up with more than 100 similarly impassioned young people to take part in the Herefords Australia National Youth Show. He spent the four days of competition honing his skills as a cattleman, which include judging, parading, grooming, learning about nutrition, show preparation and marketing. At the sharp end of the competition Bailey was named as the 2016 Herefords Australia National Youth Show Grand Champion Herdsman. That is a tremendous achievement and one that highlights the care and empathy that Bailey has for the animals under his care. We sometimes see negative images of the livestock industry. However, my experience is that most livestock producers work to provide the best care and environment for their animals. Indeed, their future relies on it as well.

As a champion herdsman, Bailey demonstrates the best practice when caring for cattle, including ensuring that there is adequate shelter, water and feed, and by ensuring that the animal is in good health and is comfortable. As I said, Bailey is a wonderful ambassador for his school, his family and the rural sector generally. I again commend him for his dedication and for making his passion his work and his goal in life. Recently in Tamworth—it is great to acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of the member for Tamworth—I had the pleasure of congratulating Bailey at the New England Training Awards in June at which Bailey won the school-based Apprentice or Trainee Student of the Year.

From Bailey setting up his own Angus stud and winning herdsman competitions across Australia, Bailey also has been training as a stock and station agent with Bob Jamieson Agencies in Inverell. One of his best friends, Talia Crisp, who attends Macintyre High School with Bailey, was the runner-up in that category of awards presented in Tamworth on 24 June. It was great to sit down and have a chat with Bailey on the night of the awards. He said he was absolutely stoked with the award. He said he absolutely loved receiving the award and he loves working at Bob Jamieson Agencies. He said:

Awesome bunch of guys in the office and out in the field ... I've done the traineeship for just over 18 months and I've absolutely loved every minute of it. I'm very thankful for the opportunity, hopefully I can carry on with it. By "carry on with it", Bailey is expressing the hope of being able to pursue his career goal of becoming a stock and station agent, and setting up his own business. I have absolutely no doubt, after spending some time with Bailey, that he has the passion and the drive, and he is certainly developing the skills to achieve that goal. Bailey's family has always been on the land, from his grandfather to his father, encouraging him to get involved in the agricultural side of business. He has been very passionate about agriculture at school since he was in year 8. He says he has always loved cattle and loved people. He believes that becoming a stock and station agent is a great way to combine his two passions—cattle and people.

As we all know, in country New South Wales, stock and station agents could certainly sell ice to the Eskimos. They are very good at convincing people they are getting a good deal. It is with great pleasure that I bring this motion to the House this morning. Bailey Gardiner is an absolutely wonderful young person and someone in whom, when you meet him, you can see that passion and that desire in his eyes to pursue his goal. I am so proud of him and so pleased that he was able to win that championship at the Australian Youth Heifer Show Northern Hereford Australia, but also to pass on my wishes for every success to him in his Higher School Certificate as he moves on, no doubt, to achieve his career goals in life. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (12:50):** One of the nice parts about being in Parliament is being able to recognise the work of young people across our State as they pursue their endeavours. Often in the media we hear a lot of negative things about young people in our society, but on a daily basis I think most members of

Parliament come across young people who excel and who are, like us, role models to other young people in the community. That is why today I am very pleased to be able to join with the member for Northern Tablelands in congratulating Bailey Gardiner on his efforts, particularly becoming the 2016 Herefords Australian National Youth Show grand champion herdsman at Inverell.

The show was held at Inverell showgrounds between 7 and 10 January this year and included about 112 competitors. What I liked about it—I was reading about Bailey in an article from the *Inverell Times*—and what came across in that article was that he is a very down to earth, very nice young man who has good direction in his life and, as the member opposite said, he has in mind a career path as a stock agent. That is very good to hear because often when you ask young people what they want to do with their lives, they shrug their shoulders and do not really have any idea. For someone as young as 17 to have a clear direction is a good thing. It is a tribute to him, to his family and to the people who work with him.

I understand that he worked at a stud called Tycolah, which is one of the bigger Hereford studs in New South Wales, which took seven little heifers to the show for Bailey and five other junior competitors. It is great that the stud is supporting young people in education and agricultural industries. I agree wholeheartedly with the member for Northern Tablelands that our agricultural industry is very important not just to our State but also to our nation. Australia has always exhibited best practice in the industries. It is great that the younger generation is taking up the cudgels and carrying on that proud tradition. My wife's family comes from a place called Hillston and they are involved with stock. I am very much a city coastal boy—

**Ms Melinda Pavey:** There is very good art there.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** There is indeed. I know that my wife's brother works very hard on the farm and they do go through some very tough times. It is not just economic difficulties they face, it is also the great Australian weather that causes immense problems on the land. This has caused many young people to leave the land and seek out better circumstances, so to have people like Bailey coming through to continue with those great skills is very important. As I said earlier, I could tell that Bailey was a great kid by the response in the paper. Emily Rabone who is the Secretary of the Herefords Northern NSW Youth Group basically said in the article that Bailey is a great kid, so that summed it up pretty well.

When I went on to read that he has his own Angus stud at the age of 17, as the member for Northern Tablelands said, I was very impressed. I know a lot of our high schools, not just rural high schools but also high schools on the Central Coast, teach agriculture and travel to different shows around the place. For several years I have been involved with the Gosford regional show, which included being involved with the Miss Show Girl competition. People have an idea that Miss Show Girl is a beauty pageant of some sort, but what I found was that it is anything but that. The Miss Show Girl competition was very much about people's knowledge of our rural industries and knowing what their particular region does.

We have some strong roots that our youth can hook into and find employment in regional areas, so that they can certainly ensure that the proud history of Australia and New South Wales in the agricultural industries continues. I congratulate the member for Northern Tablelands on recognising the individuals in his community. I have been to his electorate. He is a very popular person. They think he is a downright decent person who represents their interests and that is good to see, because that is what we are all here for: We try to represent our communities. I am very pleased on behalf of the Opposition to support the motion of the member for Northern Tablelands congratulating Bailey Gardiner on his outstanding efforts in the 2016 Herefords Australian National Youth Show.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:56):** I, too, congratulate the member for Northern Tablelands on bringing forward this important motion that focuses on the next generation of stock and station agents, the next generation of groomers, and the next generation of cattle men and women. They start in the schools in regional New South Wales, and Tamworth plays a very big part in that. My electorate has Farrer Agricultural High School, Peel High School and Calrossy Anglican School, all with very strong agricultural components in their curriculum. Farrer Agricultural High School recently held its annual Angus bull sale. I note that the member for Northern Tablelands is an ex-Farrer student, so he would have had a fair bit to do with the bull sales and the agricultural curriculum at Farrer—a proud history over many, many years.

Brewongle, which is the farm at Farrer that houses most of the agricultural sector, led by stud manager Marty Peters, recently held its latest Angus stud bull sale with a very good clearance rate. There were some thoughts that it would be a different type of bull sale this year, given the high cattle prices, de-stocking and so on, but, as usual, the Farrer crew were up to the mark and had a very good clearance rate. The students run that stud and they also run the sale. They are the ones who will take that next step and become future stock and station agents in our region, so they are very important.

Peel High School is another school that has budding agents coming through its ranks. It runs a very successful Suffolk sheep breeding program, as well as Angus cattle. It does very well when its students head to the Dubbo Show and the Sydney Royal Easter Show. I know that principal Bill is very strong in the agricultural sector; he makes sure that his students are exposed to agriculture and the results are outstanding. Calrossy Anglican School is another school that has a very strong agricultural program and it, too, exhibits not only at the Sydney Royal Easter Show but also at regional shows.

That is important because it supports agricultural shows in regional New South Wales. Quite often students of Calrossy Anglican School show cattle at the smaller regional shows such as Manilla Show, Gunnedah Show and Tamworth Show, supporting these regional shows. This gives students first-hand experience in grooming, animal husbandry and looking after the welfare of animals. I hope some of these students will stay on to become stock and station agents in the future. We have some excellent stock and station agents in our region. Davidson Cameron & Co are well-known stock and station agents in my region. My father-in-law, Don Davidson, started that business in Quirindi. He has retired and still the business powers on. Chris Paterson and Burke & Smyth are also stock and station agents who provide the carrot for the young stock and station agents of tomorrow to come through the ranks. I congratulate the member for Northern Tablelands on bringing forward this important motion.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:00):** I support this motion and I congratulate the member for Northern Tablelands, a great member of The Nationals, on bringing forward this important motion. It is great that The Nationals are leading the charge when it comes to rural and regional affairs, in particular those that involve young people in regional areas. I congratulate teenager Bailey Gardiner, of Inverell, on his achievements. The Nationals are promoting and supporting young people in agriculture right around regional New South Wales. There are a number of agricultural shows in my area including Taree Show, Wingham Show, Nabcac Show and Bulahdelah Show, all supported by young people exhibiting beef and dairy cattle.

Chatham High School, Wingham High School, Bulahdelah Central School and St Clare's High School, Taree all have a strong agricultural component and teams that exhibit cattle in the local shows. There is a dairy husbandry camp at Wingham, where young people learn about the dairy industry. There is also a hoof and hook camp at Wingham, where young people from schools across the country—from Quirindi and Tamworth and up and down the coast—stay for almost a week to learn about beef cattle on the hoof. This event is sponsored by Manning Beef, which is part of Wingham abattoir. Manning Beef is internationally renowned for producing the best beef in Australia, and members of The Nationals can attest to that. Those who attend this camp learn about getting marbling and muscling right by looking at dressed carcasses on the hook.

There are also young people involved in rodeo who participate in competitions at Wingham, Gloucester and Nabcac. Many of these young people go on to bigger and better things in regional areas. This motion is important because it not only highlights the achievements of Bailey Gardiner but also reveals the opportunities for achievement that are available in our school system. We have a great Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli. Today we heard great things that are happening for Hurlstone Agricultural High School and there are also great things happening at high schools throughout regional New South Wales offering agricultural studies and beef and dairy teams. Once again I congratulate the member for Northern Tablelands on bringing this important motion before the House, and Bailey Gardiner on his achievements.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (13:04):** In reply: I sincerely thank my colleagues the members representing the electorates of Myall Lakes, Wyong and Tamworth for contributing to debate on this motion. I am sure Bailey will be made to feel very proud of his achievements when he gets a chance to read the *Hansard*. Members have made sincere comments in congratulating Bailey on becoming the Grand Champion Herdsman earlier this year. More importantly, we acknowledge Bailey's passion and interest in the agriculture sector in becoming a stock and station agent and developing his own cattle stud.

As I said, Bailey is a special young man. Many communities have people like Bailey but not many special people in communities are so young. He already knows what career he wants to pursue. He is passionate, he is driven and—most importantly—he is a very mature, polite, well-mannered and sincere young man. Those qualities are a large part of the reason for his success. He is mature beyond his years. He has had the benefit of a wonderful education at Macintyre High School. He has also had a very encouraging and supportive family. Again I sincerely congratulate Bailey on his wonderful achievement. I am sure it will be one of many more achievements for this young man. I wish Bailey every success for the rest of his career as a stock and station agent. I have no doubt he will establish his own business in the future. I commend the motion to the House.

**Motion agreed to.**

**WYONG HOSPITAL**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (13:06):** I move:

That this House calls on the Government to begin construction on the new Wyong Hospital upgrade in the 2016-17 financial year.

I gave notice of this motion in February, but unfortunately we have now had the second budget since the 2015 election in which there has not been a single dollar for the upgrade of Wyong Public Hospital. At the time my colleague the member for The Entrance and I welcomed the fact that the Liberal Party, during the election campaign, matched Labor's promise for a \$200 million upgrade of Wyong hospital. The \$580 million or more upgrade of Gosford Hospital is underway, and we welcome that, as do all people on the Central Coast. However, we are concerned that during the election campaign, after we announced our \$200 million commitment to Wyong hospital, the Government announced on a Sunday afternoon that it would match that funding commitment. Whilst we welcome provoking the Government into action, the good people of Wyong showed that they knew who was telling the truth. In the 2015 election my margin increased from 6.9 per cent to 8.6 per cent. That shows that the people of Wyong understand that the member for The Entrance, the member for Swansea and I really know—

**Mr John Sidoti:** What about the member for Terrigal?

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** He does not live in that area; he lives down the peninsula. We know that the northern part of the Central Coast is growing at a rapid rate and we need services to cope with that growth. I turn to the history of how the two hospitals over the past few decades have been redeveloped in a complementary fashion. The reason is that the two hospitals share services and people use the hospitals for different purposes. When the Central Coast health access plan was released in 1999 it revealed the importance of both hospital campuses being developed in a complementary fashion.

In 2000 the then Labor Government under Bob Carr allocated \$222 million to expand both those hospitals. Those works started in 2001 and each part of the redevelopment was completed simultaneously at each of the hospitals. The first new building completed under that development was the cardio catheterisation unit at Gosford together with the Wyong mental health unit. In 2004 the full Wyong build was completed and in 2005 the Gosford new build was continued. There was a period when both the hospitals continued to receive upgrades and new equipment. There was \$5.9 million in the 2008-09 budget and there were further amounts of money in the 2010-11 budget, which included a new MRI scanner.

It was reinforced that those two campuses should grow together. The current policy is that the Wyong redevelopment will not start until the Gosford redevelopment is underway or complete. That will not work because it will put more pressure on Wyong hospital during that time. I will quote from what the then Minister for the Central Coast, Rob Stokes, had to say about Wyong hospital. He is a good bloke. I have dealt with him for a long time and I know that he tends to speak the truth. When the funding for Wyong hospital was announced Mr Stokes is reported in the *Central Coast Express* on 11 March 2016 as saying:

We are investing almost \$600 million in building world class health facilities here on the Central Coast.

The two hospitals need to be upgraded together to ensure they can network together.

Mr Stokes publicly endorsed Labor's position that both campuses required upgrading at the same time. There have been two budgets and funding for Gosford but not a single cent for Wyong. The Government should listen to Mr Stokes' words of wisdom if it does not want to listen to me. It should listen to the member for The Entrance, the member for Swansea and the people from the northern part of the Central Coast. Labor members, the people of the northern Central Coast and the Central Coast Local Health District understands. In private conversations with board members they will tell members that it is important for both campuses to be upgraded simultaneously.

This is not an attack on the Government for committing the money. It has committed the money but now it has to start spending so that the redevelopment benefits the entire community. The Government cannot make an election promise and, once the election is won, go back on its word. The Minister for the Central Coast stated that the hospitals must be developed together. The Labor Party agrees with the Minister—he was right and we agree with him. Unfortunately Treasury and the Minister for Health do not want to give us the money. The people of Wyong, one of the fastest growing areas in this State, have had to wait for far too long.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (13:13):** I disagree with the member for Wyong for a number of reasons. This Government is not against a motion that encourages the construction of new hospitals; this Government has a proven track record in that regard. It is not surprising that new members who come into this place have a tendency of looking forward rather than looking back. When a member resubmits a motion one tends to wonder what is going on. The member for Wyong, who is not new to this place, presided over a long list of hospitals that were not improved. I understand the reason behind that. This Government has a proven track record for delivering on its commitments. A pre-election commitment is a commitment within an election cycle. Obviously there is a tendency for those opposite to say, "I want it here and now."

This Government will live up to its commitments. Every hospital upgrade promised prior to the election is being delivered or is underway. There must be correct planning. Members will recall that the Rozelle metro cost \$500 million and delivered nothing. That is a problem we will have if infrastructure planning is left to the hospital. It must be done through relevant channels. In March 2015 the New South Wales Government announced \$200 million towards the Wyong hospital redevelopment. This included \$1.3 million committed over the 2013-14 and 2014-15 budgets towards planning. This project will deliver upgraded facilities at the hospital to provide high quality healthcare for communities in Wyong and surrounding areas on the Central Coast.

The construction works are scheduled to commence in this term of government. The redevelopment includes additional acute inpatient beds, intensive care beds, an emergency department, operating theatres, outpatient and ambulatory space, and additional mental health beds—everything that patients would need. The \$200 million investment will transform Wyong hospital and usher in a new era of modern health services for patients across the Central Coast. Government members and those opposite know that only the Baird Government can be trusted to deliver this project. It will complement the biggest project underway on the Central Coast.

The member for Wyong is familiar with this place. More than half of the State's hospitals were more than 50 years old when the Liberal-Nationals Coalition came to office, which I am sure is not the age of the member for Wyong. The Government faced an infrastructure backlog left to it by the Labor Party. During this Government's two terms in office the health capital works budget will amount to \$10 billion, which is more than Labor spent on health capital works in its 16 years in office. In its first term in office this Government invested about \$5 billion in more than 130 projects to redevelop or upgrade hospital and health services across New South Wales.

The member for Wyong, who has good intentions, probably hoped that his motion would never be debated but to his horror he now has to face the music. In regional and rural areas the Government invested more than \$2 billion in 90 or more projects to redevelop or upgrade hospitals and health services. In this term it will upgrade more than 60 health and hospital services across New South Wales in both the city and the country. The story of the Labor Party's time in government could not be more at odds with the investment of this current Liberal-Nationals Government. The Baird Government's investment is strikingly different, chiefly because it made promises that it was able to deliver. The Labor Government ignored hospitals or failed to deliver on promised hospital upgrades, including at Bega, Blacktown, Byron Bay, Campbelltown, Dubbo, Forbes, St George, Gosford, Hornsby, Lismore, Maitland, Parkes, Tamworth, Wagga Wagga and the northern beaches region. I will not name all the hospitals on the list as I will have to seek an extension of time.

At the time the shadow Minister, Michael Daley, said in Parliament that when the Labor Party was in office every major hospital in the State was rebuilt or upgraded. Let us take Westmead Hospital as one example to examine that staggering claim from the then shadow Minister. He has a tendency to mould things the way he wants—I think he believes that planting some mondo grass constitutes an upgrade. Under this Government, Westmead Hospital precinct is receiving its first significant upgrade since it opened in 1974. In excess of \$900 million will be invested, with further enhancements to medical services and mental health services on the campus, taking the upgrade to \$1 billion when completed. I understand that the member for Wyong is trying to be a good local member, but sometimes one just has to say, "Thank you," and go with the flow. I understand that as I have the same issues in my area. I also fought hard to get planning money but the last thing anyone wants is a lump sum that is thrown against a wall. In reality proper planning has to be done. Without proper planning, the final product cannot be delivered.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (13:20):** I support this motion, which states:

That this House calls on the Government to begin construction on the new Wyong Hospital upgrade in the 2016-17 financial year.

I note at the outset that there are four hospitals on the Central Coast. There are two major hospitals: Wyong and Gosford. The hospital in the electorate of The Entrance is Long Jetty hospital, a very old hospital which now performs some specific and essential functions for the community. The people of The Entrance rely on both Gosford Hospital and Wyong Hospital to tend to their health needs in the main. It is of great concern that no money was allocated in this year's budget for the promise—a bipartisan promise—made during the 2015 election campaign that there would be a major upgrade at Wyong hospital.

After Labor made its promise during the 2015 election campaign, a promise was made by those opposite to match Labor's commitment to Wyong hospital. I acknowledge that a bipartisan commitment was made during the 2015 State election campaign to upgrade both Gosford and Wyong hospitals. A lot of money has been allocated to Gosford, which is welcome, but during the election campaign the planning Minister, Minister Stokes, said that these things should proceed in tandem. He said it a number of times and he was very charming when he came to all those forums on the coast. They had to roll him out because the quality of candidates was pretty poor. Every

time they rolled out the member for Terrigal they thought, "We had better get Minister Stokes to charm everybody, otherwise things are not looking too good."

On a number of occasions Minister Stokes made the comment that these two hospitals should proceed in tandem. He talked about all the coordination that was necessary to get the two hospitals built at the same time, but nothing has happened at Wyong. Nothing has happened to make changes on the ground to the building structure. The Government might have done some planning—I have seen its PowerPoint presentation, but that is all I have seen on the Central Coast. As a local Central Coast member I have had no briefing about any plans for a start date on those works, which concerns me. It shows a complete lack of respect for the majority of local members on the Central Coast who are not on the government benches. This Government should provide advice.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** There is a reason for that.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN:** It shows disrespect. I say to the member for Terrigal that his day will come. I have had no advice on a start date for Wyong hospital which concerns me because people in my electorate rely on Gosford and Wyong for the majority of their healthcare needs. This Government needs to come clean on when it will start upgrading Wyong Hospital. I hope it is sooner rather than later. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:24):** The words I want Opposition members to take heed of are "Central Coast Local Health District". After becoming the member for Terrigal, one of the first meetings I had, unlike the candidate that Labor put up who did not win even though he still thinks he did—was with the Central Coast Local Health District. I meet with representatives from that body on a regular basis. That body decides when the Wyong hospital upgrade will proceed—fortunately it is not the member for Wyong, the member for Swansea or the member for The Entrance. We rely on expert advice from groups like the Central Coast Local Health District. An amount of \$200 million has been allocated in the budget over the next four years to upgrade Gosford Hospital.

If those opposite bothered to drive through Gosford they would know that there is a large hole on the site where Gosford Hospital is currently located—the \$348 million development of Gosford Hospital is already proceeding. I am pleased to say it is proceeding ahead of schedule and on budget which has enabled us to allocate an additional \$20 million for a medical research unit and medical school, which those opposite pooh-poohed during the Federal election campaign. I think the Leader of the Opposition said it was not on his agenda but he then suddenly said, "We will put in the \$20 million as well. We will match it." Where will Opposition members get the money from? We have the money because we are running ahead of schedule and on budget for Gosford Hospital. I draw the attention of members to the fact that we rely on the Central Coast Local Health District for guidance as to how we develop our hospitals.

**Mr Stephen Bromhead:** They are the experts.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** The member for Myall Lakes is right; they are the experts, not the member for The Entrance, the member for Swansea or the member for Wyong. So we need them to say, "We are ready to move forward." In reality one does not attempt to upgrade two major hospitals simultaneously. It was evident, even in the first four months of development, that more than 300 employees at Gosford Hospital were working through the local area health service at Wyong hospital and at other places. They will have to share services while Gosford Hospital is being redeveloped.

This is a \$348 million state-of-the-art, brand-new hospital that those opposite failed to deliver for 16 years. The member for Wyong talked about the \$220 million that was invested between 1999 and 2005. We are putting almost that much into one hospital; we are doing what those opposite failed to do. If they had bothered to visit their hospitals they would have seen that they were a complete mess, especially Gosford. Unlike those opposite, we have a fantastic, state-of-the-art facility that will be delivered on time and on budget. When Labor was in office it never delivered for Gosford.

