



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday, 14 September 2016

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 14 September 2016

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

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Bills

SECURITY INDUSTRY AMENDMENT (PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS) BILL 2016

Returned

The SPEAKER: I report the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the abovementioned bill without amendment.

[Notices of motions given.]

SCRAP METAL INDUSTRY BILL 2016

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 24 August 2016.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (10:13): On behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition, I speak in debate on the Scrap Metal Industry Bill 2016. I note that the object of the Scrap Metal Industry Bill 2016 is to provide regulation to the scrap metal industry. This is to be achieved through the installation of appropriate prohibitions, registration requirements and other regulatory measures that will ultimately provide greater transparency, accountability and oversight throughout the industry. I note from the beginning that the New South Wales Labor Opposition will not oppose the bill.

Until now the scrap metal industry has been left somewhat unregulated. Feedback from within the industry highlights how to date, any kind of regulatory intervention on individuals and businesses who have been doing the wrong thing has really had little-to-no impact on their somewhat questionable business ethics. It is worth noting that a number of individuals within this industry essentially run off a cash-for-scrap scheme, which is exactly what it sounds like. They will provide cash for all manners of metal objects, without any question as to where the metal came from. This can include things like large spindles of copper cables and wiring, and motor vehicles. In 2011 the Australian Institute of Criminology issued some strategies for preventing scrap metal theft and stated:

Scrap metal theft is a lucrative and attractive venture for thieves and a significant issue for the construction industry. It appears to be facilitated by a largely unregulated scrap metal recycling industry, the relative ease of theft due to the openness and accessibility of construction sites, and encouraged by escalating metal prices.

Strategies proposed by the institute included standardised transaction recording, information sharing, and multi-agency cooperation—all aspects that are in this bill. Part 2, division 1 of this legislation sets out the regulatory requirements of the scrap metal industry and provides for the registration requirements of a scrap metal business. Should a business operate in the scrap metal industry without being registered, it will be considered to be operating illegally and it may face a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units, \$11,000. This section also stipulates that the Commissioner of Police must keep and maintain a register containing the registration information for each registered business. This register must be publicly accessible.

As a part of the registration process, all businesses must nominate a manager for each individual scrap yard they operate to be a primary point of contact—this will provide further accountability and a go-to person in the event of any investigation. Businesses will be responsible for ensuring their information is kept current and up to date, as they are required to report any changes in their registration to the commissioner within 14 days of the changes or they may face a penalty of 10 penalty units, \$1,100.

Part 2, division 2 prescribes that it is an offence for any scrap metal dealer to pay for any scrap metal in cash, a cash cheque or through any goods or services in kind. Scrap dealers must also report to a police officer any scrap metal in the dealer's possession which may be suspected as stolen or unlawfully obtained. Failing to report unlawfully obtained scrap to the police carries a penalty of 50 penalty units, \$5,500. Further, if the identification numbers from a motor vehicle have been unlawfully removed, obliterated, defaced or altered, including from the vehicle's body, engine or chassis, it is an offence for any scrap metal dealer to purchase the

vehicle. It is also an offence for a scrap metal dealer to dispose of any unidentified motor vehicle, body, engine or chassis that meets this criteria.

This also impacts any such vehicle that may have been in the dealer's possession prior to the inception of this legislation. The only instance when a scrap dealer may dispose of such vehicles is when they have authorisation in writing from a police officer to do so. Failing to comply with this regulation carries a penalty of 100 penalty units, \$11,000. This section also enables a police officer to issue an order in writing to a scrap dealer, prohibiting them from altering the form of scrap metal or disposing of scrap metal which may be suspected of being stolen. This order may last for a period of 14 days. Failure to comply carries a penalty of 50 penalty units, \$5,000. Part 3 division 1 of this legislation provides for the Commissioner of Police to order the closure of a scrap metal business that is not registered or if the commissioner suspects that a serious criminal offence is being committed at the premises. This closure period may be in effect for a period of 72 hours, unless sooner repealed or evoked. The long-term closure of a premises by the Local Court is possible should the commissioner make an application to do so.

Obviously it is an offence for any business to continue operations within the closure period, with the penalty for failing to comply being 100 penalty units. Division 2 provides the police with the ability to enter and inspect a scrap metal premises without a warrant for the purpose of checking its compliance with regulation or to ensure that it is not contravening this proposed Act. Police officers, however, will not have the ability to enter any private property for such inspections. This legislation enables an officer to inspect only scrap metal business premises. Should a warrant be necessary for any further inspections, if an officer believes on reasonable grounds that the Act is being contravened, a warrant may be issued upon the application of an officer.

We have consulted with members of the scrap metal industry who have echoed the concerns raised in this House about criminal elements within their industry. The industry appears supportive of the moves, which will assist in the reduction of crime; however, an emphasis has been placed on the need for rigorous inspections, audits and subsequent prosecutions to stamp out those who are continually doing the wrong thing. This legislation also gives the dog a hefty bark, which can certainly create some change within the industry. However, without the appropriate resources channelled into ongoing monitoring and oversight, this legislation will not have the necessary bite to clamp down on crime and initiate real change within the industry. As I said at the beginning of my speech, the New South Wales Labor Opposition does not oppose this bill.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (10:20): I support the Scrap Metal Industry Bill 2016. As we have already heard in the debate, this bill will provide a level of minimalist regulation to the scrap metal industry—which has gone largely unregulated in this State for some time—to ensure transparency and the conduct of the scrap metal businesses but also to remove any criminal elements from that industry. In summary, the objective of the bill is to require scrap metal businesses to register with police and pay a nominal registration fee every three years, to prohibit scrap metal businesses from paying cash for scrap metal brought to them and to keep a register of those individuals who bring in scrap metal, the nature of that scrap metal and the details of the individual who sold it.

Lastly and importantly—and it was commented on by the Opposition spokesperson—this bill empowers police officers to enter scrap metal businesses at any reasonable time to conduct inspections to determine compliance or lack thereof with the regulatory requirements and investigate any suspicious activity. The regulatory scheme proposed in this bill draws from successful legislation introduced in the United Kingdom in 2013. It is, as I have already said, a minimalist regulatory scheme that will not add any undue cost burden on participants in the scrap metal industry but is designed to require a level of transparency and integrity in the industry to prevent criminal elements festering within it. The regulation has been tailored to address the concern, shared by everyone in this House, about property crime without unnecessarily getting in the way of businesses conducting their business, employing people and ultimately making a profit.

While under the proposed scheme businesses will be required to keep and maintain reasonable business records, this is something they are already required to do for other government entities—for example, the Australian Taxation Office. Obviously, as we have heard already in the debate, the prevalence of cash-only businesses might change the nature of that reporting. Nevertheless it is seen as an important initiative to remove any potential for criminality and allow for greater transparency within the industry. The ban on paying cash for scrap metal and the requirements to show identification and to keep and maintain records—an onus that is on the business owner—are expected to make scrap metal dealers a far less attractive option through which to offload stolen vehicles, stolen building supplies and the like.

We have all heard stories and read about those sorts of activities in newspapers. Property crime costs the community time and it costs individuals money. It also has an impact on the insurance industry if a claim is made. The proposed legislation will assist in bringing greater transparency to the scrap metal industry, thereby making it far easier for government agencies such as the Environment Protection Authority to monitor businesses and

assess non-compliance with environmental regulations. It will also help the police to deal with potential criminal matters. The bill contains commonsense reform that is long overdue and largely welcomed by industry participants.

I have consulted on this bill with a couple of scrap metal dealers in my electorate. They certainly welcome its provisions because they want any criminal elements in their industry weeded out. They believe that the scheme proposed in this bill will not place undue burdens on their businesses but will expose those who are operating a cash-only business and perhaps trying to fly under the radar in their conduct. It is for those reasons, as well as those previously outlined in the debate, that I support this bill. As I said, it establishes a simple and sensible regulatory regime that will provide transparency and help authorities to weed out those within the industry who seek to perpetrate criminal offences. It will also support industry participants who continue to do the right thing. On that basis I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (10:26): The Scrap Metal Industry Bill 2016 has been designed to provide regulation of the scrap metal industry through the installation of appropriate prohibitions, registration requirements and other regulatory measures to provide greater transparency, accountability and oversight for the industry. This is because the scrap metal industry has to date been largely unregulated, making it an extremely attractive avenue for criminals to make quick cash. The industry operates largely by a cash-for-scrap scheme, purchasing all manners of metal objects with little oversight by authorities. There are claims that this has fuelled vandalism and theft across the State.

While I support the intention of this bill to reduce crime, as shadow Minister for Small Business I must note that the Government is again increasing regulation in an industry with a history of very little oversight and seeking to increase the cost burden on businesses perhaps with little impact on reducing crime. Despite this Government's mantra that it is the record deregulator with "five off for every one on", which I note has been watered down to "two off for one on" in recent times, the Auditor-General has recently called the Government to account in a report that shows it has not been the deregulator it claims to be. In fact, the Auditor-General stated:

In 2015, the Government reported that its red tape reduction initiatives, implemented between 2011 and 2015, had resulted in \$896 million in savings. While these initiatives resulted in some savings, the total value of savings is unknown because estimates for some initiatives were based on unverified assumptions, cost transfers or unrealised projections.

In the absence of an accurate red tape savings figure and a stocktake of regulation, the NSW Government does not have a clear view of what impact its reported red tape savings has had on the overall net burden of red tape in New South Wales.

The 'one-on, two-off' initiative to reduce legislative regulatory burden achieved its numerical target—with approximately four legislative instruments removed for each one added. However, in cost terms, the value of total legislative burden increased by \$16.1 million over the same period despite a reduction in legislative instruments.

I think any small business owner would much prefer to incorporate five easy pieces of legislation into their business practice models than one complex piece. The Auditor-General said the audit found:

... there is no effective, central oversight of whether red tape reduction principles are being applied by departments to prevent and reduce red tape. On the back of that, the Auditor-General made several recommendations, including that the Department of Premier and Cabinet establish a framework for reducing red tape, re-establish a program of targeted reduction of unnecessary regulations; take a transparent approach by starting with a comprehensive stocktake of the regulatory burden so that progress can be accurately tracked and reported; build on past work with targeted reviews of areas with more red tape; better monitor performance against better regulation principles; and that clearer processes and responsibilities be established to improve the quality of regulatory assessments. I have raised the Auditor-General's recommendations because small business in this State is suffering under the burden of excessive regulation. Despite the Government's claim, it is clear from the Auditor-General's report and from my consultations with businesses on the ground that no effective strategy has been adopted to reduce red tape, and this legislation imposes even more.

I will now deal with some of the red tape and regulations this bill introduces and which will be an imposition on the good operators within the industry. The bill provides that scrap metal businesses must register and nominate a manager of each scrap metal yard used by the dealer as the point of contact. Further, it provides that any changes in registration information must be reported within 14 days of being amended, otherwise the business may face penalties. It also provides that a scrap metal dealer cannot buy any goods with cash, cheques payable to cash, or in kind with any goods or services. If they suspect that any scrap metal in their possession or any scrap metal sold to them may have been stolen or unlawfully obtained, they will have a duty to inform the police of their suspicion. That is obviously a good thing. They will also be required to keep transaction records containing the date of the transaction, the details of the person who sold the scrap metal to them, a description of the scrap metal, whether it consisted of a motor vehicle, and the method of payment. The records must also be retained for at least three years.

Should the business not be registered while carrying out scrap metal operations, or there is a reasonable suspicion that a serious criminal offence has been committed at the premises, the New South Wales Commissioner of Police may make an interim order that the premises be closed and the Local Court may, on application from the commissioner, order the long-term closure of the premises for those reasons. Therefore, a business will be

able to be closed on the basis of a reasonable suspicion. Police officers may at any reasonable time enter any premises that is a business dealing with scrap metal to undertake compliance inspections. However, they will not have the power to enter a premises that is used only for residential purposes without the permission of the occupier or the authority of a warrant.

The Labor Party has consulted with the scrap metal industry and the Australian Metal Recycling Industry Association about this legislation. The association supports moves that will assist in reducing crime, but it notes the absence of any consultation by the Government prior to the introduction of this legislation. It believes that without a rigorous regime of business inspections, audits and prosecutions, this legislation on its own will have no real effect in reducing the incidence of crime in the industry. I met with the NSW Small Business Commissioner and the Minister's staff earlier this week to discuss a range of issues relating to business and the lack of consultation with the industry prior to the introduction of legislation that will impose an increasing legislative and compliance burden.

I am concerned that the bar has been raised for good operators in many industries without any enforcement and compliance action being implemented to ensure that all participants comply with the legislation. This bill will increase the cost burden on the good operators while those engaged in illegal or criminal conduct will be able to sail through because of a lack of enforcement. I am also concerned about how the Government can help the industry. A model system is usually established when new regulations have been proposed by successive governments. We are talking about people working in the scrap metal industry who do not necessarily have the high level of financial or even English literacy required to implement a system to ensure that they comply with the regulations. I will be interested to see whether the Minister for Small Business offers some assistance to the industry to help it to deal with the increasing regulatory burden which will result from the passage of this legislation.

That enforcement and compliance action must be consistently applied, particularly when a reasonable suspicion of criminal activity can result in the short-term or, by court order, the long-term closure of a business. We also need to move away from the idea that cash businesses operate for nefarious purposes. Industries often operate in that way because it suits their model of providing quick and easy access to consumers with low levels of financial literacy. If a business has not had a strong history with banks in raising significant loans, et cetera, they may not have access to facilities that create a paper trail such as electronic funds transfer at point of sale [EFTPOS], which would remove some of the barriers for them.

I take this opportunity to emphasise the numbers game and regulation. Small businesses should not be burdened with the yolk of regulation in order to do the Government's work. It is the Government's responsibility to find criminals, and businesses, like all members of the community, should assist in reducing crime, particularly in identified areas that make it easier for criminals to participate. However, as I said earlier, one complex piece of legislation does not equal five simple regulations that are easy to comply with. The Government needs to take its obligation to small businesses—the engine room of our State—and help them through this regulatory burden. It may have been a good step if the Government had consulted with industry groups, but that boat has already sailed. The Minister for Small Business needs to intervene in this rollout to ensure that small business is not disadvantaged by the State's desire to stop criminal activity. Whilst I support the bill, it is my hope that the Government will work with small business to ensure that these compliance and enforcement obligations are met and that it is not all for nothing for those businesses.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (10:36): I make a contribution to debate on the Scrap Metal Industry Bill 2016. The member for Maitland is apparently so obstructionist in her outlook that she could not help but speak unfavourably about legislation that she and her party will ultimately vote in support of in this House.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: Members are entitled to make their contribution as they see fit, and the member for Maitland did so.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): To what standing order is the member for Blacktown referring?

Mr John Robertson: I ask that the disparaging remarks made by the member for Ku-ring-gai be withdrawn.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): The member for Blacktown will resume his seat. The member for Ku-ring-gai has the call.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: The comments of the member for Maitland are entirely inappropriate. The regulatory touch of this legislation is both soft and proportionate to the evil that it seeks to address. A fundamental obligation of government in a civilised society is to protect the life, liberty and property of its citizens; it is part of what is referred to in moral and political philosophy as the "social contract". This was a

concept first made famous by the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his treatise called *The Social Contract*, originally published in 1750, which the member for Blacktown probably not only has read but also takes to bed with him each night.

If government has an obligation to protect the property of its students and citizens, it also has an equal obligation to deter as far as it can crime against the property of its citizens. This bill protects people's property in so far as they possess metal items and deters crimes against that property. It does so by drawing upon the United Kingdom legislation enacted in 2013 called the Scrap Metal Dealers Act, which has proven very successful in that jurisdiction. As the Deputy Premier has informed the House, there are between 600 to 700 scrap metal businesses in New South Wales. They deal in all manner of metal objects—cars, hot water systems, copper piping and wire—and by their nature they receive, crush and recycle metal.

Up until now this industry has largely dealt in cash and has been entirely unregulated. These characteristics have made it fertile ground for the industry to be a means of receiving stolen cars, stolen hot water systems from newly constructed housing estates or stolen copper piping or wire from heritage buildings, churches and other structures. Easily replacing scrap metal with cash makes the crime largely untraceable. These crimes leave the vulnerable in our community in despair or, if they are fortunate enough to be insured, leads to higher insurance premiums for the community at large. If the stolen goods cannot be easily turned into cash then a strong disincentive for a criminal activity will exist. The bill before the House will disrupt this sometimes highly organised criminal activity.

Part 2, division 1 establishes a regulatory regime for scrap metal businesses. Clause 5 makes it an offence to carry on a business of dealing in scrap metal without being registered. Clause 6 sets out the methods of becoming registered and the information required to become registered. By requiring information such as an Australian Business Number [ABN] and the name of the manager of the business, the police as regulator will have relevant information about registered businesses operating in the industry. Other information for registration can also be prescribed by regulation. Clause 7 specifies that a fee for registration can be prescribed by regulation. The Deputy Premier has already informed the House that it will be nominal only and likely to be less than \$300 for a three year registration. Clause 11 creates an offence for providing false or misleading information to the Commissioner of Police for the purposes of registration.

Part 2, division 2 creates a number of obligations upon scrap metal businesses. Clause 12 prohibits scrap metal dealers from paying for scrap metal that they buy from members of the community by using cash, by a cheque payable for cash or by a payment in kind through goods or services. The prohibition is backed by a fine if it is breached. Criminal activity flourishes from these kinds of payments because they leave a soft criminal footprint, making crime investigation difficult. Modern means of electronic payment now facilitate easy and accessible means of transacting business without cash or its equivalent and it also permits an electronic record of those transactions. This, in turn, allows the police to trace the financial proceeds of criminal activity which may be a precursor to these financial transactions. Requiring electronic payment has a great capacity to disrupt criminal activity. In the area of scrap metal, that criminal activity is often of an organised and systemic kind.

Clause 13 of the bill also creates an important duty upon scrap metal dealers to report to police without unreasonable delay if they suspect for any reason that any scrap metal in the dealer's possession or sold to the dealer may have been stolen. A breach of that duty by scrap metal dealers will also be subject to a monetary fine. Clause 14 of the bill prevents a scrap metal dealer from buying for scrap metal a motor vehicle if the unique identifier of the vehicle has been removed, obliterated, defaced or altered. A scrap metal dealer must not dispose of the vehicle unless authorised in writing by the police. Breach of these provisions will result in a penalty upon the scrap metal dealer.

Clause 15 gives powers to police who suspect a scrap metal dealer may be in possession of stolen metal goods to prohibit, by notice in writing, the dealer from dealing with the scrap metal for 14 days. Any breach of that prohibition will be punished by a fine. Clause 16 of the bill requires scrap metal dealers to provide and retain relevant transaction records such as the date of the transaction; if the scrap metal is sold to an individual, the name, address and other details of the individual; if it is sold to a corporation, the ABN and other details of the corporation; a description of the scrap metal and its quantity or weight; and other relevant information. Part 3 division 1 has important enforcement provisions. Clause 17 allows for interim closure of premises for a period of 72 hours upon a reasonable suspicion that a serious criminal offence is being committed at the premises or if there is satisfaction that a scrap metal business is not registered but is carrying on business governed by the Act.

Contrary to the remarks of the member for Maitland, clause 18 does not allow the long-term closure of premises to be made upon only a reasonable suspicion of a serious criminal offence. In fact, clause 18 provides for due process of the law whereby long-term closure orders can only be made by the Local Court based upon evidence that either the scrap metal business is not registered or there have been or there are likely to be serious

criminal offences committed at or in connection with the premises. Clause 19 of the bill prohibits the carrying on of a scrap metal business on premises subject to a closure order. Part 3 division 2 provides the NSW Police Force with powers of entry and inspection. Under clause 21 a police officer may, at any reasonable time, enter premises at which a business of dealing with scrap metal is being carried on, or if the police officer reasonably believes such a business is being carried on. Clause 22 of the bill allows for a police officer to obtain a warrant from an authorised officer under the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act to enter premises.

Clause 23 provides for the various powers that may be exercised by police officers upon the entry of premises. There is an important qualification to the power to enter premises in clause 21, which is that a police officer may not enter premises that are used only for residential purposes without the permission of the occupier or the authority of a search warrant. In conclusion, I agree with the member for Northern Tablelands that this is long-overdue legislation. The core business of government is to protect the property of its citizens. Compliance with the law and the protection of property rights is part of the DNA of the Coalition and this legislation should be supported by the House.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (10:46): It is with pleasure that I contribute to debate on the Scrap Metal Industry Bill 2016. I will read out the objectives of the bill because they are clearly important to the aim of the legislation. They are:

- (a) to require persons who carry on a business of dealing in scrap metal to register the business with the Commissioner of Police,
- (b) to prohibit scrap metal dealers from paying cash for scrap metal,
- (c) to require scrap metal dealers to keep and maintain records of transactions for buying scrap metal, including details of the person selling the scrap metal,
- (d) to require scrap metal dealers to report suspicious transactions to the police,
- (e) to prohibit scrap metal dealers from accepting a motor vehicle (or any motor vehicle body, engine or chassis) as scrap metal if it does not display its identification details,
- (f) to provide for short-term and long-term closure orders in respect of premises at which a scrap metal business is being carried on if the business is not registered under the proposed Act or serious criminal offences have been committed on the premises,
- (g) to authorise police officers without a warrant to enter premises at which a scrap metal business is being carried on to investigate contraventions of the proposed Act and to search, take photographs and recordings and seize and copy records,
- (h) to provide for other regulatory measures in respect of the scrap metal industry. That sets the scene for the bulk of my contribution—namely, this bill is focused on preventing property crime in our communities. To introduce new regulatory requirements to an industry is a significant step, not to be taken lightly. I agree with the member for Ku-ring-gai that the level of regulation is commensurate with the problems being caused in this particular industry and to the innocent people who may be caught up with an element who, unfortunately, continuously do the wrong thing. However, when it comes to the New South Wales scrap metal industry, police have amassed evidence to show that new regulatory requirements designed to help prevent trade in stolen goods are justified.