Luckily the member for Wyong is not on the board of the local area health service. Members of that board have the experience and expertise in delivering fantastic, state-of-the-art health services that those opposite failed to deliver to the people of the Central Coast for decades. We are delivering state-of-the-art hospitals to the fantastic clinicians and nurses on the Central Coast. We have seen increases in the number of nurses during the last term of government—there are more than 300 additional nurses in the local area health service. Over the next four years they will rightfully be delivered the best hospitals in this State, along with a medical research unit, because of the planning that has taken place with the local area health service. For that reason I oppose this motion.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (13:29):** I support the member for Wyong's motion. I would also like to acknowledge one of my Central Coast colleagues here, the member for The Entrance. The member for Terrigal is also here, but unfortunately he does not have anything nice to say about Wyong Hospital. That is very disappointing, because it has been my experience since I have been in this place that the members from the Central

Coast work hard together to bring good things to the Coast—we know the good people of the Central Coast deserve that. So it is very unfortunate that we do not have the support of the member for Terrigal in trying to get the funding Wyong Hospital needs, which is what this motion is about.

People in the southern suburbs of the electorate of Swansea use Wyong Hospital. I place on record that the staff at Wyong Hospital are absolutely fantastic. They are people who put in a good day's work but who live very humble lives. What they would like is for their facilities to be upgraded, something that had been promised to them by the current Liberal-Nationals Government. About 60,000 people attend Wyong Hospital's emergency department every year and there are approximately 4,000 elective surgeries there. Despite the importance of the hospital, in its 2016 budget, this year's budget, the Baird Government again failed to deliver on its 2015 election promise of a \$200 million upgrade—an upgrade that is very much needed at Wyong Hospital. There is literally not a single mention of Wyong Hospital in the budget. It was incredibly disappointing. This is the second year in row that the promised \$200 million upgrade has not been delivered.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I will now leave the chair and the House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

*Visitors*

**VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome guests to the gallery this afternoon, in particular, students and their teachers from the All Saints College, St Peter's campus, who are guests of the member for Maitland.

*Question Time*

**AUSGRID LEASE**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:19):** My question is directed to the Premier. Your entire plan to pay for rail, roads, schools and hospitals lies in tatters. What on earth is plan B, Premier?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:19):** I can say this: There are plenty of plan Bs over there for the Leader of the Opposition. I cannot believe that the Leader of the Opposition, this man of principle, comes in here to ask about infrastructure. He is kidding me. He decided to stand in this Parliament to oppose the port transaction.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Keira to order for the first time. I call the member for Keira to order for the second time. The House will come to order.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Then he became the Leader of the Opposition and said, "I absolutely back it in." This man of principle is very special—

**Mr Luke Foley:** Today of all days is a day when the Premier might want to answer a question, for once.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition does not have a point of order. He should resume his seat. What he has raised is not even remotely akin to a breach of a standing order, and the he knows it.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** We all know about the Leader of the Opposition. We all know about his approach to any single policy. He stands for something until there is a political opportunity in something else and then he stands for that.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Keira to order for the third time.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** It is very different on this side of the Chamber.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: I am sure everybody in this House is most concerned about what plan B is.

**The SPEAKER:** Does the member have a point of order?

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Yes, my point of order is with respect to relevance.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The member should resume her seat.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** At the last election those on this side of the Chamber proudly went to the people of this State and said that we had a plan to deliver the infrastructure that this State so richly deserves, and we are getting on with delivering that.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind Opposition members that they may be asked to leave the Chamber early. I call the member for Londonderry to order for the first time.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** As the Leader of the Opposition knows, he does not want to build the Metro, WestConnex, and more schools, hospitals or sports stadiums.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time. Members will cease interjecting.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** He does not want those things. He did not have the guts to take these matters to the people.

**Mr Luke Foley:** Point of order: It is not about me; it is about the Premier. What is he going to do?

**The SPEAKER:** If the Leader of the Opposition cannot think of a point of order he should not get up to the microphone. I call the member for Auburn to order for the first time.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The member for Auburn would not understand a transaction if he fell over it. In fact, we saw what the Opposition did. It is very clear. The Government has said all along—since the election campaign until today—that matters of national interest and national security are determined by the Foreign Investment Review Board [FIRB] and the Federal Government. That is what we have said all along. FIRB and the Federal Government have the right and the opportunity to respond however they like on that matter but this Government has said that it will deliver the infrastructure on the back of this process, and that is exactly what we will do.

The transaction for this lease continues. You heard the Federal Treasurer talk about that today. Regardless of the decision that the Government makes at this time or in a week's time, as the New South Wales Treasurer has said here today, we are incredibly confident that we will achieve an outstanding result in lease 2 just as we did in lease 1. What that means for the people of New South Wales is more roads and a Metro that the people of Sydney deserve. We will deliver it. In fact, the tunnelling is already underway. Members might have missed that. On top of that, this Government will deliver more hospitals. This Government will deliver more schools. This Government will deliver more roads. That is what this Government is delivering.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** As the member for Strathfield stands to make a point of order I remind her that the Premier has remained relevant.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order relates to standing order 129. Did the Premier forget to take Scott Morrison's call? The Premier is stuffed.

#### REGIONAL FREIGHT RAIL SERVICES

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (14:25):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. How is the Government improving regional freight rail services?

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Blacktown to order for the first time. I call the member for Blacktown to order for the second time. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the second time. I call the member for Blacktown to order for the third time. I warn him that next time he opens his mouth he will be asked to leave the Chamber.

**Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) (14:26):** I thank the member for Cootamundra for her question and for her wonderful advocacy on behalf of her many communities in the Cootamundra electorate. Cootamundra is one of the most diverse electorates in our State because there is not one large regional centre in that electorate; there are many towns with similar populations. Every one of those centres is equally important in the contribution it makes to the regional and State economies.

The freight—the food and fibre products that come out of the Cootamundra electorate—needs to go somewhere. The freight needs to get to the ports. One of the key things that regional New South Wales relies on—it has been a significant focus of this Government—is making sure that our State freight strategy is up to speed, to make sure that we have the most efficient and effective access for those products from the paddock to the port so that they can contribute to our economy. We do this by identifying where the pinch points are and where there was a lack of infrastructure investment by the appalling former Government over a 16-year period. We have identified where investment was needed.

Under the wonderful guidance of Duncan Gay, we have been working with communities and industries to identify and invest in a number of key freight lines. That will make each of our regional communities far more profitable than they ever had a chance to be under the members opposite. I am about to inform the House about something even more special—not just the upgrades to existing railway lines and the pinch points but something

that the member for Cootamundra, through her strong advocacy, has achieved through her local councils and industry groups. She has joined with the Minister to announce a further \$15 million to fund 10 of these projects to improve the State's freight rail network.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Rockdale will be on a train to Cootamundra shortly—a slow, diesel train. Actually, I would not do that to Cootamundra.

**Mr TROY GRANT:** What the Speaker just said about the member for Rockdale is true. He is likely to be able to get on a train to Cootamundra because the member for Cootamundra, along with the Minister, has just announced \$5 million to reinstate a railway line called the Maimuru to Demondrille line—a 56-kilometre freight line. That is 56 kilometres of additional freight rail line. A previously closed line has been opened up.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Some members are being ridiculous and childish. I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time.

**Mr TROY GRANT:** That closed rail line cut off the productivity and prosperity of the Cootamundra region, but the line is now reopened. That coincides with a reopening of the hopes and dreams of primary producers in that region who now will be able to get their freight to a port. I congratulate the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight on his advocacy because this is an example of what this Government does. This Government addresses issues that are important to primary producers, such as upgrades to the Pacific Highway that the mighty Nationals on the North Coast have achieved during the past five years to save lives as well as the fiscal management of significant investments that go to the very heart of prosperity in regional areas of New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is far too much noise in the Chamber.

**Mr TROY GRANT:** The difference that investment in reopening the 56 kilometres of rail line can make to the entire southern region of the State is enormous.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Kogarah to order. I call the member for Rockdale to order.

**Mr TROY GRANT:** Also in Cootamundra, there has been an allocation of \$1.5 million for a rail siding extension to Barellan to assist in servicing a major grain receival site, which is an outstanding achievement. In the Barwon electorate, \$1.5 million will be spent on a rail siding at Burren Junction—another key isolated location. In Southern Highlands, \$1 million will be spent to upgrade a rail siding at the Canberra Railway Freight Terminal, which gives the Monaro region a massive capital injection. In the Northern Tablelands electorate, a rail line from Moree to Inverell will benefit from a \$2 million upgrade and will achieve better freight efficiency. The Murray electorate of the Deputy Leader of The Nationals also will receive funding. The expenditure I have outlined indicates the magnitude of funding being pumped by this Government into regional areas of New South Wales—and it has not stopped yet.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn members that continued interjections will not be tolerated.

#### AUSGRID LEASE

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:32):** In directing my question to the Premier, I refer to the leaders' debate in the 2015 State election during which he admitted that, if his asset sales failed, he had no plan B, and I ask: Does he reckon it might be time to develop one?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra has included in his question too many statements of alleged facts, which I am unable to verify. The question may be out of order.

**Mr Michael Daley:** I have videotape of it.

**The SPEAKER:** The member should table the videotape. Next time, the member for Maroubra should table verification.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:32:):** Madam Speaker, it is all coming back to me. I recall that election campaign when the member for Maroubra was the shadow Treasurer. It was before he was sacked by the Leader of the Opposition. I do not have any idea why the Leader of the Opposition sacked the member for Maroubra; perhaps it was because the member for Maroubra has no idea of finances. Today the member for Maroubra again has demonstrated that that is the case.

The Opposition may find it incredibly exciting to follow a process of transactions that includes third party oversight by the Federal Government in the national interest and for the sake of national security. That is not unusual. It has been part of every transaction that the New South Wales Government has undertaken and we are adhering to that process. Obviously the Federal Government can make any decisions. How the lease will be

determined is a matter for the Federal Government during the next week. If the Federal Government decides that the current two bidders cannot continue, then there are plenty of others. The New South Wales Government is very confident in relation to that process because people are very interested in the assets.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Kiama will cease arguing across the Chamber with Opposition members.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The New South Wales Government is very sure of exceeding the reserve price, which is something that the member for Maroubra did not do in relation to gentraders when he was the Minister for Finance. Does the member for Maroubra even remember the gentraders?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Kiama that the Premier has the call. The level of noise in the Chamber is unacceptable.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The Auditor-General said that the member for Maroubra sold the gentrader assets for less than half their true value. The New South Wales Government is determined to do the right thing for the people of the State, and that is exactly what we will do. This Government is very confident in the processes we are undertaking.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Premier should tell the House what the reserve price is.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier has remained relevant to the question.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** As the shadow Treasurer knows, one does not disclose the reserve price of assets but, rather, ensures that it is exceeded, which is something the member for Maroubra did not do when he was in government. Labor Opposition members might have missed the point that in the 2015 election campaign, the Government was determined to deliver infrastructure—and that is what this Government is doing. I invite the member for Maroubra to visit the north-western area of Sydney. It is all well and good for the member for Londonderry to criticise—she was an advisor to Bob Carr on this. Premier Carr promised infrastructure for the north-western area of Sydney in 1998—but it is this Government that is delivering it. I invite the member for Londonderry to visit the area where the tunnelling that is taking place, or travel along sections of the Pacific Highway that are being duplicated.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Londonderry to order for the second time.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** You promised it, but we are delivering it, and it does not matter where you go in New South Wales.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: The Premier should be making his comments through the Chair, not directly to a member.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I did not notice that the Premier was not directing his comments through the Chair, but I will continue to observe. I thank the member for Maitland for drawing that to my attention.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The New South Wales Government through the Minister for Health is delivering a new hospital in Maitland.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind members, particularly the member for Maitland, that Standing Order 294A may be invoked. Members who continue to interject will be removed without further warning from the Chamber for up to two hours whereas the ultimate punishment is removal from the Chamber for the remainder of the day. This afternoon interjections are beyond belief.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** Labor Opposition members can engage in histrionics and say that the world is coming to an end, but the good news for the people of the State is that the Government is working very well and will deliver for the people of New South Wales. This Government will deliver to the people of the State the infrastructure we promised. The Government is very confident about the transactions being undertaken. The Government has achieved an outstanding result from lease 1; we will achieve an outstanding result in relation to lease 2; and we will achieve an outstanding result on lease 3. That is important because we will be delivering for the people of New South Wales. Members of the Government know that if you had won the 2015 election and occupied the Government benches in this House, the people of New South Wales would have \$20 billion less in infrastructure. That is what you have been delivering—absolutely nothing. If Labor was in government, every public transport project you saw would be cancelled. They are very good at cancelling public transport projects.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: The Premier again is not directing his comments through the Chair.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier's last sentence began, "They are".

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** He has been saying you, you, you. Madam Speaker, I thought you might have picked it up. I am just drawing it to your attention.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier has been saying "they". Members may direct a comment through the Chair by using the third person, such as "They are doing such and such." The Premier is directing his comments through the Chair.

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The process continues. This Government will deliver the infrastructure, as promised, and that is great news for the people of New South Wales.

#### AUSGRID LEASE

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:37):** My question is directed to the current Treasurer.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I wish to hear the question. The member for Keira will repeat his question.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** My question is directed to the current Treasurer. Which projects will she delay, and which projects will she cancel, in the light of her failure to sell Ausgrid to her preferred bidder?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (14:38):** The shadow Treasurer's question highlights, firstly—

**Mr Anthony Roberts:** Current shadow Treasurer.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The current shadow Treasurer.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Keira that he already is on three calls to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Firstly, we know that the shadow Treasurer does not know the difference between public money and private money; nor does he know the difference between a dumped policy and a live policy.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the member for Keira to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of two hours pursuant to Standing Order 249A.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Keira left the Chamber at 2.38 p.m.]*

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The member for Keira actually resurrected a policy that had been twice dumped by his own party. With that question he has demonstrated his complete lack of understanding of how to run a transaction, how to actually bank billions of dollars and how to actually deliver infrastructure for the great people of this State, and that is exactly what we will do. I wish to stress and place on the record that it is under this Government that we have the most comprehensive and exciting infrastructure strategy and I want to assure the people of this State—

**The SPEAKER:** If the member for Bankstown and the member for Rockdale want to have a private conversation they should go outside. The Treasurer has the call.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I reiterate to the people of this great State that our infrastructure strategy not only is on track, but will deliver the much-needed roads, rail, hospitals and schools for our great State. I say to those opposite, exhibit one, the TransGrid transaction, \$2.258 billion gross proceeds to the State. Those opposite had better study and get their facts right because we know that they do not support infrastructure in this State. We know that when they were in government they had a whole raft of policies which never saw the light of day.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order! My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. It was a clear question—the sale price is heading south, so what projects will you cancel?

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer remains relevant to the question.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The point of order of the former shadow Treasurer and current future aspirant of the Treasury portfolio is completely ignorant and it demonstrates the hand he had in the failed gentraders transactions that those opposite delivered. Remember those? Those opposite unfortunately do not—

**Mr Michael Daley:** That was genuine reform.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Unfortunately those opposite do not appreciate what it actually means to run a successful transaction process.

**The SPEAKER:** The House will come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Worse still, their questions demonstrate today that they never have and never will get economic management.

**Mr Michael Daley:** This is so weak.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Maroubra will come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I say to those opposite, why do you not support the Government's infrastructure program.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Maroubra is stirring; he will stop it.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I say to those opposite, what have you got against roads? What have you got against hospitals? What have you got against public transport?

**The SPEAKER:** I direct the member for Londonderry to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of one hour. I direct the member for Bankstown to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of one hour. I direct the member for Rockdale to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of one hour.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Londonderry, the member for Bankstown and the member for Rockdale left the Chamber at 2.42 p.m.]*

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Why have not those opposite—

**The SPEAKER:** They are lucky it is not for the rest of the day. I am sick of it. If we have nobody on the Opposition benches, except the usually good ones, that could be a good thing.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: There is plenty of noise coming from that side of the Chamber too.

**The SPEAKER:** They are not interjections.

**Mr Michael Daley:** I know you are running a protection racket for the Minister for Health; do not run one for the Premier and the Treasurer.

**The SPEAKER:** I direct the member for Maroubra to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of two hours. Does the Leader of the Opposition want to go too? They are my decisions to make.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Maroubra left the Chamber at 2.43 p.m.]*

**Mr Luke Foley:** Why don't you throw us all out, because they need all the help they can get today. Throw us all out. Come on. Come on. We dare you, throw us all out. They need all the help they can get.

**The SPEAKER:** You would love that. There was a little bit of bullying going on there. That was very good.

**Mr Anthony Roberts:** In fairness, if they started behaving like an opposition, then you would not have to throw them out. What they have got to do is treat this place with the respect it deserves.

#### REGIONAL EDUCATION FACILITIES

**Mr ANDREW FRASER:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. How can the New South Wales Government provide future focused learning facilities for students in regional New South Wales?

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** I thank the member for his question.

**The SPEAKER:** The House will come to order. Opposition members will cease interjecting.

**Mr Andrew Fraser:** Oh shut up—

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** I want to put on the record—

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Did you hear what he said?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Maitland will come to order. I cannot always hear the conversations. The Minister for Education has the call. I did not hear what the member said.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** I am happy to tell you.

**The SPEAKER:** You can talk to me later. The Minister has the call.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Madam Speaker, I am sorry.

**The SPEAKER:** Resume your seat.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** He has just—

**The SPEAKER:** Resume your seat.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** —asked the member for Maitland to "shut up bucket mouth". Is that parliamentary?

**The SPEAKER:** I did not hear it. No, it is not parliamentary.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** I can get my colleagues up here. Ask him to withdraw please.

**The SPEAKER:** Resume your seat.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Ask him to withdraw please.

**The SPEAKER:** Resume your seat and I will deal with it.

**Mr Luke Foley:** You never hear what they say; you are a partisan disgrace.

**The SPEAKER:** I direct the Leader of the Opposition to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of one hour.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Auburn left the Chamber at 2.44 p.m.]*

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: Standing Order 73. Can I request that the member for Coffs Harbour withdraw his previous statement and apologise.

**The SPEAKER:** I did not want to deal with it while the member for Swansea was continuing to stand at the microphone and shout. I was trying to say that I would deal with it. But as the Speaker, if I cannot hear what the comment is, then it is reported to me in a somewhat second-hand manner, I cannot really deal with it. If the *Hansard* record shows that those comments were made, then I will certainly talk to the member for Coffs Harbour about it. I cannot deal with something that I have not heard. If Opposition members were to walk out on that basis, that would be ridiculous. I told the member that I was about to deal with the matter. She is entitled to be outraged, if those words were said, but walking out does not resolve things. It just shows the immaturity of the Opposition. The Minister for Education has the call.

**Mr Andrew Fraser:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** To that point of order or to my ruling on that point of order?

**Mr Andrew Fraser:** The Minister for Education has not uttered one word in response to my question and the clock has wound down three minutes due to the childish behaviour of the Opposition.

**The SPEAKER:** Do you not think that I would deal with that as well?

**Mr Andrew Fraser:** I ask you to reinstate the time.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not think you need to ask me that. Welcome to the members for Lake Macquarie, Balmain and Sydney. It is open slather and it is great to have you. The Minister for Education has five full minutes in which to respond to the question of the member for Coffs Harbour.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** As I was about to say, I just want to put on the record my disappointment that nothing would make the Opposition happier than to see capital works projects in this State cancelled. That is the point of the questions they have just been asking, including education projects. Nothing would make them happier than to see the new school at Parramatta, funded through leasing the poles and wires, actually cancelled. Nothing would make them happier than to see the project at Ballina, a \$50 million redevelopment of Ballina High School and co-investment with the council up there, cancelled. It is going to be one of the finest high school facilities in the country and nothing would make them happier than to see it cancelled.

I know that they sit up all night praying for bad news in this State. They pray that the unemployment rate is going to go up. They pray that economic growth is going to go down, and I think that is the saddest thing about what used to be a proud Labor Party. Some of those Labor luminaries over the decades played the politics, but it was all about the best interests of New South Wales. Unfortunately for this group of Labor members of Parliament, and we have just seen them walk out—I say to the students in the gallery, if you want to see an example of a political stunt, you have just seen it. You grandstand; you pretend you are upset about it, then you storm out. I am sure there will be a press conference and there will be press releases. What we are on about on this side is good government. I know they will be up there watching the rest of question time on television. Do not think they are ignoring what is happening here in the Chamber.

They will all be upstairs watching question time on television. They have essentially given us and members of the crossbench a free go at question time. All the electorates they represent are now not represented

during question time. What is the Government doing for regional New South Wales in terms of education? This Government is making a huge investment. The Government is able to do that because it has made the tough decisions in government. Earlier today there was a debate about the sale of the Hurlstone Agricultural High School site. Those opposite opposed it. If they oppose that sale, they cannot spend the money it would raise on projects like the extension of William Stimson Public School or the construction of a new high school at Oran Park. If they oppose the sale they would not be able to support the things we plan to do in developing a new science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM], and agricultural high school in Hawkesbury.

I have a five-year-old son who loves going on holidays. When I go to work, he says, "Why do you have to go to work, dad?" I say because I have to do the hard work in order for us to have the good times. He understands that sometimes when you make a positive decision you have to make other decisions to pay for the positive decision. My five-year-old gets that better than members of the Labor Party do. They oppose everything. They opposed the leasing of the electricity poles and wires, but every Labor member whose electorate stands to benefit from an infrastructure project will be at the opening of the completed project. They will sit at the front with their name tag on their seat. If they are not invited to the opening, they will be cranky. I cannot guarantee that we will be gracious about inviting them to the opening but we probably will be. They want to be part of the good news but think people are stupid and do not realise that they have opposed every measure we have undertaken to raise the funds so we can afford these measures.

The new round of the Resource Allocation Model [RAM], the recurrent money, will come out later this year. This funding really matters for schools and there will be more good news for schools in New South Wales, particularly regional schools, when it is released this year. How can we afford to release more funds? We cut the bureaucracy, the waste in the public service. This was one of the reasons we were elected as it is one of the foundation stones of a Liberal-Nationals Government. We cut the waste and put that money into front-line services such as building new schools and funding recurrent spending so schools can employ speech pathologists for students having trouble at school or employing teacher support for a student with a disability. We have done these things since we came to government. We must forget the noise in New South Wales politics and focus on the fundamentals of being a good government. That is why I and every member of this Government is proud of the work that we have done and continue to do.

#### REGIONAL JOBS GROWTH AND BUSINESS CONFIDENCE

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (14:52):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. How is the record investment in regional New South Wales under the Baird-Grant Government driving employment growth and business confidence?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:52):** I encourage the members opposite to heckle, because it is uncomfortable for me not to be heckled during question time. I thank the member for Tweed for his question. He is a champion on behalf of regional communities, especially in the northern part of this great State. This Government has great news for people right across regional New South Wales when it comes to business confidence and jobs, and nowhere more so than in the Richmond-Tweed area where in the last 12 months alone 14,400 new jobs have been created. That is against the backdrop of unemployment in that region that used to be around 11.2 per cent. Today it is 4.3 per cent, which is fantastic. These jobs are being created off the back of government infrastructure spending on projects like the Pacific Highway, our hospitals and schools. Infrastructure spending is growing the New South Wales economy.

There are many sources for this good news. Two weeks ago the Sensis Business Index Report on business confidence across the nation showed that once again New South Wales is ahead by a country mile of every other State on business confidence. More importantly, when it comes to perceptions of our economy New South Wales is not only in front of every other State but is the only State in positive territory. When Sensis surveyed businesses about their confidence in the economy in the next 12 months, businesses in New South Wales said they were confident enough to invest in this State, whereas businesses in other States did not have that confidence. I was pleased to read the results of the survey of attitudes to government policy. Again, New South Wales was the only State where businesses' attitude to government policy was positive. That shows businesses believe that government policy settings are creating a fertile landscape for investment by the private sector and small businesses. In regional New South Wales there is greater confidence in government policy than in any other part of the nation, including metropolitan Sydney.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Government members will come to order.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Regional businesses show the highest level of confidence in five years. When that is compared to the position in which Labor left this State, when there was no confidence in government policies and the State's economy was growing more slowly than that of any other State, we see that this

Government has turned around this State. This has led to the creation of jobs. That is off the back of a number of policies of this Government. We have supported businesses through the introduction of the payroll tax rebate. We have introduced the small business employment initiative, under which small businesses receive \$2,000 for employing the long-term unemployed. We are investing in skills training for jobs outcomes. We are ensuring that the right training is being delivered to enable businesses to employ the skills sets they need to grow. When it comes to investing in businesses, there has been a rapid growth of businesses right across regional and metropolitan New South Wales.

Jobs growth in regional New South Wales is running at 4.5 per cent, a greater rate than jobs growth in Sydney where it is 2.5 per cent. Regional New South Wales has a great story to tell because of the policy settings of this Government and the infrastructure spend. We know this would not have happened if the Labor Party had won the last election. It was going to cut 2,000 jobs out of forestry to establish a koala park. We all remember the great policy setting of the Labor Party. It was going to cancel tax cuts for businesses that would have cost each business about \$7,500. We delivered those cuts in this year's budget.

This Government understand the role it has to play in encouraging investment and supporting businesses, both small and large, to grow jobs. We must spend our money to build enabling infrastructure to encourage the economy to grow. From that there will be matched investment by the private sector and the ripple effects that support small businesses. That is why New South Wales is leading the way. That is why all the indexes—be they from Sensis, ANZ or Commonwealth Bank—give an endorsement of this Government's policies. We are cutting regulation and making it easier to do business in this State.

There is more to come, a lot more investment in regional New South Wales including in airports and mobile phone towers. We support the start-up space through a \$12 million boost program building incubator accelerator spaces and shared spaces to make sure the best people in regional New South Wales have the opportunity to come together and create new and emerging businesses of the future. New South Wales is a great place to do business.

#### TRANSPORT ACCESS PROGRAM

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (14:58):** I draw the attention of the House to the interim arrangements of the crossbench; and just quietly, we've agreed; we quite like it.

**The SPEAKER:** The more responsible members of Parliament.

**Mr GREG PIPER:** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Noting that the initial four-year Transport Access Program, largely expended in the Sydney metropolitan area, has expired, will the Government commit to maintaining and possibly expanding the program to allow for needed improvements at regional stations such as Wyee and Dora Creek?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:58):** I thank the shadow Minister for Transport for his question. The member can be the shadow Minister for whatever he wants.

**Mr Greg Piper:** Can I have Treasury?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Government members would be happy for you to take the portfolio, as we know you would ask sensible questions every day of the week. I witnessed the display of Opposition members this afternoon and saw the Leader of the Opposition call the Speaker a "disgrace". Quite rightly, the Speaker asked him to leave. The stunt pulled this afternoon has brought the House into disrepute. Opposition members should never walk out. They should be in the Chamber asking sensible questions of the Government. The Government is happy to provide answers to the people of this State. The behaviour we have seen week after week is disgraceful. This question regarding the Transport Access Program is important to every member of the House. It is a program that the Government has been proud of and it has been increasing.

I take issue with one part of the program: we have not expired the program and we are investing in regional New South Wales, including the member's electorate on the Central Coast. I know that the member is committed to disability services. Prior to the member entering this place his passion and commitment to Stockton was evident. I know the member's interest in the area. The Government will assist those two stations, as it is looking to invest across regional New South Wales. The Government has invested in 400 projects that are in the process of being delivered or have been delivered. In terms of the member's electorate, the Government has invested in Fassifern station, Morisset station and Cardiff station.

The Government is in the process of looking at those stations and a number of others across the State. It is important for people with disabilities, those who push prams and our commuting seniors. The program budget is \$890 million. The Government is focused on providing access and removing the barriers that exist across the

rail network. This Government has provided access for 80 per cent of customers with appropriate access to railway stations. There are legacy issues around the program such as an old network. I am happy to talk to the member offline. I thank the member for the question and his interest in this subject.

#### REGIONAL INDUSTRIES INVESTMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

**Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (15:01):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy. How is the Government investing in regional industries and driving regional employment, and are there any other related matters?

**The SPEAKER:** Bring out the box.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) (15:02):** Now is the time to open the box. I thank the member for this great question and her interest in the achievements of regional businesses and industries. As Madam Speaker would be aware, regional New South Wales remains the largest and most diverse regional economy in Australia. It is leading the nation on jobs growth. The most recent official data shows that over the past 12 months regional New South Wales added more jobs than Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania combined. The Baird-Grant Government is helping regional businesses and communities to transition into innovative high growth sectors.

One such business is in Nambucca Heads in the electorate of Oxley represented by the energetic Ms Melinda Pavey. As a result of funding from this Government, Rusted Cage Productions has developed a mobile device application for the health sector. This app provides remote medical patient monitoring via Bluetooth, wi-fi and the internet, making life better for vulnerable residents in rural and regional New South Wales. The hardworking member for Barwon will be delighted for me to mention that in Narrabri, Australian Recycled Plastics is expanding its operations. The company provides raw materials by recycling plastic milk bottles into other food packaging products and building materials. This has been possible in part to a \$500,000 investment by the Government and is expected to create up to 26 new jobs.

In the vacant electorate of Wollongong the Government is providing AquaHydrex with \$540,000 in funding to help establish a hydrogen-producing cell manufacturing facility, with a potential to create more than 100 new jobs and to deliver significant energy sector advances. Those are a few of the innovative companies growing and creating jobs for regional economies with support from the Government. It does not end there. The Government is spending record amounts on hospitals, transport, roads and schools in the regions, which means improved services and lifestyle and more jobs. I have an extensive attack section here, but I will condense it to give members a flavour, otherwise it does not work.

The Coalition is concentrating on providing jobs, roads and hospitals for regional New South Wales while Labor's priorities were highlighted at the 2016 State Labor conference. Labor branches had an opportunity to put up their wish list of policies to be voted on. Taree, Cessnock, Clarence and other branches demanded a change to the coal seam gas policies of the former Government. They were demanding that Labor change its own policies. I am pleased to say that this Government has changed Labor's policies, and as Labor members probably are watching this they can thank the Government later. Members know about the Clarence branch: the singly funded project from the Leader of the Opposition in the last election was a koala sanctuary.

**Mr Thomas George:** It was not funded.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** The member for Lismore says it was not funded. It was an idea. What does the Clarence branch think about it? It objected to the establishment of a koala conservation reserve. The Opposition leader has one trick in the bag and it falls over; his own branch is opposed to it. Labor promised to fund and deliver hospitals across the State in Dubbo, Parkes, Forbes, Tamworth, Port Macquarie, Bega and Wagga Wagga. I am not speaking of those presently on the opposite side of the Chamber, they are good guys. [*Extension of time*]

I will contrast Labor's efforts against the record of arguably the best Minister for Health this State has seen. Since the 2007 election, frontline health staff across rural and regional New South Wales has increased and Bega, Byron Bay, Kempsey, Lismore, Tamworth, Parkes, Forbes, Dubbo, Wagga Wagga, Port Macquarie, Gundagai, Hillston and Peak Hill, to mention just a few, have received upgraded health or hospital facilities. I congratulate and pay tribute to the Minister for Health. Unlike the Opposition, the Baird-Grant Government looks forward with confidence to a bright, prosperous and innovative future throughout this State. As Leader of the House I will say that the stunt we saw today in the Chamber was nothing more than that, a stunt. It was confected outrage, it was contrived and set up. I have never seen anything more unparliamentary and disgraceful in all my time in this place as a member of Parliament or as someone who has followed this Parliament.

Madam Speaker has a trying job in difficult circumstances. I have always respected Madam Speaker as tough but fair. As the previous member stated, for the Opposition to desert the field shows a lack of leadership, guts and ticker. The Opposition does not belong in this place as an opposition bootstrap. These three gentlemen remaining in the Chamber—the member for Sydney, the member for Balmain and the member for Lake Macquarie—have more ability to contribute constructively to the governance of this State than the entire Australian Labor Party front and back bench members. I commend Madam Speaker for the hard work she does. I understand there are comments that fly backwards and forwards. Today I could certainly pass on some comments that were heard last week.

**The SPEAKER:** Indeed. So could I.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** The Opposition, with its confected outrage, should be very careful with respect to this. I will not go on, but I will say that you are doing a magnificent job with our full support.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you. In reference to the comment that was made last week, I reiterate that I found it appalling. Not too many people heard it, but it was an accusation by an Opposition member that a Government frontbencher is a baby killer. Obviously that was unacceptable. Let us remember the kinds of interjections that are made in this Chamber. We have that on the *Hansard* record.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (15:10):** This is a great opportunity to ask some questions. I direct my question to the Minister for Planning. Despite significant increases in housing supply, affordability of housing, especially in areas in Sydney and in my electorate, continues to decline. When will the Government make a commitment to affordable housing by introducing a comprehensive inclusionary zoning policy?

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) (15:10):** I thank the member for his question and for his commitment to a fair, just and socially inclusive city. This is a challenge for global cities around the world and the Pacific rim in particular. As more and more people want the benefits of the productivity and liveability of great global cities, which obviously creates some demand pressures that expose underlying supply constraints. As the member indicated in his question, one of the fundamental things we must do is increase supply. There has been an historic undersupply of new housing into the Sydney market. There is an underlying demand for about 50,000 new homes every year. Historically there have been about 30,000 provided each year under the Labor Government. It is now up to 70,000, but there is an historic undersupply that has led to some affordability challenges, particularly in areas closer to the central business district such as the electorate of the member opposite.

I take seriously the member's support and advocacy for inclusionary zoning. We already have provision for inclusionary zoning through the operation of State Environmental Planning Policy [SEPP] No. 70, but that is activated in terms of the City of Sydney where it has successfully provided more than 500 affordable housing dwellings to be managed by community housing providers in the past few years. There is also provision for it to operate in the electorate of the Treasurer in Willoughby Council. It has not been as effective in that area even though the council is able to use it. That exposes the fact that, while inclusionary zoning can be effective in certain conditions in certain areas, we must be very careful that it does not apply in a way that owners or applicants are not aware of and in so doing undermine the feasibility of development. We also must recognise it is only one of the tools that is available to provide for affordable housing.

Affordable housing is necessary for the city shapers, the key workers—teachers, nurses and bus drivers—the people who keep the city operating, but it is also important in providing a pathway from social housing through affordable housing into the private market. I am working very closely with the Minister for Family and Community Services on ways in which we can work together on government-owned sites to provide pathways through social housing into affordable housing and also into the private market. A good example of how we are doing that is the former Ivanhoe estate in the Macquarie University precinct. Another example on government-owned land is the urban growth project at Lachlan's Line where recently about 100 units have been made available for affordable housing.

Here is a range of options we can use. Inclusionary zoning is one. Affordable rental accommodation through the relevant SEPP is another. Another is providing for affordable housing on government-sites. And then there is the fundamental lever that I have as planning Minister, which is unlocking greater supply. With all of these levers available to us we can make a real difference to providing for a diverse and affordable city for a whole range of income levels. We all want neighbourhoods where everyone can participate and where there is a diversity of different income groups living in communities together. Diversity is strength. That is what we must do as a system. I look forward to working with the member to look at new ways of unlocking more opportunities for affordable housing.

## SERVICE NSW

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:14):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. I wish those opposite were here to hear it. How has the Government shown leadership in its heritage and services initiatives across rural and regional New South Wales, and is the Minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (15:14):** It is disappointing. I was ready to go today, but it will have to wait until the week after next. I was with the Minister for Education during debate on Hurlstone agricultural school, which provided an interesting insight into the lack of intelligent understanding—I note the intelligence in the Chamber has probably doubled in the last 30 minutes—of asset recycling issues and what a great outcome it was to go from having one school to having two schools as a result of that decision.

When it comes to Service NSW, one of the great success stories of the New South Wales Government, one of the joys of the job is going out to rural and regional areas to see people leaving government services with a smile on their face. The reality is if customers and citizens come into these places and are treated poorly or their issues are not resolved then they worry about what is happening behind the scenes. It is just like going to a restaurant—if the cutlery is dirty you wonder what is going on in the kitchen. We know what was going on in the kitchen under Labor, but we will get back to that in a couple of weeks.

One of the challenges with Service NSW has certainly been the rollout in rural and regional areas simply because of the larger electorates in which those service centres need to operate, but the feedback that we have received in those areas is outstanding. Since March last year more than 130,000 customers have been attended to in Albury with an average wait time of under five minutes. Since April last year Bathurst has had more than 80,000 customers with an average wait time of under 6½ minutes. Maitland—oh, forget Maitland. Since May, Coffs Harbour had more than 155,000 customers with an average wait time of six minutes. And Kiama, one of my favourites and our very first centre—I was there with the member for Kiama recently—had more than 105,000 customers with an average wait time of under three minutes and 30 seconds.

**Ms Pru Goward:** What about Goulburn?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Goulburn is my favourite centre—the team in Goulburn is absolutely brilliant. It sets a very high bar. The success of Service NSW is really not about the app or the one-stop-shop with the websites and all the great things we can say about it. It comes down to the staff that serve the people of this State every day, just as the people in this House do. Everybody in this House at the moment cares about the community that they represent. They get into politics and public life to make a difference to those communities. The people who work in Service NSW are no different. They are there every day, like us, trying to do their best to serve the people of this State and make sure that their issues are resolved. I say to the staff of Service NSW: Thank you very much for the great work you do every day, to make a difference to the people of New South Wales.

## LIQUOR LAWS REVIEW

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:18):** By leave: My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. How will the Government respond to the growing support for small bars as a way to help the vibrancy of Sydney's night life?

**Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) (15:18):** I thank the excellent member for Sydney for a genuine question without notice. I recently alluded to the fact that the member for Sydney is doing an outstanding job representing the Sydney electorate. It is a global city and he represents the most significant part of our global city. It is a dynamic world city and therefore it should offer visitors and locals alike a range of opportunities for not only work and rest but also play. The Government is currently undertaking the Callinan review, which is looking at the legislation that was introduced by this Government in its last term, a range of measures concerning alcohol-related crime and the operation of licensed premises. It is an extensive review that is due to report to this Government very soon. This global city has a suite of offerings of which small bars are an important component. The small bars legislation is a separate body of legislation that is subject to its own statutory review, which is underway at the moment.

Across Australia the average patronage for small bars is approximately 120. In New South Wales it is only 60. There is potential and scope for the statutory review to look at the imbalance between the national average and Sydney. Fundamentally, small bars operate differently to other licensed premises. They contribute significantly to the atmosphere and social engagement of many cities across the world. The Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events will know that small bars are not only a good contributor to the local economy but also

they add to the atmosphere of local communities. All those contributions and opportunities will be considered in the statutory review.

The roundtables that were convened in addition to the Callinan review offered a number of opportunities about the night life in Sydney. Small bars can play a part in complementing those recommendations that are now before the Government and being considered by Mr Callinan. I thank the member for Sydney for understanding his electorate and for raising an issue where there is an opportunity for Government to examine greater opportunities for the small bar sector, which will add to the broader vibrancy of our global city. I congratulate him on his overall work. He is one of the more decent members of this place. Many Opposition members could learn a lesson or two from him about their conduct and demeanour.

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE:** I seek leave to ask an additional question.

**Leave not granted.**

#### *Documents*

### **VARIATIONS OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ESTIMATES AND APPROPRIATIONS 2015-16**

#### **Tabling**

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (15:22):** In accordance with section 24 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1982, I table the following documents:

- (1) Receipts and Payments Estimates and Appropriations for 2015-16 under section 26 of the Public Finance and Audit Act arising from the provision by the Commonwealth of Specific Purpose Payments in excess of the amounts included in the State's receipts and payments estimates—Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development, dated 30 June 2016.
- (2) Variations of the Receipts and Payments Estimates and Appropriations for 2015-16, under section 26 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, arising from the provision by the Commonwealth of Specific Purpose Payments in excess of the amounts included in the State's receipts and payments estimates—Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development, dated 30 June 2016.
- (3) Variations of the Receipts and Payments Estimates and Appropriations for 2015-16, under section 26 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, arising from the Commonwealth receipts and transfer payment to non-Government schools and local government in excess of the amounts included in the State's receipts and payments estimates, dated 19 July 2016.

#### *Petitions*

### **PETITIONS RECEIVED**

#### **Palliative Care Services**

**The SPEAKER:** I announce that the following petition signed by more than 10,000 persons has been lodged for presentation:

Petition requesting sufficient palliative care services to meet demand and additional funds to support training of palliative care workers, received from **Mrs Jillian Skinner**.

**Discussion on petition set down as an order of the day for a future day.**

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following petitions signed by fewer than 500 persons have been lodged for presentation:

#### **Powerhouse Museum Ultimo**

Petition requesting the retention of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo and the expansion of museum services to other parts of New South Wales, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

#### **Light Rail Station, Surry Hills**

Petition requesting the construction of a second light rail station in Surry Hills at the Wimbo Park/Olivia Gardens site, received from **Ms Jenny Leong**.

#### **Route 389 Bus Services**

Petition requesting more reliable 389 bus services, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

#### **Social Housing**

Petition requesting that the Sirius building be retained and its social housing function be continued, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

## Pet Shops

Petition opposing the sale of animals in pet shops, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

### *Committees*

#### LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

##### Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 21/56

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:24):** As Chair: I speak to the Legislation Review Digest No. 21 of the fifty-sixth Parliament. Nine bills were introduced in the sitting week beginning 26 June. I will speak briefly to the committee's comments on three of those bills. The first is the Adoption Amendment (Institute of Open Adoption Studies) Bill 2016, which amends the Adoption Act 2015 to prescribe the Institute of Open Adoption Studies as a research organisation for open adoptions and to allow it to obtain data about adoptions. The bill will authorise the Secretary of the Department of Family and Community Services to enter into arrangements with research organisations so the secretary can disclose information about persons involved in adoption or out-of-home care.

The bill contains some privacy safeguards, including that research organisations are required to treat the information as confidential and, as far as reasonably practicable, information that could identify a person will not be published. The committee acknowledged that the bill could impact on the right to privacy of affected individuals. However, the committee noted the safeguards contained in the bill. The committee also noted the NSW Privacy Commissioner supports the bill, and that research organisations must comply with certain provisions of the New South Wales privacy legislation. As such, the committee made no further comment.

The second bill I speak to is the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Protection from Serious Offenders) Bill 2016. This bill provides that any person found guilty of murder, manslaughter or other certain serious offences in relation to a child or young person will automatically have their future children removed from their care at birth or be prevented from residing with, approaching or contacting them. The committee commented that the bill may impact on personal rights and liberties by permitting the State to remove future children from a parent who has committed a serious violent crime against their other child.

However, it was the committee's view that the health, welfare and best interests of children must outweigh the protection of the family unit in instances such as those identified in the bill. The committee also noted that a parent who has a child removed or who is subject to a restraining notice can apply to the Children's Court for the return of their child and revocation of the restraining notice. The committee made no further comment. The third and final bill I speak to is the Local Government and Elections Legislation Amendment (Integrity) Bill 2016. The bill imposes caps on political donations in respect of local government elections and will mirror the existing caps on donations that apply at the State level. The committee commented that setting limits on the amount a person may donate to a political party, member or candidate may impact on the implied freedom of political communication.

However, on balance, the committee considered the measures in the bill are appropriate in the circumstances to ensure the integrity of local government decision-making and to minimise the risk of corruption. The committee also commented on provisions within the bill that disqualify a person from holding civic office if that person has been convicted of an offence of any kind that is punishable by imprisonment for five years or more. The committee noted that many offences punishable by imprisonment for five years or more have a range of offending behaviour. It is not apparent from the bill that the diversity in circumstances and sentencing is taken into consideration in determining whether a person should be disqualified. As a result, the committee referred this issue to Parliament for further consideration. That concludes my remarks on this digest. I thank the committee staff and members for their input, and I commend the digest to the House.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:28):** I speak on behalf of the Opposition and thank the House for the opportunity to speak on the Legislation Review Committee Digest No. 21 of the fifty-sixth Parliament. The committee considered nine bills against the five criteria of scrutiny under section 8A (1) (b) of the Legislation Review Act 1987. These are set out in pages 1 to 15 of the digest. The committee commented on five of the bills. I will not repeat the comments that were made by the chairperson, except to say that I support his comments. I note that the committee referred the Local Government and Elections Legislation Amendment (Integrity) Bill 2016 to Parliament because it trespasses on personal rights and liberties regarding people's right to take part in public affairs and, under new section 275 of the Local Government Act, whether the range of offences that

disqualify a person from seeking office is too broad. I bring to the attention of the House that the Minister made no comment on the bill and it received no address in the debate in this House.

In considering that digest, the committee received a report on the volume of correspondence that had been sent to Government Ministers and to private members who introduced bills, bringing to their attention items that were commented on by the committee with respect to the criteria it is meant to administer. Since 28 October 2015, 37 items of correspondence have been sent out but only five replies have been received, which is not a good response to the work of the committee or enough recognition of the important job that it does. This Government does not take the work of the committee seriously. I thank the secretariat and members of the committee and commend the digest to the House.

**Report noted.**

**LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 22/56**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall):** The question is that this House take note of the report.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:30):** As Chair: Before commenting on the Legislation Review Committee's Legislation Review Digest 22/56 of the Fifty-sixth Parliament, I note that the member for The Entrance was somewhat misleading when he referred to correspondence between the Legislation Review Committee and Ministers and how many responses had been received by the committee. However, he failed to say that the letters clearly stated, "We are simply bringing this matter to your attention". The letters did not ask for a reply. The member for The Entrance consistently denies that but that is probably why he is on the opposition benches.

The committee examined two bills introduced into Parliament in the last sitting week—the Plastic Shopping Bags Prohibition Bill 2016 and the Security Industry Amendment (Private Investigators) Bill 2016. The committee also included a report on the Government Sector Employment Amendment (Transfers to Non-Government Sector) Regulation 2016. The Plastic Shopping Bag Prohibition Bill 2016 introduces measures to prohibit the retail supply of certain plastic shopping bags. One of the stated objects of the bill is to minimise the number of plastic bags entering waterways and the marine environment, and so reduce harm to marine animals. The bill proposes a phase-in period of 12 months, wherein retailers must make alternative shopping bags available for customers. The bill provides that, during the phase-in period, a retailer must display a notice about the availability of alternative shopping bags, and provide an alternative shopping bag to any customer that requests one.