I will give some examples. In October 2010, police tracked a stolen vehicle that had been fitted with a tracker to a scrap metal yard in Fairfield. Fifteen minutes after arriving at the yard the vehicle was crushed and the person who drove the vehicle to the scrap metal yard received \$300. No receipt for the sale of the vehicle was provided and no documentation or proof of ownership was taken by the scrap yard dealer. While at the yard, police noted that vehicles were crushed shortly after being received and without parts being removed. In September 2009 police located 31 motor vehicle registration plates belonging to unrecovered stolen vehicles from a drain in a street in Mount Druitt. On this street, an auto dismantler and a scrap metal dealer were situated.

A source informed police that this particular scrap metal dealer was receiving a large quantity of motor vehicles for scrapping and was responsible for placing the plates down the drain. The source also indicated he had been provided vehicles for scrapping at \$150 per car. Further police investigations discovered that the scrap metal dealer would purchase vehicles for approximately \$90 per tonne and would remove the tyres, wheels and catalytic converters. The partially stripped vehicles were then sold to another larger scrap metal dealer who would shred the vehicles in a metal shredding machine. At the time, the police did not have any power to enter and inspect the scrap metal dealer's business but they were able to enter and inspect the premises of the auto dismantler because the business was covered by other legislation. None of the 31 stolen vehicles has ever been recovered.

In January 2014 in the Hawkesbury, information obtained during a State crime command strike force indicated that, amongst other criminal enterprises, vehicles and machinery were regularly being stolen and sold to identifiable scrap metal dealers. The vehicles were scrapped for parts and were then shipped overseas. The impact of metal theft is highlighted by the theft of low-value cars. I understand that in 2014, 12,435 light commercial and passenger vehicles valued at more than \$44 million were stolen in New South Wales and 4,124,

or about one-third of those vehicles, were never recovered. Of the recovered vehicles, more than 45 per cent were less than \$5,000 in value and approximately 23 per cent were valued between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

When presented with this evidence, it is difficult to argue with the action being taken, which is aimed at closing scrap metal yards as a way to dispose of stolen metal items. As has been mentioned by previous speakers, particularly the member for Northern Tablelands, good industry participants welcome this legislation and, unlike the unnecessary fears expressed by the member for Maitland, a commensurate level of regulation is normal for many businesses. For many years before entering Parliament I was in small business in the financial planning industry and I can vouch for the level of regulation and how frustrating it is. However, I do not know of any legitimate business that does not keep accurate records not only for compliance but also for the good management and structure of their business. The scrap metal industry participants welcome this legislation. The Deputy Premier mentioned the minor cost of \$300 for a three-year licensing certificate, which is not onerous in any way. It is not unreasonable to expect that a business such as a scrap metal dealer keep appropriate records. There are other pieces of legislation covering all sorts of industries across our financial markets that make it compulsory to report certain transactions. This legislation brings the scrap metal industry into line with many of those other industries. For the reasons I have articulated, the scrap metal industry is a significant outlet for, in particular, car theft and associated crimes, and we need to arrest this. The Australian Metal Recycling Industry Association has its own code of conduct, which is:

1. Maintain a high standard of commercial conduct and business ethics with other members, customers and suppliers. This includes the honouring of all contracts and commitments freely entered into, in particular the observance of both quantity and quality.
2. Represent the common interests of the industry in their relations with suppliers, consumers, local authorities and government departments.
3. Observe the highest practical standards of environmental care and protection.
4. Ensure adequate insurance cover is maintained ...
5. Ensure strict adherence to relevant State Department of Occupational Health and Safety regulations.
6. Compliance with all Federal/State laws and regulations.

It is clear that the industry itself broadly welcomes the Government's initiative, which brings the industry into line and protects innocent people. If enacted, the scheme will be reviewed after three years of operation to ensure that it continues to meet its objectives. I am very confident that this measure will work and will result in a clean-up of the industry. It will give police the powers they need to target those criminal elements in our society that we all want to see gone. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (10:56): It is a pleasure to speak in support of the Scrap Metal Industry Bill 2016. This is a sensible, common-sense bill that will remove from the industry those who are doing the wrong thing. It will give assurance to the community by addressing the practice of stealing cars and selling them for scrap metal. This bill follows the introduction of successful legislation in the United Kingdom in 2013. I am pleased that the Government has adopted a sensible bill and process from another jurisdiction, and reasonably quickly. I congratulate the Minister for Police, my party leader, and Deputy Premier, Troy Grant, on acting so swiftly to bring this bill forward.

It is a travesty that people's cars are stolen and within a couple of hours are crushed into metal for very small return—a process that is inspired and encouraged by criminal elements. This legislation will ensure that police will have powers of entry to and inspection of a property. Police will be able to enter the premises, without a warrant and at any reasonable time, of a scrap metal business, or premises where police reasonably believe such a business is being carried on, for the purposes of determining compliance with or contravention of the Act.

The legislation will require a scrap metal business to register with police and pay a nominal fee every three years. It will prohibit scrap metal businesses from paying cash for scrap metal. It empowers police officers to enter scrap metal businesses at any reasonable time to determine compliance or lack thereof with regulatory requirements. This is a minimalist regulatory scheme designed to prevent crime. The Minister for Police, when explaining the legislation, was at great pains to highlight the fact that this legislation represents a minimalist intervention in business.

As a small business person, I know it is important that business people have the least possible government interference in or oversight of their business activities. But the community expects us to have processes that will catch those people who do the wrong thing. The bill enables that to occur. The regulations have been tailored to address the concerns at hand—property crime—without unnecessarily getting in the way of good, honest businesses. While businesses will, under the proposed scheme, be required to keep and maintain reasonable business records, they are already required to do this for other government entities—for example, the Australian Taxation Office. The ban on paying cash for scrap metal and requirements to show identification and keep and

maintain records are expected to make scrap metal dealers far less attractive as an option for people who wish to off-load stolen cars, stolen building supplies and the like. Property crime costs us all. It costs us time, money and—if we have insurance—an insurance claim.

The legislation will also assist in bringing greater transparency to the scrap metal industry, thereby making it easier for agencies such as the NSW Environment Protection Authority to monitor businesses and assess compliance with environmental regulations. For these reasons the proposed regulatory scheme outlined in the bill should be supported. I acknowledge the contributions from Opposition members and the fact that the Opposition will support the legislation. This is a good moment in this place, when common sense prevails and members work together. The Government has brought forward a bill that will make our community a bit safer. It is about making it harder for criminal elements. I have great pleasure in supporting the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I congratulate the member for Oxley on her appointment as Temporary Speaker.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (11:01): The Scrap Metal Industry Bill 2016 provides regulations for the scrap metal industry through a number of measures that enable greater transparency, accountability and oversight of this industry. At present, the scrap metal industry is largely unregulated and operates through a cash-for-scrap scheme. This makes it attractive to criminals, fuelling vandalism and theft to make easy money. The bill contains a number of measures to ensure there is greater transparency and accountability within the industry. The bill will also help to disrupt criminal activity flourishing within the industry. Part 2, division 1 of the legislation requires businesses to register and nominate a manager for each scrap metal yard used by the dealer as a point of contact. If a business deals with scrap metal without being registered under the proposed Act the maximum penalty will be \$11,000.

Part 3, division 1 states that if any business is carrying out scrap metal operation while not registered, or if there is a suspicion that a serious criminal offence is being committed, the New South Wales police commissioner may make an interim order that the premises be closed. This bill will also allow police officers to enter a scrap metal business at any reasonable time for the purpose of compliance inspections. However, they do not have the power to enter a premises that is used for residential purposes without the permission of the occupier or the authority of a warrant. Division 2 makes it an offence for a scrap metal dealer to pay for any scrap metal in cash, including cash cheque or in-kind with goods or services. The maximum penalty for this offence is 100 penalty units. If there is suspicion that any scrap metal has been stolen or obtained unlawfully it is the responsibility of the scrap metal dealer to report this to a police officer.

A scrap metal dealer must now keep a record of certain details of transactions entered into by the dealer for buying scrap metal, including the identification of the person who sold the scrap metal, a description of the scrap metal and the method of payment. All records must now be kept for at least three years. Failure to do so carries a maximum penalty of 50 penalty points. Until now the scrap metal industry has been largely unregulated. The bill before the House will provide a number of measures that will ensure greater oversight of the industry.

I remember, in years gone by, when I was younger, a lot of people talking about "midnight spares". This referred to the action of stealing a car, taking it to a garage somewhere and stripping it of all saleable items, leaving just a chassis. All the panels, seats and lights were sold off and then the scrap metal of the chassis was sold. I note that the more senior members in the House are nodding their heads because they know all about midnight spares. The scrap metal dealers used to make a fortune from scrapping the chassis and the unsaleable, large parts of cars. The midnight spares operation went on for a long time until panels and parts were identified by number. That made it a bit harder for the scrap metal dealers, but unscrupulous dealers found that if they crushed the parts and sold the metal the numbers would never be known.

In years gone by there was a lot of stealing, even from schools. When schools had copper downpipes and guttering the crooks would get into them at night and strip all that copper and sell it to scrap metal dealers. It was sometimes obvious that brand-new copper in downpipes and guttering was stolen but it was rarely reported because it was easy money for the crooks and easy money for the scrap metal dealers. I know that no matter what is done loopholes will always be found, but I hope that this legislation will close down that practice.

I will give an example of something that happened at my home. I got home late one night—at about one o'clock. I turned on the tap but there was no water. I thought, "What is happening here? Maybe the kids have been mucking around and turned off the front tap." When I went out and turned on the water it spurted across the whole paddock. Some guys had knocked off the garden tap in order to sell the brass. So I had to find a plug to block it off so that I had water. That is the sort of thing that people get up to. It is not just on industrial estates; it can happen at one's home.

I can provide a much more serious example, which occurred when I worked for Prospect Electricity. I was involved in the electrical industry for 23 years. A substation was being built. It was very close to being commissioned. Crooks got in there one night and cut through quite a thick bit of copper wire with a hacksaw. But the council had livened the wire overnight to provide temporary power and the person attempting to steal the wire was electrocuted. When the police asked his wife, "Where is your husband this evening?" she said, straight up, "He went out to steal copper wire." They said, "He is dead now because he cut through a live wire." It is a dangerous enterprise because some of those pipes are earthing points and if someone cuts them they may die. This is good legislation, and that is why the Opposition will not oppose it. Let us hope we can bring this industry into line and stop the thievery and criminal activity that sometimes goes on within it.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (11:07): On behalf of Mr Troy Grant: In reply: I thank the member for Northern Tablelands, the member for Ku-ring-gai, the member for Upper Hunter, the member for Oxley, the member for Fairfield, the member for Maitland and the member for Cabramatta for their contributions to debate on the Scrap Metal Industry Bill 2016. I particularly thank the member for Cabramatta for enlightening the House about "midnight spares". I thought he might have been close to declaring an interest, but he did not.

Mr Gareth Ward: At least he didn't incriminate himself.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: That is right. He highlighted the fact that items are being stolen. In rural and regional New South Wales, showgrounds are a particular target for thieves, who break in and steal valuable metals. That becomes a major cost and a huge problem for show societies across rural and regional New South Wales. Hopefully, this legislation will put a stop to that. I note the comments of the member for Maitland regarding the impact on business. The proposed model in the bill strikes the right balance by not getting in the way of business but, at the same time, ensuring that police have the powers and records they need to investigate property theft.

The issue of consultation with industry was raised as part of the debate. The lack of regulation in the scrap metal industry is not a new issue and has been the subject of discussion for many years. Representatives of the Deputy Premier, the NSW Police Force and the Department of Justice have met with the Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of NSW. The meeting was constructive and the Government has committed to liaising with the association when drafting the regulation provided for by clause 28 of the bill. The Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association has communicated to the New South Wales Government that its members are supportive of the general principle aims of the Scrap Metal Industry Bill 2016. The association indicated that it is its long-held view that all persons and organisations involved in any form of waste and/or recycling should, as a minimum, comply with all relevant laws and regulations, and that the passing of this bill provides a framework that enables New South Wales police to better regulate the scrap metal industry.

The Department of Justice has liaised with businesses such as Sims Metal, which is supportive of the reform, and businesses such as Sell and Parker have also been supportive of the bill. In my electorate, a number of private electrical contractors, who build transformers and engage in industrial and high-voltage line work, will welcome this bill. They also have been targets of thieves who have broken into their premises to steal precious metals and the like to sell to the scrap metal industry. Those involved in the electrical industry will also welcome this bill. In conclusion, the New South Wales Government is pleased to introduce a bill that aims to drive down property crime across New South Wales. The bill provides for a measured approach to regulate the scrap metal industry and deserves the support of every member of the New South Wales Parliament. As chairman of the Rural Crime Advisory Group, which met recently at Wagga Wagga and Tamworth and soon will meet at Port Macquarie, I advise the House that the issue of rural crime is being considered. This legislation will assist in addressing that matter as well. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: On behalf of Mr Troy Grant: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE AMENDMENT (SUMMARY PROCEEDINGS FOR INDICTABLE OFFENCES) BILL 2016

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 25 August 2016.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (11:12:1): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Summary Proceedings for Indictable Offences) Bill 2016. The Opposition does not oppose the bill. The bill has two main aims. One is to provide for certain indictable breaking and entering offences set out in the Crimes Act to be dealt with summarily unless the prosecutor or person charged elects otherwise. The second and less significant object relates to minor statute law revision. The Government essentially presents the main part of this bill on two bases. The first is as a modest incremental change to the criminal law and, principally, the jurisdiction of the Local Court. This pace of change can be justified as a modest, rational change following proper consideration. On that basis, the Opposition does not oppose this bill.

The second basis posited by the Government is to address the chronic and longstanding crisis of District Court criminal trial delay. That basis for this bill is unmitigated drivel. The way to address the District Court crisis is not by fiddling with a minute number of jurisdictional issues. The Government has sat on its hands since 2011 on the issue of District Court delay. The Government is five years late in taking action. When the President of the Law Society had the temerity to point that out, the Attorney General launched into a diatribe against him. The Attorney General's second reading speech was entirely innocent of any assessment of how many cases might actually be affected by this bill. One would have thought that was a pretty basic piece of information to justify the bill, or even to introduce it. If the bill is intended to address District Court delay, to what effect is that so? There was no sign of it in the second reading speech. It may be that the figures are difficult to obtain. If they are, then the Attorney General has no proper basis, let alone any business, in asserting that it will make a contribution to reducing the delay and alleviating the crisis in criminal trials in the District Court.

The Attorney General's announcement last year of extra funding to address the District Court delay was to address only 640 cases. Even on her optimistic view, that would still leave a far worse situation than that inherited by the Government in 2011. Indeed, the Attorney General's activity in this area is incredibly belated. The NSW Law Reform Commission labelled the system broken. Two successive chief justices, Reginald Blanch and Derek Price, warned of increased time delays. Material released by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research in July this year shows that the time taken to finalise criminal trials in the District Court increased considerably over the past five years. The median time between committal for trial and outcome increased by 47.3 per cent, from 233.5 days to 344 days. The overall median time for trial cases from arrest to finalisation in the District Court increased by 28.1 per cent, from 502 days to 643 days. The figures I have cited are for between 1 January 2011 and 31 December 2015.

The longest delays in the State were at Dubbo. The average wait from committal to outcome at the Dubbo District Court increased from 304 days in 2013 to 403 days in 2014, which makes placing a further full-time District Court judge at Wagga Wagga rather than at Dubbo a very curious decision. Of course, it is not just the District Court that faces funding cuts. The Government's five-year onslaught upon the Local Court has been deep and sustained, which raises, not unreasonably, the issue of how the Local Court will cope with extra work, having lost so many magistrates. That is precisely the question raised by the President of the Law Society, Gary Ulman, concerning this legislation. A few days ago, Mr Ulman said:

Orange is one of the more fortunate places in the State with both a functioning courthouse and regular Local Court sittings. In other parts of the State, court closures and cutbacks in the number of magistrates continue to have a negative impact on access to justice. As Local Court sittings move or are reduced in number, significant increases occur in the time taken for matters to come before the courts or to be finalised. Feedback from regional Law Society presidents has provided a disturbing picture of the impact of these closures.

For example, Tenterfield police usually take defendants to Armidale for their bail hearings. If that is granted, defendants must find their own way back to Tenterfield. Wauchope sittings have been significantly reduced which means that a person charged out of Wauchope police station can wait up to two months for the first return date for their matter. Camden Local Court has had a majority of its sitting days stripped away leaving only two days per month for apprehended violence order lists. Balranald Local Court closed in December 2015. Cases that would otherwise be filed there have been redirected to Hay, which is approximately 150 kilometres away, but there is no public transport.

The Local Court resources mentioned by the Attorney General in her second reading speech will hardly deal with the problems highlighted by the Law Society president. Mr Ulman also went on to say:

Last week, the NSW Attorney General introduced the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Summary Proceedings for Indictable Offences) Bill 2016. The purpose of the bill is to allow for offences for breaking and entering to be heard in the Local Court. It is said that this will reduce the criminal trial backlog in the District Court. This, however, begs the question does the Local Court have the resources to meet the additional workload? Based on feedback from the regions, the additional workload is going to sorely test the already strained resources of the Local Court unless more magistrates are appointed and court closures reversed.

The Attorney General's public response to this not unreasonable commentary was to accuse the Law Society of being mean spirited and petty. Fairfax Media was accurate in describing this as an extraordinary attack by the Attorney General on a body that should be one of her main stakeholders. The Attorney General might be better advised not to shoot the messenger. Experts in the field say that the District Court crisis will not ease until the second half of next year. The Government has allowed this crisis to go on for too long and has dedicated far too

few resources to deal with it. Unreasonable delays inconvenience all parties, add stress for victims and delay defendants being able to proceed with their lives. The reliability of the memories of witnesses is less precise, and accordingly the value of justice is less certain because of those delays.

The bill proposes four offences relating to breaking and entering offences that will be designated as table 1 offences. Those offences include section 109 (2) of the Crimes Act, which is the offence of section 109 (1) in circumstances of aggravation. The second is section 111 (2) which is, in circumstances of aggravation, entering any dwelling house with intent to commit a serious indictable offence therein. The third is section 112 (2), which once again is the aggravated offence, but this time of section 112 (1). The final offence is section 113 (2), which is the aggravated offence of breaking and entering any dwelling house or building with intent to commit any serious indictable offence therein. The situations that constitute circumstance of aggravation include being armed, being in company with a person or persons, the use of corporal violence, the intentional reckless infliction of actual bodily harm, the deprivation of a person's liberty, or knowing that there are people present when the offence is alleged to have been committed.

The bill provides that these become table 1 offences only if the following conditions are met: first, the serious indictable offence alleged is stealing or intentionally or recklessly destroying or damaging property; secondly, the value of the property or the value of the damage does not exceed \$60,000; and, thirdly, the only circumstance of aggravation is that the alleged offence is in the company of another person or persons. Making these offences table 1 offences means inserting them into table 1 of schedule 1 to the Criminal Procedure Act. These are offences that are to be dealt with summarily unless the prosecutor or the person charged elects otherwise. I note that in the fifth paragraph of her second reading speech the Attorney General is reported in *Hansard* as saying this about the bill:

Therefore prosecutors will be able to choose which court—either the Local Court or District Court—is the most appropriate forum to hear and determine these cases.

In fact, that is not strictly accurate. That seems to be a description of table 2 offences, not table 1 offences. This bill does not leave the election exclusively to the prosecutor but also to the defendant, which is precisely the point of table 1. The Attorney General has identified the origin of this bill in a report of the Sentencing Council from December 2010—almost six years ago now—entitled "An examination of the sentencing powers of the Local Court in NSW". I think the Attorney General said it was a 2011 report, but in fact it is dated December 2010. This, in turn, seems to have arisen from a request by the then Attorney General in April 2009. Specifically the then Attorney General sought advice *inter alia* on increasing the maximum property value for indictable break and enter offences that can be dealt with summarily from \$15,000 to \$60,000.

In June 2010 the monetary limit for section 112 (1) offences was increased to \$60,000. The Sentencing Council also considered whether there should be a general increase in the Local Court jurisdiction. That, of course, has been the object of discussion for some time and is still the subject of submissions by those advocating that change at every possible opportunity. It quite often involves allowing significantly increased jurisdiction in the imposition of penalties by the Local Court—that is, the maximum penalty could be increased significantly. The Sentencing Council's approach was recorded at paragraph 4.8 of the report as follows:

The council is of the view that the sentencing statistics do not support the need for a general increase in the Local Court's jurisdiction. Additionally it accepts that there are sound policy reasons for preservation of the status quo.

That is important because Labor's lack of opposition to the very particular, and frankly quite limited, increases in jurisdiction in this bill should not be confused with support for any broader increase in the Local Court jurisdiction, especially in relation to maximum sentencing. On this point, I think the Sentencing Council was correct. The council did, however, make this recommendation:

The council recommends that a general review of the Crimes Act be undertaken to determine whether any additional offences should be included in the Tables, and whether any offences currently included in the Tables should be re-categorised as strictly indictable offences.

The Attorney General says that after a review of these provisions the Government will consider whether they will be expanded to further offences. Granted the glacial pace of review by this Government, that is likely to be many years off. However, it should not be used for an indiscriminate increase in Local Court sentencing jurisdiction just to deal with over five years of scandalous underfunding of the District Court by this Government. The Opposition does not oppose the bill.

[*Business interrupted.*]

*Visitors***VISITORS**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I welcome to the public gallery members of the Shoalhaven Lioness Club and the Bomaderry Lions Club, who are guests of the member for Kiama.

*Bills***CRIMINAL PROCEDURE AMENDMENT (SUMMARY PROCEEDINGS FOR INDICTABLE OFFENCES) BILL 2016****Second Reading**

[Business resumed.]

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (11:22): The Criminal Procedure Amendment (Summary Proceedings for Indictable Offences) Bill 2016 provides further reform by this Government of criminal procedure to ensure more quick and cost-effective criminal justice in this State. As the Attorney General pointed out in her second reading speech, the bill complements other reforms by the Government. In December 2015 the Government announced a \$20 million package for the provision of 250 extra sitting weeks for the District Court over the 18 months from January 2016 to June 2017, as well as funding to increase the number of judges in the District Court by two judges, with two additional Public Defenders to be located in Port Macquarie-Tamworth to work across an area including Armidale, Port Macquarie, Tamworth and Taree. Just last month the budget delivered a further \$39 million package, which included the provision of three additional District Court judges. In a short period, this Government has appointed five new judges to the District Court to eat into, particularly, the criminal trial backlog in that court.