The bill has not provided any exceptions or defences for failure to comply with the provisions; thus it is an offence of strict liability. The maximum penalty for not complying with the provisions is 50 penalty units. The committee noted the introduction of an offence of strict liability; however, it also noted that the provision is aimed at ensuring retailers and customers are aware of the proposed measures in the bill. As such, the committee made no further comment. The second bill the committee considered was the Security Industry Amendment (Private Investigators) Bill 2016 which provides for the private investigation industry to be regulated as a security activity under the Security Industry Act 1997. The bill provides for its commencement by proclamation. The committee noted that it prefers legislation to commence on assent or a specified date; however in this instance it referred to the Government's intention to commence the bill at the same time as a future bill not yet introduced. As such, the committee made no further comment.

The committee also reported on the Government Sector Employment Amendment (Transfers to Non-Government Sector) Regulation 2016 which was published in the *Government Gazette* on 17 June 2016. This regulation provides that, where services delivered by a government sector agency are transferred to a non-government sector body, persons offered comparable employment by that body may not be entitled to severance or redundancy payments from the government sector agency. The committee referred this regulation to Parliament for further consideration. The committee considered that the regulation could impact on the right to adequate compensation for cessation of employment in the government sector by removing the entitlement to redundancy or severance payments in certain circumstances. I thank the committee staff and members for their input and I look forward to a somewhat truthful response from the Opposition. I commend the digest to the House.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:35):** On behalf of the Opposition I thank the House for the opportunity to speak in debate on the on the Legislation Review Committee's Legislation Review Digest 22/56 of the Fifty-sixth Parliament. The committee considered two bills. I support the comments made by the Chair in relation to both those bills. The committee referred to Parliament the comments that it made relating to that regulation. What does it mean when we refer something to Parliament? When the committee next meets it should

consider what it means when a matter is referred to Parliament. If a matter is important enough to refer it to Parliament the committee should follow through and make sure that something is done. The committee referred that matter to the Parliament for an important reason. It said:

The Committee is concerned that this Regulation unreasonably impacts on the right to adequate compensation for cessation of employment in the government sector by removing the entitlement to redundancy or severance payments in certain circumstances.

That is a remarkable change of employment entitlements for public sector workers, which has the potential of flowing on to private sector workers. When the committee refers a matter to the Parliament it just sits there and then disappears after it has been talked about. We need to think about what we do with these matters once we refer them to Parliament. Talking about correspondence, I note that 10 more items of correspondence were sent out, bringing the total to 47. One reply was received, bringing the total number of replies received to six. We can do better than that. The Committee must take its role much more seriously in that regard. However, we have a good Chair and I have faith in his ability to change and improve. He always tries to make the work of the committee more relevant to the House and to this State.

**Mr Michael Johnsen:** I will endorse that.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN:** I note the Chair's endorsement of my remarks, which is fantastic. I thank the staff for the work that they do to support the committee. I thank the committee members and I commend the digest to the House.

**Ms Tanya Mihailuk:** I would love to see the Chair's notes.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall):** Order! Under Standing Order 249 (A) I am not sure whether the member for Bankstown should be back in the Chamber. According to the Clerk she is not supposed to be back in the Chamber until 3.42 p.m. It is now 3.37 p.m. If the member had remained quiet she would not have come to the Chair's attention.

**Report noted.**

*Matter of Public Importance*

**NATIONAL MISSING PERSONS WEEK**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:38):** We stand united in this House in support of, and to raise awareness of, National Missing Persons Week. National Missing Persons Week takes place during the first week of August every year and aims to engage with the community and raise awareness of this significant issue. The inaugural National Missing Persons Week was held in 1988 with a memorial service, and community support for this great cause has been growing ever since. Each passing year has a new theme. The theme for 2016 was "Stay Connected", which promoted the message, "Missing persons leave frayed edges; stay connected." The message promoted the importance of friends and family staying in regular contact with one another and ensuring that they keep a close eye on those who are at most risk of going missing.

The impact that a missing person can have on friends, family and even colleagues can be catastrophic. The emotional, physical and psychological trauma experienced by not knowing what has happened to their loved one will have a truly devastating impact on the lives of friends, family and colleagues. Really, anyone can be impacted by that type of trauma. Missing persons do not become missing because of their age, ethnicity, education or even geographical location. You, me, or someone we know and love could become a missing person at any point in time. That is a fact that everyone should take a moment to think about and allow to sink in. The trauma associated with missing persons does not discriminate.

It has been reported that missing persons often find it quite difficult to talk about their experience in a way that is meaningful to them. That compounds their trauma and hinders their recovery. Through Missing Persons Week many community groups and organisations band together with their local communities to raise awareness about missing persons and how they can help. Raising awareness of the issue and engaging with communities to enhance the available support mechanisms is one of the key strategies put forward to reduce the impact of this problem. Throughout National Missing Persons Week police forces across Australia shine the spotlight on a number of missing persons in their respective States and Territories and give a voice to friends and families who have been impacted by their loved one's disappearance.

According to the National Missing Persons Coordination Centre, approximately 35,000 people are reported to the authorities as missing persons each and every year in Australia. Approximately 1,600 of those persons remain missing for more than three months. Most missing persons are found within a week of their disappearance being reported, but some people are not so fortunate. Some friends and family continue to wait—holding on to hope, and sometimes just yearning for closure.

I take the opportunity afforded me by this discussion to dispel a misconception about reporting missing persons. Many people believe that they must wait between 24 and 48 hours before reporting a person who is missing. However, in Australia that is simply not true. A person may be reported missing by someone who has immediate concern for that person's safety and welfare, and that person's whereabouts are unknown. A key message I wish to get across today with regard to National Missing Persons Week is: Follow your instincts. If your gut tells you that something is wrong, do not wait. Report it immediately. Remember that every second counts.

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (15:42):** I support the matter of public importance discussion on National Missing Persons Week, which has been initiated by the member for Fairfield. I thank him for his concern. I do not think any member of this House could possibly forget the image of William Tyrell in his Spiderman costume. Last year, many members put up posters depicting his image in our offices, and that image should be entrenched in the minds of each and every one of us as we think of the missing persons around the State and throughout the country as well as the importance of Missing Persons Week.

This year National Missing Persons Week 2016 ran from 31 July to 6 August 2016 and, as is the case each year, its aims are to reduce the incidence and impact of missing persons in Australia. Currently in New South Wales, more than 160 people are reported missing each week. This year's theme was "Missing persons leave frayed edges; stay connected." It is a reminder that for each missing person, 12 people are affected in some way—emotionally, physically, psychologically, or financially. The stress of a loved one being missing and having to live with the unknown have a huge impact on friends and family members. It can affect everything from their health and wellbeing to work responsibilities, and of course it is very emotionally tiring.

The New South Wales Government funds the only specialist counselling and support unit for families and friends of missing people in the country. The Families and Friends of Missing Persons Unit works collaboratively with search agencies to provide support in what can be a very traumatic experience. Our State's unique unit offers free and confidential counselling, practical guides, and organises support groups and events to help those who are experiencing the loss of a missing person. As I mentioned earlier, more than 160 people are reported missing each and every week—and that is 160 people too many—but for their family and friends left behind, the wait for contact or information can be agonising.

The NSW Police Missing Persons Unit provides operational support to our police in the field to locate persons reported as missing. While 99 per cent of missing persons are located, often with the help of the community, it is unfortunately not the case for every missing person. It is important for people to be aware that being reported missing is not a crime and that it is the aim of the NSW Police Force to ascertain whether the missing person is safe and well. Many agencies specialise in finding missing people. Help is out there and this year's National Missing Persons Week has been a reminder to the community of help that is available and where assistance may be obtained. Agencies have national and international contacts. Furthermore, the people who work at those agencies understand how others feel. Some of them have experienced the trauma of having someone they care about being missing. The agencies want to help. The agencies function as a team and work tirelessly to find each and every missing person possible.

In conclusion, I endorse some of the sentiments so carefully and thoughtfully expressed by the member for Fairfield. I echo his advice that if anyone has concern or information about a missing person, they should follow their instincts and contact our local Police Force. I would add that those who are struggling in any way because someone in their life is missing should not hesitate to reach out for support because there are so many people in our community who not only are qualified but also are deeply concerned to ensure that the right support is provided. I commend this matter of public importance discussion to the House.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (15:46):** My contribution to discussion on the matter of public importance instigated by the member for Fairfield will be brief. I echo the sentiments expressed by the member for Miranda, who congratulated the member for Fairfield and Labor's shadow Minister for Police. The member for Fairfield has ensured that today the Parliament acknowledges National Missing Persons Week. As both members indicated, this year National Missing Persons Week was acknowledged at the end of July and the beginning of August. The event has taken place each year since 1988. It was initiated in 1988 in Townsville by the Mayor of Townsville in honour of Tony Jones, who became missing in 1982.

National Missing Persons Week provides each and every one of us with an opportunity to take the time to consider and respect the work that police do in supporting families whose loved ones are missing. I acknowledge the National Missing Persons Coordination Centre and the work undertaken continuously by that unit to ensure that families are given the opportunity to publicise that their loved one is missing, that information is provided online, and that all efforts are made to try to find loved ones who are missing. What is most difficult for families of missing persons is how difficult it is to live in limbo. It is incredibly difficult to never really know what is happening to a loved one.

Earlier I searched the missing persons website and noticed the name Nikolce Veljanovski, who I do not know personally, but I know his brother. The Veljanovski family lives in my electorate of Bankstown. Nikolce is a brother and son of that family and he became missing on 11 June 2014 at 28 years of age. Nikolce Veljanovski left a house in Yagoona that day and by 11.00 p.m. the same night, his family had reported him missing. His car was later found in Bundeena and, despite an extensive search for Mr Veljanovski that also involved PolAir, police divers and the police rescue squad, he has not been found. I know that family is suffering terribly and living in limbo. Never really knowing what has happened to their son and brother has made their life incredibly difficult. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the incredible work of the National Missing Persons Coordination Centre and, of course, our Police Force in the work that they do. They do their best to find people who are missing.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:49):** I thank the member for Miranda and the member for Bankstown for their contributions to debate on the matter of public importance. I draw the attention of the House to the comments made by both members. The member for Miranda referred to William Tyrell and the devastating impact his disappearance had on his family and the community. Members will remember when the Tyrell family visited Parliament last year and they will also remember the launch of the "Where's William? Help find William Tyrell & bring him home" campaign which had a massive impact on communities in the New South Wales and other States. The member for Miranda also spoke about the Family and Friends of Missing Persons Unit and the counselling and support services that are available to people. The member for Miranda said that about 160 people are reported missing every week but that 99 per cent of them are usually located, which is a good thing. Unfortunately, however, 1 per cent of missing persons are not found.

The member for Bankstown referred to events that are being held from the end of July until the beginning of August. She referred also to Tony Jones who went missing in 1982 and then said that the Mayor of Townsville initiated Missing Persons Week in 1988. The member for Bankstown also spoke about the police support that is available for families. Many families are left in limbo whilst waiting for information about their loved ones who have gone missing. The member for Bankstown mentioned that a local resident had been missing since 11 June 2014. Even though an extensive police search had been conducted that resident has not been found and the family is struggling to cope with what has happened.

If people have information regarding the disappearance of William Tyrell they should go to [www.crimestoppers.com.au](http://www.crimestoppers.com.au) or ring 1800 333 000. If anyone in the community has information about any missing person and they know their whereabouts, I implore them to contact that number as families are going through living hell every day as they do not know what has happened to their loved ones. All they want to know is that they are safe and that they are coming home. I am sure that Government members join Opposition members in offering bipartisan support for National Missing Persons Week.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **THE HILLS DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (15:53):** The study of history often requires the use of the acronyms "BC" and "AD". However, in the Hills shire our history requires the terms "BJG" and "AJG". This year will mark the end of the Julie Graham's era at the Hills District Historical Society as it welcomes a new president at its annual general meeting on 15 August. Julie has diligently served as president for 10 years and her role in establishing a museum and regular publications preserving and celebrating the history of our great shire cannot be understated. Thank you Julie. The entire Hills community wishes you well in the next chapter of your life.

#### **HELP ASTRID PAY IT FORWARD**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:53):** I acknowledge the wonderful work done by Astrid, a 10-year-old girl from Campbelltown who has been raising funds to purchase care packages for kids in need. Astrid, with the help of her mum, buys plain white socks and creatively decorates them with tie dye. Astrid then sells the socks through her Facebook page, Help Astrid pay it forward, and uses the money she raises to buy care packages of toys, arts and craft materials and other goodies to put in care packages for kids in need in our local area. Astrid is just one example of the many wonderful initiatives that our incredible young people in Macarthur are passionate about. I ask the House to join me in congratulating and indeed, thanking Astrid, and wishing her all the best with the future of her charity.

#### **TUNCURRY FORSTER JOCKEY CLUB**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:54):** Tuncurry Forster Jockey Club was one of only six in New South Wales to host this year's national tour of the Melbourne Cup. The Victoria Racing Club accompanied the prestigious cup on the two day tour of the area where it was paraded through Forster and Tuncurry and was taken to two nursing homes for residents to view, before being taken to Tuncurry Forster Jockey

Club where its appearance coincided with the club's Ladies Day race meeting. I congratulate president Garry McQuillan.

I commend the drive and initiative of both the Tuncurry Forster Jockey Club and local radio station Great Lakes FM. Great Lakes FM, which is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary this year, was responsible for putting together and submitting the successful tender to host the Emirates Melbourne Cup Tour. The Great Lakes FM committee did an incredible amount of work to ensure that it was a memorable event, not only for the racing community but also the wider community. I commend Andrew Farr, manager of the radio station. The jockey club raised more than \$6,000 for Riding for the Disabled.

#### **VICTIMS & WITNESSES OF CRIME COURT SUPPORT**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (15:55):** I recognise the tenth anniversary of the Victims & Witnesses of Crime Court Support [VWCCS]. The anniversary was celebrated at an event on 22 July, which included an official welcome to the organisation's new patron, Professor Gordian Fulde. The Victims & Witnesses of Crime Court Support consists of 140 volunteer court assistants who accompany and assist victims of crime in the Children's Court, the Local Court, the District Court and the Supreme Court. This occurs at Sydney, Parramatta and at two regional centres.

The organisation has seven permanent office locations at the Downing Centre, the Parramatta Children's Court, Local Court and District Court, Waverley Local Court and Orange and Bathurst courts. The president and director of the Victims & Witnesses of Crime Court Support is Peta Thornton. Her contribution and the contribution of volunteers should be acknowledged, and they should be congratulated. The organisation is entirely voluntary and the invaluable work that they do should be acknowledged. They do a great deal with very limited resources.

#### **SOUTHERN ART CONNECTIONS**

**Ms ELANI PETINOS (Miranda) (15:56):** I acknowledge Jim and Janet Flood of Miranda, two talented artists who are holding an exhibition of their art at Woollooware Shores on 9 and 10 September. The couple, now both in their seventies, raised a family in the Miranda area where they have lived for 40 years. Jim is well known for his work as a palette knife painter. He creates artworks that encapsulate the colours of the Australian landscape reflecting his great love for the land, sea and local waterways. Jim has held solo exhibitions, is a featured artist and conducts master classes. He has also exhibited in international art exhibitions in Paris and New York.

Jim's wife, Janet, became interested in pottery when their children were young. She attended classes at Gympie TAFE and has been creating functional pieces like bowls and plates for the past 30 years. Together they operate as Southern Art Connections and hold several joint exhibitions every year. Between them they are members of several art societies, including the Port Hacking Potters Group, 101 Art Society, Continuum Art Society and Southern Cross Art Society. I congratulate Jim and Janet Flood on their achievements and wish them the best of luck for their future exhibitions.

#### **AUTISM CARE SERVICES**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (15:57):** Two new family day care centres for children on the autism spectrum have been opened in the Wyong electorate, at Blue Haven and Watanobbi. Autism Central Coast runs family day care for children with autism aged two to six and will also run before and after school care and vacation care. The centres have been running since October and appear to be a success with the many families who have children with autism. Congratulations to staff at the Blue Haven and Watanobbi centres and Autism Central Coast for having the insight to realise that these services are greatly needed on the Central Coast. They are searching for three to four more locations in the centre of the Central Coast and down towards Woy Woy peninsula. All children will have an individualised learning plan completed with enrolment and they will be reviewed weekly to ensure progression and that correct programming is in place for every child. This is facilitated by the fact that we will have double the staffing ratios of a traditional day care environment, so the children will receive more one-on-one care than any other centre on the Central Coast.

#### **ANZAC COMMEMORATION**

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (15:58):** I acknowledge the Anzac commemorations for overseas service personnel stationed at Camp Taji in Iraq. These brave and duty-bound individuals are currently assisting the Iraqi Army in combatting Islamic State, and some can trace their family history back to Gallipoli Cove. An example is 29-year-old Leigh Traven, whose great grandfather, Harold Trevan, was awarded the Military Cross in 1917 for conspicuous bravery. Another is Mittagong local, Corporal Horton, who was selected to play the bagpipes at the dawn service at Camp Taji. His great-grandfather also fought at Gallipoli and filled his spare time with playing the bagpipes; however, he would never play them again after the war. Corporal Horton has filled his

family with immense pride by continuing the tradition, in his own words as "the way we tell our history and culture". I wish all currently serving Australian personnel in Iraq a safe return and success in their mission.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall):** I remind members on both sides that if they wish to have private conversations, they should do so outside the Chamber.

#### **TARA MOSS**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:59):** I acknowledge the efforts of Gleebooks at Blackheath in partnership with the Varuna Writers Centre in Katoomba in organising a fantastic literary event featuring feminist author Tara Moss in the Blue Mountains this winter. Held at the iconic Carrington Hotel ballroom, and in conversation with the author, musician and academic Kate Fagan, the feisty and articulate Tara Moss discussed *Speaking Out: A 21st-Century Handbook for Women and Girls*. Tara addressed a room full of locals, many of them schoolgirls, in response to the question, "How can I speak out?" providing practical advice on negotiating public spaces—sometimes in the face of savage trolling, backlash and critics.

With a focus on social media and online safety, Tara offers tips on how to research, form arguments, deliver confidently, find support and handle criticism as a girl and woman. Tara is accessible, funny, passionate and lucid. She has been described as "a serious thinker" and her book as "intelligent, riveting and invigorating". I commend *Speaking Out* and its message: Here are some simple and necessary strategies to cope with the often disproportionately aggressive response women receive when they speak out.

#### **CHLOE DALTON, OLYMPIC CHAMPION**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:00):** From time to time we hear of sportspeople changing their direction mid-stream and finding their feet in an entirely different sport. Such is the case with Chloe Dalton, who is now an Olympic champion after our women's rugby sevens team won the gold medal game against New Zealand yesterday in Rio. The Aussie women won the decider 24-17 after sweeping all before them in their previous games. Chloe Dalton at 23 is another proud product of the sporting programs at Pymble Ladies College in my electorate of Ku-ring-gai. But while she is a try-scoring, goal-kicking stalwart of the Australian rugby sevens scene, it was not always that way.

Chloe had aspirations of representing her country in basketball, and in fact played at the elite level with the Sydney Flames in the national domestic competition. But two years ago she won selection in the national sevens rugby squad and has not looked back. I congratulate her and all her teammates on their gold medal victory in rugby's return to the Olympic stage after 92 years. Rio has been a happy hunting ground for Chloe, after she missed last year's sevens tournament in Sao Paulo, Brazil, due to a third break in her left arm, which required surgery and a lay-off from the game to ensure recovery for the Olympics.

#### **CAMBODIA VISION**

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:01):** I had the pleasure of attending the 2016 fundraiser for Cambodia Vision on 25 June 2016 at Crystal Palace Function Centre. Cambodia Vision, which was established in 2006, aims to prevent blindness and provide basic medical needs to small, impoverished provincial towns in Cambodia. I was pleased to hear the 2015 trip was a huge success with more than 2,715 people assessed from all over the country for vision problems. The trip also provided 344 prescription optical glasses and 1,054 sunglasses, treated 710 patients with various illnesses and provided 10 hospital beds to Kratie Referral Hospital and Sihanouk Hospital. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the chairperson of Cambodia Vision, Mr Chek Ming Ly, the staff and all of the volunteers for the outstanding work they did to help those in need. I look forward to hearing about the same success on many more trips ahead.

#### **VIETNAM VETERANS PEACEKEEPERS AND PEACEMAKERS ASSOCIATION**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:02):** I acknowledge this day in Parliament the wonderful work of the Vietnam Veterans Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Association of Australian, Central Coast Sub-branch. For years they have represented the thousands of men and women who fought in the Vietnam War and their spouses. They have counselled and supported those in need and this very weekend will remember those who lost their lives at the Battle of Long Tan. This year is the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan and it will be commemorated with a march through Ettalong Beach to the beautiful memorial on the waterfront. Their annual dinner will be held following the march to remember the Battle of Long Tan. I wish these great advocates all the best in caring for returning peacekeepers from Vietnam.

#### **GREYSTANES HIGH SCHOOL**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:03):** I draw to the attention of the House the Greystanes High School Boys to Men program. With over \$16,000 in funding from Wenty Leagues Club, Greystanes High

School was able to execute a three-phase program to engage at-risk boys to develop practical work skills and improve overall engagement, work ethic and attitude. The project required the boys to learn and develop skills in formworking, concreting, plumbing, bricklaying and carpentry. The students built a bike shed that was then launched. This project culminated in a Ride to School Day, which saw students ride to school and enjoy a barbecue breakfast with school staff, council representatives, Wenty Leagues directors and me. I congratulate the students and staff who participated in the Boys to Men program. I am sure that the bike shed will be put to good use for many years to come. I thank Wenty Leagues Club for supporting our community.

#### TRIBUTE TO PETER RILEY

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:04):** Earlier this year our region saw the departure of an outstanding ABC morning radio broadcaster in Peter Riley. Peter who has 30 years' experience with our national broadcaster began working for the ABC after switching from commercial radio in Albany, Western Australia. From there he moved to Karratha, then made the Illawarra his home in 1993. Some of the highlights from Riley's 22 years at ABC Illawarra were covering major events like the Waterfall train disaster and a tornado that tore through Kiama and the Illawarra. Another major highlight was the growth of Viva La Gong.

On a personal note, I always found Peter to be a very independent and fair announcer and journalist who was immensely experienced and community focused. In December 2014, I hosted my inaugural Kiama Electorate Community Recognition Awards with Peter Riley as the master of ceremonies and New South Wales Governor David Hurley as special guest at the Kiama Pavilion in front of 300 local residents. Peter is now enjoying spending more time with his family, including visiting his sons who are interstate and watching his partner, Sharon, compete in the National Squash Masters Championships. I congratulate Peter on an outstanding career.

#### LAKESIDE LEISURE VILLAGE

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:05):** As a representative of an electorate that has a large number of home park residents, it is fair to say that I spend a lot of my time speaking to these residential communities about issues that affect them. They are mostly pensioners, who in their retirement look for a home and a community that is affordable and safe. Lakeside Leisure Village is one such community in Lake Munmorah, and I recently had the privilege of attending the Biggest Morning Tea there, hosted by the Lakeside Leisure Village's library group. The library group is a friendship group for women with an interest in books. I was blown away by the generosity of the residents at the Lakeside Leisure Village, who dug deep to raise \$650 for cancer research. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of those people who organised the morning tea. Events like these go a long way to making the Lakeside Leisure Village a warm and welcoming community. Well done to everyone involved. I thank you for your generosity and your hospitality.

#### LINDSAY KAUL

**Ms LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (16:06):** I acknowledge 17-year-old Lindsay Kaul, a year 12 student at Camden Haven High School, whose musical talents have shot him into the spotlight. Lindsay is the youngest musical director in the history of Port Macquarie's Players Theatre. Lindsay has performed in over eight shows locally and his most recent show, *Grease*, opened to a standing ovation. Lindsay was introduced to music by his parents at the age of five with piano lessons after which he switched to oboe. Lindsay now plays a variety of instruments in a number of local ensembles including local concert bands, big bands and orchestras. Lindsay has been described as showing "a calmness and composure rarely seen in a 17-year-old". I congratulate Lindsay on his hard work in preparation for being a music director and wish him success in his future studies and progression.

#### PARRAMATTA WOMEN'S RUGBY TEAM

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:07):** This has been a really big week for women's rugby with Australia winning gold in the rugby sevens at the Rio Olympics. But we would not have that success without the excellence on display in women's rugby here in Sydney. I mention particularly the Parramatta Two Blues women's team, who are based in Granville and played their fourth grand final in five years last Saturday, losing narrowly to Sydney University, 25-24. This match was played with intensity, with the lead changing throughout. Vanessa Foliaki, who has represented New South Wales in Rugby League State of Origin, scored two tries for the Two Blues, with Syria Tuiasau and Kayla Sauvao also try scorers, and Alexandra Sulusi making two conversions.

Parramatta had four Wallaroos players in the side, including Hanna Sio, Nita Maynard and Chloe Butler who represented Australia at the 2014 Women's Rugby World Cup. Unfortunately, their commitments as single mothers prevented Hanna Sio and Nita Maynard from pursuing national sevens representation. I would also like to mention Ana and Tina Sio, the twin sisters of Wallaby Scott Sio. They joined the team in 2015 and are now considered on the cusp of higher representative honours in the future.

### ALBURY WODONGA EISTEDDFOD

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (16:08):** The past two weeks have seen a marvellous display of regional talent on stage as part of the Albury Wodonga Eisteddfod Festival of Sight and Sound. More than 4,000 performances were held in a catalogue of events spanning music, debating, dance, choral, bands, speech and drama. Congratulations to the Eisteddfod team, which is run entirely by volunteers. Without their dedication throughout the year in organising the disciplines this major cultural event would not be possible. I recognise particularly chairman and debating coordinator Linda Martin; vice chairman Rad Gavrilovic; dance coordinators Michele Pertz and Rebecca Jonker; speech and drama coordinator Jan Skinner; highland dance coordinator Deanne Burr; music coordinator Margaret Barkas; and minute secretary Margaret Gavrilovic. I congratulate all participants and winners in the various sections.

### LIFE EDUCATION GOLD HAROLD DINNER

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:09):** This year's Life Education Gold Harold Dinner was truly a night to remember. Like many of my parliamentary colleagues, I too am a proud ambassador of Life Education, which made this event close to my heart. It was an amazing night that highlighted the wonderful contributions of Australians across many areas who have made a difference. I particularly congratulate Ms Lyn Thurnham on her achievement of the Gold Harold Award, and I congratulate all those who received awards on their commitment, dedication and effort that has bettered our children.

Healthy development of Aussie kids is a fundamentally important aspect that affects all of our lives and the passion and hard work that Life Education exerts was clear on the night. The atmosphere was uplifting and the speakers on the night quite inspiring. As a child I had the benefit of learning about better life choices through visiting the Healthy Harold van and now, all these years later, I get the chance to advocate for this terrific cause. As a representative of our diverse community, I highly value efforts to empower our young people to make healthy and safe life decisions. Congratulations to my friend and CEO of Life Education, Kellie Sloane, and her wonderful team on putting together such an important fundraiser.

### EPPING CLUB TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (16:10):** In July the Epping Club celebrated its twenty-first anniversary of serving the community. It is located near my office in Rawson Street, Epping. Club CEO Peter Saez has turned the club into one of the best RSL clubs in Sydney. With function rooms upstairs for weddings and events, and a premium restaurant which is getting great reviews, the club has truly become a five-star venue. The club's proud history and commitment to veterans have not been forgotten, with John Curdie leading a very active sub-branch which hosts local Anzac and other remembrance services each year. The Epping Club is also responsible for the long-running Granny Smith Day Club, a local seniors group coordinated by Caroline Pierotti. I was pleased to be able to join the anniversary dinner to commemorate this important milestone in the club's history.

### AUSTRALIAN TAIWAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (16:11):** I bring to the attention of the House the wonderful work of the Australian Taiwan Women's Association, as it celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary. The association was established in 1991 to support Taiwanese women in Australia in overcoming language and cultural barriers. I commend the work of the association's president, Phoebe Alexander, and her committee including Frances Huang, Rosa Kou, Pauline Chang, Changken Liu, Jassie Tsai, Sue Chan, Mei Ying Tseng, Wendy Tsao, Theresa Lin, Emma Lai, Judy Lui and Anna Chao. I acknowledge their commitment to the community through the raising of funds for local charities and by helping those who are disadvantaged and isolated. I thank them for not only providing much-needed support to women but in doing so promoting the status of women in our community. They also work to support single mothers and mothers that adopt children from overseas. They deserve to be recognised in this Parliament. I congratulate them on their twenty-fifth anniversary, which was celebrated on 22 June 2016.

### SCULPTURE AT BARANGAROO

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:12):** Public art can help create and define a sense of place. Such is the case with Sculpture at Barangaroo. It is a visionary project delivered by the Barangaroo Delivery Authority in collaboration with the Sculpture by the Sea organisation, which celebrates its twentieth anniversary this year. I congratulate all involved. Sculpture at Barangaroo features 14 works by various Australian artists. The sculptures in this free outdoor exhibition are scattered around the six-hectare heritage Barangaroo headland. The exhibition showcases Aboriginal works and craftsmen, as well as more mainstream artists like the accomplished Ron Robertson-Swann.

It commenced on Saturday 6 August and runs until Sunday 21 August, which also marks the first birthday of Barangaroo Reserve. The artworks highlight some of the location's distinct features like sandstone and the historical connection with the Aboriginal people, who lived and fished there for generations before colonial settlement in 1788. I acknowledge that Barangaroo is named after a strong Aboriginal woman who was a member of the Cammeraygal clan and who played a significant role in her community and the early British colony.

#### ALEXANDRIA HOTEL

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:13):** I congratulate the Alexandria community who supported the grassroots campaign to save the Alexandria Hotel—the Alex—from developers wanting to demolish the 130-year-old local institution and build apartment units with no car park facilities. Following an intense and well-organised campaign the Alex was rightly granted heritage status and the site protected for future generations. The Alex has recently been purchased by a new operator and is scheduled to reopen and to once again serve the community.

This remarkable result is thanks, in large part, to the hard work of the Save the Alex campaign led by convenors Ben Noblet and Michelle Noblet. This engaging campaign was supported by the Alexandria Residents Action Group, notably Ben Aveling, Gary Speechly and Vanessa Speechly. The campaign supported community members to make substantial and critical responses to the development application and to lobby for the site's heritage listing. I extend my thanks and congratulations to all involved in this fight; it has achieved a terrific result. I was proud to have stood alongside them.

#### SYDNEY TO GOLD COAST YACHT RACE

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (16:13):** Hornsby is home to some incredible athletes, and includes some who have even gone on to compete in the Olympics. Today, I want to talk about Lauren Gallaway who strongly believes that there is no such thing as too young when it comes to sailing. A student at Asquith Girls High, Lauren was the youngest sailor in seven years to compete in the Sydney to Gold Coast Yacht Race. The fleet started at the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia and finished 384 nautical miles north at the Southport Yacht Club in Queensland. Lauren raced *Local Hero*, a 36 foot long yacht, against *Wild Oats XI* and *Balance*, last year's Sydney to Hobart winner.

But sailing is no easy feat; Lauren's challenge was just as much a mental one as it was a physical one. She enjoys the thrill of the race, catching the big waves and sending her yacht towards the finish. One can only imagine what this adrenaline rush feels like. For Lauren, age and gender play no role in the race; sailing is a level playing field where the novices can compete with their heroes. However, if this is what Lauren is doing at 17, I can only imagine what she will achieve in the future. Lauren is an outstanding talent and the vice-captain of Asquith Girls High. I am sure members will hear a lot more about this impressive young woman and I look forward to watching her star continue to rise.

#### TRIBUTE TO BOB DUNN

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (16:14):** I pay tribute to Bob Dunn, who says farewell to 34 years of service as the station master at St Marys station in my electorate. Bob is a proud Colyton local and has been working on trains since he started selling tickets as a 16-year-old at Stanmore station, finishing a mammoth 40 year career with Sydney Trains. Bob is renowned to commuters in St Marys having been an important member of our community for several generations. A tribute to Bob's work was recently the subject of the front page of the *Mount Druitt St Mary's Standard*. They aptly describe Bob as the "heart" of St Mary's. I congratulate Bob on his tremendous service to both Sydney Trains and our community of Western Sydney and I wish him and his family all the very best for the future.

#### PASTOR PETE BOUGHEY

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:15):** I inform the House of the great work being done by Pastor Pete Boughey of Casino in providing a pathway to a better life for young offenders. Pastor Pete works at the Acmena Juvenile Justice Centre in Grafton and he sees a great number of reoffenders come back to Acmena. He claims the repeat offender rate is about 75 per cent and he has taken it upon himself to break this cycle. He has sourced some funding to employ three young offenders who work in his garage cutting up rags for Lifeline or making wooden toys for sale with the sale proceeds going back into the program. This is a wonderful program which gives some discipline to these young men, teaches them a work ethic and provides a saving to the Corrective Services budget. The program runs on the smell of an oily rag and I would love to see some additional funding to expand the program in the best interests of these young men and the community.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:16):** The Maitland community is coming together saying "enough is enough". We need to unite to say no to domestic violence. I congratulate Craig McGregor, president of the Maitland Business Chamber, Mark Jennings, chief executive officer of Jennings Print, Norm Burton of Maitland Toyota, Deepak Chand and the Fijian and Indian community for their generous efforts to help this cause. I congratulate the presidents of the various sporting teams—the Mustangs, The Blacks, Pickers, Magpies and Rams—for wrapping a white ribbon around Maitland in a united stand against domestic violence, raising funds for Carrie's Place and community awareness and embarking on an education program in their clubs.

I offer my sincere congratulations to Joe Gollan and Bronwyn Bell and the rest of the team at Carrie's Place for organising The Big Gig, a variety night for Carrie's Place to be held within the next month. It will raise vital funds. I know through this collective approach our community is making a great difference. Maitland has many community-minded and dedicated individuals, teams and businesses. We are a driving force for change. Thank you everyone.

## TAREE ROTARY CLUB

### TAREE HIGH SCHOOL NAIDOC WEEK

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:17):** I inform the House of the recent Rotary Club of Taree changeover dinner held in early July. I was delighted to attend the evening to congratulate a number of long-serving members of the club. My friend Manuel Zaunders was honoured for his 60 years of service to Rotary. It is a phenomenal achievement by Mr Zaunders and I congratulate him once more. I also wish to acknowledge friends Alan Small, Max Carey and Ted Gauntlett, who between them have over 150 years of service to Rotary.

Taree High School recently celebrated NAIDOC week with its first ever NAIDOC night. The school hall was transformed for the visual and musical spectacular for the inaugural night. The Biripi people of the Taree area showed their support for the evening, which had students and teachers working together to commemorate Indigenous culture. The contemporary pieces such as poetry, stories of diggers and songs about country gave the audience plenty to ponder. I commend the school, students and the Indigenous community for coming together to pull off the evening.

## GALLERIES IN THE GARDENS ART SHOW

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:18):** It was a privilege to once again officially open this year's Galleries in the Gardens Winter Warmer art show at the Tea Gardens Hotel and to witness the wonderful talent of the 25 local artists who exhibited. On a chilly July night I entered the hotel to find 150 community members and friends attending the event, now in its seventh year. Collectively the artists put together a fantastic exhibition and I was thoroughly impressed with the many ways in which this year's theme, Food for Thought, was interpreted.

The compositions were all well executed but it was Patrick Judd's painting *Mushrooms* on which judge Dr Waratah Lahy bestowed the highest honour. In her nineties Pat was a very popular and well-deserving winner, with Helen Sillar and Rosemary Lucas also highly commended for their entries. I congratulate all of the participating artists and commend the organisers Sue and David Matheson, Lee Anderson, Chez Rands and Rosely Leonard for their efforts in both showcasing the talents of local artists and bringing the community together in such a warm and enjoyable way.

## TRIBUTE TO GLENN STEVENS

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (16:19):** Today I congratulate Glenn Stevens, Governor of the Reserve Bank and resident of Sylvania Waters, who was made a Companion in the General Division of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday honours. The award is an "achievement and merit of the highest degree in eminent service to Australia or to humanity at large" and Mr Stevens was one of only 13 recipients this year. The award recognised Mr Stevens' "eminent service—to the financial and central bank sectors through leadership roles; to the implementation of innovative monetary and economic policy; to international financial regulation; and to the community".

After a decade as Governor of the Reserve Bank, which is a remarkable achievement in itself, Mr Stevens will retire in September. He played a key role in keeping the Australian economy stable during a period which saw financial growth and the global financial crisis. Due to the importance of his job Mr Stevens has become a household name and yet he shows incredible humility. His dedication to community service, which includes chairing the Financial Markets Foundation for Children, volunteering as a pilot for Angel Flight and his role as a founding board member of the Anika Foundation, epitomises why he is the perfect candidate to have received such an honour. I congratulate him on receiving this honour and wish him well for the future upon his retirement.

### IFTAR DINNER

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:20):** I had the great pleasure of attending the annual Iftar dinner held at Star Palace, which was hosted by the Cabramatta Mosque committee. Iftar is an Islamic practice which involves breaking the fast that Islamic people observe during the holy month of Ramadan. The great values that Iftar promotes within the community ought to be acknowledged. Iftar provides an opportunity for individuals to engage in reflection on their everyday lives in a way that promotes recognition and celebration of diversity amongst the community.

Above all, Iftar is a practice that promotes community, whereby individuals from all walks of life, including people not of the Islamic faith, join together in conversation and consume a meal with those practising the daily fast. I particularly thank the Cabramatta Mosque committee for inviting me to attend this event. This event is an excellent way of promoting understanding of Islamic customs to non-Islamic members of the community. It is great to see Cabramatta Mosque promoting these links and providing our community with the opportunity to gain a better appreciation and understanding of this religious tradition.

### GREEN GLOBE AWARDS

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (16:21):** I wish to acknowledge the amazing efforts of Mittagong residents Cintia Yamane and Andy Lemann on being awarded first place in the residential projects category for the New South Wales Government's Green Globe Awards. Mr Lemann and Ms Yamane were awarded the Green Globe Award because of their Greeny Flat, which provided 3½ times as much energy to the grid as it used. Their home should be put on a pedestal as it is also a water-efficient home which maintains a moderate temperature throughout the year. A video illustrating the benefits of the Greeny Flat was presented to those at the awards ceremony. I am sure that the flat inspired many in attendance. I wish them both the best and I hope that they continue to inspire people across Australia to live more sustainable lives.

### NATIONAL ZAKAT FOUNDATION TOY DRIVE

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:22):** Late last year I had the pleasure of running a Christmas toy drive for local community groups in celebration of the festive season. To see the kids' faces when they received new toys was priceless and a memory I will treasure for a long time. I saw firsthand how much this act meant to those children and so I would like to recognise the efforts of the National Zakat Foundation for a similar toy drive it conducted recently. In the spirit of Eid, the Muslim celebration at the end of Ramadan, the National Zakat Foundation distributed more than \$1,500 worth of toys to children at Westmead Children's Hospital as well as to asylum seeker and refugee families in the Lakemba-Bankstown area.

The organisation has been conducting this toy drive for three years. It is a great initiative to give back to the community. At a time of celebration, it was great to see the inclusion of those less fortunate and to see the community unite to help spread joy. I especially acknowledge the contributions of Mr Asif Mulla, Ms Soofia Abbas and Ms Saadiqa Davids for garnering community support and conducting the toy drive. In difficult and trying circumstances, this great initiative is a bright spot for children who otherwise have very difficult lives.

### GENEVIEVE HORTON, OLYMPIC ROWER

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:23):** Most of us watch it but so few get the honour of experiencing it as a competitor. Of course I am talking about the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. One who will be there flying the flag for us is rower Genevieve Horton, a proud product of the excellent sporting program at Pymble Ladies' College [PLC] in the electorate of Ku-ring-gai. Genevieve admits to trying a large range of sports at PLC before settling on rowing, and we are glad she did. It will be the first games for 21-year-old Genevieve.

Genevieve will compete in the women's double scull from this Saturday as the youngest member of our rowing outfit. In fact, the Rowing Australia record books had to be rewritten several years ago when she was selected as a member of the national women's eights at the age of just 18 years and 75 days. Despite this being her first Olympics, Genevieve will have a steady hand, as her partner in the double scull, Sally Kehoe, has experienced the pressure of Olympic competition before in 2008 in Beijing. Australia has a fine tradition in rowing at international level. We wish Genevieve, Sally and the entire Australian Olympic team every success.

### SERBIAN FOLKLORIC FESTIVAL

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:24):** By leave: I recognise the thirtieth national Serbian Folkloric Festival. The festival was held over three days on 29, 30 and 31 July at the Bonnyrigg Sports Club. The festival, which I have been able to attend for a number of years, helps to preserve Serbian folkloric heritage and culture in Australia and 10,000 people attend the festival each year. Apart from the Australian-based folkloric groups that attended this year, special guests included Kud Kraljevacka Riznica Kraljevo, a folkloric group from Serbia. I also

acknowledge Nikola Maric, John Pavasovic and the members of the organising committee. Present at the official opening of the festival was Branko Radosevic, Consul General of the Republic of Serbia, and Bishop Irinej of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Bishop Irinej has been in Australia for 10 years and from now is to be based in the United States. He goes with the best wishes of many in Australia, including me.

#### **MOUNTAIN BIKE RIDERS CHARLIE MCCABE AND MAX RICHARDSON**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:25):** By leave: I acknowledge Wamberal mountain bike riders Charlie McCabe and Max Richardson who have won all five cross-country endurance races ending the Shimano mountain bike grand prix series event at Awaba Mountain in the north of the Central Coast. Charlie McCabe has won her 30-39 age group in multiple 24-hour solo world championship events, which is outstanding. Max Richardson successfully won in multiple cross-country and marathon events. I congratulate both Charlie McCabe and Max Richardson on their fantastic wins at the Shimano mountain bike grand prix series.

#### **ST PETERS COLLEGE**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:26):** By leave: Today I acknowledge the contribution of the students in my electorate, particularly those from St Peters College in Maitland who attended Parliament House today. I also acknowledge a particular member of the class from St Peters College, John Mayo, who was not able to attend today because he was returning from a tour of Europe as part of World Youth Day. Many students in that class gave me fantastic questions before question time. It was interesting to see the process of making questions and answers. They did that really well. I pay tribute to their teachers who got up early to come with the students so they could experience a day in this place.

#### **CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY**

**Ms LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (16:26):** By leave: I recognise and congratulate Charles Sturt University for being officially recognised as Australia's only carbon neutral university. Charles Sturt University [CSU] was certified as carbon neutral on Tuesday 26 July, meaning not only is CSU the first university certified but it is one of only 27 nationally recognised organisations to be deemed carbon neutral. According to the Department of the Environment and Energy, "The net emissions of CSU are equal to zero."

This is an outstanding result from an organisation that is made up of nine campuses across New South Wales and Victoria. CSU has reduced its energy use by using more efficient lighting and air conditioning and also installing solar energy systems. On behalf of the community of Port Macquarie I thank Charles Sturt University for its planning and hard work in investing in projects that provide carbon offsets. Congratulations CSU for leading the way to living more sustainable lives in our communities and encouraging other organisations to follow suit.

#### **SUMMERLAND POINT GWANDALAN NETBALL CLUB SPORTING GRANT**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:27):** By leave: Local sport clubs make an invaluable contribution to our local communities. Most often they are run by a committee of volunteers with a passion for the sport and a commitment to a healthy lifestyle. I was pleased to be able to support the Summerland Point Gwandalan Flames Netball Club's application for a local sporting grant earlier this year, and I was delighted when they received \$1,500 to run coaching courses and purchase training equipment. Most recently, I attended the official opening of the new Tunkuwallin multipurpose sporting facility, which will host the club's games in the future. I was able to meet with the local club members and I was impressed by their enthusiasm and dedication to the sport. This grant could not have gone to a more deserving organisation. The coaching courses and new equipment will ensure the Flames can continue to provide sporting opportunities for people of all ages and to expand these opportunities for its growing membership.

#### **PHOTOGRAPHER HELEN TRENERRY**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (16:29):** By leave: When you are being showcased alongside some of the nation's best, it is safe to say that you may be one of the best. This year, Dural's Helen Trenerry was invited to showcase her photographs at the Trapezium Gallery in Kingswood. Helen was awarded five silver and one gold award from her eight images entered into the 2015 Australian Institute of Professional Photography NSW Epsom Professional Photography Awards. A self-taught photographer, Helen initially started out with a pet photography business but has since been making waves in the wider industry. Photography is her lifeblood. Her parents were amateur photographers and her grandfather had his own darkroom.

It is understandable that Helen's passion grew, but with passion comes hard work. Helen completed, with distinctions, her Certificate IV and Diploma of Photo Imaging. In 2015, Helen was honoured by the Australian Institute of Professional Photography NSW as a finalist in the Emerging Photographer of the Year category. Her talent continues to be recognised in 2016 with three silver awards from the institute for pet/animal and illustrative

photography. I do not believe this will be the last we hear of Helen's incredible talent and hard work. I applaud Helen's success and look forward to hearing about further awards in the future.

### NATIONAL TREE DAY

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:29):** By leave: On 31 July I joined the Sri Mandir Temple in Auburn to celebrate National Tree Day and participated in tree planting at the Auburn Botanic Gardens. It was an amazing event. More than 150 people from a number of different ethnic groups attended. Representatives from the Islamic Welfare Centre in Auburn were present as well as people from Africa, China and Australia. It was amazing to see so many people planting native trees and making a great contribution to the biodiversity in our local area. This event stands in stark contrast to statements made in recent weeks about migrants, particularly Muslim migrants, who do not make a contribution to this country. Quite clearly they do. National Tree Day could not be a more Australian event, with people from all ethnic backgrounds around Australia planting native trees and contributing to our biodiversity.