This legislation complements those initiatives by providing for four break and enter offences to be, at the election of the prosecution, heard in the Local Court. The Local Court is the engine room of criminal justice in this State. In its criminal jurisdiction the Local Court does not determine factual findings with the assistance of a jury. The District Court, by contrast, usually exercises its criminal jurisdiction through trial by jury. A feature of trial by jury is that when certain legal points are raised during a trial, the jury is required to leave the courtroom while the barristers and the judge debate points of law. Through their inherent nature, jury trials are therefore much slower and more expensive than a magistrate-alone hearing in the Local Court.

While the jury has a central and important role in our criminal justice system, since the establishment of the rule of law in our State a jury trial has not been considered necessary for lesser criminal offences. Over the past 30 years or so in this State there has been a trend to allow for less serious offences to be heard in the Local Court in respect of crimes that had previously been heard by a judge and jury in the District Court. This legislation is a continuation of that long trend in the administration of our criminal justice system.

The starting point for the bill that is before the House is a report from 2011 entitled, "An examination of the sentencing powers of the Local Court in NSW". In that report the Sentencing Council recommended a general review of the Crimes Act be undertaken to determine whether any additional offences should be included in the tables, being the second category of offences, that is, table 1 offences within the Criminal Procedure Act. Pursuant to that review, consultation was undertaken to determine whether the four offences, which are the subject of the bill, should be put in the tables to the Criminal Procedure Act. That is what has now been brought before the House.

It is important to note that the bill, in the provision of the four offences within the table, has been widely supported. It has been supported by the Department of Justice, the NSW Police Force, the Sentencing Council, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid, the Public Defenders, the Chief Judge of the District Court, the Chief Magistrate of the Local Court, the Bar Association and the Law Society. All the relevant stakeholders within the criminal justice system in this State support the inclusion of these four offences in the table. Importantly, the prosecutor has an election to make as to whether the matter will be heard in the Local Court or the District Court. Importantly, that election is only in respect of the less serious offences. These offences are property offences relating to break and enter, the sum involved cannot exceed \$60,000, there can be no violence associated with the commission of the offences, and the only aggravating factor is that the crime was committed in the company of another person or persons.

As the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] statistics for 2012-15 show, the offenders convicted of these offences were usually sentenced to sentences less than the jurisdictional limit of the Local Court. It is important to note that in no sense does the bill represent a relaxation of the penalties that will be meted out by courts in relation to these offences. It represents simply an administrative expediency in terms of ensuring quicker and less expensive justice in our State. In that regard it is important to note that the Productivity

Commission report on government services in 2015 recognised that the New South Wales Local Court was the most efficient court in the nation, with the lowest backlog and the highest percentage of cases finalised within 12 months.

This legislation will take four crimes that are heard in the District Court and put them into a much more efficient court. Importantly, complementary to this legislation, the Government has announced the funding of an additional one magistrate and two prosecutors to deal with the increase in the workload of the Local Court by reason of this bill. All of those economic and systemic benefits are important, but they are perhaps not as important as the human impact of this bill upon people involved in the criminal justice system. I am speaking particularly about the victims of and witnesses to crime. Taking these offences out of the District Court and putting them into the Local Court will ensure that court proceedings will hang over the heads of victims of and witnesses to crime for a shorter time than would otherwise be the case if they were heard in the District Court. It also means that the victims and witnesses will not have to give evidence twice, once in a committal proceeding leading up to a District Court trial and second at a District Court trial.

This legislation also provides other benefits. By relieving the pressure on District Court trials, more serious offences in the District Court will come to trial earlier. If the accused in those cases is on bail, he or she will be on bail for a shorter time because the trial will come to the District Court more quickly. There are benefits for accused persons who are ultimately acquitted in cases coming on more quickly for trial in our criminal justice system. As the Attorney General mentioned in her second reading speech, there is also a benefit of rehabilitation for convicted and sentenced offenders. Access to rehabilitation services will be more abundant if Local Court trials come on more quickly than District Court trials. There are many human benefits in this legislation beyond the financial, systemic and procedural benefits. For all of those reasons, I support the bill before the House. It is another example of the Government trying to improve the criminal justice system, which benefits the community at large.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (11:32): The Opposition does not oppose the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Summary Proceedings for Indictable Offences) Bill 2016. It is a worthwhile piece of legislation because the Government went through a consultation process in its law reform exercise. I have said repeatedly in this House that when it comes to law reform issues it is vital that the Government engage in a detailed consultation process to get the bill right. If every bill is right, it minimises the incidental or unforeseen consequences of various legislation as it intrudes on the common law.

There is no reason or prejudice that flows to either the prosecution or the accused by changing break and enter offences into table 1 offences because neither the prosecution nor the accused forfeits the right to a jury trial but maintains his or her election. Problems only occur in this area where, as a result of a budgetary exercise, people forfeit their rights to a jury trial, and this bill does not do that. In its review, the NSW Sentencing Council observed that there should be a further examination of the Crimes Act 1900 and additional offences added to table 1 offences because it is a more efficient way to provide justice for those offences that are within the magistrate's jurisdiction. The Sentencing Council cautioned against extending the jurisdiction of the Local Court beyond the current limitations, and the member for Liverpool made reference to the very good reasons for that.

I will not detail those valid reasons, but there would be a real problem if the Government ventured down that path. The reasons of substance relate to the detail of consideration required by judges in relation to sentencing people for indictable offences. The concern expressed by the member for Liverpool—which is apparent to me, having practised in this jurisdiction—is whether the resources to be provided will be sufficient. In her second reading speech, the Attorney General made no reference to the number of cases that will end up before the Local Court. That may be understandable because it may be impossible to look at past decisions of the District Court to ascertain that, as the Local Court and the District Court have completely different sentencing patterns. Nevertheless, I discern that simply providing one extra magistrate and two police prosecutors will not be sufficient to deal with the workload in the Local Court.

Whilst the Attorney General refers to the Local Court as the most efficient court system in the country, it is very much overburdened. Irrespective of whatever delays might be asserted by the member for Liverpool—and he would be right because he undertook some detailed consultation before contributing to the debate—the reality is that magistrates are very hardworking with huge lists. They begin sitting at 9.30 a.m. and very few of them are able to finish at 4.00 p.m. During my time at the bar, I observed that it was always retired judges who said courts should sit longer than the traditional 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Those of us who have practised, particularly on regional circuits where traditionally time is added to the court day to get through the list, will know that the level of concentration required by both judicial officers and practitioners is immense. A human being has only a certain capacity to concentrate and absorb in great detail the material that is provided.

There is very good reason for courts over the decades, if not the centuries, to have operated between 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. If even half an hour a day is added to a court's sitting time on circuit, by Wednesday all

the participants—The Public Defenders, Crown prosecutors and judges—are exhausted as they are trying to get through the list. If that happens for three weeks, participants effectively cannot walk. I cannot stress enough the detailed concentration required on the issues that judicial officers consider. Tired justice is not just poor justice, it is bad justice. Judicial officers deliver justice, but they are human beings who need to absorb virtually every word that is being said to them and read every document that is put in front of them. Consequently, increasing the burden on judicial officers in the Local Court, where tabled offences become quite serious offences, may well have an overwhelming burden on an already tired magistracy.

In respect of the matters of this nature that are being inserted into table 1, it is true that it is a quicker way to dispense with these matters and it is not an unfair way to do it. However, simply moving a case from the District Court into the Local Court to have a magistrate deal with it does not take away a judicial officer's burden in determining the sentencing principles. These cases should not be rushed through. Whether or not a case is in the District Court or the Local Court, the subjective assessment of, say, an offender, must be put before the court by those representing the offender—whether that requires psychiatric and/or psychological analysis as well as reports from probation and parole officers—and considered by the court. We are dealing with offences at the highest end of the scale for the Local Court.

The same sentencing principles must be applied by the magistrate as those applied by the District Court judge. Because there are rights of appeal to the Court of Criminal Appeal on errors of law only—not on matters of fact or simply because someone wants the court to make a different decision—judges, as a matter of course, are giving lengthier judgements and remarks when sentencing. About four or five years ago, Justice McClellan observed in respect of the Court of Criminal Appeal—the reference escapes me—that in sentencing offenders judges should not give detailed dissertations on the law. However, the complexity of sentence proceedings means that judges are now delivering extremely long judgements and remarks. I apprehend that the complexity of the process and the decisions of the Court of Criminal Appeal are recipes for delay. If the Government wants to reduce delays in the District Court, it should examine the practices of the court in respect of sentencing. It should also establish why judges are required to take so long to deliver judgements, and why they reserve their judgements.

Many judges are fearful, especially those without extensive experience in criminal law, about delivering extemporary judgements and thereby falling into error and being criticised by the Court of Criminal Appeal. If the Government wants to reduce delays in the District Court, it should examine the current practice and the remarks on sentence made by judges. It should ask whether when sentencing an offender for an offence similar to those referred to in this bill a judge needs to deliver an hour-long judgement. It must consider whether that is an appropriate use of the court's time. It should establish where the fault lies. It does not lie with judges, it lies with the Parliament. A simplification of that process is required. [*Extension of time*]

This legislation requires the Local Court to deal with complex matters, but there is no provision for additional solicitors from the Legal Aid Commission to be appointed to deal with the increased workload. As I indicated, the same work needs to be done by those representing offenders irrespective of the court in which they appear. In the Local Court one does not call an offender to give evidence as some counsel do in the District Court, although that was never my practice. However, the reality is that the same material should be obtained and placed before the magistrate for consideration at judgement. Although there is a right of appeal from the magistrate's decision to the District Court and a magistrate's judgement is not subjected to the same analysis on appeal as occurs in the Court of Criminal Appeal or in the District Court, the same law and the same heads of consideration apply. Therefore, it is vital that the Local Court be given additional Legal Aid Commission solicitors.

I query whether one magistrate is enough to carry the increased workload that will result from the passage of this legislation. Of course, the issue that has not been addressed—and it is a practical matter that should be considered—is whether Local Court security is adequate to deal with cases involving more serious offences. The Government must determine whether Corrective Services resources are adequate to deal with the detention of those appearing before the courts. The Government cannot simply move cases from one court to another and appoint one magistrate and a couple of police prosecutors to deal with the increased workload. As a heavier caseload involving more serious and more complicated cases is imposed on an already overworked bench, pressure is also imposed on the prosecutors and those who represent the accused—effectively the Legal Aid Commission solicitors—and on Corrective Services. The service will need additional staff to deal with the increased number of people in custody both before they are dealt with and afterwards because of the nature of their offences. Of course, additional pressure will also be imposed on the sheriffs' officers and the court security services.

Some of the matters dealt with summarily will be subject to pleas of not guilty and will need to be heard by the magistrate, which involves even more court time. As a result, more people will be in custody and more security will be required. It is not as simple as the Attorney General suggested in her law lecture, presented as a

second reading speech. Our justice system has been the victim of the bean counters in Treasury for some time. The blowout in the time taken to hear cases has impacted on the accused, the victims, the police and everyone else. The Government is seeking to increase the court's workload. It must understand the consequences of what it is doing when it starts fiddling with the allocation of matters to courts. As I said, I do not oppose this legislation because it is sensible. There are far more offences in the Crimes Act that could be moved to table 1, and that would benefit everyone in the long term. Those issues should be considered. It is about time this Government examined why the District Court is overburdened, and it should alleviate the pressure on judges who are required to deliver the sorts of sentences they must deliver every day.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (11:46): I support the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Summary Proceedings for Indictable Offences) Bill 2016. The object of the bill is to amend the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to provide for certain indictable break and enter offences under the Crimes Act 1900 to be dealt with summarily unless the prosecutor or the person charged elects otherwise, and to make other amendments in the nature of statute law revision. The Attorney General has presented a short but practical and sensible bill, the purpose of which is to ensure that victims, witnesses, and the accused have access to justice by allowing for property-related criminal offences which currently are dealt with in the District Court to be dealt with in the Local Court.

The Local Court deals with most criminal matters in New South Wales, and the Attorney General has explained why it would be faster and more cost effective for some of them to be dealt with in the District Court. The electorate of Cootamundra—which covers 35,000 square kilometres—has no District Court. A magistrate travels from courthouse to courthouse on various days of the month. I acknowledge that many victims see any crime committed against them as a major offence. This legislation transfers minor offences to the Local Court. Dealing with a matter in or near the town in which the crime was committed means that the victims can travel to court to ensure that justice is done.

In the case of the electorate of Cootamundra, not having to travel significant distances to the nearest District Court will result in a lot more convenience for all concerned—family and friends—and more efficient justice will be achieved more quickly due to the flexibility of its timetables and procedures. Obviously the Local Court does not have to deal with juries. Accused persons who cannot otherwise necessarily afford to have a lawyer can have somebody from Legal Aid represent them. I note that it takes approximately 11 months for a case to be finalised in the District Court. That compares to around four months in the Local Court. The legislation before us about summary proceedings for indictable offences is, as I said earlier, eminently practical and sensible. I compliment the Attorney General on bringing this legislation forward.

There are obviously some differences between the Local Court and the District Court, particularly in relation to maximum sentencing. In relation to this particular legislation, if it is believed that the offence should proceed at the District Court level then there is scope to do that. The maximum sentence that can be imposed by the Local Court is two years imprisonment or five years for multiple offences. There is widespread support for this reform. As the Attorney General has mentioned, the NSW Police Force, the Sentencing Council, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid, the Public Defenders, the Chief Judge, the Chief Magistrate, the Bar Association and the Law Society all support this important reform. There is increased funding to meet the increased workload in the Local Court as a result of this legislation.

The Legislation Review Committee has looked at this bill and has basically been satisfied that the Attorney General's second reading speech has covered any concerns that may have been raised within that committee. It is good to see that those concerns have been addressed. It is also good to see that the legislation has been thoroughly scrutinised by that important committee headed by Michael Johnsen, MP, the member for Upper Hunter. That committee has a list of eminent members.

The purpose of the bill is to allow four strictly indictable breaking and entering offences that currently have to be heard in the District Court to be heard in the Local Court. These offences will only be heard in the Local Court when the circumstances are as follows: the serious indictable offence intended to be or actually committed as part of the break and enter offence is stealing or malicious damage; the value of any property concerned does not exceed \$60,000; and the circumstance of aggravation is "in company". As a result of this reform, these offences will be heard in the Local Court except when an election is made for the matter to be heard in the District Court by either the prosecutor or the defence. Offences in this category are known as "table offences".

Magistrates—such as the local magistrate in my region, Peter Dare, SC—will be able to hear those cases. It will mean less travel and less consumption of time in rural areas where there is no District Court facility. Importantly, it is anticipated that the length of sentences will not be impacted as a result of this bill. The maximum penalty that can be imposed in the Local Court is two years imprisonment for a single offence or five years for multiple offences regardless of the actual maximum penalty for an offence. For example, an offence might carry

a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment, but if it is heard in the Local Court the maximum penalty that the court can impose is two years imprisonment. However, it is important to be aware that most of the existing table offences that can already be heard in the Local Court are serious criminal offences, with many carrying a maximum of 10 years imprisonment or more.

During a recent inspection of the Young Local Court that I attended when Magistrate Peter Dare was in the chair, I was surprised to see 26 consecutive apprehended violence orders being applied for. When I had a chat with the clerk about it, she said, "That is not the highest number. We would expect more like 30 to be held on any given day." I note Minister Goward is at the table. I thank her for her hard work in this important area, particularly as it relates to women. It was not so long ago that a woman who had been the subject of a domestic violence attack or some sort of assault would have to chase the perpetrator from court to court until the perpetrator, of whatever gender, was tracked down and brought to justice. That caused significant stress and mental harm to victims. The progress that we have made over a short period of time in this space is unbelievable.

I acknowledge that and thank Minister Goward for her hard work in this space, along with other Ministers in this Government. The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research sentencing statistics show that a large majority of sentences currently imposed by the District Court for the new table offences are well within the Local Court sentencing scope of two years. On average this was more than 90 per cent of sentences imposed in 2015, and the sentencing trend has been consistent from 2012 to 2015. In fact, these numbers are conservative as they only include matters that received less than two years imprisonment. [*Extension of time*]

It must also be remembered that just because an offence may be heard in the Local Court does not mean it must be heard in the Local Court. Any serious charges involving a new table offence can be dealt with in the District Court when an election from either the prosecution or the defence is made. That is a very important point. The making of an election by the prosecution is governed by the internal protocol between our hardworking NSW Police Force and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions signed in January 2016. When police are of the view that a matter is serious and cannot be dealt with within the sentencing jurisdiction of the Local Court, the matter is referred to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The protocol establishes an agreed process between the NSW Police Force and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for the referral, determination and review of election decisions. Cooperation between police and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions under the protocol will ensure that fewer serious matters are dealt with efficiently and cost effectively in the Local Court and more serious matters continue to be dealt with in the District Court. While it is not anticipated that the length of sentences will be affected, a review will be conducted to allay concerns that offenders might receive lower sentences and confirm the impact of the bill. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research will monitor any change in the sentences given in the Local Court and District Court for similar cases before and after the reform as well as monitor any change in the timing or incidence of guilty pleas.

A review by the Department of Justice one year after commencement will evaluate three aspects: the impact of this reform on sentencing; the impact on the workload of the Local Court, the District Court and justice agencies; and the possible addition of further recommended offences as table offences. That is a very sensible set of procedures to follow. While I am speaking on this subject, I mention that the Cootamundra Police and Community Together [PACT] meeting was held in August this year in Gundagai. I welcome our new local area commander for the Cootamundra region, Chris Schilt. For a long time we have had temporary people filling in this position, including Inspector Paul Huxtable—somebody who has my greatest respect—and others. It is great to have a formally introduced local area commander for Cootamundra. We warmly welcome Chris Schilt to the position.

The need for a new police station at Young—where currently there is a split site—was raised at the PACT meeting. I have made several representations to successive police Ministers about this issue. I take this opportunity to remind the Minister for Police that Young needs a new police station. It was raised also that the accident and emergency unit at Young is the only mental health facility in the Cootamundra local area command [LAC] and the mental health room at the Young Hospital needs a safety upgrade. The community is concerned that nurses at Young Hospital are not safe. I request that the relevant Ministers take note of this situation and provide an upgrade to the mental health room at Young Hospital as soon as possible. It was mentioned that Port Macquarie Base Hospital has a mental health room that would meet the requirements of Young, but as it is the only mental health facility in the Cootamundra LAC we sincerely request that Young Hospital be upgraded.

Cootamundra and Young police stations now have drug testing units, for which I thank the Minister. They were much needed and are much appreciated. The need for an update and review of the NSW Police and Ambulance Service memorandum of understanding, which was last completed in 2007, was also raised at the meeting. Among the many important issues in Cootamundra and Young are the statistics relating to malicious damage and stealing. Cootamundra reported 51 malicious damage cases and 33 stealing cases over a 12-month

period. In Gundagai, 15 malicious damage cases and 25 stealing instances were reported. In the township of Young, 176 cases of malicious damage and 89 cases of stealing were reported. It is eminently sensible and practical for those cases to be dealt with in the Local Court. This bill has my full support.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (12:01): I speak in support of the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Summary Proceedings for Indictable Offences) Bill 2016. The purpose of the bill is to allow for strictly indictable break and enter offences currently being heard in the District Court to be heard in the Local Court. The bill aims to reduce court delays for victims by ensuring that criminal offences are dealt with efficiently by the most appropriate court. The Local Court has a strong track record of resolving criminal matters quickly and efficiently.

A lengthy court process can compound the stress and trauma that victims experience while waiting for their cases to be resolved. By reducing the average time it takes to resolve a criminal matter, the bill directly benefits the victims of those crimes because they will face shorter periods of uncertainty. Reducing court delays will also benefit witnesses who are significantly impacted by the length of time it takes to finalise a matter. The less delay between an offence and a court date, the greater the likelihood that witnesses will accurately recall the detail of their evidence.

The most significant way that the bill will benefit victims and witnesses is by reducing the number of days they will be required to give evidence. That is because the bill will result in more matters being resolved in the lower court where there is no committal process. Currently, the strictly indictable matters must move through the local committal court process before proceeding to the District Court or Supreme Court. Victims and witnesses can be called to give evidence in the Local Court at a committal hearing and again when the case goes to trial in the District Court or Supreme Court. Giving evidence on multiple occasions can traumatise victims or witnesses.

Once offences become indictable offences, some will be finalised in the Local Court, with the result that victims and witnesses will only have to give evidence once. In addition to minimising the trauma, finalising matters sooner provides tangible benefits to victims, such as compensation orders by the court under the Victims Rights and Support Act, which can only occur after an offender is found guilty. Fast resolution of criminal matters also increases public confidence in the administration of justice. Ensuring that offenders are sentenced faster sends a strong deterrent message to the community about the consequences of criminal behaviour.

This reform will bring many benefits. It will reduce the delay and uncertainty for victims and witnesses whose lives are impacted while they wait for their cases to be resolved—which can be achieved faster in the Local Court—and offenders will have greater access to support and supervision for rehabilitation as a result of their earlier sentencing. Support and supervision services are not available when an accused is on remand or awaiting a District Court trial. A further benefit is that an innocent accused may be acquitted earlier. It goes without saying that the faster resolution of cases will send a strong deterrent message, increase community confidence in the justice system and allow the District Court to better focus on more serious criminal offences. The criminal courts trial backlog will be reduced by approximately 25 trials per year by moving cases to the Local Court, where they can be dealt with more effectively and efficiently.