### *Committees*

#### STAYSAFE (JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY)

##### Membership

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall):** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desire to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

That Mr MacDonald be discharged from the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety and Mr Farlow be appointed as a member of the committee.

Legislative Council

DON HARWIN

11 August 2016

President

### *Petitions*

#### GREYHOUND RACING NSW

##### Discussion

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (16:31):** The Premier's unilateral decision to shut down the New South Wales greyhound racing industry sent shock waves through the State and will cause enormous damage to the local economy of my town. An annual \$29 million is added to the Hunter economy by this industry. More than 60 per cent of Hunter races are held at the Gardens Race Track in the Wallsend electorate. Every year, the greyhound racing industry contributes \$17.69 million to the Wallsend economy. Is the Premier troubled that the closure of the track will take money away from my town?

Is the Premier troubled that the livelihoods and jobs of 500 people, including those directly employed by the track, those employed on race days, and those in related industries will be jeopardised by the closure of the greyhound racing industry? The Gardens Race Track employs three people full-time and provides work for dozens of people on race days, including a judge, a lure driver, a starter, kennel attendants, stewards, bar staff, and function room staff. Related businesses, local photographers and suppliers, including Woy Woy Poultry—which sells tonnes of food to trainers—will lose valuable clients.

Local businesses and community groups also rely heavily on our track. A restaurant favourite, family-owned Angsara Wok, is located at the track and will be forced to close if this ban goes ahead. The Blue Gum Hills Men's Shed uses the facilities, as does the historic Wallsend Football Club, and every Sunday the C3 Christian Church meets in the complex. Given that one in 80 people in the Hunter region are directly involved in the sport and that the Gardens Race Track played host to tens of thousands of visitors last year, it is no surprise that within weeks this petition easily attracted more than 37,000 signatures. Locals have told me that this is more than a hobby to them. It is a passion and it is a lifestyle.

I question why the Premier made this decision. He used the McHugh report as his primary justification, even though the lead recommendation called for Parliament to make the decision, not the Premier alone. I denounce animal cruelty unreservedly, as do my colleagues. People guilty of animal abuse should not only be banned from the sport for life, but they should also face criminal penalties, as the McHugh report recommended. More than 37,000 people put their signature to this petition, calling for all of the recommendations of the McHugh report to be implemented, not only the recommendations that are most politically expedient for the Premier. This decision will cost the State \$330 million a year and 2,785 full-time equivalent jobs will be lost. Hundreds of

livelihoods in the Wallsend electorate will be directly impacted. I have heard from many of my constituents about how this decision will change their lives. Many are utterly devastated.

It is incumbent upon us all in this Chamber to represent our electorates. I am pleased to argue against the closure of the New South Wales greyhound racing industry because the Premier's unilateral decision will have a direct negative impact on 500 people in my electorate alone and \$17.69 million will be ripped from the Wallsend economy every year. I urge the Government to heed the voices that have been raised in opposition to this brash decision. These people are not stuck in the past. These people love their dogs and their sport and feel shut out and left behind by the Baird-Grant Government. I call on the Government to implement all of the recommendations made by Justice McHugh. So much is at stake for so many people.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (16:36):** I speak on behalf of the Government to the petition seeking to continue greyhound racing in New South Wales. The Government acknowledges that shutting down greyhound racing will have an impact in some communities, which is why it announced a transition task force. We wish to support people through this process. The Government cannot and will not forget those in the greyhound racing community. The Government was left with no option, however, but to shut it down.

*[Interruption]*

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** This is the rudeness we endure from the Opposition. We listened in silence but Opposition members cannot hold back.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Tweed will direct all comments through the Chair. If members continue with this type of disruptive behaviour, they will be removed from the Chamber for the remainder of the day.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** There is no doubt that the practices of animal cruelty are so entrenched within the industry that the scale of animal deaths is unlikely to change. The Government has been left with no other alternative. The commission's report made it clear that, fundamentally, the greyhound industry is unable to change its practices. Greyhound Racing NSW is unable to implement lasting reforms. The commission found that at least half of all greyhounds bred to race were killed in the past 12 years because they were deemed uncompetitive. The report states that up to 20 per cent of trainers engaged in live baiting and 120 greyhounds a year sustained catastrophic injuries during racing such as skull fractures and broken backs. None of this chilling information can be ignored. This Government has a responsibility. The black-and-white report reads that up to 70 per cent of greyhounds, or even more, were deliberately killed simply because they never were, or no longer were competitive.

Despite the best intentions and plans of Greyhound Racing NSW, the economics of the industry will ensure that this cycle of birth, short period of racing—if at all—and destruction will continue. Greyhound Racing NSW officials deliberately engaged in and condoned the misreporting of injuries and deaths of dogs at race tracks. Live baiting has been described by those in the industry as common practice, rampant and extremely widespread. A transition plan has been developed and a transition task force has been established to plan an orderly shutdown of the industry. Dr John Keniry, AM, has been appointed as coordinator general to head the Greyhounds Transition Taskforce. Dr Keniry is working with the industry and its suppliers, as well as animal welfare organisations, and government agencies, which will support industry participants through the transition. We must remember the alternative. If the industry were allowed to continue, most country tracks would close.

Economic modelling by several international consultancy firms points to the fact that, across most of the State, greyhound racing would come to an end regardless of the Government's decision and there would be no assistance packages—just the closure of commercially unviable tracks across regional areas. The industry transitional plan allows participants to consider their options as an assistance package is rolled out. The petition also asks the House to acknowledge the positive reforms that Greyhound Racing NSW has introduced to prevent animal cruelty. Since the appointment of an interim CEO, Greyhound Racing NSW has certainly taken some steps to clean up the sport, and reforms were introduced after the live baiting scandal first came to light. However, it is a case of too little, too late—of reforms being imposed upon the industry from outside, rather than driven by it.

It was only this year, a year after the industry was put on notice, that injury reports accurately reported deaths on the racing field. In just 79 days of racing, 39 dogs died and 80 suffered major injuries. Based on this evidence, it seems that the level of reforms necessary to make the industry accountable, transparent and ethically responsible would require such fundamental and generational change that it would render the industry unsustainable. The commission heard about the breeding of greyhounds, the social contribution made by the industry and its governance. It considered 804 submissions in its report.

Greyhound Racing NSW promoted the commercial interests of greyhound racing at the expense of its obligation to protect the welfare of greyhounds purpose bred for the sport. Even if the industry committed to

reforming or implementing more ethical practices the industry would not be sustainable without the large scale wastage of greyhounds. We were elected in this place to do the right thing. If members read the report they would know that there is one clear course of action that the community expects us to make. On this side of the House we make the tough decisions and we do the right thing.

[*Interruption*]

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! It has been the tradition in this House for 250 years that when the Speaker is speaking there is silence. I ask the member for Kogarah to remove himself from the Chamber.

[*Pursuant to standing order the member for Kogarah left the Chamber accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-arms.*]

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:41):** I am very pleased to support the petition tabled by my parliamentary colleague the member for Walsend. She has been an absolute champion in the cause of saving the greyhound industry in New South Wales. This petition, and the tens of thousands of signatures on it, is a testament to her hard work. She deserves substantial recognition for its being debated today in this place. Like the member for Walsend and other colleagues in this place, I represent an area that has greyhound racing facilities. The world-famous Dapto Dogs is located in my electorate. Although I will speak in more detail during the debate on the legislation in coming sitting days, I will use the brief opportunity presented during this debate to put a few things on the record. The decision driven by the Premier and the Deputy Premier to shut down this industry is wrong. The decision is arbitrary. It was made without consultation.

The Premier and the Deputy Premier certainly never picked up the phone to raise it with any of the members who have greyhound facilities in their electorates. I know I never got a phone call from the Premier. It would not have taken either of them very long to do that. There are, after all, only 34 greyhound racing tracks across the State. They did not even bother to talk to members on their own side of the Chamber. Through their public comments in recent weeks we have seen just how angry many of those members have been. I appeal to those members to cross the floor. They should work with us on this side of the Chamber to help give the greyhound racing industry the chance to continue to reform. Government members make much of their freedom to cross the floor to show just how independent they can be in disagreements over policy decisions.

I say to the members of The Nationals and the Liberal Party who have expressed anger at the decision of their Premier and Deputy Premier that now is the time to exercise their consciences. Now is the time for those members to stand up for their communities. Talking the talk but not being prepared to walk the walk is not good enough when the future of the greyhound racing industry is at stake. I plead with those members to work with members on this side of the Chamber to give the industry a chance to reform properly. I also put on the record that I invited the Premier to the Dapto Dogs to listen to the concerns of the people who will be directly affected by this arbitrary decision to shut down the greyhound industry.

The Premier declined my invitation, which was very disappointing. Unlike the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the shadow Minister for Gaming and Racing, and the shadow Treasurer all joined me on a visit to the Dapto Dogs about a fortnight ago. I thank Luke Foley, Michael Daley and Ryan Park for their interest and willingness to at least front up and listen to the concerns of the participants in the greyhound racing industry in my electorate. Aside from the impact of this decision on the industry and its participants, there will be a major impact on animal welfare organisations, which have already warned the Government that they will be overwhelmed by the shutdown. The Australian Veterinary Association has also begged the Government to rethink this decision, but the answer was no.

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (16:45):** I gladly speak on this petition seeking to continue greyhound racing in New South Wales. The petitioners state that they are opposed to animal cruelty. That is an admirable statement, but they are asking this Parliament to allow to continue in this State an industry that has the death and injury of dogs as its cornerstone. The facts are clear. On average around 4,000 healthy greyhounds are slaughtered each year. Over the past 12 years tens of thousands of healthy greyhounds were killed. They became wastage because they were not fast enough.

One in every five greyhounds will suffer an injury while racing. An average of 136 dogs will die because of injuries they have suffered as a result of racing in any one year. We saw the barbaric images on *Four Corners* of those piglets, possums, rabbits and, I am told, even kittens that are victims of this brutal practice of live baiting—a practice that has continued. Even though it was banned in 1967 in this State, this practice still continues today. If we allow greyhound racing to continue in this State we will continue to see live baiting taking place. People may argue over precise percentages and numbers of greyhounds being killed, but it is in the thousands.

"Systematic", "endemic" and "large-scale" abuse are words used to describe the animal welfare issues found at the core of this industry. I say to those opposite: rather than appealing to the Premier, the Deputy Premier and Government members to let the greyhound racing industry continue, perhaps they should appeal to their own conscience and sense of decency when it comes to cruelty to animals. I know that more than a few members opposite have to back in behind their leader even though they are disgusted by the action he has taken. There are not just a few rogue operators in this industry; we continue to see people being convicted of cruelty to animals, and exporting them to Macau. Once the animals are done with, they kill them, and 179 trainers and owners have been charged. [*Time expired.*]

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:48):** By leave: I had intended to begin by recognising the tireless efforts of the member for Wallsend, who from the outset called out the Baird Government on the greyhound racing prohibition issue and its failure to represent the people of New South Wales.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Opposition members will remain silent.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I congratulate the member for Wallsend on her fantastic efforts in securing 37,000 signatures in just three weeks, which is very impressive. The contributions to this debate by Government members have led me to wonder about this Government's priorities.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I call the member for Kiama to order.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** So the behaviour of the member for Kiama is indicative of the state of the New South Wales Parliament. That is great! I am very concerned about the greyhound racing ban issue because when I spoke to the one person in my community who was in favour of banning the greyhound racing industry—whereas everyone else I had spoken to was in favour of Labor's position—I was told that 90 per cent of people in the greyhound industry had perpetrated acts of cruelty against animals.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I remind the member for Kiama of my previous ruling regarding interjections.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Acts of cruelty against animals not only are wrong; what she told me is not a conclusion reached by the McHugh report, which has had approximately 10 revisions—and that also is a disgrace. The Premier, Mike Baird, has not tried to save animals or ensure that they are protected. If he had wanted to do so, he would have implemented Labor's bans on puppy farms and put together an animal welfare package before the last election—just like Labor did—but he has not done that. What the Premier has done throughout his whole approach to this issue is what he does best—divide the community. We all have complex opinions on the issue.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The member for Kiama will resume his seat.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Everyone has complex opinions on the greyhound racing ban issue. There would not be one person in Maitland, throughout this State or even in this Parliament who does not feel for animals that are being treated cruelly. We are all in furious agreement. As the shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, I would love to hear any of the outrage that is being confected by Government members about greyhounds being expressed about the mistreatment, abuse and deaths of women in our State. The position adopted by Government members is outrageous. I am gravely concerned about the priorities of Government members. Do they care about women dying as a result of domestic violence? No! Government members want to kill industries without giving those involved in the industry any chance to implement reforms.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

### **LIVERPOOL ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:52):** I inform the House of issues within the Liverpool central business district [CBD]. The combined effect of State Government and Liverpool Council actions and inactions have the potential to create very serious problems for the Liverpool CBD. State Government decisions have reduced the number of jobs within areas adjacent to the Liverpool CBD. There are now fewer jobs at Liverpool TAFE as a result of government policy. The dismemberment of the NSW Trustee and Guardian means that the office on the corner of Moore and Bathurst streets will close, with jobs to go. The number of positions at NSW Business Link have been significantly reduced since this Government has come to power. Having Business Link in Liverpool is the employment equivalent to having three old-fashioned government department head offices in the Liverpool CBD, so the Government's job shedding of Business Link is particularly concerning.

The Liverpool courthouse formerly had four magistrates sitting in four courtrooms. The Government delivered on Labor's plan to install a fifth courtroom, but reduced the number of magistrates to three. The position now is that the courthouse has gone from four magistrates in four courtrooms to three magistrates in five courtrooms. That has had employment consequences within the legal profession and ancillary services. The State Government used to boast that it was moving government jobs to western and south-western Sydney. In March 2014 then Premier O'Farrell announced that the NSW Community Relations Commission would move to Liverpool. The commission is now named Multicultural NSW. That move has not happened, and it will not. The commission has not moved—under either its old name or its new name—despite the then Premier saying in March 2014 that the Government in several weeks would be seeking expressions of interest for commercial space in Liverpool. As I understand it, Multicultural NSW will not be going to Liverpool, but instead will be going to Parramatta.

There is already a significant imbalance between the size of the population in our area and the number of jobs available, forcing residents to travel long distances to work. Anyone who works in this building, as do I, and lives in Liverpool will be acutely aware of this issue. The problem, however, is getting worse for other reasons. There has been significant building development in the Liverpool CBD in recent times, with even more to come. This has been celebrated by the current council majority. Many residents have a slightly more sceptical view of it. They have a sensible view that development at any cost is not a desirable option. Development can be a good thing, but it needs to be properly planned, properly thought out and properly balanced. That sort of development is welcome. Development that is not properly planned ought to be avoided. I have frequently had residents express their concern to me about badly designed, unattractive tower blocks being constructed in areas without adequate—especially for families—public spaces and with completely inadequate parking facilities in an area that already has a plethora of parking challenges.

The massive new tower block currently under construction near the intersection of Copeland Street, Hoxton Park Road and Terminus Street is at the worst possible location. It was irresponsible to approve that block's development. It has also been said to me by residents that the cost of units is such that they will be purchased by investors rather than by residents or first home buyers. The other point to make is that the overwhelming bulk of both what is being constructed in and what is proposed for the Liverpool CBD is residential. There is only a disproportionately small amount of commercial development proposed. This exacerbates and worsens the jobs deficit in Liverpool. The gap between the number of people living there and the number of jobs available is getting worse. This emphasis on residential development prevents and inhibits the development of any commercial hub. That is the inevitable consequence of what is being done by the State Government and the council in Liverpool.

The consequence for jobs in the Liverpool CBD is catastrophic. This appalling lack of proper planning must be sheeted home to the incompetence of the current council leadership. Things will become immeasurably worse if the council allows industrial sites to be knocked down, redeveloped and replaced by more residential units. But that, apparently, is precisely what is being proposed for land on the east bank of the Georges River opposite the CBD. This includes what was once the Cablemakers site and is now Pirelli Ericsson. A population twice the size of Goulburn's will occupy that site. Industrial jobs will be replaced by massive residential units. It is appalling and disgraceful planning. It has been suggested to me that this will be the densest residential site in the State. One can only assume it is allowed and supported by council operatives who are convinced that developers ought to get everything they want. Council figures are putting developers' profits before people. Such attitudes are also seen in the grotesque proposal for multistorey developments at Miller.

The increasing scale of residential development in the Liverpool CBD, moreover, is not being matched by the State Government's provision of services. Indeed, not only is the State Government not increasing services in line with population growth; it is actually reducing what is there. Two examples are instructive. The State Government is mothballing the aerial rescue trucks that are designed to fight high-rise fires and rescue people from apartment buildings. These units, called "brontos" and also known as "aerial appliances", have a reach of 37 metres. They are being moved from locations, including St Andrews, and are being replaced by machines with a 15-metre ladder and no basket. This is happening because the brontos are more expensive to run and require more staff. Doing this at a time when a dramatically greater number of dramatically higher buildings are being developed in Liverpool is an act of rare stupidity. It is also potentially catastrophic.

Another area where services are being reduced is Liverpool railway station. I am told that station staff are about to be reduced by one-third. I am told that only one person, a manager, will be at Liverpool railway station at night. For a station of the size and importance of Liverpool, this is a foolish decision. It is representative of a political leadership with absolutely no interest in the future of Liverpool. Liverpool deserves much better than the Liberal Party, both on the council and in the State Government.

## EVANS HEAD AIR PARK DEVELOPMENT

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:57):** I inform the House of the multimillion-dollar air park development at Evans Head and the benefits it will bring to the community. The air park is the brainchild of a consortium led by Peter Lynch. This is a \$156 million project which will consist of 85 residential lots, 23 commercial lots, a new aviation museum, a boutique hotel and a conference centre. Plans have been lodged with the Richmond Valley Council and the proposal has been well received by the Evans Head Business and Community Chamber.

The project will help to stimulate the local economy and create jobs, and it will assist in maintaining the aerodrome as a working airfield. The project will be built in five stages over two distinct precincts. The eastern precinct will be constructed first and will comprise the residential lots, industrial areas and the hotel. The western precinct will comprise the new aviation museum and the conference centre. The president of the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Heritage Aviation Association, Rod Kinnesh, is very excited at the construction of a new, larger, museum facility because it will enable them to expand the collection of aeroplanes and other aeronautical memorabilia they have amassed.

Recreational aviation has become more accessible to and popular with the average person due to the falling costs of light aircraft. Evans Head, and the North Coast more generally, boasts some of the best flying instructors in Australia. The creation of a residential and commercial air park will attract related aviation industries. This in turn will bring in associated businesses and increase the number and range of employment opportunities in that regional community. This does not occur every day. When an opportunity such as this arises, government—all government—should seize it and leverage off it to increase the benefits to the local community. This is not just a residential subdivision but a unique opportunity to develop an air park. It allows people who love flying and have an aeroplane to park their plane in a nearby hangar, giving them unlimited opportunities to use their planes for work or for pleasure on a daily basis. It will attract businesses associated with the aviation industry, and similar-minded people, opening up a whole new world of employment options, which are so limited in regional New South Wales.

In addition, the proposal will invigorate the historic Evans Head airfield, which was established in 1936 as an emergency landing ground. It was taken over by the Commonwealth in 1937. After the start of the Second World War in 1939, more than 5,000 men and women came to train at Evans Head as part of the No. 1 Bombing and Gunnery School. Of those trainees, 1,500 lost their lives in the war. The proposal will also be the catalyst for the expansion of the Memorial Aerodrome Heritage Aviation Museum, which will significantly increase visitor numbers through the gate. It will help to promote tourism in Evans Head, in addition to holiday tourism. With the addition of the F1-11, the museum has been very successful in attracting thousands of tourists. The expanded facility will attract more aircraft exhibits and will increase tourist numbers, making it one of the best aviation museums in the country. This is a unique development and very appropriate for Evans Head. I commend Peter Lynch and the consortium for their vision and for their confidence in making such a significant investment in Evans Head.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. Members who wish to have private conversations should do so outside the Chamber.

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS:** I know it will be well received by business and the community, and by the tourists who come to Evans Head. On behalf of the House, I wish the members of the consortium every success in their venture.

## MAY CHESTER 105TH BIRTHDAY

### WATERFALL PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (17:01):** In 1911 the tallest building on earth was the Eiffel Tower, the *Titanic* was launched from the Belfast shipyards, the average life expectancy of a man was 47 and the first Census was conducted in Australia. And May Chester was born, 105 years ago. May was born in England and moved to Australia in 1925. She married her husband, Bill, in 1936 and they were happily married for 71 years until Bill passed away in 2007. They have two children, six grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

May, incredibly, keeps up with current affairs. She is quite aware of day-to-day activities and she participates in them. She loves receiving letters from, and writing to, her family in England. She is still an avid reader. On her birthday, on 15 July, I visited her at Thomas Holt nursing home in Kirrawee to present her with a flower arrangement celebrating her milestone. May lived in her home until she was 100 years old, when she suffered a fracture of the spine that resulted in her moving into care. May is Anne England's grandmother; Anne

works in my office. When I visited May we had a conversation about the Federal election and the outcome. May knew who the Prime Minister was and that the numbers were close.

Inevitably, the question is asked, "What is the reason for your longevity?" May's answer is: "Darling, not a drop of alcohol has ever passed my lips." One hundred and five is a long innings. May has seen many things and she has lived a very happy life. In his congratulatory message Premier Mike Baird wrote, "WOW!" One hundred and five is a great age and a great achievement. Congratulations to May Chester on her 105th birthday. I also report to the House the outcome of a Community Building Partnership for a small school community within my electorate, Waterfall Public School. This small community on the edge of the Royal National Park is well supported by all parents and a very active parents and citizens association committee, led by Mrs Alison Cairncross.

The association applied for and was successful in gaining a Community Building Partnership grant to build new play equipment and a play area for their students. Recently I was invited to officially open the new play area and was very impressed that the whole school community turned out for the event. Waterfall is a small school with a big impact. It is a school that has served the community of Waterfall for more than 100 years. There are many generations of families whose children still attend the school today. It is wonderful to see grandparents, parents and children who have benefited from this wonderful school. You can imagine the early days when it was a half-day trek to buy provisions. This intimate little school is striving to bring best practice to the school community. Although situated right on the edge of the Royal National Park the school community supports its public school by fundraising far beyond the size of the community. I congratulate Waterfall Public School and commend the parents and citizens association and the community as a whole on their achievements.

### COMPULSORY PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (17:05):** I bring to the attention of the House an issue of importance not only to my community but also to residents across Sydney who are being impacted by major projects such as WestConnex, the Sydney Metro and light rail. I feel compelled to speak on this issue because of the hypocritical response of the Premier in answering a question from the member for Balmain last week. This issue I speak of is compulsory acquisition—an issue I have been raising for many months. It is a flawed process being used across my community and many others. Last week in this House the Premier said:

We have to be generous and caring and we have to do everything possible to minimise the inconvenience.

That is not the first time the Premier has said this, and yet he does nothing to change the outcome for impacted residents. This is yet another public relations stunt from a Premier who tells people what he thinks they want to hear. In my electorate and in the electorate of Summer Hill 180 properties, mostly residential, have been acquired for the M4 East tunnel. Like the member for Summer Hill, I have worked with many residents whose homes have been acquired against their wishes. There has been no empathy, no caring approach and no generosity from a system that does not take into account the personal impact of losing one's home. It does not take into account the anxiety and disruption that are inherent in being told you can no longer live in your house.

In the Premier's response last week he indicated that he had asked Mike Pratt, the State's Customer Service Commissioner to "oversee the acquisitions recently identified as being part of stage 3 ..." He also indicated Mr Pratt would be "making some recommendations". My questions to the Premier are: Is this a formal review? What are the terms of reference? When will Mr Pratt report? Will his findings be made public? Why will the review just cover those 28 home acquisitions and not every acquisition across every infrastructure project? Finally, why does the Premier think this is just a customer service issue when the legislation that regulates the compulsory acquisition process, the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991, is clearly flawed?

The Government knows it is flawed because in May 2012 then Minister Pearce launched the Government's examination of the just terms legislation by announcing that David Russell, SC, would carry out the work. We have the consultation paper dated October 2012. We also have a media release from Minister Constance, as then acting Minister, dated 26 June 2013. That release announced the release of the consultation paper. The eight-month delay in releasing the consultation paper has never been explained. In that June 2013 media release Minister Constance said:

The legislation has an impact on the rights of individual landowners, and the Government is committed to ensuring it is efficient and fair.

In the 16 May 2012 release then Minister Pearce said:

It is well known that compulsory acquisition of private land and its impacts have been an ongoing area of stakeholder concern for many years.

Yet here we are, 4½ years since the review was announced, with all sorts of promises and the Government has still not released the report. We know from a freedom of information [FOI] request that the report was handed to

the Minister in February 2014. The report took two years to complete and it is 2½ years since it was given to the Minister. The report's cost was \$98,000. We know from that FOI request that a Cabinet minute was prepared; however, we do not know whether it went to Cabinet, because the Government will not say. My message to the Premier is: Release this report, stop the bleeding-heart routine and actually do something. Releasing this report would be a good start.

I suggest that the Premier read the report of the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General into the land valuations system, which was released in May 2013. The Government has never responded to that report, which also outlined deficiencies in the legislation as it relates to the Valuer General's office and its role in the acquisition process. It makes a number of very sensible recommendations but, of course, this Government has not responded to that report either. The Government is on the record agreeing that this process and legislation are letting people down. The Premier is also on the record admitting people are suffering and that the Government has to do better. Yet the responses to date have been woefully inadequate, and I will not let this issue go.

### **SOUTH COAST EMERGENCY SERVICES STORM RESPONSES**

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (17:09):** I recognise and commend the selfless work of the volunteers and emergency services personnel who responded to the severe east coast low which struck the South Coast area in early June 2016. On Friday 3 June a severe weather warning for damaging winds, heavy rainfall, abnormally high tides and damaging surf was issued for the South Coast. An east coast low that had developed off southern Queensland was forecast to hit the New South Wales coast and move southwards over Saturday and Sunday. The storm coincided with some of the highest tides of the year, increasing the risk of flooding. A flood watch was issued by Friday afternoon, with the Shoalhaven River and St Georges Basin catchments put on alert and marked as potential areas of concern.

By the morning of Sunday 5 June, eastern New South Wales had experienced its wettest day on record on an area-averaged basis. Of the 20 coastal river catchments in New South Wales, 19 recorded at least 70 millimetres of rain on Sunday alone. Jervis Bay in my electorate received a record 400 millimetres of rainfall over that weekend, the highest in living memory. Wind speeds reached 100 kilometres per hour and swells of six metres battered the Shoalhaven coastline, with 11 metre rogue waves recorded. To the dismay of many locals, as a result of the violent swells a 100-year-old jetty and local swimming hotspot, the Bawley Point Gantry, was destroyed, which was a very sad occasion in Bawley Point.

Damage was widespread across the South Coast and at one point 6,000 properties in the Shoalhaven had no power. Areas affected by the floodwater included Greenwell Point, the St Georges Basin area, Lake Conjola, Burrill Lake, Lake Tabourie, Shoalhaven Heads and Sussex Inlet, which were pre-warned for evacuation. Flooding closed a large number of roads, including sections of the Princes Highway, for both northbound and southbound traffic. Travel was further restricted due to the closure of the South Coast train line, as a result of flooding between Wollongong and Bomaderry. By Tuesday 7 June, Premier Mike Baird had announced natural disaster declarations for all local government areas in the South Coast and Illawarra, which was enormously well received in the areas.

State Emergency Services [SES] were stretched. The New South Wales SES units based in the South Coast electorate received 360 calls for assistance, of which the Ulladulla unit received 80, the St Georges Basin unit received 65 and the Nowra unit received 215. The majority of assistance given was for storm or weather jobs such as fallen trees and minor flooding. However, of the 215 calls for assistance taken by the Nowra unit 15 were flood rescues, with nine of the 15 flood rescues taking place on the Monday night along Bolong Road.

Approximately 65 local SES members logged an incredible 2,600 hours braving the severe weather that weekend. The Shoalhaven Emergency Operation Centre opened and a multiagency taskforce made up of NSW Fire and Rescue, NSW Ambulance Service, NSW Police Force, Shoalhaven City Council, Westpac Helicopter, the Rural Fire Service, and Goulburn SES supported the three local SES units. SES volunteers Jo Allen and her son Matthew had been out helping the community for three days straight when they returned to find their own home flooded. They stayed at home only long enough to make their property safe before heading back out to help the community once again.

Other SES volunteers such as John Brentnall and Sean Dunne put in extra hours, staying with their units as the roads they would normally travel to get home flooded and became impassable. It is thanks to the dedication, sacrifice, professionalism and preparedness of these men and women, and many others who I cannot name in the short time available to me, that the impact of the storm was considerably reduced and thankfully no lives were lost. The local emergency services took proactive measures, filling and deploying sandbags and putting all members on standby for operational activities. Also their pre-event communications to the community meant that we were already aware of how to stay safe when the storms finally struck.

As the low moved further south and conditions eased slightly, many of the SES teams worked all hours of the day and night to clear the large backlog of jobs that had accumulated during the storms. Local tradies and businesses also pitched in offering their services free of charge to ease the pressure on the emergency services. Those unable to offer a trade offered their time to clean up and remove debris or cook meals for volunteers. On behalf of the South Coast community I offer our sincere thanks to all of those involved in the clean-up and response to the storms: the State Emergency Service, the police, the members of Fire and Rescue NSW, the Shoalhaven City Council Mayor, Joanna Gash, and her councillors, and volunteers, their families and employers. They all worked tirelessly to keep us safe that terrible weekend.

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (17:14):** I join with the member for the South Coast in her tribute to the State Emergency Service and the brave and wonderful work they do in times of flood, storms or fire. The volunteers give of their own time and put themselves in harm's way to look after the community. They do it voluntarily. There are some great people on the South Coast. I pay tribute to the Parramatta unit. The Minister for emergency services and I will be inspecting their base shortly and I am hoping to offer them financial assistance. I commend the member for the South Coast for her support for the State Emergency Service and I pay tribute to our own Parramatta unit.

### MAKE HEALTHY NORMAL CAMPAIGN

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (17:17):** Whether it is an afternoon session of backyard cricket, shooting some practice hoops, kicking a ball around or going for a morning swim, whether engaged casually or competitively, Australians are renowned for their passion for and prowess at sports of all kinds. However, this positive reputation is yielding to an increasing trend towards sedentary lifestyles, with associated negative physical, mental and social repercussions. The Australian Health Survey 2011-2012 found that nearly 70 per cent of Australian adults are sedentary or have low levels of physical activity.

Active recreation is a significant factor in ensuring good health and quality of life. NSW Health's Make Healthy Normal campaign highlights the many choices we can all make to live more active lifestyles. Many constituents in my electorate of Davidson choose to participate in fun runs held throughout the year. I have a personal interest in such events, including through participation in the Run Forest Run, Jabulani Challenge, Lindfield Rotary Fun Run, San Run for Life Fun Run, the Bear Creek Trail Run and Roseville Chase Rotary Fun Run, which I ran on the challenging hills of Castle Cove Sunday week ago.

**Dr Geoff Lee:** How did you go?

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA:** I am pleased to say I ran the 10 kilometres in a reasonable time. It is a fantastic experience to run alongside members of the local community. Achieving personal and family fitness motivates many people in the Davidson electorate to partake in fun runs. There are a range of different course lengths and difficulties at different times of the year, ensuring everyone can be involved in a race that suits them. Hosted in March by the Forestville Public School Parents and Citizens Association, Run Forest Run encourages parents to run with their children in two kilometre, five kilometre or 10 kilometre races. They also hold a post-race fair on the school grounds, which provides family entertainment and a wonderful place to mingle with others.

Likewise, although it is conducted in the adjacent electorate, the Ku-ring-gai Chase Fun Run and Barry Easy Walk held in March encourage camaraderie through post-race activities including a picnic and the Special Olympics Come and Try Community Carnival. The carnival enables children with intellectual disabilities to join a range of sports such as tennis, dance, cricket and athletics. The Barry Easy Walk is a great opportunity for people to actively participate by walking or running a 4.5 kilometre loop around Wahroonga. Friends and family can get involved by sponsoring runners to raise funds for Special Olympics Sydney Upper North Shore.

In November, the San Run for Life Fun Run is held in the grounds of the Sydney Adventist Hospital and surrounding suburb of Wahroonga. Participants raise funds for the hospital by running five or 10 kilometres and afterwards enjoying a barbeque breakfast and local entertainment. I will be running again this year, as I did last year, with the members for Ku-ring-gai, Hornsby and Bradfield. Whether for young or old, local fun runs empower members of the community to prioritise fitness while supporting good causes. With picturesque natural surroundings and beautiful local national parks, it is unsurprising that some people choose to take a scenic route. Research undertaken in 2015, in association with the National Academy of Sciences, showed that a 90-minute walk in nature reduced the participant's negative thoughts, whereas the same walk in an urban environment had no such effect.

Some of our local fun runs involve trails that allow people to enjoy the rich beauty of the Australian bush and improve their mental wellbeing by spending time outside. Organised by the St Ives Park Primary School Parents and Citizens Association, the Bare Creek Trail Run winds through the fire trails of Garigal National Park. The Great NOSH Footrace, supported by the Orienteering Association of NSW, starts at Lindfield Oval and

crosses the majestic Middle Harbour via Roseville Bridge to finish at Seaforth Oval. Fun runs can rouse motivation to work towards a set goal. I have previously spoken in this place about the Jabulani Challenge, a demanding 12, 22 or 45 kilometres race. Jabulani covers beautiful, challenging terrain, exploring the Gibberagong and Warrimoo trails of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. Running, especially a half-marathon or marathon, requires mental tenacity and physical fortitude that is worth cultivating. Japanese author Haruki Murakami provides great insight into the mindset of a runner as follows:

Most runners run not because they want to live longer, but because they want to live life to the fullest. If you're going to while away the years, it's far better to live them with clear goals and fully alive than in a fog, and I believe running helps you to do that. Exerting yourself to the fullest within your individual limits: That's the essence of running, and a metaphor for life.

Many people in my electorate aspire to live life to the full. I have seen firsthand how fun runs uniquely capture this lively spirit, inspiring healthy lifestyles, social cohesion and goodwill to charities and local communities. I commend all the organisers, volunteers, supporters and participants in my local area's various fun runs. As Parliamentary Secretary for Major Events and Tourism I look forward to participating in the biggest annual run in Sydney this Sunday—the City to Surf. I hope to beat my previous time of just under 70 minutes. Irrespective of how I go I wish all fellow runners well.

### FOSTER CARERS

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (17:20):** An important issue is affecting many long-term foster carers in New South Wales, who I believe are some of the many silent victims of Sydney's out-of-control property market. Foster carers are the unsung heroes of our community. They agree to take in children who, through no fault of their own, can no longer live with their biological parents. Many foster carers are family members who have been asked to take on a child of a brother, sister, son, daughter or cousin, and sometimes at short notice. Out of love for the child these people agree to take on this responsibility—a responsibility that is life changing.

Accepting the responsibility to care for a child is a heavy commitment. As a parent I know firsthand the cost of raising children. When a foster carer agrees to take a child into their home they also agree to take on the cost of raising that child. The State is not oblivious to the sacrifices of foster carers. Eligible foster carers are entitled to a fortnightly payment of \$688 for the care of a child under the age of 18 through the statutory care allowance. An amount of \$688 might seem adequate, but when thinking of the costs involved in raising a child in New South Wales it is easy to understand that up to \$344 a week only helps foster carers to make ends meet.

Many foster carers who accept responsibility for a child are in it for the long haul. Many take on children in their infancy or pre-teen years. However, once a foster child enters their teenage years foster carers are faced with the same dilemmas as every household in Australia with teenagers. Many of us know too well that a teenager at the precipice of adulthood is at times challenging. That is an understatement, and it is no different for foster parents. A foster child, like all children, needs his or her space. Many families may opt to move to a larger home many years before their child becomes a teenager in preparation for when that child reaches that phase in their development. Unfortunately, for many foster carers that is just not possible. With the state of the property market in Australia, it is simply out of the question for many.

I know of a foster family in which both parents work. The parents have three children: a girl and two younger boys. They have taken in a young relative, a boy, as a foster child. The family live in a three-bedroom home. When the children were young this was not a problem. However, as their two sons and their foster son begin to enter their teenage years, space has suddenly become an issue. They believe that their older daughter should not have to share a room with a boy about to go through the phase of entering adulthood.

However, the New South Wales property market prevents them from buying a bigger house. They could sell the house that they now live in, but the proceeds from the sale of their three-bedroom home may not be enough to buy a larger property in my electorate or in many other places in Sydney. The price of a home in Sydney is now more than \$1 million, even before the Reserve Bank cut the interest rate by 25 basis points to a historic low of 1.5 per cent in its August meeting. In recognition of the responsibility many foster parents agree to take on when they accept guardianship of a child, the New South Wales Government needs to look at programs to help them locate to larger premises, particularly if they have had the care of a child for a number of years.

Currently the foster family I talk about cannot get assistance from Housing NSW, a government agency belonging to the portfolio of the Minister for Family and Community Services, because they own their own home. They are not eligible for public housing or social housing because both parents work and do not meet the income test. The family is in a catch 22 situation. I am not here to condemn the Minister for Family and Community Services. On the contrary, I have a great deal of respect for the Minister and would not want to be in his shoes. However, the plight of so many foster families must be told. Someone has to answer their call for help.

### TRIBUTE TO SHARON BISHOP

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (17:25):** Nurses are the backbone of our community. They are hardworking Australians who invest every waking moment of their lives in ensuring that we are safe and healthy. They care for our elderly, disabled, sick and injured. They help all Australians when they are at their weakest, and for this we must be truly grateful. I wish to tell the House the story of Wollondilly local hero and legend Sharon Bishop. During her school years it was Sharon's dream to become a nurse. Having finished her time at school she began to study nursing at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. During this period nurses were trained through an apprenticeship-style program rather than today's university training.

Having qualified as a nurse, Sharon went on to look after Australia's sailors on the HMAS *Penguin* with the Royal Australian Navy. From there she went on to work at Camden Hospital. She then worked for Victorian Health in community Indigenous aged care. After finishing her tenure in Indigenous aged care, Sharon sought a new life direction by beginning her own practice which provided in-home care to Australia's veterans. Having worked on HMAS *Penguin*, Sharon had an amazing history in caring for Australia's defence community. Sharon gained a rapport with many of the veterans as she knew and understood the needs specific to conditions common among former Australian Defence Force [ADF] personnel. Equipped with her robust and precise experience, Sharon was able to assist and advise the Department of Veterans' Affairs and provide a wealth of knowledge on the issue of alcohol consumption amongst Australia's veterans, the resulting health impacts and methods to mitigate consumption.

Despite spending her days caring for our defence community, Sharon never forgot her local community and gave a great deal back to Wollondilly. For 22 years Sharon has been an active member of the Lions Club of Tahmoor and has held every position in the club except treasurer. Amazingly, she has been re-elected to the position of president five times. Currently, Sharon is not only the District Governor of District 201N2; she is also First Vice District Governor, Second Vice District Governor and Zone Chairperson. She also sits on the Global Leadership Team.

Her wealth of experience has led her to become involved in the Drug and Alcohol Nurses Association, Nurses in Management—Aged Care, and the Royal College of Nursing. Her dedication and hard work for our local community and for the defence community has not gone unnoticed by those whose lives she has personally touched. During her youth Sharon was a Queen's Guide and has subsequently become a Melvin Jones Fellow, Nurses Scholarship Foundation Ken Lentfer, OAM, Award recipient, Keith Small Gold Honour Award recipient, International Presidents Leadership Medal recipient, Neville Tucker Silver Award recipient and Key Member Award recipient.

For her devotion to the wellbeing of our veterans, Sharon became a life patron of the south-west region's Vietnam Veterans Association. She was further awarded a Centenary Medal for her continued dedication to our veterans. I had the great pleasure of announcing Sharon Wollondilly Woman of the Year. Furthermore, she was awarded Wollondilly Citizen of the Year. She has also twice been nominated for Australian of the Year. Sharon now spends time teaching nurses who trained overseas to ensure they are able to work in the Australian health system.

Unfortunately, there is not enough time to give Sharon enough praise for all the lives she has changed. I thank Sharon for her dedication not only to Wollondilly but also to our veterans and Indigenous community members across Australia. I wish her all the very best in her future ventures and hope she continues to touch our lives for many more years to come. I also acknowledge her equally hardworking husband, Tim, who also does a fantastic job in our local community. We always joke that he is the patient one, but he also goes at a crackerjack pace. They are true local treasures of Wollondilly and I am proud to call them both friends.

### TICK TOXICITY

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) (17:29):** Tonight I speak about a matter of public health in my electorate and across much of the northern beaches of Sydney—namely, tick toxicity. The member for Wyong is in the Chamber. No doubt this malaise affects people in his electorate as well as many others. Our local vets, doctors and nurses are working hard in the treatment and prevention of tick-related illnesses, and tonight I will share with the House the great work that is being done to protect the community from what is becoming an increasing problem. Beachside communities such as Avalon, Clareville and Bayview, owing to their proximity to the beautiful Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, and western-facing areas with thick undergrowth and lots of native animals, particularly bandicoots and possums, face significant problems with ticks and this presents massive problems for our local pets. My electorate is a very pet-loving community—dogs, cats and companion animals are important to many of our families.

My sister, Dr Jennifer Wingham, who works at the Mona Vale Veterinary Hospital, told me earlier today that each year they treat 300 animals for tick-related illnesses and tick toxicity. Pet owners can also avail themselves of the excellent preventative products that are now on the market. But even more serious are the risks and dangers of ticks to human health. Indeed, whilst tick toxicity is a problem for animals, anaphylaxis from ticks is significant and growing among adults and children in my electorate. I have had the opportunity of meeting many people who have suffered some shocking meat allergies as a result of being bitten by ticks. In a medical first for Australia, Clinical Associate Professor Shery van Nunen, Department of Clinical Immunology and Allergy at Royal North Shore Hospital, first discovered the association between anaphylaxis and meat from mammals after a person had been bitten by ticks. This is well recognised on the northern beaches.

Dr Andy Ratchford, the Director of Emergency Medicine at Mona Vale District Hospital, has said that each year his department treats hundreds of people who have been bitten by ticks. This is a serious public health issue and it is important that members communicate this risk to their communities. I also note the great work that is being done by the Tick Induced Allergies Research and Awareness [TIARA] group, in particular Dr Stephen Ginsborg, who has worked as a local general practitioner on the northern beaches for more than 30 years. In that time he has treated many patients with tick-related conditions. Clearly there is more that we can learn. I urge every member of this House to communicate the seriousness of this problem to their communities. It is affecting many people's lives and having dramatic impacts on communities. It may seem like a small issue, but it is having real effects on people. I congratulate the health professionals and veterinarians who are working on this issue.

Dr Ginsborg can be identified as a local hero in raising awareness on not just tick bites but also the consequences of tick bites and the need to seek medical attention. He also raises awareness about the need for further research into what can result in a debilitating and life-changing experience for people affected by this anaphylaxis. Clearly there is more that we can learn. I urge every member of this House to communicate the seriousness of this problem to their communities. It is affecting many people's lives and having dramatic impacts on communities. It may seem like a small issue, but it is having real effects on people. I congratulate the health professionals and veterinarians who are working on this issue.

#### **BAIRD GOVERNMENT AND ROCKDALE COMMUNITY**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (17:34):** I bring to the attention of the House the creeping influence of the nanny State, the breakdown of community consultation under the Baird Government and the impact it is having on my constituency of Rockdale. For anybody with the vaguest belief in individual liberty and freedom, it should be extremely worrying to see the manner and style in which the Baird Government has increasingly chosen to act. From lockout laws, to council amalgamations, to devaluing of taxi plates and now the impending shutdown of greyhound racing, it is not just the draconian and arbitrary decisions the Baird Government is taking but the dictatorial way in which it is taking them that has many in my community so concerned. One of the foundation principles of the rule of law in our country is the idea of certainty. Whether we have purchased a taxi plate—the ultimate value of which is held in an implicit guarantee by the Government—or we have spent our life racing dishlickers, there is an expectation that the State will not unduly infringe on our property. If it does, it is understood that we will be justly compensated in fair terms.

That is not so under the Baird Government. It has left so many people in my Rockdale electorate significantly disadvantaged as a result of its callous and rushed decision-making. It is simply unconscionable to run a government by waking up in the morning and discussing with a social media adviser over a chai latte which industries will be shut down or which pub will be closed on the basis of the number of Facebook likes. The Premier may get a warm fuzzy feeling for a brief moment while he is trending in the twittersphere, but at the end of the day it is real people such as my constituents who are being hurt by this Government's approach to governance by proclamation in social media. It is not the role of a good or decent government to rashly interfere in people's lives so that they are stopped from enjoying themselves without good reason.

The Baird-Grant Government has demonstrated a profoundly misguided sense of priority if it thinks that a report into the greyhound industry requires an immediate response with no warning or consultation, but reports about the crisis in our health system involving incredibly harrowing human tragedy can be fobbed off for six months simply by the *Daily Telegraph* reporting that the Minister might be sacked six months down the track. It is telling that this Government thought that greyhounds were worthy of having three posts on Facebook in the past month but not one status was posted about the issues in our public hospitals. Three Facebook posts for greyhounds, but not a single post, tweet, or Instagram about our health system.

The Baird Government is more than happy to tell us when it is restricting people's rights to enjoy themselves, but it is far less keen to discuss the impacts of Government cuts to frontline services and the real impacts we are beginning to see in the community. The Premier loves talking about the sharing economy, but when it comes to letting the owners of taxi plates know that they will be out of pocket by hundreds of thousands of dollars as a result of Government legislation, he trots a Minister out to deliver the bad news. Unfortunately,

being a nice guy does not count for much if he is not willing to run a nice government. It is highly concerning to all in my community that the sense of arrogance that this Government possesses means attacks on personal freedoms are being taken away at an ever-increasing rate.