A number of safeguards are in place. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] statistics from 2012 to 2015 show that offenders convicted of indictable break and enter offences are usually sentenced to less than two years imprisonment, which is within the current sentencing jurisdiction of the Local Court. Under an existing protocol, prosecutors can choose to have a matter heard in the District Court if police and prosecutors consider it warrants a sentence of longer than two years. The defence also has this choice. One year after commencement of this legislation, the Department of Justice will review the impact of this reform on sentencing patterns based on data collected by BOCSAR and the workload of the Local Court, District Court and justice agencies.

I congratulate the Attorney General on introducing these important reforms. I know how hard she has been working to improve the justice system across the State. Recently, my parliamentary colleague the member for Camden, Chris Patterson, and I had the pleasure of hosting the Attorney General in our region to inspect the \$770,000 upgrades to Campbelltown Court House. This courthouse is special to me because whilst undertaking my university studies I worked as a court officer at Campbelltown Local Court, in courtrooms 3 and 5. In those days cassette tapes were used to record the evidence. My then colleagues and I would note the speakers and the times each person spoke. It was a labour-intensive process and, obviously, trial backlogs occurred because of the outdated technology. The new system in place uses digital recordings.

In relation to crimes involving sensitive issues, such as sexual assault, witnesses' evidence can now be given remotely. The real-time evidence is streamed into the court and the judge or magistrate and counsel can interact with the witnesses. This technology ensures that the perpetrator and the victim are separated, which can assist the victim to not relive the crime. I note the Minister for Women, Pru Goward, is seated at the table. This investment by the New South Wales Government will go a long way to addressing the issues and ensure that more

cases are able to be heard promptly. The Macarthur region is growing, particularly in Wollondilly, Campbelltown and Camden. More than 100 people per week are moving into the Camden electorate, and the Government has announced 35,000 new homes in my electorate of Wollondilly. This Government is ensuring that our court system is keeping up with the times.

As previous speakers have mentioned, another issue is the role of our police, who do a fantastic job. My electorate shares a local area command with the electorates of the member for Camden and the member for Goulburn. The local area commanders in those areas do a fantastic job to ensure that our communities are kept safe. The Southern Highlands Local Area Command is moving from Bowral in my electorate to Moss Vale in the electorate of the member for Goulburn. The expanded, up-to-date, state-of-the-art facility will service all of the Southern Highlands.

Ms Pru Goward: It will have interview rooms.

Mr JAI ROWELL: Interview rooms will be available for use. A number of years ago I was at the opening of the Narellan Police Station in the Camden Local Area Command. I know that the new police station at Moss Vale will be a special facility for the Southern Highlands. The Minister and I are looking forward to it.

Ms Pru Goward: Yes, we are.

Mr JAI ROWELL: The Minister acknowledges that she is looking forward to it, as am I. I also mention Picton Court House, where the storm that occurred eight weeks ago flooded this historic courthouse. I worked there when I was undertaking my university studies. Through the hard work of the Attorney General, her office and her department—whom I particularly thank—that courthouse has been refurbished and very shortly, certainly before Christmas, will be reopened. In the meantime, hearings have continued at Moss Vale Local Court. We are looking forward to reopening the courthouse and revitalising the main street of Picton. I could go on and on about this bill, our justice system, and the work of my Government colleagues but I have run out of time. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (12:11): It is my pleasure to speak in support of the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Summary Proceedings for Indictable Offences) Bill 2016. This is another common-sense bill, showing that this Government is getting down to business and improving the lives of people in New South Wales. The purpose of the bill is to provide faster, fairer and more accessible justice to victims, witnesses and the accused by allowing four property-related criminal offences that currently must be dealt with in the District Court to be dealt with in the Local Court. I applaud the work of the Attorney General, Ms Gabrielle Upton, in bringing forward this common-sense proposal, which responds to the needs of the community.

The Local Court deals with the majority of criminal matters in New South Wales. In my electorate of Oxley, Wauchope Local Court, Kempsey Local Court—particularly on a Monday—and Bellingen Local Court are very busy places. The Local Court deals with the majority of criminal matters within New South Wales. It provides a faster and more cost-effective process than does the District Court because it has greater flexibility in its timetables and procedures.

The Local Court does not involve trial by jury and allows an accused who cannot afford a lawyer to access a Legal Aid lawyer at the court. It takes an average of 11 months for a case to be finalised in the District Court, as compared to only four months in the Local Court. The maximum sentence that can be imposed by a Local Court is two years imprisonment or five years imprisonment in total for multiple offences. The NSW Police Force, sentencing counsel, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid, the Public Defenders office, the Chief Judge, the Chief Magistrate, the New South Wales Bar Association and the Law Society of New South Wales all support this common-sense reform.

Again, I acknowledge the work of the Attorney General, who brought in all those players and stakeholders within the legal profession to approve and support this very sensible reform. One additional Local Court magistrate and two NSW Police prosecutors will be funded to meet the Local Court's increased workload, which will result from the court being able to hear these four new offences. This reform will benefit the victims and witnesses. It will reduce delay and uncertainty for victims and witnesses, whose lives are impacted while they await the resolution of their cases. Cases can be resolved faster in a Local Court—a point well raised by the member for Wollondilly.

This is positive legislation. Our Government is putting those who are affected by crime—the victims and the witnesses—at the forefront. To witness a crime and to be called to give evidence is a traumatic experience for anybody, so we need to reduce delays and uncertainty. On average, a matter is dealt with within four months in a Local Court, but it may take at least 11 months for a matter to be heard in the District Court. There are also benefits for the accused. Offenders have greater access to support and supervision for rehabilitation as a result of earlier sentencing. Offenders will do their time for their crime and then get on with their lives.

The community expects that those who have done the wrong thing to pay the price but does not want their lives to be defined by that event. The extra support and supervision that will be available to the accused at a time closer to the incident is a good way of ensuring that their lives do not spiral out of control. Further, it potentially will assist innocent accused by their being acquitted earlier. That is a very important part of the justice process. Those who have been wrongly accused will be able to get on with their lives much earlier once this reform is introduced.

In relation to the wider community, a faster resolution of cases sends a strong deterrent message, increases community confidence in the justice system and allows the District Court to focus on more serious criminal offending. As to the benefits of the reform to the justice system more generally, the District Court criminal trial backlog will be reduced by approximately 25 trials per year by moving cases to the Local Court, which can deal with them more efficiently.

As I said, this reform is sensible. First and foremost, it helps victims, the accused, the community and the justice system. There are also very strong safeguards within this legislation. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] statistics over the three-year period from 2012 to 2015 show that offenders convicted of these offences are usually sentenced to less than two years of imprisonment, which is within the current sentencing jurisdiction of the Local Court. Under an existing protocol with police, prosecutors can choose to have a matter heard in the District Court if police and prosecutors consider it warrants a sentence of longer than two years. The defence also has this choice. The Department of Justice will review the impact of this reform on sentencing patterns based on data collected by BOCSAR and the workload of the Local Court, District Court and justice agencies one year after commencement.

I turn now to the content of the bill. The four property-related offences—being aggravated breaking and entering offences contained in sections 109, 111, 112 and 113 of the Crimes Act 1900—will be added to table 1 of the schedule of the Criminal Procedure Act 1986. The four offences are similar in nature and involve the following circumstances: a person breaks and enters a dwelling, having committed or having intended to commit stealing or malicious damage to property in company with one or more persons and the value of the property does not exceed \$60,000. Sadly, this type of activity is too well known to many of the communities that I am so very proud to represent. The community of Kempsey is a strong and resilient community, as are the Nambucca and Macksville communities. Too often, our communities face the circumstances of break and enter offences. As I understand, the process will be sped up to deliver justice for victims and witnesses as well as, to some extent, the accused.

This bill will enable the Government to provide services for the accused and give them an opportunity to change their lives. The provision of support for the accused in the criminal justice process is a very positive outcome. The bill also contains amendments identified by the Parliamentary Counsel in the nature of statutory law revision to ensure that the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 reflects the 2007 changes in terminology that were made to the Crimes Act 1900. The mental element "maliciously" has been replaced by the modern terms of "intentionally" and "recklessly". In conclusion, I again congratulate the Attorney General and our Government on this sensible reform. Although the bill deals with only four offences, it will have a tremendous impact on the justice system. It is sensible and common-sense reform. I acknowledge the work that has been done particularly on the mid North Coast through the family justice model that the Deputy Premier, Troy Grant, instituted in my community and in his community of Dubbo.

Family justice will better wrap government services around families in order to break the cycle of crime. In time, we will all learn more about this fabulous initiative. I also acknowledge the work locally of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, which instituted, under the direction of the former Deputy Premier, Andrew Stoner, a process of breaking the cycle of crime in the Kempsey community. Some people have described that process as simple common sense, but sometimes common sense is hard to come by when different departments and organisations are involved. For the first time, this Government will operate within our communities instead of government operating in silos. Our communities will operate collaboratively and with everyone at the table sharing their stories, thereby achieving better outcomes for the community. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (12:21): I mention as background information that the Criminal Procedure Amendments (Summary Proceedings for Indictable Offences) Bill 2016 is part of a reform package funded by a \$570 million allocation in the 2016-17 budget to support comprehensive reform of the justice system across New South Wales. The legislation will include immediate measures to reduce demand on courts and reduce reoffending. The legislation is directed particularly towards reducing the backlog of District Court criminal trials, thereby providing a faster and more accessible justice system.

The bill targets one of the principal causes of the backlog of cases, which is the increasing length of criminal trials. This increase has been caused by various reasons, including the complexity of matters heard in various jurisdictions. It takes more than twice as long for a case to be finalised in the District Court as it takes to

finalise a case in the Local Court. By moving more matters to the Local Court, cases will be resolved more quickly than would otherwise occur in the District Court. That is a win-win.

I acknowledge the outstanding job done by the Attorney General, Ms Gabrielle Upton, in introducing this bill, which will reduce the backlog in criminal trials by approximately 25 new trial registrations a year. Other efforts by the Government to reduce the District Court criminal trials backlog include providing a package of \$20 million, which will fund almost 250 extra sitting weeks of the District Court over 18 months between January 2016 and June 2017. The funding was announced in December last year.

Mr Adam Crouch: Outstanding.

Mr MARK COURE: I acknowledge the interjection. It certainly is outstanding. Importantly, the package includes two new District Court judges, who were appointed in March 2016, additional Public Defenders for Port Macquarie and Tamworth, case management initiatives such as special call-overs in Wagga Wagga and Newcastle, and pre-trial conferencing for trials set down for more than 20 days in order to encourage early resolution. Those reforms constitute a great step taken in the right direction.

The second point I make about the Government's efforts to reduce the District Court trial backlog is that a further package of \$39 million was announced in the 2016-17 budget to extend the earlier package of support. The funding will go a long way towards addressing the backlog. Members of this House should take careful note of these measures, which will provide an additional two years of support and include funding for the appointment of three additional District Court judges, who were appointed this year, two new Public Defenders, additional resources for Legal Aid and for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, and additional sittings in areas that matter—for example, regional areas. One of the new judges will be permanently based in Wagga Wagga, which is great news for the member for Wagga Wagga, and the other will be permanently based in New England.

The third point I wish to raise is that the Department of Justice is continuing to develop a package of reforms as well as operational measures to improve the efficiency of the State's justice system. More importantly—and I draw this to the attention of members on both sides of the House—the measures will reduce reoffending. The main purpose of the bill is to provide faster, fairer and more accessible justice to victims, witnesses and the accused by allowing property-related criminal offences, which currently must be dealt with in the District Court, to be dealt with in the Local Court.

There are four key benefits of the reforms inherent in the bill and funded by the Government. Firstly, victims and witnesses will benefit from reduced delay and uncertainty in the resolution of their cases by moving those cases to the Local Court where they can be dealt with more quickly. That is a win-win for both groups. Secondly, offenders will have greater access to support and supervision for rehabilitation by being sentenced earlier and, conversely, an innocent accused may be acquitted earlier. Members who have actually read the bill—as have many Government members—will know that that is a key objective of the bill. I fully support that provision. It should be noted also that support and supervision services are not available while an accused is on remand awaiting a District Court trial.

Thirdly, the community will benefit. Faster resolution of cases sends a strong deterrent message throughout the community and increases community confidence in the justice system. More importantly, faster resolution also allows the District Court to focus better on more serious criminal offences. Having such cases heard in the Local Court will reduce the current backlog in criminal trials and ensure that the District Court can get on with the job of dealing with cases on time and as quickly as possible. The fourth benefit of moving trials to the Local Court is to the justice system—that is, the backlog in the criminal trials to be heard in the District Court will be reduced by approximately 25 trials per year. At the end of the day, this can mean that criminal matters will be dealt with more efficiently and effectively. I think this bill is a good step in the right direction. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (12:30): I speak in support of the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Summary Proceedings for Indictable Offences) Bill 2016. The bill will ultimately impact on the Local Court of New South Wales. It is timely to mention what a great institution the Local Court of New South Wales is. Previously I was a police prosecutor in that jurisdiction and I have certainly had quite a bit of experience in the Local Court. I have seen firsthand the great benefits of the Local Court across our State. One would understand that the Local Court plays a significant role both in our cities and across the rural and regional areas of New South Wales. Everyone knows where their Local Court is situated, as it is generally a centrepiece of the local town. Justice in the Local Court is quick and efficient and fair and accessible—as it should be because it is the jurisdiction that provides legal fairness to large numbers of people across this great State.

One of the avenues the Local Court will use to mete out justice is through the administration of justice in apprehended violence orders and domestic violence matters. It is fitting that the Minister for Mental Health,

Minister for Medical Research, Assistant Minister for Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault is in the Chamber. The Local Court, in dealing with matters in that jurisdiction, is able to offer fast and effective justice on those important matters, which allows victims and witnesses to have their matters finalised quickly.

In moving to allow for strictly indictable break and enter offences to be heard in the Local Court—currently they are heard in the District Court—the Government is pursuing meaningful law reform. We are committed to delivering fast, fair and accessible justice for the people of New South Wales. The period between an offence taking place and sentencing, as one can understand, is extremely stressful not only for the victims whose lives are impacted while they wait for the case to be resolved but also for the many witnesses who are expected to recall the details of the evidence some time later and, of course, for the accused person who must await consideration of the matter and a finding of guilt or otherwise. That is why the Government is moving to reduce delays in the District Court, which is possible only through well thought out and well-considered reform, which this bill represents.

In drafting this bill, as with any reform, all stakeholders were consulted in the jurisdictions across this great State, including the Law Society, the NSW Police Force, victims of crime agencies and groups, and support organisations. Opposition speakers in this debate indicated that this bill will not be opposed. The bill aims to reduce court delays for participants in the criminal justice system by ensuring that criminal offences are dealt with in the most appropriate court. Criminal cases are dealt with in the Local Court, the District Court or the Supreme Court, depending on the type of offence that has been alleged. Criminal offences fall into three categories. The first type of offences are categorised as summary offences. They are the least serious criminal matters in New South Wales. These offences must be dealt with by the Local Court, and they carry a maximum penalty of two years imprisonment or less.

The Local Court currently deals with the vast majority of criminal cases in New South Wales and resolves those matters quickly and efficiently. It is also the most accessible legal jurisdiction in New South Wales, with courts located across the State and regular sittings held. Unlike the District Court, the Local Court does not hold committal proceedings for matters in its own jurisdiction, has more flexibility in its timetables and procedures, does not have jury trials, and allows accused persons who cannot afford a lawyer to access duty solicitors services or urgent on-the-spot legal advice provided by Legal Aid at the court. Once again, this ensures quick access to justice for all involved.

The benefits to the community of this reform are wide ranging. First, and most significantly, delay and uncertainty will be reduced for victims and witnesses whose lives are impacted while they wait for matters to be resolved, which can be achieved faster in the Local Court. Secondly, victims and witnesses will avoid the trauma of giving evidence twice, as matters finalised in the Local Court do not go through a committal proceeding to test the sufficiency of the evidence. By comparison, when a case is dealt with in the District Court, victims and witnesses can be called to give evidence during the committal proceedings in the Local Court and potentially again in the District Court. Thirdly, the accused will receive justice faster. Returning to the problem of victims and witnesses having to give evidence multiple times, one can only imagine how distressing that would be. Being cross-examined some time after the event puts the victims and witnesses in an unsatisfactory position.

Those who are convicted and sentenced will have quicker access to support and supervision for rehabilitation. A person on remand cannot access rehabilitation assistance provided by Corrective Services NSW. Therefore, imposing sentences at an earlier time allows offenders to participate in programs addressing their needs. Furthermore, an innocent accused may be acquitted earlier. The bill will contribute to alleviating the pressure on the criminal justice system, including the backlog in District Court criminal trials. Moving the four offences is estimated to reduce the criminal trial backlog by approximately 25 trials per year. This in turn creates capacity in the District Court to focus on more serious matters that the District Court was designed to handle.

I was previously a police prosecutor and I am pleased to be part of a government that is pursuing this meaningful reform. The justice system is criticised at times for being inaccessible and for prolonging the pain and hurt of victims. Every reform that this Government undertakes in the justice space is centred on the principle of reversing that view. As I said in my inaugural speech, I have been on the front line of the justice system with both the Australian Federal Police and the NSW Police Force. I spent my working life representing victims of crime and witnessing the tragedies that befall them. As I have said, I am a firm believer in our justice system and I think it must prioritise the victims of crime in a more strident manner. There is no doubt that this reform goes about achieving this aim comprehensively.

I have always said that the pendulum must swing towards those issues confronting victims in a timely, compassionate and responsible manner. This reform goes a long way towards ensuring that victims of crime are dealt with in a way that is in line with community expectations. The community expects that we in this place will legislate in the interests of those who use the facilities of the justice system, particularly the victims of crime. That

is exactly what this bill does. We must ensure our system represents the community that it was designed to serve. With this bill the Government will work to ensure that the justice system is fast, fair and accessible.

Delays, as we know, put victims under stress. Delays make it harder for victims to recall key details. Delays deplete the resources of our justice system. The benefits that will flow from these measures will assist all participants in the criminal justice system, which is to be commended. Delays in the District Court will be reduced. This is a sensible proposal, it is good reform and it is supported by all stakeholders. I commend the bill to the House, not only because of its ability to unlock justice for all but also because it will provide fair, fast and accessible justice to the victims of crime in New South Wales.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (12:39): I support the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Summary Proceedings for Indictable Offences) Bill 2016. The bill will provide faster and more accessible justice for victims, witnesses and accused, with cases to be dealt with in the Local Court rather than the District Court. This is important because the District Court is already overburdened—in fact, many regional areas do not even have a District Court and therefore matters must wait until the court travels to a particular jurisdiction. The Government has established that this is more convenient for all concerned. Offences include four strictly indictable break and enter offences.

The bill will help in a number of other ways. The Local Court has a strong track record of resolving criminal matters quickly and efficiently. A lengthy court process can compound the stress that trauma victims experience while waiting for their cases to be resolved. This bill will benefit victims who are currently facing long periods of uncertainty. It can also reduce court delays, which will benefit witnesses who are significantly impacted by the time it takes to finalise a matter. If that time is reduced witnesses will have a more accurate recollection of details of their evidence. The bill proposes that offences will be heard in the Local Court only where the circumstances are as follows: the serious indictable offence intended to be committed or committed as part of the break and enter offence is stealing or malicious damage; the value of any property concerned does not exceed \$60,000; and the circumstance of aggravation is "in company". No impact on sentence length is anticipated as a result of this bill.

The maximum penalty that can be imposed in the Local Court is two years imprisonment for a single offence or five years imprisonment for local offences, regardless of the maximum penalty for an offence. For example, an offence may carry a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment but, if it is heard in the Local Court, the maximum penalty is two years imprisonment. However, just because an offence may be heard in the Local Court, it does not mean that it must be heard in the Local Court. Any serious charges involving a new table offence can still be dealt with in the District Court, where an election is made by either the prosecution or the defence. This election is governed by internal protocol between the NSW Police Force and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Cooperation between New South Wales police and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions under the protocol will ensure that less serious matters are dealt with efficiently and cost-effectively in the Local Court and more serious matters continue to be dealt with in the District Court.

This reform is part of the \$570 million package announced in the budget to support comprehensive reform of the justice system. This includes immediate measures to reduce demand on courts and to reduce reoffending. The bill will reduce the criminal trial backlog by approximately 25 new trial registrations per year. This is because they will be resolved more quickly in the Local Court. Other recent Government efforts to reduce the District Court criminal trial backlog include a package of \$20 million, which equates to more than 250 extra sitting weeks over 18 months from January 2016 to June 2017, for the District Court. This included the appointment of two new District Court judges and additional public defenders for Port Macquarie and Tamworth.

Case management initiatives have also been implemented, such as special call-overs in Newcastle and Wagga Wagga and pre-trial conferencing for trials more than 20 days to encourage early resolution. A further package of \$39 million was announced in the budget to extend the earlier package of support. It includes funding for three additional district court judges, two new public defenders, additional resources for Legal Aid and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, and extra sittings in regional areas.

This bill has far-reaching and positive outcomes. Currently, strictly indictable matters must move through the Local Court committal process before proceeding to the District Court or Supreme Court. Victims and witnesses can currently be called to give evidence in the Local Court at a committal hearing and again in the District Court or Supreme Court at the trial. Giving evidence on multiple occasions can traumatise victims and witnesses. Under this bill victims and witnesses will need to give evidence only once. Fast resolution of criminal matters increases public confidence in the administration of justice. Ensuring that offenders are sentenced faster also sends a strong message about the consequences of criminal behaviour. In true conservative government fashion, this bill is all about delivering outcomes for the community of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:46): I speak in support of the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Summary Proceedings for Indictable Offences) Bill 2016. I commend the Attorney General for her fantastic work on this bill. I acknowledge those Opposition members who spoke in support of the bill today—the member for Liverpool and the member for Heffron. I also acknowledge the outstanding contributions of members from this side of the House—those members representing the electorates of Ku-ring-gai, Cootamundra, Wollondilly and Oxley—and indicate that the member for Oxley has a birthday today. I acknowledge the excellent contribution of the member for Seven Hills, who outlined his experience as a former police prosecutor, and that of my friend and colleague the member for Drummoyne.

Dr Geoff Lee: He's not a bad bloke either.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: He is not a bad bloke but we have doubts occasionally! The purpose of this bill is to provide faster, fairer and more accessible justice to victims, witnesses and the accused by allowing for property-related criminal offences that currently must be dealt with in the already overburdened District Court to be dealt with in the Local Court. The background to this bill is that the Local Court deals with the majority of criminal matters in New South Wales. The Local Court is faster and more cost-effective than the District Court because it has more flexibility in its timetables and procedures. It does not have jury trials and it allows an accused who cannot afford a lawyer to access a Legal Aid lawyer at the court. It takes on average about 11 months for a case to be finalised through the District Court, compared with four months in the Local Court. In addition to the background of this amending bill, the maximum sentence that can be imposed by the Local Court is two years imprisonment or five years imprisonment in total for multiple offences, unlike that of the District Court.

I again highlight the outstanding work done by the Attorney General and the collaborative way in which this bill was produced. It should be noted that the Attorney General worked collaboratively with the NSW Police Force, the NSW Sentencing Council, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid NSW, the Public Defenders office, the Chief Judge, the Chief Magistrate, the New South Wales Bar Association and the Law Society of New South Wales. All these peak bodies are supportive of the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Summary Proceedings for Indictable Offences) Bill 2016, which speaks volumes about the work done by the Attorney General.

It was a privilege to have the Attorney General visit the Central Coast. The member for Wollondilly, the Attorney General and I visited Gosford Court House and saw firsthand the outstanding work being done there and the new video trial system. This Government has devoted a great deal of funding to the provision of legal infrastructure across New South Wales, and those initiatives have been encouraged by the Attorney General. People in the Gosford area who are the victims of sexual crime or child abuse will now feel more comfortable giving evidence because they will be able to do so in a separate room. It would be incredibly intimidating for a young person to sit in direct line of sight of the accused. That was the second time I visited Gosford Court House. The first time was when I was sworn in as a justice of the peace.

On both occasions I found the courthouse incredibly intimidating. I can only imagine what it would be like for a young person who must give evidence about a serious crime. I commend the Attorney General for the outstanding work she has done in conjunction with the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, the Hon. Pru Goward, and the Deputy Premier. Local Court magistrates and two New South Wales police prosecutors will also be funded to deal with the increased workload that will result from the court being able to hear new cases involving the four offences referred to in the bill. Other members have outlined the benefits of this reform, but it would be remiss of me not to reiterate them. This legislation will reduce the delay and uncertainty experienced by victims and witnesses whose lives are impacted while they wait for cases to be resolved, which will be achieved much more quickly in the Local Court.

Offenders will also have greater access to support and rehabilitation supervision services because they will be sentenced earlier. Those services are not available while an accused is on remand awaiting a District Court trial. In addition, an innocent accused person may also be acquitted earlier. That is a clear demonstration that this legislation addresses the needs of not only the victims but also the accused. This legislation will result in faster resolution of cases, and it sends a strong deterrent message that those acts will not be tolerated. It will also increase community confidence in our justice system, allow the District Court to focus on more serious criminal offences, and address the backlog that it is experiencing.

The community obviously has very strong views about how to deal with crime. People on the Central Coast have been frustrated in the past about the backlog in the District Court, and they want minor offences to be dealt with much more efficiently and quickly. Cases are being dealt with more effectively at the Gosford Local Court, and this legislation will take that to the next step by providing assistance to the District Court. The Local Court does a good job under trying circumstances. The District Court criminal trial backlog will be reduced by approximately 25 trials a year as a result of less serious cases being transferred to the Local Court. That is a

staggering number of cases if one considers the average time it takes for a case to be resolved in the District Court. This is an excellent way to deal with that backlog.

Members have been given the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] figures for 2012 to 2015, which indicate that offenders convicted of the offences mentioned in this bill are usually sentenced to less than two years in prison, which is within the current sentencing jurisdiction of the Local Court. Under the existing police protocol, prosecutors can choose to have a matter heard in the District Court if they believe the offence should attract a sentence of more than two years in prison. Of course, the defence also has that choice. In addition, the Department of Justice will review the impact of the sentencing reform based on the data collected by BOCSAR and the workload of the Local Court, the District Court, and justice agencies one year after the commencement of the legislation. The Attorney General will undertake a review of the legislation. [*Extension of time*]

I acknowledge that the Attorney General is now in the Chamber. It is great to see her here to witness the passage of her bill. I congratulate her on introducing this fantastic legislation, which has been supported by members on both sides of the House. I have told the House about the Attorney General's recent visit to Gosford. The locals were extremely pleased to be visited by the first female Attorney General in New South Wales. She was a crowd stopper; people recognised her and went out of their way to congratulate her on the work she has been doing across New South Wales, and especially on the Central Coast. It was almost like a celebrity visit.

Dr Geoff Lee: She is the Kim Kardashian of the legal fraternity.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I acknowledge the interjection. However, that is understating the Attorney General's contribution and worth to the State. The registrar, John Arms, was excited to have an opportunity to show us the new technology that has been installed at the Gosford Court House under the auspices of this Attorney General. He outlined the advances that he has seen in his 32 years of service, and he was only too happy to show the Attorney General through the courthouse and to explain to her the benefits of the new technology that she has provided.

I have discussed the purpose of this bill, its background, its benefits, and the safeguards that it implements. It refers to four property-related offences. The aggravated break and enter offences in sections 109, 111, 112, and 113 of the Crimes Act 1900 will be added to table 1 of schedule 1 to the Criminal Procedure Act 1986. The four offences are similar in nature and involve a person who breaks and enters or breaks out of a dwelling or house having committed, or having intended to commit, stealing or to cause malicious damage to the property in company with one or more persons, and the value of any property does not exceed \$60,000.

The bill also contains amendments identified by Parliamentary Counsel in the nature of statute law revision to ensure that the Criminal Procedures Act 1986 clearly reflects the 2007 changes in terminology made to the Crimes Act 1900, where the mental element "maliciously" was replaced with the modern terms "intentionally" and "recklessly". Again I commend the Attorney General and all of her staff for this well-drafted bill and congratulate them again on the way in which they have worked with all the stakeholders in drafting this outstanding reform. Obviously I have been pleased to speak in debate on this bill which I commend to the House.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Attorney General) (12:59): In reply: I thank members for their contribution to debate on the Criminal Procedure Amendment (Summary Proceedings for Indictable Offences) Bill 2016. I acknowledge the contributions of the member for Ku-ring-gai, the member for Cootamundra, the member for Wollondilly, the member for Oxley, the member for Oatley, the member for Seven Hills, the member for Drummoyne and the member for Terrigal. I thank the member for Terrigal for his kind remarks and reflections on my visit to his electorate. I also acknowledge the contributions of the member for Liverpool, the shadow Attorney General, and the member for Heffron. As Attorney General I am committed to delivering fast, fair and accessible justice for the people of New South Wales. This bill does just that by allowing four property-related criminal offences to be dealt with in the most appropriate court, thereby reducing the delays in justice for victims, witnesses and offenders.

Before I make my concluding remarks I will address some of the matters that have been raised in the Chamber by members. First, I strongly reject the comments made by the shadow Attorney General relating to this Government's handling of the running of the District Court. I am proud of the efforts that this Government is making towards reducing the criminal trial backlog in the District Court. Since December 2015, the Government has announced a total of just under \$60 million in funding for extra resources for the District Court to increase its capacity to deal with criminal trials.

With this funding we on this side have done a number of things. We have appointed five new District Court judges. There are three additional judges based in Sydney, one in Wagga Wagga and one in the New England region. To accompany these new judges there will also be five extra sheriff officers and more court staff as is appropriate. In this respect the shadow Attorney General appears confused about the arrangements for

the District Court in Dubbo. Just to be clear, Judge Ingram will be assigned to the District Court in Dubbo next year. The current Dubbo District Court judge, His Honour Judge Lerve, who has served well, is moving to Wagga Wagga. Just so the shadow Attorney General is clear, Dubbo will continue to have a District Court judge. The Government will not apologise for sending judges to where they are needed, no matter where they are in the State.

The package that the Government has announced includes additional funding for four Public Defenders, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and Legal Aid to better manage cases before the courts. I bring to this Chamber's attention that we are already seeing the impact of case management initiatives. For example, call-overs are case management initiatives designed to clear easily disposed of old cases in the system. Special call-overs held in 2015 had a clearance rate of 50 per cent and more than 90 cases did not then proceed to trial. The third special call-over in May 2016 saved close to 45 weeks of court sitting time. Further call-overs in Coffs Harbour, Gosford and Lismore are planned for the coming months, which I am sure will have similar results.

The District Court is also trialling a rolling list initiative. The rolling list is an innovative case management initiative that is showing early signs of success in obtaining pleas earlier in the criminal justice process and therefore clearing matters before they are listed for trial. Another case management initiative is pre-trial conferencing for long trials that last 20 days or more. This involves the prosecution and defence meeting prior to the trial to ensure the early resolution of those criminal trials. This bill is a further part of the Government's comprehensive plan to reduce court delays and ensure criminal cases are resolved as efficiently as possible. Allowing four property-related crimes currently dealt with in the District Court to be dealt with in the Local Court will mean approximately 25 fewer criminal trials in the District Court every year.

The shadow Attorney General must not have been listening when I made this remark in my second reading speech: It is 25 fewer trials in the District Court every year. As he would know but fails to mention, the Local Court is able to deal with these cases more quickly and efficiently than the District Court. Unlike the District Court, the Local Court does not hold committal proceedings for matters in its own jurisdiction, has more flexibility in its timetables and procedures, does not have jury trials and allows accused persons who cannot afford a lawyer to access duty solicitor services—urgently, on the spot, provided by Legal Aid—at the court. In addition, of course, the Local Court has many locations across the State where justice can be sought.

The shadow Attorney General and the member for Heffron also expressed concern that the Local Court will not be equipped to deal with these additional matters. The member for Heffron and the shadow Attorney General fail to appreciate that the Local Court will in fact save time and resources by no longer needing magistrates to conduct the committals I referred to for these four offences. Committals are, as they would know, the precursor for matters going to the higher courts in our justice system. In addition, as the Government has already announced, it is funding an additional magistrate to handle the increased workload that will come to the Local Court from this reform. This has been agreed with the Chief Magistrate, Graeme Henson, the head of the Local Court, as the appropriate resourcing that he requires. The Chief Magistrate—not those opposite in this Chamber—is best placed to advise me and the Government on these matters.

Indeed in the development of all of our reforms we talk to all stakeholders in the criminal justice system including the Chief Judge, the Chief Magistrate, the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid, the Public Defenders Office, the NSW Police Force, the Bar Association and the Law Society of New South Wales. The shadow Attorney General can only give grudging support to this bill whilst channelling misplaced concerns from just one stakeholder—the Law Society of New South Wales. He and the Law Society fail to see the bigger picture across the State. I take their views into account but I will not be bound by them. As Attorney General it is not my task to deliver for the Law Society and the outcomes it may desire—although it may have good views—but for the people of New South Wales and the broader interests of justice in our State. That is exactly what we are doing with this reform.

As I have previously mentioned the New South Wales Government is investing in more judges, more magistrates, more sheriffs and better courts where they are needed in the city, in the bush and the regions. On this side of the House we want services to be where they are needed and where they can make the most difference to our community. A further indication of the Government's commitment to improving our justice system is its \$40 million Justice Audio Visual Link [AVL] Consolidation Project. The member for Terrigal mentioned my visit to Gosford. I have made many visits to the courts across our State with local members welcoming the investment in AVL in their regional courts.

The use of AVL is already providing greater access to justice in New South Wales. Through the \$40 million project there are now 400 audiovisual suites in courts and tribunals, corrective services facilities, juvenile justice centres, police stations, Legal Aid offices, the Office of the Department of Public Prosecutions, the Aboriginal Legal Service and Multicultural NSW. Using AVL means we can connect with people without physically bringing them to a courthouse. We have also reduced the need to transport prisoners, juvenile offenders, expert witnesses, interpreters and staff. Police can remain on duty at their base, at their local area command, rather

than travelling and waiting to give evidence in court. For example, to make this real, in 2015 witnesses appeared via AVL from France and New Zealand in a trial at the Goulburn District Court and expert witnesses from the United States gave evidence via AVL to the Blue Mountains bushfire inquiry held at Katoomba court. That sped up the process of justice for matters that affect our whole community.

We are also modernising our courthouses, which the Opposition will not acknowledge even when some of that investment goes to the electorates that their members hold. For example, the court complex at Newcastle, which I was proud to open in February this year, marks a benchmark for how we want to provide fast, fair and accessible justice across our community. It is a \$90 million courthouse and is now the largest, most technologically advanced courthouse outside Sydney. It includes 10 courtrooms, two tribunal rooms, high definition screens for evidence playback and video conferences, jury rooms, legal suites and, importantly—responding to the needs of twenty-first century justice—safe rooms where victims of domestic violence can wait with their children and their families before they are called to give evidence in court. In February this year I also opened Wollongong courthouse, which has received an \$80 million upgrade. These are key capital investments in courthouse infrastructure across our State. This Government is investing broadly across our justice system. Finally, contrary to the shadow Attorney General's assertion, I stated in my second reading speech:

For table 1 offences, which are more serious, an election may be made either by the prosecutor or by the defendant.

The shadow Attorney General was not listening to my speech when it was delivered. He even failed to pick it up while reading my second reading speech to prepare his speech for the Legislative Assembly today. The bill will have a direct and positive impact on victims, witnesses and offenders in the criminal justice system. It will reduce delays and uncertainty for victims and witnesses while they wait for their cases to be resolved. For offenders it means earlier access to support and supervision for rehabilitation or, indeed, an innocent accused may be acquitted earlier. That is a good justice system. The bill is also accompanied by funding for one new magistrate and two new police prosecutors at the request of the Chief Magistrate to support the additional work that will be in the Local Court.

The bill ensures that when offenders are convicted, they will continue to receive a sentence that is commensurate to the seriousness of their offence. That is appropriate. The most serious cases will continue to be heard by the District Court at the discretion of the prosecution or the defence. However, to ensure there are no unintended consequences, the Department of Justice, with input from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, will also conduct a review of the reform after 12 months to examine its impact on sentencing and the workload of courts and the justice agencies. This is an important reform. It is part of a comprehensive reform that this Government is delivering to justice across the State. It is another step toward a better justice system for our great State. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Membership

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council.

Madam SPEAKER

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

1. That Mr Franklin be appointed to the Committee on Children and Young People in place of Mrs Taylor, discharged.

Legislative Council
14 September 2016

DON HARWIN
President

*Community Recognition Statements***ROBYN CASTLE TENNIS COMPLEX**

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (13:13): Earlier this month I had the privilege of visiting the Robyn Castle Tennis Complex at Kings Langley. This complex is the heart of the Kings Langley community. Again I put on record my pride in representing the wonderful people of the Kings Langley community. I had a chance to catch up with Robyn Castle as well as members of the Tuesday seniors group. There was a serve of peach slice, which truly was a great hit. Robyn Castle does a lot to promote the game of tennis, in particular, senior tennis, having been involved in the game for a number of years. Robyn is a well-liked former teacher of Catherine McAuley High School in Westmead. I thank her sincerely. I thank outgoing Councillor Len Robertson, a longstanding former Liberal mayor of Blacktown council, for his service to the people of Kings Langley. Last year he was instrumental in a decision to allocate \$60,000 from the ward two capital budget to upgrade the Kings Langley tennis courts so that everyone in Kings Langley and surrounding suburbs can enjoy them.

PORT STEPHENS SUICIDE PREVENTION NETWORK

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:15): Sitting atop a rocky headland at beautiful Boat Harbour is a cairn, a tall mound of stones. Each stone is in memory of those who have taken their own lives. Last weekend, on World Suicide Prevention Day, I joined many people from my community to place a stone on the cairn in memory of those who have taken their own lives and to acknowledge the many broken-hearted people they have left behind. It was a moving experience, combining a deep sense of loss with hope. I thank the amazing team at the Port Stephens Suicide Prevention Network for their ongoing efforts to raise awareness of suicide and for providing support to those who have been left behind. Sadly, the annual Walk With Us event is growing each year. I also thank the Rotary Club of Salamander Bay and the hardworking Boat Harbour 355 committee for their significant contributions to the success of the event. I am proud to represent a community that is doing all that it can to combat the rising prevalence of mental health issues and suicide with kindness, care and compassion.

GLENBROOK SWIMMING CLUB

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Sport) (13:15): I acknowledge the progress and growth of the Glenbrook Swimming Club, which is the most eastern swim club of an area called Mountains and Plains, which extends as far as Parkes, Forbes and Cowra. The Glenbrook Swimming Club was established in 1980 and today, under president Matthew Neale, has 150 members. In 2011 its first national relay team represented the club in Adelaide and this year it increased its representation to three teams. In addition to the three relay teams seven individual swimmers represented the club. The club offers free stroke correction classes for members, catering for almost 40 young swimmers each week during the summer. In order to provide its swimmers with continued encouragement and to give them a competitive edge, the club will be installing an electronic timing board at the Glenbrook Swim Centre in the near future. I wish the Glenbrook Swimming Club and its members continued success for the future.

MADDI ELLIOTT, PARALYMPIAN

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (13:16): Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, oi, oi, oi! As the dust settles on another Olympic Games, Rio is still buzzing as Paralympians have descended on the city to take on rivals from around the world. I am pleased to inform the House that Maitland teenager Maddi Elliott is one of those talented sporting heroes competing in Rio. In fact, earlier this week Maddi won the gold medal in the S8 category 100 metres freestyle with a record time. This morning she won the silver medal in the 100 metres backstroke event. She will have another shot at taking a gold medal in the 50 metres freestyle final on Saturday morning. This is a magnificent achievement for someone who has already made a splash in swimming circles across Australia and the world. I congratulate Maddi on her achievements. I am looking forward to welcoming her back to Maitland when she returns from Rio. I pay tribute to Simon Orchard, another Olympian from Maitland, who has been supporting us in our white ribbon initiatives to raise the profile of domestic violence. Good work to all of our athletes.

INDIGENOUS SURF FESTIVAL

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (13:17): I acknowledge the efforts of the Juraki team following the 2016 Indigenous Surf Festival held at Fingal Beach from 9 September to 11 September. Long-term Fingal residents Joel and Mary Slabb held the inaugural Indigenous surf titles in Fingal in September 2015. Despite the weather not being the best on Saturday, which thwarted my efforts to hit the surf and ride the waves, the sun shone on Sunday to see the final day finish with a glow. A total of 60 Indigenous surfers ranging in age from 10 to 40 from all over Australia attended the event over three days. It is a great effort by the Fingal Rovers Surf Life Saving Club, which hosted the event for a second year in a row. It creates a great deal of goodwill in our Indigenous communities and throughout the surfing community. Well done, Joel and Mary Slabb

FAIRFIELD POLICE AWARDS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:18): On 9 September 2016 the Fairfield Local Area Command hosted the annual award ceremony at Cabra-vale Diggers Club. Current and former police officers received the following awards: National Police Service Medal, NSW Police Medal, Medallions, Warrant of Appointment, Long Service Award, Certificate of Service, G20 Summit Citation, Region Commander's Unit Citation, and LAC Certificates of Commendation.

The ceremony was attended by NSW Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione, AO, APM; Assistant Commissioner Frank Mennilli, APM; my parliamentary colleague Nick Lalich, MP; the police band; friends and families. I congratulate all award winners on their outstanding service to the Fairfield community. I make special mention of the master of ceremonies, Inspector Raven Maharaj. I also acknowledge the outstanding contribution of Superintendent Peter Lennon, APM, and his support for our local officers. Unfortunately, Superintendent Lennon could not be with us on the day. On behalf of those in this House, I extend our condolences to the Lennon family on the passing of Mrs Lennon senior.

SURF LIFE SAVING CENTRAL COAST

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:19): I congratulate Chris Parker and the team at Surf Life Saving Central Coast on the official launch of their new drone rescue program this week at Terrigal Beach. This fantastic new service will boost the lifesaving capacity of Surf Life Saving Central Coast and will be used for major search and rescue incidents and for preventative surveillance during high-risk times to support our local patrols.

Congratulations to Brett Beswick from Avoca, Matias Trehwela from North Avoca, and Paul Kenny from Terrigal, who will this weekend commence the Civil Aviation Safety Authority [CASA] operators certificate training in the use of drones at our local beaches. Surf Life Saving Central Coast has partnered with Little Ripper and Surf Life Saving NSW to lead the way in trialling this innovative technology. Well done and congratulations to Surf Life Saving Central Coast for the implementation of this fantastic drone technology.

TRIBUTE TO MAXWELL JOHN ROWLAND DUNBIER

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (13:20): It is with sadness that I advise the House of the passing of a former member for Campbelltown, Maxwell John Rowland Dunbier. Max was the Liberal member for Campbelltown from 1968 to 1971—a transitional time for our great city, as it was developing from a country town into the regional city that it is today. Max was a colourful character whose reputation was in knowing how to make friends and influence people. He was a well-known and long-term Macarthur local who certainly left his mark, particularly during the 1970s. Former upper House member and fellow parishioner John Ryan defined Max's character as a "strong cup of tea". Max was born on 3 February 1938 and passed away this morning at home in the company of his family after a long battle with cancer. I ask the House to join me in offering my sincerest condolences to Max's family and loved ones, on behalf of the people of Campbelltown and the Parliament of New South Wales.

TRIBUTE TO DANIELLE LUCAS

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (13:21): I acknowledge today Danielle Lucas, an inspiring woman from Kirrawee, who recently started Care 4 Kids, an organisation which donates care packs for children affected by domestic violence. Danielle had a difficult childhood, personally experiencing domestic violence and the negative repercussions of abuse. An incredibly strong woman, she has turned her experience around by making a difference to the lives of young children whose circumstances are similar to her own as a child. The Care 4 Kids volunteers donate backpacks full of fun activities like colouring books, pencils, bubbles and stickers.