When I was growing up in suburban Rockdale, going out in the city and enjoying myself with my mates was a great experience. It is truly sad that the Baird Government has robbed future generations of that experience. We cannot be sure what the Baird Government's next offensive against the people of New South Wales will involve because it appears that Mike Baird considers it within his mandate to give or take away anything and everything as he so chooses. What we can be sure of is that it will not be good or fair for future generations of our State.

### MYALL LAKES TOURISM

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:39):** Myall Lakes tourism operators have again shown their excellence with a raft of local businesses winning big at the North Coast Destination Network and The Legendary Pacific Coast Tourism Awards. Of course, everybody in this place knows that the Myall Lakes electorate is internationally renowned as Australia's water playground, with Myall Lakes, Smiths Lake, Bombah Waters, Wallis Lake, the islands, the mighty Manning River—the only double delta formation in the southern hemisphere with 156 kilometres of navigable waterways—the longest single-drop waterfall in the southern hemisphere at Ellenborough Falls, and almost 200 kilometres of pristine beaches. It is a truly remarkable place and people can go there and stay with some of the best tourist operators in Australia.

I congratulate five tourism operations which picked up awards at the gala dinner at our great winery, Cassegrain Winery in Port Macquarie on Saturday 30 July. With a focus on recognising excellence in tourism, entrants included businesses, events, marketing organisations, clubs and individuals, all aiming to promote tourism in their region. The winning businesses in my electorate included Bent on Food at Wingham, which won a gold award for Tourism Restaurants and Catering Services and a second gold award for Excellence in Food Tourism. I congratulate Donna Carrier, who is the owner/operator of that business. She is a wonderful, vibrant, enthusiastic, dedicated and hardworking woman who not only looks after her businesses but, at the same time, promotes the region as a whole. She also shares her knowledge by helping out at Taree TAFE in its hospitality course and assists disability students in the cooking competition they hold each year as part of recognising disabilities.

Big4 Great Lakes at Tuncurry won a gold award for Caravan and Holiday Parks. I congratulate Jan Richter-Spencer, who is the owner, and Shane Ridgewell, the general manager. Wingham Akoostick Music Festival won a gold award for Festivals and Events, and I congratulate Donna and Kevin Ballard. That festival has grown, with the assistance of events funding through Destination NSW, and it brings people into the fantastic historic town of Wingham. Sea Horse Diamond Beach received a silver award for Self-Contained Accommodation. Dianne and Chris Denton are the owners/operators of that business and they are wonderful people. Their son lives in Sydney and he was—and I hope he still is—a member of the Young Nationals. The Boogie Woogie Beach House at Old Bar won a gold award for Standard Accommodation, and I congratulate Stephen Doessel, the owner. Stephen is very active in the Old Bar community and is a member of the Chamber of Commerce there.

Beaches International at Forster was also recently crowned the second best accommodation by Star Ratings Australia in the serviced apartments category. This locally owned and operated business was ranked in the prestigious gold list. The rating represents data collected from more than 100 respected websites. Residents and visitors alike all know that the Great Lakes has the best of everything—the best beaches, surf, waterways, fishing, and now accommodation. I congratulate business owner Greg Randall on his commitment to providing the highest standard in accommodation for visitors to our wonderful area.

I have been pleased to be able to help the Wingham Akoostick Music Festival over the years in securing State Government funds to assist with the growth and development of the festival. However, another great festival, not mentioned in the awards, is the Old Bar Beach Festival held on the October long weekend. It holds the record in the *Guinness Book of Records* for the most number of kombis at a location. It is an absolutely fantastic weekend with food, produce, wine, the kombis and entertainment, and it attracts around 35,000 visitors, which is a phenomenal achievement. Once again, I congratulate all those award winners from the Myall Lakes electorate. The award winners are automatically entered as finalists in the NSW State Tourism Awards and, if successful, they will proceed to the National Tourism Awards. All of these operators play an important role in the promotion of our region and I congratulate them.

### ST MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL GATESHEAD LANDCARE GROUP

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:44):** I recently visited St Mary's High School at Gateshead in my electorate of Charlestown to celebrate 20 years of Planet Ark's National Tree Day initiative. I joined St Mary's Landcare team of 40 students from years 7 to 10, and together we planted more than 250 trees at Kennedy Creek, which runs along the school playground and boundary. I was reminded on that day of the benefits and importance of a holistic education and extracurricular activities, which allow students to pursue interests outside a standardised academic context.

Sometimes extracurricular activities can be seen as a distraction from, and not as important as, academic work. But academic subjects and extracurricular activities complement each other. Extracurricular activities provide a channel for reinforcing the lessons learned in the classroom and offer students the opportunity to apply academic skills in a real-world context. They are essential for a quality education that develops well-rounded, socially-skilled and healthier students. St Mary's has established a Landcare group of its own. Landcare Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that takes a community-based approach to managing and protecting natural resources. I am very proud to be a member of the Parliamentary Friends of Landcare.

The St Mary's Landcare team has established a school greenhouse, which has become an outdoor classroom. Earlier this year, St Mary's received an Environmental Sustainability Grant from Lake Macquarie City Council to support its incredible efforts and allow it to finish the school greenhouse. The greenhouse has enabled the school to undertake seed collection, germination and seedling care for native plants, herbs and vegetables. The greenhouse is also used by science students and Human Society and Its Environment [HSIE] students. In the greenhouse students learn how to propagate local native trees, shrubs, vegetables and herbs. These students then plant the seedlings in the school vegetable and herb garden as well as in the wider school grounds to help improve the quality of Kennedy Creek. They are hoping that in the long term they will be able to supply neighbouring schools and other members of the local community with endemic trees and shrubs.

It is fabulous to see the many Landcare days that St Mary's has each year. It is a great way to break up what can be a long day in the classroom. For 10 years, the St Mary's community has worked to rehabilitate Kennedy Creek by planting thousands of native trees, shrubs and grasses. These efforts have led to a range of benefits and incredibly improved soil and water quality. I was blown away by what I saw that day, and I was certainly blown away at how engaged and passionate the students were. They absolutely thrived in the outdoor and engaging learning environment where they are given the opportunity to contribute. They could see, through the animals and bugs that now call Kennedy Creek home, that their work is making a difference. It is something the whole school and community are benefiting from.

The Landcare group is a great way to get students to explore various interests they may have. It is this kind of hands-on learning that gets students out of the classroom and makes sure our schools cater for a range of students' gifts, talents, abilities and interests. At St Mary's this included one student with a learning difficulty who gained employment at a nursery after finishing school. It was his experience with the Landcare group that opened up this opportunity and made him more employable. When I was talking with teachers throughout the morning they told me how difficult it is for schools to guarantee funding for such initiatives. More needs to be done to help schools fund these extracurricular activities. I must say, though, that some of the students at St Mary's that day seemed to believe that funding would be better spent on BMX bikes and a quad bike for them to use around the school. They are yet to convince me.

I commend the teachers at St Mary's for creating the Landcare group. In particular, I acknowledge the work of Maryann Murray, a quality teacher and passionate environmentalist, who established the St Mary's Gateshead Landcare Group all those years ago. She continues to actively support the group along with Katrina Piper, who coordinated the tree planting day that I attended. They have taught and continue to teach their students useful and practical new skills. They have fostered a sense of commitment and purpose in the students and, most importantly, they have built a whole new community within the area. Well done, St Mary's High Gateshead for this fabulous initiative.

### OUR LADY OF FATIMA CATHOLIC CHURCH FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:48):** I acknowledge and bring to the attention of the House the fiftieth anniversary of my parish church, Our Lady of Fatima at Peakhurst, a church in which our family has celebrated and acknowledged baptisms, confirmations, communions and the odd funeral. The church was founded in 1966 by Father John O'Shea, together with a small but incredibly dedicated band of parishioners. Perhaps the most notable was Mr Colin Sinclair, who essentially designed the church building, ably assisted by his wife, Lorna, in all things to do with the interior upkeep of the church, including making vestments for Father O'Shea.

The new church building was officially opened two years later in 1968. Father O'Shea served in the parish for 20 years, a time he describes as "among the happiest of my life". This pioneer priest was a father-figure and a mentor to many right across the Peakhurst, Lugarno and St George area. As one early parishioner recalls, he "could always be relied upon to give help and advice in any way if needed". During those early years of the church's existence, and despite hardships and difficulties, many of the church's groups and societies were founded. They included the Catholic Youth Organisation and, of course, the St Vincent de Paul Society.

In 1973 the youth group hosted a scoot-a-thon, which not only raised money for the parish but also saw the team of 25 participants entered into the *Guinness Book of Records* for riding an ordinary child's scooter 490.5 kilometres over 24 hours. This was the church's first and only scoot-a-thon, which is probably for the best. But other traditions continue to this day, such as the tradition of raising funds and supporting those in need. For example, Our Lady of Fatima has been especially active in both flood and drought relief over many years. Likewise is its fundraising for the School of St Jude in Tanzania and its continued support of the St Vincent de Paul Society, which assists those not just locally but across the State.

Since 1988 Our Lady of Fatima at Peakhurst has shared a priest with St Declan's at Peshurst, along with St Anne's at Hurstville Grove, but it has retained its own parish identity, led by a dedicated lay leadership team. Its mission—as it is nourished by God's word and sustained by the sacraments—is to build and nurture a Catholic Christian community that welcomes all people. It does this by promoting prayerful, meaningful liturgies, actively demonstrating Christ to the wider community and providing opportunities for faith development for all.

My family and I are members and regular attendees at Our Lady of Fatima at Peakhurst. In fact, two years ago our son, James, was baptised there. It is indeed our spiritual home. I pay tribute to all the parishioners, the current priest, Father John Crothers, who I understand is retiring next year, the lay leadership team, all who worship at Our Lady of Fatima at Peakhurst and those who have done so in the past. They probably will not end up in the *Guinness Book of Records* again, certainly not for scooter riding, but that is not what matters. It is a wonderful local church and on behalf of all of us I congratulate Our Lady of Fatima at Peakhurst on 50 years of ministry.

#### HUNTER ELECTORATE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (17:53):** I would be the first to admit that there are problems with public transport in the Hunter, particularly in the Wallsend electorate, but I know that privatisation is not the answer. When a public service is operated with the sole goal of making a profit, it is always the average citizen who loses out. When public transport is privatised, prices go up and services rarely improve. One need only look at the example of Great Britain where a privatised rail system has seen the cost of rail travel skyrocket and passengers abandon the system in droves. In March last year when the people of the Hunter went to the polls they overwhelmingly rejected the Baird Government and the aggressive agenda of privatisation. The election results spoke for themselves. One can only imagine how much wider the margins in seats across the Hunter would have been if the Baird Government had made clear that it intended to privatise Newcastle's public transport network before the election.

Instead, the Transport Minister and the then Premier laid in wait, holding off on the announcement for eight months before springing it on an unsuspecting electorate—an electorate which had, earlier in the year, told the Baird Government exactly what to do with its privatisation agenda. We have heard a lot about how the Baird Government is all about infrastructure, and yet it continually fails to invest in the Glendale Transport Interchange that has been identified by all 11 Hunter mayors as the number one infrastructure priority for the region. Instead, the Government continues to push its hard line privatisation agenda, despite resistance from the Hunter community at every turn. Worryingly, very little information has since been forthcoming. Like the much-vaunted light rail project, there are more questions than answers. We still do not know when the privatisation will take place, what safeguards the Government will offer commuters in the Hunter, or what is to become of the hundreds of men and women who currently make their living on the buses, trains and ferries that service Newcastle.

What does it mean for services in the western suburbs, in Jesmond, Wallsend, Maryland, Shortland, Beresfield and Tarro that have already lost their most direct link to Newcastle as a result of this Government's decision to axe the rail line from very important working-class communities such as Beresfield and Tarro—areas where the residents live the longest distance from transport services in the Newcastle City Council's bailiwick and who often have the least resources? This Government owes the people of Newcastle some definite answers to these questions: What bus routes will be impacted and how? Will commuters in the western suburbs get their fair share of services, or will the focus be shifted—as has often been the case with this Government, entirely to the eastern suburbs and the inner city? How many people will lose their jobs? How will this Government ensure that the rights of commuters are protected and that the provision of services is properly regulated?

## CENTRAL COAST PALLIATIVE CAMPAIGN

### **Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (17:56):**

Today I bring to the attention of the House the dying wish of a brave woman who died in a nursing home in my electorate. When Elsie Green was first diagnosed and told she was terminally ill, she told friends that she dreamt of building a palliative care hospice for the Central Coast—a place with the familiarity of a home-cooked meal, a place where family could stay and have home comforts, and a place that would allow good memories to be made. During her remaining time, she was cared for by her brother until he could no longer care for her at home and she was placed in a nursing home. Elsie was a nurse. She spent her life caring for others in sickness, yet when her close friend and neighbour, Oana, came to visit her, she found Elsie in a shower chair, alone. Elsie said to her friend, "I am dying in this hell". Elsie's life was unique. Unfortunately, the circumstances of her passing were not.

The Central Coast is severely lacking in palliative care services for both children and adults. While there has been a home support service operating since 2013, it is currently stretched and unable to meet the needs of terminally ill people in our region. Like Elsie, many people on the Central Coast are left with no option but to die in a nursing home. We can do better. We need to do better. This cause is not without advocates. After seeing her friend suffer, Oana McBride, who is a mother from San Remo, began lobbying for a hospice for the Central Coast to keep Elsie's dream alive. She is also leading a call for more specialist trained palliative care staff on the coast, in acute hospitals and in nursing homes

Oana has joined with the Lions Club of Tuggerah Shores as well as local clubs and media. She hosted a public meeting at Mingara and engaged with a statewide campaign known as "Push for Palliative". The Push for Palliative campaign pushes for awareness and funding for palliative care services across New South Wales. The campaign has a particular resonance in regional areas where most services are harder to access. I know I do not need to explain in great depth the importance of terminally ill people having dignity and comfort when they are cared for. State and Federal governments must both take responsibility for improving this situation and ensuring that people living with a terminal illness in rural and regional areas have access to this vital service. It is not a matter of convenience to locate these services in the regions.

Palliative care services need to be located in places that provide comfort and familiarity to those whose services they require. People like Oana McBride understand this because they are unfortunate enough to have lost a friend or family member who had to suffer due to lack of palliative care services. I commend Oana for her passion and advocacy. As an elected representative, I will do everything in my power to support her and our community and push for more palliative care services on the Central Coast. To that end, the community is holding a Black and Bling Ball on 3 September at Mingara, and then a telethon later in the year, to raise funds. I acknowledge the efforts and hard work of Margaret Pearce and Dr Yvonne McMaster, OAM, in raising this issue on the Central Coast.

At the public meeting at Mingara there was bipartisan support. There were both State and Federal members from both the Labor Party and the Liberal Party, and all offered their support for this important cause. There was also support at the meeting from the private sector, offering to help educate the community and to help find a place for such a palliative care respite service. Last week members of the committee that has been formed to get this service going visited several facilities in Sydney to gain an understanding of the requirements. I, along with other members of the community, will be trying my hardest to help them raise funds—because this issue is not just for government; it is for the community.

If the community shows its willingness to raise funds to support this very important cause, the Government will know that the community is serious and will come to the party. Anyone who has been through the death of a family member or friend who was not able to die in their own home will understand the importance of a place for respite that is not in a hospital ward. We must help people in their final days of life to maintain their dignity. I commend all those involved in this initiative, particularly Oana McBride, Margaret Pearce and Dr Yvonne McMaster.

## VISION AUSTRALIA

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (18:01):** I take this opportunity to reflect on the work of Vision Australia. It is a great charity that makes an outstanding contribution to the community. Vision loss is becoming more prevalent in society and, in response to the resultant increased demand for services, Vision Australia recently opened a new service facility in Epping. I was privileged to be its guest at the opening on 1 July. I cut the ribbon and thought how fortunate my electorate was to be home to such an important new service facility. Last week Minister Ajaka visited my electorate to talk about the delivery of the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS]. It is organisations like Vision Australia, which provide such vital services to the community, that will

benefit from delivery of the NDIS. It will help them to better provide their clients with the services they want and need.

Vision Australia is a leading national provider of blindness and low-vision services in Australia. It works in partnership with Australians who are blind or have low vision to help them achieve the possibilities they choose in life. Vision Australia has 15 service providers, comprising adult and paediatric occupational therapists, orthoptists, orientation and mobility trainers, and a regional manager working out of the new Epping site, as well as a high number of dedicated volunteers. Vision Australia currently provides expert services to 520 clients living within the Sydney north and north-west area. With the establishment of this site, they are now able to provide services to the approximately 8,000 community members who are blind or have low vision.

At the opening I remarked on how technology is streamlining the way we do things and how, in many ways, technology is improving accessibility for people with a disability. However, we should also be mindful of the challenges technology can bring. The widespread use of touch screens on so many devices, for example, can present a real challenge for someone who is visually impaired. We should not take for granted the impact that these sorts of changes can have on someone's lifestyle.

I want to talk about two individuals I met when I visited the new centre, which is located near my office in Rawson Street, Epping. Mia is an inspiring young lady who joined me in cutting the ribbon to open the centre. She is 16 and a long-time client of Vision Australia. This new centre will provide great support to her, much closer to where she lives. Mia has a hereditary condition called macular atrophy. Her central vision is poor and she has to rely on her peripheral sight. Mia spoke with confidence and sincerity about the difference that the support of Vision Australia has made in her life. She will shortly be visiting Canada, to take part in a specialty retreat, through Vision Australia. It was great to meet her.

The other individual who made an impression on me was Michael Simpson, the general manager of the New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory [ACT] branch of Vision Australia and Alternative Information Services. Michael was one of the first people who greeted me at the door. He made me feel most welcome. After becoming totally blind at 18 as a result of two separate incidents, Michael's first connection with Vision Australia—then known as the Royal Blind Society of NSW—was as a client. Michael is responsible for delivering services to clients in New South Wales and the ACT through the National Information Library Service, the alternative format production service and the National Contact Centre.

Michael served as national president of Blind Citizens Australia for seven years. He has held senior roles on bodies that provide advice to government and the corporate sector on issues related to vision impairment. I thank Brendan McMahon, the regional manager for Sydney North and North West, and Victoria Agnese, the client liaison officer at the Epping centre, for their support and assistance as well. The new Epping centre is a great asset. It adds to a growing list of reasons the Epping electorate is such a great place to live, work and raise a family.

#### **KHALSAAID**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (18:06):** On Sunday 7 August I had the privilege of attending a fundraising event on behalf of KhalsaAid, organised by the Super Sikhs Sports and Cultural Association. KhalsaAid is a Sikh international aid group that provides emergency relief to people affected by natural disasters, wars and civil strife around the world. The special guest at the event was Ravi Singh, the founder of KhalsaAid. Ravi Singh is an English Sikh who was motivated to act on the Sikh principle: "Recognise the whole human race as one." The organisation, which is based in the United Kingdom, was established in 1999.

Since that time KhalsaAid has responded to emergencies in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and Haiti, in the Americas. Drawing financial support from Sikh communities around the world, KhalsaAid has provided food, water, clothing, shelter, medical supplies, assistance with rebuilding and many other forms of help. The list of emergencies where KhalsaAid has provided help is impressive. I will read out the list. KhalsaAid assisted refugees in the Albanian civil war in April 1999. It provided help after the earthquake in Turkey in August 1999. KhalsaAid also provided assistance during the cyclone in Orissa, India, in December 1999; the earthquake in Gujarat, India, in January 2001; and the volcanic eruption in the Congo and Rwanda in January 2002. It assisted refugees in Kabul, Afghanistan, in July 2003 and helped with water purification in Somalia in July 2003.

In the Andaman Islands KhalsaAid helped victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami in December 2004. It assisted victims of the Pakistan earthquake in March 2005 and the Indonesian tsunami in March 2006. KhalsaAid provided assistance following a cyclone in Bangladesh in May 2007 and floods in the Punjab in August 2007. It assisted Sikh and Hindu refugees in Pakistan in March 2009, orphans in Cambodia in August 2009 and people affected by the Haiti earthquake in June 2010. KhalsaAid helped Libyan refugees in Tunisia in March 2011. It provided assistance following the famine in Kenya in May 2011 and dug boreholes in Kenya in August 2012.

KhalsaAid also assisted victims of the Uttarakhand floods in India in June 2013 and the Muzaffarnagar riots in September 2013; The Philippines typhoon in December 2013, floods in the United Kingdom in January 2014, Syrian refugees in Lebanon in April 2014 and Sudanese refugees in Uganda in May 2014. In May 2014 KhalsaAid assisted with those affected by floods in Bosnia and in June 2014 Syrian refugees in Iraq. KhalsaAid assisted displaced Sikhs in Iraq in July 2014, those affected by riots in India in July 2014, floods victims in Jammu and Kashmir in September 2014 and a cyclone affecting India and Nepal in October 2014. In 2015 KhalsaAid assisted in the aftermath of Cyclone Marcia in Queensland in February, Malawi floods in March, the earthquake in Nepal in April and the floods in the United Kingdom in December. Most recently KhalsaAid has assisted Greece with the refugee crisis in May 2016.

This is an enormous list of catastrophes and civil unrest in which KhalsaAid has come to the rescue of affected people. That work has been supported by generous Sikhs all over the world who have put their hands in their pockets to assist their neighbours—in the widest sense of the word—all over the globe regardless of race, politics, religion or any other category. Those who need assistance are seen as being human beings who are part of the human family. Ravi Singh's address to the 300 residents of The Ponds, Stanhope Gardens, Glenwood and surrounding areas as well as quite a few visitors from far afield on Sunday 7 August, was inspiring in its simplicity and clarity.

The response of generous people like Ravi Singh to the principle that the whole human race is one was straightforward in taking action to help wherever there is need. This help is given regardless of borders, race, religion, creed, politics or any other consideration. The support forthcoming from those who attended was impressive. I understand that \$50,000 was raised at the event. I commend KhalsaAid for its commitment to help needy people around the world and I commend the Sikh community in Sydney's north-west for its generous support of this aid agency. I congratulate Balraj Ougra and his team of Super Sikhs for organising the event.

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (18:11):** As the Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism, I commend the member for Riverstone for bringing to the attention of this House the wonderful work of Khalsa Aid and Ravi Singh. I commend KhalsaAid for undertaking wonderful programs over many years. I know the Punjabi community adds vibrancy to the Australian community. I am sure members of this House, including the member for Riverstone, join me in wishing India a great Independence Day on Monday. India is the largest democracy in the world and those Indians who have joined the Australian community are wonderful, hardworking people. I pay tribute to the Punjabis in this country, especially the Sikhs who make a wonderful contribution to the Australian lifestyle.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:12 until Tuesday  
23 August 2017 at 12:00**