The packs are distributed by the Miranda Local Area Command domestic violence team to children at Miranda, Sutherland and St George police stations and Sutherland Local Court. It is Danielle's hope that receiving these packs will help bring some happiness into the lives of these children, and also aid in keeping them occupied while visiting police stations. With the support of friend Jan Borg and her family, Danielle's commitment to helping vulnerable children is truly commendable. Her optimism and strength are an inspiration to others and it is a privilege to be able to acknowledge her great work and her passion for helping others.

MASCOT SENIOR CITIZENS CENTRE

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (13:22): Today I recognise the remarkable Annette Gardner of Mascot, whose vision and dedication has revitalised the Mascot Senior Citizens Centre. Before her involvement, in 2014, the Mascot Senior Citizens Centre had only a handful of members. Now its numbers have grown to more than 140. Mascot Senior Citizens Centre plays a vital role in connecting the retired and young at heart to government services. One of Annette's projects is to have the internet installed at the centre so that members can learn how to access government services online and hopefully have the facilities in place to allow them to do it from the centre.

More importantly, the centre provides a space where local seniors can come together and socialise and break the hold of isolation facing so many of the elderly and retired in our community. Annette has done a tremendous job of building a network of community-oriented local businesses, not-for-profit organisations and volunteers to run programs and to help her meet the centre's expenses.

WOLLONDILLY SHIRE COUNCIL SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (13:23): I acknowledge the achievements of this year's Wollondilly Shire Council Sportsperson of the Year. Judith Rigg has an amazing record of achievements in athletics, including receiving gold medals in the 100 metre and 400 metre events, as well as a silver medal in the 200 metre event at this year's country track and field championships. At the Australian Athletics Championships, Judith won a total of four bronze medals and, for the second time, was able to break a track record. She regularly takes parts in fun runs and even competes in the annual tough bloke-chick challenge which comprises an eight kilometre run over a total of 26 obstacles. Unfortunately, I could not compete in that event this year! Judith was announced the Wollondilly Shire Council Sportsperson of the Year at this year's Australia Day awards. I wish Judith the best of luck in any upcoming track and field championships.

WOOLCOCK INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:24): On Saturday 10 September, in my capacity as the member for Bankstown and shadow Minister for medical research, I had the honour of attending the Golden Heart Charity function hosted at the Bankstown Sports Club to raise funds to support the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research tuberculosis control program in Vietnam. The institute is conducting groundbreaking research into the treatment and prevention of tuberculosis and other respiratory illnesses, particularly in Vietnam, where there are still more than 100,000 cases and 17,000 deaths caused by tuberculosis yearly.

I thank Dr Vinh Binh Lieu, President of the Vietnamese-Australian Medical Association, for the invitation to attend. I also acknowledge a number of guests, including Dr Thang Ha, President of the Vietnamese Community Association; Dr Peter Wong; Mr Dennis Halpin; Mr Quang Luu, AO, from ActionAid Australia; Thuat Van Nguyen, OAM, President of the Children's Festival Organisation; and Dr Greg Fox, Senior Lecturer in Respiratory Medicine, Sydney Medical School and a number of other guests from the institute. I congratulate the institute and the Vietnamese Medical Association on their fine work and on the fundraising efforts for the evening.

BLESSED TO BLESS FUNDRAISING DINNER

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (13:25): On Saturday 3 September I attended the Blessed to Bless gala dinner organised by a locally based fundraising committee chaired by Bruce York. Blessed to Bless is a mission organisation that raises money to educate poor children in the northern Copper Belt region of Zambia, particularly at the Ipalo Christian Community School. One hundred and twenty children attend the school from years 1 to 4, and the school hopes eventually to cater for students up to year 12. The project manager of the school's proposed expansion program, Kim Matuka, travelled from Zambia to speak on current and proposed programs. She was an enthusiastic and inspiring speaker who moved us with her commitment and compassion. Blessed to Bless raised more than \$101,000 through the evening and associated efforts, which will go a long way towards helping poor and disadvantaged children in Zambia. I commend all concerned.

WENTWORTHVILLE TAMIL STUDY CENTRE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (13:26): The Wentworthville Tamil Study Centre, also known as the "Tamil school" is a wonderful organisation in the Western Sydney community. Each Saturday, more than 650 students take part in Tamil language classes from pre-kindergarten to year 12, using the classrooms at Girraween Public School. In fact, about half of the Girraween Public School population are also students of the Tamil Study Centre. The Tamil Study Centre is doing a remarkable job of fulfilling its mission—rendering educational, cultural and social services to the Tamil community.

The centre is also empowering Tamil children to communicate fluently in Tamil with their parents, teachers and peers; providing opportunities for Tamil children to learn and understand the Tamil culture through drama, dance and music; encouraging youth to develop leadership skills by conducting annual speech competitions and performances; and enhancing the education of Tamil children using state-of-the-art technology. I commend the centre's committee for providing such a wonderful service. In particular, I thank the secretary, Mr Partheepan Gunaratnam, for inviting me to Kalai Vizha, the centre's annual cultural festival. The Tamil community is an important part of Australian society, and I am proud to represent it in the New South Wales Parliament.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) (13:27): I congratulate recent winners in the Shire Business Awards in the Cronulla electorate: Burraneer Bakery and Deli for best bakery; Best Fresh Farm Markets for delicatessen/gourmet food; The Sleeping Giant, Caringbah Home Centre, for home furniture; Loaf Sandwiches for best new business; Blooms the Chemist, Cronulla, for best pharmacy; Newton Real Estate for best real estate agency; Sealevel Restaurant for restaurant fine dining; Floormanania, Caringbah, for service and trade; Motorcycle Accessories Supermarket, Caringbah, for specialised retail business; and Sharni Taylor at Cronulla Skin Sanctuary for the Youth Award.

I congratulate the Sealevel Restaurant on its recent award for winning the best fine dining restaurant award in the Shire Business Awards. Sealevel offers a modern Australian venue with French and Italian influences. The restaurant was founded in 1997 by Claude and David Allouche and they have passed on their passion for the industry to their sons, head chef Nathen Allouche and Marc, Blake and Adam Allouche, who now operate the iconic restaurant. I congratulate Sharni Taylor, winner of the Youth Award in the Shire Business Awards. Sharni is an advanced endermologist and medi-spa therapist at Cronulla Skin Sanctuary. She has a comprehensive background in the paramedical health, wellness and beauty industries. Sharni has been trained as a natural therapist and a paramedical therapist.

BYRON BAY WRITERS FESTIVAL

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (13:28): I congratulate Byron Bay Writers Festival board founder Chris Hanley and director Edwina Johnson on the success of the 2016 festival. This year marked the twentieth anniversary of the writers festival and featured more than 150 writers and thinkers, and attracted more than 70,000 patrons from across the region, State, country and globe. The weather this year threatened to cancel the festival, with cyclonic winds shredding marquees the night before opening but, thankfully, and due to the efforts of the organisers and volunteers, the show still went on.

The theme, "Where Stories Take You", was certainly evidenced by the diversity and multiplicity of the featured artists and thinkers. There were too many highlights to mention but I was particularly enthralled to hear Michael Leunig speak about his life, as his artwork has provided such profound keynotes for so many of us for decades. I was proud to sponsor the event and on behalf of my community we thank founder Chris Hanley for his vision, passion and service to lovers of literature and thought everywhere as he retires from the festival.

ST PETER'S PRIMARY SCHOOL STOCKTON

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (13:29): I speak today of the year 3 and year 4 students at St Peter's Primary School, Stockton. These students, at only nine and 10 years old, were issued with an assignment to write a letter on a topic they were passionate about. They wrote about a playground. The teacher then sent the letters off to Newcastle City Council hoping that it would result in a playground being added to the Stockton foreshore. Amazingly the council was impressed with their efforts and is now working with the students to put together designs and consult with the local community. The school has said that the students now feel like they are part of a decision-making process, and are able to make a positive change and difference. I wonder what they will write about next year. Congratulations to the students and teachers at St Peter's Primary School, Stockton.

ALBURY ELECTORATE BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (13:30): Congratulations to Brett and Karen St John of Corowa Flooring Xtra who were awarded the New South Wales Top Store prize for 2016. They have been running the business for six years and their dedication to ensuring customer satisfaction, acting on customer feedback and giving back to the community by sponsoring local sports teams makes them worthy winners of the award. What a great achievement. Well done to Brock Shore of Tumbarumba who won the fourth year Apprentice Award for the Riverina at the Group Training Employment Services Apprentice and Trainee Awards held recently. Brock works as a diesel mechanic at the Snowy Valleys Council Workshop in Tumbarumba. All the best in your future endeavours, Brock.

KYEEMAGH INFANTS SCHOOL PARENTS AND CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (13:30): I pay tribute to the fantastic Kyeemagh Infants School Parents and Citizens Association and the brilliant advocacy work it is doing on behalf of the children and the community. The Kyeemagh parents and citizens association has been joining with staff and students to fight for an expansion of its school, which is currently K-2, to be a full K-6 primary school. Association members, including Gina Moeke, Luisa Trieu, Louise Sheehy, Nadene Faure, James Kyriakou, Caroline Foley and many others, are such a passionate and impressive group of people who provide a real sense of community to their local school.

I acknowledge also the receptiveness of the Department of Education and the Minister's office, and thank local Public Schools Director Susan Shelley, as well as Minister Piccoli's staff, for taking the time to meet with me regarding the school's proposal and our community's needs. Schools across the St George area are increasingly encountering capacity issues and it is fantastic to see this local parents and citizens association take the initiative to help relieve demand on other local schools and make use of this fantastic school site.

AVALON BULLDOGS JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) (13:31): I congratulate the A-grade winners from the Avalon Bulldogs Junior Rugby League Football Club for 2016. On 4 September the Avalon Bulldogs played the Narraweena Hawks. The two teams have a great rivalry, with the Avalon being the only team to have won against Narraweena all season—something of which I will remind the member for Wakehurst. It was a nail-biting finish, with Jared Palmer delivering a field goal from 40 metres out to give Avalon a one point lead. The final score was 19 to 18. This is the first A-grade competition the mighty Avalon Bulldogs have won.

Good luck for next season, boys, including Michael Bowdon, Luke Johnson, Kurt Stevenson, Jackson Lloyd, Ryan Clissold, Will Kelly, Ryan Evans, Aaron Groom, Alan Avis, Jared Palmer, Tim Goose; Will Haines, Nathan Johnson, Tom Creagh, Liam Jackson, Chris "Pig" Seymour, Dan Matthews, Judd Hanlon and Sam Meehan. Congratulations also to coach and ultramarathon champion Craig Goozee; and manager Piers Cope-Williams, whose claim to fame is being the brother of Jackie.

MOON FESTIVAL

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (13:32): I recognise the Moon Festival, also known as the Mid Autumn Festival, celebrated by people in my electorate of Kogarah. The celebration of the Moon Festival occurs on 15 September, although it is generally observed on the following weekend. The celebration is associated with having fun with friends and eating moon cake—anyone who loves carbs will love moon cake. However, the Moon Festival is more than about eating cake; it is a festival that celebrates gathering, thanksgiving and praying. Members of the St George community from a Chinese background have earned the right to take a day off from their busy lives to celebrate with family and friends, considering their massive contribution to modern Australia and also to their families. I was lucky enough to celebrate this wonderful celebration with friends at Sunny's Restaurant hosted by the owner, Sunny Zheng, who was a wonderful host. Also in attendance were the member for Rockdale and the new member for Barton, a former member of this Chamber. I wish all people with a Chinese heritage a happy Moon Festival for 2016.

MACINTYRE HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (13:33): I recognise three Macintyre High School students who performed magnificently at the recent Combined High Schools State Athletics Championships in Sydney. I commend javelin-thrower Chloe Johnson and hurdler River-Dean Pentecost on winning gold medals in their respective events, as well as long-jumper Nathan Pearce for finishing sixth in the finals in Sydney, which was a step up from his eighth place finish in the same competition last year. I acknowledge all three athletes for their hard work, the injuries they have had to overcome, the commitment to training they have had to display to reach that level of competition and, in the case of Chloe and River-Dean, to achieve their medal placings. I wish them both all the very best for when they compete in the national athletics competition. Hopefully they will bring back more medals for the Macintyre High School and the Inverell community.

KINCUMBER HIGH SCHOOL DEBATING TEAM

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:34): I congratulate Kincumber High School on its win at the Probus Club of Kincumber debate last month. This is an enormous achievement for the Kincumber High School debating team, as it retains the Lerryn Mutton shield for a second year. Four of our local schools competed in the debate—Central Coast Grammar School, Erina High School, Green Point Christian College and Kincumber High School, with three debates of two heats and a final. The quality of the debating from our high school students is absolutely outstanding. The quality of the debaters speaks volumes about all the work put in by the schools. Once again, congratulations to Kincumber High School on a fantastic result.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): I will now leave the chair until 2.15 p.m.

Announcements

NATIONAL PEACEKEEPERS' DAY

The SPEAKER: I bring to the attention of the House that today is National Peacekeepers' Day—a day in honour of the service of more than 30,000 men and women who from 1947 onwards participated in

peacekeeping operations. I note that Minister Roberts and Minister Elliott are both former peacekeepers. We thank them, and all the men and women involved, for their service.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I extend a very warm welcome to His Excellency Mr Najeeb Al-Bader, who is the Ambassador of the State of Kuwait and who is the guest of the Speaker and member for South Coast.

I also welcome to the gallery the students, leaders and parents from the Eastwood Heights Public School, who are attending the Ryde electorate's school leadership program and who are guests of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation and member for Ryde. I also welcome Neville Tomkins, OAM, Chief Commissioner of Scouts Australia, and Ross Grove, Greater Western Sydney Regional President of Scouts Australia. They are guests of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier for Western Sydney and member for Castle Hill.

I also acknowledge and welcome to the gallery members of the Shoalhaven Lioness Club, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast and member for Kiama. I also welcome students and teachers from the Holsworthy Public School, guests of the member for Holsworthy. I also welcome World Youth Day Pilgrim students and their teacher from the Delaney College, guests of the member for Granville. I also welcome Angela Tran and Tasmin Kabir, who are work experience students from the St George Girls High School, guests of the member for Kogarah.

Announcements

**DEATH OF MAXWELL JOHN ROWLAND DUNBIER, A FORMER MEMBER OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

The SPEAKER: I regret to inform the House of the death on 14 September 2016 of Maxwell John Rowland Dunbier, a former member of the Legislative Assembly, who served as the member for Campbelltown from 24 February 1968 to 13 January 1971. On behalf of the House I extend to his family the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.

RONDA MARY MILLER, CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The SPEAKER: I have to report to the House that on 1 August 2016 I received a letter from Ronda Mary Miller, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, informing me of her intention to retire and that her last day of duty will be Friday 23 September 2016. I also wish to advise members that during the course of proceedings on Thursday 22 September 2016, which will be the Clerk's last day in the Chamber, there will be an opportunity for the House to formally acknowledge Ronda's more than 26 years of service commencing in the 1980s. I will be hosting morning tea for the Clerk at 10.30 that morning, immediately following the conclusion of the debate in the House, and would like to invite all members to join me in the Speaker's Garden to say a very fond farewell to Ronda.

Ministerial Statement

NORMAN MAY

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Sport) (14:23): On behalf of the New South Wales Government I acknowledge the recent passing of legendary sports broadcaster Norman May, OAM, at the age of 88. May, who was affectionately known as "Nugget", is best known for his commentary of Olympic and Commonwealth Games; however, during his time at the ABC he covered a multitude of sports, most particularly rugby and cricket. Norman May was born in Melbourne in 1928 and moved to the Sydney suburb of Coogee at the age of three, where he developed his love of the surf.

At the age of six, he suffered a terrible accident when his mate Alan Reynolds shot an arrow into his right eye, while they were playing cowboys and indians, causing him to lose the eye. His ABC colleagues later labelled him the most unbiased one-eyed commentator in Australia! Despite this setback, Norman became an excellent sportsman in his own right, playing cricket for the Combined Great Public Schools [GPS] Firsts and rugby union for Randwick, as well as representing New South Wales at surf lifesaving, where he won three Australian championships.

Norman got his break at the ABC when he was interviewed about surf lifesaving by Dick Healey, who was later the Liberal member for Wakehurst and then Davidson in the governments of Sir Robert Askin, Tom Lewis and Sir Eric Willis. Just three months after the commencement of television in 1956, May was spotted on a bus by Healey who asked him whether he would commentate the ABC's telecast of the Metropolitan Surf

Championships in early 1957, thus commencing a career with the national broadcaster that would last almost three decades. After being impressed by Norman's call, he was asked by the ABC's General Manager, Charles Moses, to call the first ever broadcast of rugby union between Manly and Gordon at Chatswood Oval.

Norman once related that the toughest job of his career came at the 1972 Munich Olympics. He had completed his call of the swimming one evening and had later gone out for some drinks with the German media contingent, unaware of the tragic events that had taken place at the Olympic village and the nearby German air base with the murder of 11 Israeli athletes by the Black September group. He was woken at 6.00 a.m., after only a few hours sleep, to be told of the tragedy. Carrying a bit of a hangover he was asked to call the ceremony of mourning at the Olympic Stadium later that day. With the ceremony being conducted in four languages and the translation almost indecipherable, Norman fell back on the old adage, "If in doubt, say nothing."

Of course, Norman May is most famously remembered for his call of the men's 4 x 100 medley relay at the 1980 Moscow Olympics, where Australia broke an eight-year gold medal drought, no doubt helping to explain his immortal call, "Gold! Gold to Australia! Gold!" as 17-year-old Neil Brooks touched out his Russian opponent. However, Norman's favourite sport was cricket, and he considered it a privilege to spend 17 years commentating alongside the legendary Alan McGilvray. May recalled on one occasion calling a match between the Melbourne Cricket Club [MCC], which was captained by Peter May, and New South Wales, which contained a number of Australian players including Richie Benaud, Bob Simpson and Alan Davidson.

Proving that even the greatest are not infallible, McGilvray turned to Norman May to introduce him and said, "And here's Peter May". Of course, at the next break McGilvray was profuse in his apology; and at the commencement of their next shift he threw to Norman by saying, "Now to continue, here's Norman O'Neill". They also got up to plenty of mischief. McGilvray, May and the great Keith Miller had a ritual on the first morning of a test match where they would get together in McGilvray's hotel room for a few beers along with breakfast and discuss team tactics and strategy.

Ms Pru Goward: And a few more beers.

Mr STUART AYRES: And probably a few more beers. No doubt Norman May will go down in cricket folklore as the man behind the microphone when Doug Walters famously hit Bob Willis for six on the last ball of the day in the Ashes Test of 1974-75 at the Western Australian Cricket Association [WACA] ground to bring up a hundred in one session. On a personal level, Norman never married but spent many years looking after his elderly mother before moving to an apartment overlooking Bondi Beach. As well as receiving the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1983, he was also awarded the Olympic Order in 2000 by Juan Antonio Samaranch for services to the Olympic movement in Australia. I had the honour and privilege of inducting Norman into the Sydney Cricket Ground [SCG] Media Hall of Honour. Norman May will go down in the annals of history as one of the great pioneers of broadcasting in this country. I am sure members of this House will join me in acknowledging his massive contribution to broadcasting in Australia and in honouring him today.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (14:29): On behalf of the New South Wales Opposition I join with Minister Ayres and the Government to pass on our sincerest condolences to the entire May family, the wider sporting community and the sporting media community. The Australian sporting media lost an icon and a broadcasting star in his own right. Norman May, OAM, was a legendary voice in sports broadcasting in Australia since the late 1950s. I can attest that he will be sorely missed by us all.

Many of us will recognise the catchcries of the likes of Richie Benaud with the magic words "Marvellous!" or "Two for 22"; Ray Warren with "Oh, crunching tackle!"; and Bruce McAvaney, with simply "Delicious!" or "Special!". Those phrases from broadcasting greats ring familiar to sports lovers right across the country, but no other words are more etched into my mind—and I am sure the minds of the 93 members of this Chamber and of those across the country—than a famous phrase of Norman May. Who can forget his magic words? The Minister said them today, but I will also put them on the record: "Gold! Gold to Australia! Gold!" This well-known phrase was used by the late Norman May when he was covering the 100 metres men's medley relay in 1980.

Norman May worked with the ABC in his early years, and he changed the way sports broadcasting was conducted forever. Norman did away with the polite, traditional-sounding English accent—the Oxford accent, as he called it—citing the fact that he had no prior training in broadcasting and therefore was going to do it his own special, unique way. It was a decision that changed the way sports broadcasting was shaped, leading to those phrases from those wonderful broadcasters I mentioned.

Norman May's passion, fire and personality propelled this new, "out there" approach until it became the gold standard in sports broadcasting. His actions opened the door for many famous broadcasters. He was a revolutionary of his time and his contributions have not gone unnoticed. In 1983 Norman was awarded the Medal

of the Order of Australia [OAM] for his services to the media. In 2000 he was awarded the Olympic Order for services to the Olympic movement. In 2013 he was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Australian Sports Commission. Norman May led an extraordinary life and committed himself wholeheartedly to the projects he pursued. I am humbled to be here today to honour this great man—a true Aussie legend. We all can say together: vale Norman May.

Question Time

CHALLENGE COINS AND NSW POLICE BUDGET

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:37): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. What is the cost to the police budget of the Minister minting coins in his own likeness?

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) (14:37): I thank the Leader of the Opposition and member for Auburn for his question—inaccurate as it is, as usual. No coins that I am aware of have my name or image on them. I think the coins the member is referring to are coins known as "challenge coins". They are exchanged between officeholders, including enforcement officers around the world.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will listen to the answer in silence.

Mr TROY GRANT: They are also exchanged between police commissioners, deputy commissioners and assistant commissioners and our Police Association, for example. It is widely known that officeholders have created coins as they are a much more respectful and cost-effective option than alternative gifts, especially with relevant law enforcement agencies around the world. Coins have been given where respective agency coins have been received from officeholders at the US Department of State, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the New York City Police Department and the London Metropolitan Police Service when I have held counterterrorism meetings with these organisations. NSW Police Legacy has asked to use the coins to raise vital funding so that it can assist police families that have suffered a loss by providing meaningful benefits, services and advocacy. The cost of the coins was met from the NSW Police Force protocol budget.

Ms Jodi McKay: How much were they?

Mr TROY GRANT: I find it intriguing that members opposite want to talk about gifts for foreign dignitaries and the like. I will not go into the Dastyari saga.

Ms Jodi McKay: Please do.

Mr TROY GRANT: The man who stood beside the Leader of the Opposition recently—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: I regret interrupting the Deputy Premier Augustus.

The SPEAKER: Do you?

Mr Michael Daley: Yes. The question was simple: How much—

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier has remained relevant to the question.

Mr TROY GRANT: As I remain relevant to the question, I am happy to conclude by stating that I find it intriguing that members opposite would ask a question about gifts for foreign dignitaries and the like. I will not talk about Dastyari and his cavalcade of gifts and payments, but I will address the cost of the coins in a moment. In 2010, the then Labor Premier—it will take me a moment to remember who it was—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will not start interjecting.

Mr TROY GRANT: It was Keneally. She went on an overseas trip that cost the taxpayers of this State \$100,000.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The Deputy Premier is not being relevant to the question asked. The Leader of the Opposition asked how much it cost to mint the coins at the "Royal Mint of Troy".

The SPEAKER: Order! Based on that comment, I rule the point of order out of order. That is not like the member for Fairfield. Opposition members who are shouting will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr TROY GRANT: Of that \$100,000, the then Premier spent \$6,714.18 on gifts. In March 2009, members opposite spent \$290,000 on gifts. Their hypocrisy knows no bounds. Each coin cost about \$15.

The SPEAKER: Order! I welcome to the gallery Mr Richard Purves, a constituent from the electorate of South Coast and a friend of the Speaker and the President.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (14:42): I address my question to the Premier.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will be quiet. The member for Drummoyne has not yet asked the question. Give him a go.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: How is the Government delivering better services for the people of New South Wales?

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn Opposition members not to interject. If they do so they will be removed from the Chamber. Shouting is inappropriate.

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:43): I thank the member for Drummoyne for the incredible work he does in his electorate. He is loved from one end of his electorate to the other.

The SPEAKER: Order! I again warn Opposition members about interjecting. The member for Londonderry will come to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: He knows how important it is to improve customer services and to deliver for the people of this State, and that is what this Government does regularly. We understand that we can improve service delivery and we are doing that every day. Many interactions occur between government agencies and the people from one end of this State to the other. Our job is simple: We must make it easier for people to interact with government agencies, and there are many ways in which we can do that. There is also a tale of two cities. We remember what it was like when members opposite were in government. This Government has implemented three key initiatives to make people's lives easier.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I need say only one word: "Opal". What an incredible story. I remember that great day in 1996 when Bob Carr, accompanied by the then Minister for Transport, told the people of New South Wales that the Labor Government would deliver the Tcard, and it would be delivered before the 2000 Olympics. That sounded awesome; it sounded like a great thing to do. However, when the Olympics arrived there was no Tcard. There was no Tcard in 2001, 2002, 2003—oh no, here we go—2004, 2005 or 2006. In 2007, 11 years after it was promised, there was still no card.

Contracts were cancelled and the people of New South Wales faced a \$100 million bill. The Labor Government needed a treasurer who could do the job. We have just that person. We have the Treasurer and the new Minister for Transport and Infrastructure we need to deliver. This dream team delivered the Opal card. Everyone has an Opal card. You little ripper! How many cards have been issued? This Government has not issued one card or two cards; it has issued 8.9 million Opal cards across the State. There is great news everywhere we go. The Government is proud to have delivered.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Under this Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, there is not only a new Opal card but also 15,840 additional transport services.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Summer Hill to order for the first time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation has done a great job in introducing FuelCheck, which is a fantastic app that allows motorists to find the cheapest fuel.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: That innovation is fantastic for the member for Kogarah and the member for Summer Hill because when they are travelling around working the numbers they will be able to access cheaper fuel.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Lakemba to order for the first time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The member for Strathfield travels to Keira, which is a fair distance.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Summer Hill will cease shouting. I call the member for Summer Hill to order for the second time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It will be cheaper for her to travel while she works out her dream team. This Government is delivering for the people of New South Wales. What a great thing that is. This Government has also established Service NSW.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Swansea will come to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Minister for Finance and Services is also delivering for the people of this State. We remember what happened under the Labor Government. It had 100 call centres, 1,000 websites and 8,000 phone numbers. It was supposedly easy for people to make contact with government agencies. If I wanted to contact a government service I could ring one of those numbers, but no-one would answer. Members opposite thought that was a good service. Service NSW can be contacted 24 hours a day. In between those trips up and down the highway doing the numbers, members opposite can call Service NSW and renew their licence. Driving test wait times have been reduced from 35 days to four days.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maitland will cease shouting. There is too much noise coming from the Opposition benches.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: This is a good news story for the people of New South Wales. This Government is delivering better services and more infrastructure every day. We are here to look after the people of this State.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Oatley and the member for Drummoyne to order for the first time. I call the Minister for Education to order for the first time.

NEPEAN HOSPITAL

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:50): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. In late March last year the member for Penrith and the member for Mulgoa issued separate media releases promising a \$370 million upgrade of Nepean Hospital, but on 7 September this year she said that the \$370 million figure was "somehow plucked out of the air". Is she wrong or are they wrong?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (14:51): I think we can tell from references to the front pages of papers that this is a member of Parliament who likes to have a bob each way. The reality is that this is a very serious question because it relates to the Nepean Hospital at Penrith. I congratulate the member for Penrith, who made a great speech in this House yesterday that put on the record exactly how it should have been. In 2012 the Coalition opened the east block of the hospital, which had been planned by the Labor Government—I give them credit for it. The only trouble is it went only halfway; it left the emergency department and a whole lot of things undone. Since that time what has this Government done? It has opened the mental health facility and the oral health facility—the largest of its kind in Australia, I believe.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Londonderry to order for the second time. I call the member for Londonderry to order for the third time.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: This Government has opened car parking, which was simply not available when the Coalition took office. The Government then committed the funds to get on with the job of planning the balance of the building needed to complete the development of that hospital and that is exactly what it has been doing. The Government has been consulting with doctors, with nurses, with patients and their families, with the member for Penrith and with others about what is needed in that facility. And I know there was a suggestion of \$370 million back then—

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Keira that this is not a debate.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: Did you not ask the question?

Mr Ryan Park: Yes.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: Right, well, listen then. The answer was: That was a figure that came out of the best work estimate of the district at the time. As I have said, the Government has engaged designers. The Government has engaged architects.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Bankstown to order for the first time.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: The Government has gone through the comprehensive consultation process to see the size and scope of the building—

Mr Ryan Park: So you were wrong?

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

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: —that will be announced once that work is finished. Watch this space. But as I said to the media the other day, I do not think it will be \$370 million.

Mr Ryan Park: No?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: No, I do not.

Mr Ryan Park: How much?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: I think it will be a lot more than that.

The SPEAKER: I again remind the member for Keira that this is not a debate.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: But we will wait until we find out what the planners say, because that is how this Government will get it right—that is how it will build a building that does not require any extra money. Let me go back to the time, for example, when Bathurst hospital was built by the Labor Government. It was a half-baked design and inadequate to deal with the patient care at the time, so what did it have to do? Almost the moment it was open the Labor Government had to allocate more money to remediate. This Government is not doing that. It is developing plans that make sure we will complete a hospital that is able to meet patient need not only now but also in the future.

I congratulate the local member on his marvellous work in this space and in fact the work that is going on at that hospital now. I know those opposite will be disappointed when we announce exactly how much we are allocating and that work will begin on this hospital, as demonstrated by the member for Blacktown's and silly motion today about Blacktown Hospital. Let me just remind people—I always carry this little piece of paper around in my folder; it is the *Hansard* from 22 October 2010—what the member for Blacktown at the time said:

I asked for another 110 beds that were needed urgently at Blacktown Hospital but Prime Minister Rudd gave us only 18.

He went on to say:

At the time I said it was a bit like asking one's father for a motorcar at Christmas time and getting a pushbike instead.

He went on to complain about Blacktown Hospital where they were getting absolutely nothing:

Doctors and clinicians are ready to walk away.

That was Paul Gibson, then Labor member for Blacktown, who I am happy to tell members is now on the board of the Western Sydney Local Health District. The Government opened that hospital's stage one—\$300 million—earlier this year. Work is underway on stage two—\$400 million. Members should have a look at the website. I have looked it up on my iPad. It is there for anyone who wants to see the artist's drawing and there is an invitation to the public to have their say about what the final design will look like. Work is well underway there, as it will be out at Nepean when the professional planning is finished.

LIQUOR AND GAMING INDUSTRY

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (14:56): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. How is the New South Wales Government improving service delivery, and industry and community certainty in liquor and gaming?

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) (14:56): I thank the member for Tamworth for his question. He, like many in this place—maybe some of those opposite—would have received representations from upstanding publicans and people in the liquor industry within his electorate who have been frustrated for a long time about how long it took for some routine, low-risk applications to be processed by the former Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing. It was a frustration that was experienced by many local members—a frustration I experienced as the member for Dubbo before taking on the portfolio. I am happy to be able to update the House on substantial progress that has been made in efficiencies, better customer satisfaction and better regulation in the liquor and gaming industry.

Let me be clear: This Government supports a strong regulatory regime that balances the social, economic and cultural aspects of our hospitality and gaming industries. Decisions taken by the Independent Gaming and Liquor Authority are just that—independent, as they should be—which is entirely appropriate. But slow justice is no justice. The community, affected individuals and the industry all benefit from having a clear and more efficient system in liquor and gaming. That is why this Government created a new agency, Liquor and Gaming NSW, in legislation late last year. Before our change, the average time to process liquor licence applications—something that the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation understands very well—was a frustrating 170 days, and it was not uncommon for relatively simple applications to take much longer than 170 days.

My agency now tells me that this is the way it was under the construction of the former Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing [OLGR] and the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority [ILGA] in its former incarnation under those opposite. A lot of time was taken up by those who would simply write a brief, discuss an application and send it across the hallway to another office. When people in the community wanted to use Google to get information about ILGA, they would type in "ILGA" and be directed to the web page. When there was an issue relating to OLGR, they would type in "OLGR" and would be directed to the same web page.

It was a bit of a nonsense, but I am proud to report that is no longer the case. As at today, 80 per cent of licence applications are completed in 120 days, which is a reduction of 50 days. We can and should do better, and we will do better. All applications must meet this target. With a reformed agency, a strong independent authority, led by chair Philip Crawford, we are moving toward being able to determine low-risk liquor applications for cafes, restaurants and small bars within 45 days, not 170 days as was the case under those opposite.

The SPEAKER: The member for Newcastle will come to order.

Mr TROY GRANT: Better still, wherever possible, we are aligning development applications with the planning system under the excellent Minister for Planning to remove the red tape and duplication that was occurring.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Newcastle to order for the first time.

Mr TROY GRANT: I remind the House that this sensible reform was opposed by those opposite in the most vitriolic fashion, which is par for the course in how they operate.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Newcastle to order for the second time. He will cease interjecting.

Mr TROY GRANT: Liquor has been the topic of conversation in the public domain today. Here is hoping that after a successful Callinan review into the lockout laws and its analysis by the community, those opposite can find it within themselves to take a more mature and balanced approach to the legislative changes that will occur in this place over the coming months. That is what an effective opposition with principles would do. It is not what this Opposition is doing. This Opposition is led by the man of principle, but a man with no integrity who adopts a "whatever it takes, get into power, work it out later" approach. That is not the way to run a State, let alone an agency of the New South Wales Government.

NEPEAN HOSPITAL

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (15:01): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister visit Nepean Hospital with me and meet with doctors, nurses and health professionals, to hear for herself about the poor and overcrowded conditions that these people endure as they struggle to provide care for patients?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (15:02): I regularly visit and talk to doctors, nurses and others at the hospital. I have visited with the member for Penrith on many occasions. In fact, we usually sit at Edens over the road where Carol, who runs the cafe, says, "The usual, Minister?" She knows exactly what I have for lunch because I have been there so often. I meet with doctors, nurses and many others. In fact, I was there recently. I did not tell the member for Londonderry that I was there after the terrible shooting, visiting staff in the emergency department. In the interim, before we start on the new build of the hospital, we will allocate money to upgrade the emergency department to take children out of it, so there will be no more paediatric care mixed up with adult care, which is what the Opposition left us with, because it did not do it when it was in office. I am happy to join the member for Penrith to visit that hospital in his electorate at any time.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (15:03): My question is addressed to the Minister for Early Childhood Education. How is the New South Wales Government supporting affordable access to early childhood education for families in New South Wales?

Ms LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (15:03): I thank the member for Heathcote for his question and for his genuine interest in early childhood education across this State. Recently I was in Engadine with the member for Heathcote and we visited some fantastic services. Engadine Preschool Kindergarten will benefit from the additional funding that the Premier and I announced this morning. Research tells us that children who participate in a quality early childhood program in the year before school develop stronger cognitive, social and behavioural skills that will help them succeed in school and in later life.

Ms Kate Washington: Learn to speak about the Commonwealth funding.

Ms LESLIE WILLIAMS: I note the interjection from the shadow Minister. I would have thought that she would be interested in what is happening in early childhood services across the State.

The SPEAKER: I am quite surprised at the interjections of those opposite during this answer. The Minister has the call.

Ms LESLIE WILLIAMS: An average of 600 hours a year or 15 hours a week is considered to be the baseline level for participation. That is why the Premier and I were proud to announce today that this Government is investing a further \$115 million to ensure that New South Wales families have affordable access to 600 hours

of early childhood education. Members are already receiving emails and texts from excited preschool staff and parents. I thank Aunty Tracy and the wonderful team at Wunanbiri Preschool, including the management committee members who were with us today, David Watkins and Kristy Masella. I cannot forget to thank the preschoolers, who were the stars of the morning. I am pleased to report that the Premier and I have nearly got the barramundi song down pat. In what will be the largest single fee reduction initiative in New South Wales history, this funding will be tied directly to the provision of more affordable early childhood education for families in New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time.

Ms LESLIE WILLIAMS: We are supporting community preschools with an additional \$85 million in funding over the next two years. From next year, children who enrol in community preschools for 600 hours in the year before school will receive increased subsidies from the Government—up to \$6,600 for the most disadvantaged children.

The SPEAKER: If the member for Port Stephens wishes to debate this matter with the Minister, perhaps she should make an appointment with the Minister rather than interjecting.

Ms LESLIE WILLIAMS: This will allow community preschools to reduce fees for all families by an average of 30 per cent, and in fact remove nearly all fees for children from Aboriginal and low-income families. We are also improving the way we support services in rural and remote communities. Children in rural and remote areas often experience additional barriers to accessing early childhood education. This Government is working closely with peak industry bodies to ensure community preschools continue to provide access to future generations of young children.

Beginning in 2017, there will be a safety net for small community preschools operating in rural and remote areas. This safety net will support eligible services by providing a minimum funding of \$132,000, to ensure that children living in small rural and remote areas have access to quality early childhood education. We also know that educators in rural and remote areas face unique challenges. That is why the New South Wales Government last year established the Rural and Remote Early Childhood Teaching Scholarship program, committing \$1.3 million to fund this initiative.

Ms Kate Washington: It is not working.

Ms LESLIE WILLIAMS: Not according to the teachers to whom I speak. I thank the member for Port Stephens; I acknowledge that interjection. The scholarships assist diploma qualified teachers working in community preschools in rural and remote areas to upgrade to degree qualified early childhood teachers. On top of the 30 scholarships already awarded for the 2016 academic year, an additional 49 scholarships will be awarded to students in 2017. These scholarships are a great opportunity to support those working in the sector to improve the delivery of early childhood education programs in rural and remote areas. [*Extension of time*]

In addition, the Government has provided funds for capital works grants to increase the number of preschool places in New South Wales. I have been absolutely delighted to visit preschools that have received this grant. Under the program, preschools have been established in Old Bar and Wingham, in the electorate of the member for Myall Lakes, and in Alstonville and Orange. This Government will also deliver \$30 million in funding for long day care centres. We are proud of the State's diverse early childhood education sector.

For many of our working families, long day care is the preferred option. Parents who choose long day care can be confident that this Government will support their children to participate in early childhood education in that important year before school. The Government's \$30 million investment in long day care centres will reduce fees on the second day of enrolment for disadvantaged children to ensure that 600 hours of early childhood education is affordable for all New South Wales families. This Government knows that to build a more prosperous society, investing in the early years is essential. Our commitment to early childhood education funding in New South Wales will improve educational outcomes for children and deliver greater affordability for our families.

PRISON TEACHERS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:10): My question is directed to the Minister for Corrections. Given that research by the RAND Corporation shows that education programs in prisons can reduce recidivism rates by up to 40 per cent, why is the Government sacking 152 specialist correctional education officers?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (15:10): I am delighted that the member for Fairfield has honoured me with this question because it gives me an opportunity to update the House on this important policy—a policy that will see twice the number of inmates accessing literacy programs than in the past. Before I answer the

question, it is important for my friends in the gallery to know that every morning the Opposition tactics committee gets together and determines priorities for the day.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Port Stephens will come to order.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: For today's question time, the Opposition has placed a higher priority on a \$15 medallion from the Deputy Premier than on the very important issue of prisoner rehabilitation. I acknowledge the shadow Minister's interest in this issue, but his question has been asked following four questions from Opposition members and their priority was a \$15 medallion. I am now able to update the House on this important policy.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Port Stephens, the member for Lakemba and the member for Bankstown will come to order.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: The New South Wales Government is reforming the way prison education is delivered so that more than double the number of inmates complete literacy and numeracy courses. At the moment, the face-to-face time of inmates and teachers is 62 per cent. We need to lift that to 100 per cent.

The SPEAKER: The member for Lakemba and the member for Londonderry will come to order.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: We need to reduce recidivism in this State, and the only way to do that is to educate our prison inmates.

Mr John Robertson: You could run an ad campaign on literacy like he did on the greyhounds.

The SPEAKER: The member for Blacktown will come to order.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I note the interjection from the member for Blacktown—the only member in this House who has ever given away a prison to the private sector. This Government is moving from an in-house provided model to an outsourced model. I hear the howls from the Opposition. That policy is consistent with the policy adopted in Labor States around the country. We are following what the Labor States around the country are doing. Only those who are qualified and are engaged through a clearly defined contract will teach inmates. We have had negotiations with the Teachers Federation to increase teaching weeks per annum by staggering leave. Corrective Services teachers accrue 11 weeks leave per year. Regardless of the way leave is scheduled, the full teaching load cannot be delivered.

The SPEAKER: Opposition members will come to order. Members will be directed to leave the Chamber if they continue to interject. The member for Rockdale will come to order.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: This policy is about the inmates, not the teachers. I am happy with the work that the teachers have been doing but this policy is about rehabilitation.

Mr Jihad Dib: Why didn't you turn up today?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Lakemba. The reason I did not turn up today was that I was not invited.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Lakemba to order for the second time.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I have already met with the Teachers Federation; I was not invited today.

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: It was a political protest, and I was not invited because the member for Lakemba organised it. Inmate education and training reforms will more than double the number of inmates completing literacy and numeracy courses. We need to increase that number to 1,840 per annum. This policy will increase the number of inmates undertaking vocational education and training activities by 20 per cent. Corrective Services staff will continue to assess each inmate's educational and vocational needs.

The new positions of Assessment and Planning Officer and Education Services Coordinator will provide dedicated resources focused on assessment and ensuring that the education programs are delivered. As I said before, Corrective Services teachers are committed and are doing a good job. They are certainly not the ones to blame for anything that has gone wrong. The model is to blame. Even Labor States around the country are walking away from that model.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the second time.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: At no time has the Government been critical of the quality of the teachers. At no time have we been critical of their dedication and commitment. I hope that the teachers who are here today, and who were part of the engagement over the past couple of months, will decide to stay with Corrective Services.

Many of my colleagues and I have spoken to them. These teachers are keen and committed educators. I encourage them to stay within our system and to help us ensure that all our rehabilitation programs are education and outcomes based. This new policy—a policy that is endorsed by the Labor Party in other States—is the right way to go.

HOMELESSNESS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (15:15): My question is addressed to the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing. Will the Minister inform the House what the Government is doing to support people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless?

The SPEAKER: Members will cease interjecting.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing) (15:16): I thank the member for Kiama for his question. I acknowledge that he and the Speaker recently held at Nowra a forum which examined the challenges of homelessness on the South Coast. I thank the Speaker, the Minister and the former mayor for taking part in that forum and for their active work on the South Coast and in the Illawarra. Homelessness is a problem throughout New South Wales. When the Liberal Party came to government five years ago, economically the State was on its knees.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: On most economic indicators, the State was the lowest of all States and Territories. Over the past year, we have been able to turn that around. As the Premier constantly reminds us, the task of government is about looking after the vulnerable. We are now in a position to do a lot more work in that regard, but we need to engage the entire community in the process. I want to thank the member for Bankstown, who attended a forum this morning with me to acknowledge foster carers and the work they do, as well as the agencies that work in that area, including the staff of the Department of Family and Community Services.

The concern is that far too many children are coming out of foster care and ending up homeless, as well as far too many people coming through the avenues of domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse and other contributory factors. In my role, I have had the honour of working with many people to try to develop a new approach to assist people who are homeless. It is formidable to think that in the past 12 months 58,000 people received services from specialist homelessness service providers across New South Wales. One of the Premier's priorities is to target youth; I am sure that would be a priority for many of us. The Government has been doing as much as it can on that front. About 58 per cent of people who have been helped were people under the age of 25, and about 51 per cent were female. That reflects many of the problems in this area.

A few weeks ago I had the great pleasure, after doing a lot of work with community groups, non-government organisations and the wonderful staff of the Department of Family and Community Services, to present a discussion paper to the community called "Foundations for Change—Homelessness in NSW". All members should have received a letter from me—this is a matter that rises well above politics—asking them to engage their local communities and to take every step they can to make sure their constituents are aware of this issue. As a community, we should be doing far more to help people who are exposed to the risk of homelessness.

Certainly, some of the lessons I have learned have been lessons from organisations. I acknowledge Moo Baulch from Domestic Violence NSW, Michael Coffey from Yfoundations, who is very compassionate towards young people, and Kath McKernan from Homelessness NSW. I also thank the many people who are homeless and who talk to me about what brought them to homelessness. A woman named Stephanie is someone most members of this House would know. Thankfully, Stephanie now is in housing, but she has pointed out to me on a number of occasions when I have seen her around Sydney while she has been supporting homeless people that we need to support people before they become homeless.

The discussion paper "Foundations for Change—Homelessness in NSW" is aimed at developing a preventive approach instead of dealing with people who effectively or metaphorically have fallen off a cliff. The Department of Family and Community Services will hold a number of forums, the first of which will be conducted in Orange on Friday. Others will be held at Queanbeyan on 6 October and at Erina on 26 October. I want to see forums held throughout the State because this is as much a regional problem as it is a Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong problem.

I thank each of the people who will attend those forums because, by attending, they give us the benefit of their advice and wisdom, and hopefully we will be able to work collectively as a community to try to address some of the issues. The Government is contributing \$188 million of taxpayers' funds this year to support homelessness services. The Premier, through personal intervention, has ensured that \$40 million has been allocated to support youth by the provision of a rental subsidy scheme. [*Extension of time*]

Young people who are transitioning towards independence in this challenging world often find that very hard, especially if they come from a background of domestic violence, or a family that has been caught up in drugs and alcohol, or if they have mental health issues, which is another big contributor to homelessness. Young people from such backgrounds really do need us as a community to support them. One of the proposals that has been implemented is a rental subsidy program for young people who are prepared to re-engage in education or work. The subsidy will be approximately 25 per cent of the rent. It is a good program, despite challenges such as high prices for rent in Sydney. It may be the case that a 25 per cent subsidy of rental may not be sufficient. The Government is working with its non-government partners to see what can be done.

The Government also has contributed \$32 million to the Homeless Youth Assistance Program, which is designed to ensure there is support for young people. If people want to have their say, they can do so by going to the Government's excellent website www.haveyoursay@nsw.gov.au. Any members who are not familiar with that website should have a look at it because it brings together a significant proportion of outreach discussions on which the Government is seeking community input. Third from the top of topics is "Foundations for Change", which will enable people to have their say about the Government reaching out to the community. I again encourage all members of the House to ensure their electorates are aware of "Foundations for Change" to ensure that the solution that is achieved is one that is born of the community. As all members know, the community has the final say on matters of this type, so I urge them to ensure that their communities have their voices heard.

CITY OF SYDNEY COUNCIL ELECTION

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:23): My question is directed to the Premier. Given the \$12 million cost, the complex process imposed on the city and business voters, as well as the undemocratic nature of giving businesses two votes, I ask: Will the Premier work with the City of Sydney to establish a fairer and more efficient way to encourage business participation in City of Sydney elections?

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:23): I thank the member for Sydney for his question and for his interest in the City of Sydney. I am pleased the question has been asked because before the 2016 council elections, the Government's rationale and concern was that businesses paid 80 per cent of the rates yet had only 2 per cent of the votes. The issue was: How can the Government address that? The local business community, which comprises approximately 80,000 businesses, had limited opportunity to participate. This is an issue not just for the City of Sydney; it is an issue that has been examined across the country, particularly Melbourne, as the member for Sydney knows.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much conversation in the Chamber.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: There was an extensive period of consultation. The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters recommended that the City of Sydney introduce the same model of non-residential voting as applies in the city of Melbourne. That created an opportunity for businesses to have a say.

Mr Gareth Ward: It was introduced by Labor in Melbourne.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Indeed, it was introduced by Labor in Melbourne. With the introduction of the changes, 22,972 non-residential voters cast their votes last weekend.

Mr Luke Foley: And you still got thumped.

Mr Gareth Ward: So did you. One quota, mate.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Yes. Well played by the Leader of the Opposition. The 22,972 voters who voted in the 2016 election is more than 13 times the 1,709 voters who registered at the last election in 2012. I pay tribute to Christine Forster and her team. She did an outstanding job, she is an outstanding councillor, and she was an outstanding candidate. But, most importantly, I congratulate Clover Moore.

Mr Luke Foley: Do you?

Ms Prue Car: But what have you actually said about it?

Mr David Harris: Say it like you mean it.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: What Opposition members are saying is not true. Clover Moore and I have our differences on key issues.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maitland and the member for Cessnock will cease making inappropriate and stupid comments.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Whether or not the member for Maitland disagrees with me, she is preventing me from paying tribute to Clover Moore. If that is not her intention, she should refrain from interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Sydney is entitled to hear the answer to his question. The member for Maitland could have asked the question if she wished. The member for Maitland will remain silent.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Clover Moore does an incredible amount of work to assist homeless people across Sydney and has been a public advocate for a number of causes in both State Parliament and as the Lord Mayor of Sydney. Her achievements, notwithstanding our differences, should be applauded. I congratulate Clover Moore on her victory and look forward to continuing to work with her.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (15:26): My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. How is the Government delivering new and updated education facilities and services for New South Wales students? What alternative policies are available?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI (Murray—Minister for Education) (15:26): That is an excellent question—without notice. We all know how Government members take Ministers by surprise with this type of question. Yesterday a question by the member for Lismore was addressed to the Minister for Skills.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Just out of the blue.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: They are out-of-the-blue questions and we provide out-of-the-blue answers. It has been 302 days since I have been asked a question by the Opposition so, as always, the Government side of the House has to do the hard work, which includes asking questions. Last week the Premier and I were in Auburn, which is a marginal electorate that the Coalition will target at the next election.

Mr Brad Hazzard: It is becoming more and more marginal by the day.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: That is right. We read about it in the paper this morning. Coalition members are after Labor seats—Auburn, Summer Hill and Blue Mountains. At the next election, Labor will have to defend its decision about greyhound racing in Summer Hill. Don't worry: the Coalition has all the material.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members who continue to interject will be called to order or removed from the Chamber for an hour or two, or for the remainder of the day. I remind the member for Londonderry that she is already on three calls to order.

Ms Yasmin Catley: I would not go there, Adrian.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: I already know because I remember the material. An Opposition member said, "I can't in all good conscience vote for the continuation of the greyhound racing industry", but of course she did vote for the continuation of the greyhound racing industry. I do not know about her good conscience: it obviously does not mean much.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. In my electorate, we have some of the worst maintenance records in the Hunter and we would like the Minister for Education to tell us about schools.

The SPEAKER: The member for Swansea will resume her seat. As I could not hear what the Minister was saying because of the level of interjections, I cannot rule on the member's point of order.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: We were in Auburn last week to make a great announcement—\$25 million in funding for three schools to expand the capacity of schools in that part of Sydney. That pledge brings the amount this Government is spending on expanding school capacity in the Parramatta Road precinct to about \$80 million. But the Leader of the Opposition says that we need to do more. I remind the House that this Government has had to make difficult decisions that Labor has opposed at every stage. We have made difficult decisions to build schools. Those opposite do not support the decisions we have made to raise funds to afford to do what we are doing, but they want us to do more. I want to highlight to the House the projects that would have to be cancelled if we did what the Labor Party is urging us to do. We are selling Hurlstone Agricultural High School land.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Macquarie Fields will come to order.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: At the next election, the Labor Party's policy will be to buy it back. That would mean no upgrades to the three schools for specific purposes—Ajuga School, Campbell House School and Glenfield Park School. It would also mean no new high school at Oran Park, no new primary school at Gledswood Hills, and no additional classrooms at William Stimson Public School, Cecil Hills Public School and Prestons Public School.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition and crossbench members will come to order.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: All these cancelled projects if Labor were elected to government have led me to go to Staples office supplies to get a stamp saying, "Cancelled by the Labor Party". Those opposite have their own stamp from the last time they were in government, which says, "Rozelle Metro", "Tcard", and all the other projects that were cancelled. They will not lend us their stamp, so I have had to create my own.

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

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: Rebuilding NSW— [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: Order! I have warned the member for Londonderry to cease interjecting.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: How time flies when you are having fun. I refer to the Rebuilding NSW money. Those opposite were utterly opposed to the poles and wires transaction, the long-term lease of electricity poles and wires, following an open and transparent process in this Parliament. Despite the fact that they slipped one through the day before the writs were issued and sold parts of the industry for nothing, they completely opposed this transaction. That means that they would not have the billions of dollars we have to spend on schools. Under a Labor government there would be no major investment in schools in Parramatta, such as Arthur Phillip High School and Parramatta Public School. Ballina High School in regional New South Wales would not receive a \$40 million investment. These schools would receive a "Cancelled by the Labor Party" stamp.

They bleat about Cleveland Street High School, but it would also get the stamp, as would numerous other projects. The Treasurer announced in the budget \$400 million for school upgrades and new schools, but under Labor a new primary school in North Kellyville would be cancelled, as would upgrades at Fort Street Public School and Bolwarra Public School in the Maitland electorate. Those opposite want to accept the benefits of every tough decision we make. They say, "We would not have done that, but we will take the money." Will they buy back the land at Hurlstone? Will they reverse the poles and wires transaction? Will they reverse the savings measures? No, they will not. This Government has a proud record of making the tough decisions so that we can build and upgrade schools. Those opposite will be exposed at the next election.

Documents

NSW OMBUDSMAN

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt, in accordance with section 74B of the Firearms Act 1996, of the report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled "Review of the Police Use of the Firearms Prohibition Order Search Powers", dated August 2016, received out of session on 9 September 2016 and authorised to be printed.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber. It is disrespectful for the Minister for Education and the member for Swansea to hold a conversation on the floor of the Chamber.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

Safe Schools Coalition

Petition requesting that the Government prevent the use of the Safe Schools Coalition program in government schools and support for holistic anti-bullying approaches, received from **Mr Kevin Conolly**.

Safe Schools Coalition

Petition requesting that the Government prevent the use of the Safe Schools Coalition program in government schools and support for holistic anti-bullying approaches, received from **Mr Thomas George**.

School Bus Services

Petition requesting the reinstatement of the Walbundrie South Primary School bus run, received from **Mr Greg Aplin**.

The CLERK: I announce that the following petition signed by more than 500 persons has been lodged for presentation:

Local Government Amalgamations

Petition requesting that the Government reinstate the councils of Great Lakes, Greater Taree City and Gloucester Shire, received from **Mr Jamie Parker**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The CLERK: I announce that the following Ministers have lodged responses to petitions signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Anthony Roberts—Coalmining and Exploration—lodged 9 August 2016 (Ms Pru Goward)

The Hon. Jillian Skinner—Palliative Care Services—lodged 11 August 2016 (Mrs Jillian Skinner)

*Business of the House***REPUBLIC OF KOREA NATIONAL FOUNDATION DAY****Reordering**

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (15:35): I move:

That the General Business Notice of Motion (General Notice) given by me this day [Republic of Korea National Foundation Day], have precedence on Thursday 15 September 2016.

This motion should be given precedence because National Foundation Day, Republic of Korea, also known as Gaecheonjeo or Tangun Day, celebrates the formation of the first Korean state of Gojoseon in 2333 BC, that is, more than 4,000 years ago. Celebrated on 3 October, this date is a national holiday in the Republic of Korea and is traditionally regarded as the date for the founding of the Korean nation. National Foundation Day, Republic of Korea, is a day of national pride for Koreans all over the world. The day celebrates Korean culture and the achievements of the Korean people, not just in Korea but throughout the world. Each year on this important day, ceremonies are held to honour Tangun.

When it comes to the economic and cultural relationship between New South Wales and the Republic of Korea, the links between our two communities continue to grow ever closer. South Korea is one of New South Wales's largest trading partners, conducting \$6.9 billion worth of bilateral merchandise trade in 2013-14. In May 2015, Premier Mike Baird made an important visit to the Republic of Korea and met with government, community and business leaders, including the Mayor of Seoul, Mr Park Won-soon. This trip saw our cities agree to increase collaboration in four areas: education, financial technology, emergency management, and creative industries. The cultural links between New South Wales and Korea have never been stronger.

As the member for Parramatta, I am honoured to represent a large Korean population. The 2011 census revealed that 7.5 per cent of residents in Parramatta were born in the Republic of Korea. Their contribution to business, education and society should be recognised and applauded. I have come to know the Australian Korean community, who have demonstrated their values of hard work, family focus, strong faith and education and being polite and respectful. The Korean migrant community contribution to Australian society cannot be surpassed. It is for these reasons that I move that this motion have precedence. Jeongmal gamsahamnida.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (15:39): I oppose the reordering motion moved by the member for Parramatta, because our schools are at breaking point and the Government is failing to take this seriously. Instead, the motion of which I gave notice earlier in this sitting should have precedence tomorrow. Currently, in New South Wales more than a third of schools are either at or above capacity. This Government has failed to provide the classrooms that our children and their teachers need. One week ago this Friday, the shadow Minister for Education, the member for Lakemba, and I held a roundtable with parents and citizens in my Charlestown electorate. The concerns of parents were clear: They were raising money to pay for basic maintenance and infrastructure such as painting, cleaning gutters and sinks for handwashing in student toilets. A member of the Wirapaang Public School community said very clearly that the quality of teaching and of staff at that school is second to none.

There is no doubt the teachers in our schools do a fantastic job. This motion is not a reflection on the quality of people in our public school system; it is anything but that. It is, however, atrocious that our schools can be so overcrowded. More than a third of New South Wales schools are full and 180 are stretched beyond their capacity. When students are banned from running in playgrounds, as they are in some schools in this State, because there is simply not enough room and when teachers are forced to find spaces outside classrooms to teach, it is clear that New South Wales is facing an overcrowding crisis. I remember the crowing this Liberal-Nationals Government did when Wirapaang Public School opened only three years ago, merging Gateshead Public School and Gateshead West Public School. It is an absolute embarrassment for the Baird Government that a freedom of information request has revealed Wirapaang has a student utilisation rate of 220 per cent. That is 220 per cent over capacity.

The overcrowding crisis is not an isolated issue. Across New South Wales, schools are bursting at the seams. In the Hunter, Islington Public School, Jesmond Public School, Grahamstown Public School, The Junction

Public School and Maitland Grossmann High School are all at more than 100 per cent capacity. Glenquarry Public School in Wollondilly, Kapooka Public School in Wagga Wagga, Bowning Public School in Goulburn and Wattle Flat Public School in Bathurst are all at more than 200 per cent capacity. In Sydney, Orange Grove Public School is at 164 per cent and Bondi Public School is at 141 per cent. Being so far over capacity puts incredible pressure on teachers, staff and students at our public schools. Teachers are forced to find teaching space outside classrooms. This is far from an environment conducive to learning. For too long this Government has failed to plan for or even consider population growth in our education system. The Government needs to fix the overcrowding crisis: It needs to build the classrooms that New South Wales needs so desperately.

[Interruption]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I place the member for Rockdale on three calls to order.

The question is that the motion standing in the name of the member for Parramatta have precedence on Thursday 15 September 2016.

The House divided.

Ayes48
 Noes34
 Majority.....14

AYES

Anderson, Mr K	Aplin, Mr G	Ayres, Mr S
Baird, Mr M	Barilaro, Mr J	Berejiklian, Ms G
Brookes, Mr G	Conolly, Mr K	Constance, Mr A
Coure, Mr M (teller)	Crouch, Mr A	Dominello, Mr V
Elliott, Mr D	Evans, Mr L	Fraser, Mr A
Gibbons, Ms M	Goward, Ms P	Grant, Mr T
Gulaptis, Mr C	Hazzard, Mr B	Henskens, Mr A
Hodgkinson, Ms K	Humphries, Mr K	Johnsen, Mr M
Lee, Dr G	Maguire, Mr D	Marshall, Mr A
Notley-Smith, Mr B	O'Dea, Mr J	Patterson, Mr C
Pavey, Ms M	Perrottet, Mr D	Petinos, Ms E
Piccoli, Mr A	Provest, Mr G (teller)	Roberts, Mr A
Rowell, Mr J	Sidoti, Mr J	Skinner, Ms J
Speakman, Mr M	Stokes, Mr R	Taylor, Mr M
Toole, Mr P	Tudehope, Mr D	Upton, Ms G
Ward, Mr G	Williams, Mr R	Williams, Ms L

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J	Atalla, Mr E	Barr, Mr C
Car, Ms P	Catley, Ms Y	Chanthivong, Mr A
Crakanthorp, Mr T	Daley, Mr M	Dib, Mr J
Doyle, Ms T	Finn, Ms J	Foley, Mr L
Harris, Mr D	Harrison, Ms J	Haylen, Ms J
Hoenig, Mr R	Hornery, Ms S	Kamper, Mr S
Lalich, Mr N (teller)	Lynch, Mr P	McDermott, Dr H
McKay, Ms J	Mehan, Mr D	Mihailuk, Ms T
Minns, Mr C	Park, Mr R	Parker, Mr J
Piper, Mr G	Robertson, Mr J	Smith, Ms T
Warren, Mr G (teller)	Washington, Ms K	Watson, Ms A
Zangari, Mr G		

PAIRS

Davies, Ms T

Smith, Ms K

Motion agreed to.

*Motions Accorded Priority***SERVICE NSW****Consideration**

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:49): It is a pleasure to explain why my motion should be accorded priority. It is extremely easy to speak about Service NSW. As the Premier said during question time, its establishment is the result of great work done by the Minister for Finance and Services. Service NSW is groundbreaking and it delivers state-of-the-art services to the people of New South Wales. The people of this State rightly expect to access government services quickly, conveniently and simply, and they expect them to be delivered in ways and at times that suit their busy lives. People are busy and it must be frustrating to wait in long queues or not be able to find government information online quickly. Service NSW has reshaped government services to focus on the needs of citizens rather than the needs of government.

As the Premier said, like members opposite, the system delivered by the Labor Government was fragmented and frustrating. There were hundreds of generally single-service shopfronts, more than 100 call centres, hundreds of unconnected websites, and thousands of government telephone numbers that never led anywhere. People now have one place to go to in order to have their needs addressed. The Service NSW model is being copied interstate and is viewed favourably by international jurisdictions. It is reducing duplication, but not services. Shopfront sites have been chosen based on providing better services to people at different locations, which are chosen to form part of a network that will benefit the entire community. Customers will have access to more than 970 transactions, with more than 44 government agencies under one roof.

Old government agency sites, which offered only one government service, are being progressively merged into the fantastic, newer Service NSW sites, which offer multiple services, modern technology and shorter waiting times, and which result in incredibly satisfied customers. Service NSW customer satisfaction is tracking at more than 97 per cent. That number would have been unimaginable by members opposite when they were in government for 16 long years. In almost three years Service NSW has handled about 48 million customer visits across multiple channels. It has helped people, whether they are celebrating the birth of a child or getting their first driver licence. It has helped small business operators to get the permits they need to grow their enterprises, and seniors to access discounts and concessions. That is why my motion should be accorded priority.

STATE HEALTH SYSTEM**Consideration**

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown) (15:52): There is no greater issue confronting the people of New South Wales than the crisis now evolving in our health system. The figures released by the Bureau of Health Information clearly demonstrate that our health system is in crisis. Media reports in recent weeks have revealed tragedies occurring at Bankstown hospital, elective surgery waiting times blowing out, and people attending hospitals in Western Sydney being forced to wait more than the recommended four hours. Cardiac patients are being kept waiting at Nepean Hospital because the roof in the cardiac ward is crumbling. The Minister for Health was the shadow Minister for 16 years, during which time she ran around chasing every ambulance she could find and calling for commissions of inquiry when tragedies occurred. Despite that, the Government will not debate this issue. It should be debated by this Parliament this afternoon rather than some self-congratulatory motion about Service NSW.

This State has a significant problem with hospital waiting times. Five of the six longest waiting times for elective surgery are at hospitals in Western Sydney. The population of the Bankstown local government area alone will increase by 300,000 people in the next decade. The Minister for Planning has been out doing the circuit this week talking about the fact that the Government's own projections have underquoted population growth. I note that the Minister is standing outside the Chamber nodding his head in agreement. The Government is talking about spending money, but it is being spent on planning and not on building anything.

The Minister for Health has told me that I should be thankful for Blacktown Hospital. I will thank her when the hospital has sufficient staff to deliver the services the area needs. Members representing Western Sydney electorates will thank her when our hospitals have the staff they need. The member for Londonderry will thank the Minister when the Nepean Hospital cardiac ward roof is repaired. We will thank the Government when it starts construction of stage four of the hospital. I will thank the Minister when Blacktown Hospital has the staff it needs and the bulldozers start on stage two. We are not interested in artists' impressions. There is one artist in this place—the Minister for Health. However, I am not talking about a pretty artist; she is another kind of artist that I will not mention. The Minister thinks it is okay to say that she provides the money but that she is not responsible. That is not good enough.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Blacktown does not need any endorsement.

The question is that the motion of the member for Terrigal be accorded priority.

The House divided.

Ayes46
Noes35
Majority.....11

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Baird, Mr M
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Hazzard, Mr B
Humphries, Mr K
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G (teller)
Skinner, Ms J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Ms L

Aplin, Mr G
Barilaro, Mr J
Constance, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V
Fraser, Mr A
Grant, Mr T
Henskens, Mr A
Johnsen, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C
Petinos, Ms E
Rowell, Mr J
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

Ayes, Mr S
Berejiklian, Ms G
Coure, Mr M (teller)
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Ms M
Piccoli, Mr A
Sidoti, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Greenwich, Mr A
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Parker, Mr J
Smith, Ms T
Watson, Ms A

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Piper, Mr G
Warren, Mr G (teller)
Zangari, Mr G

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Foley, Mr L
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Park, Mr R
Robertson, Mr J
Washington, Ms K

PAIRS

Roberts, Mr A

Smith, Ms K

Motion agreed to.

SERVICE NSW

Priority

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:02): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the success of Service NSW as a single, integrated and revolutionary platform for citizens to interact and transact with government.
- (2) Welcomes the Government opening 66 Service NSW centres, 28 store-in-stores and eight digital stores across the State, with another 15 to be delivered in 2016-17.

- (3) Notes Service NSW has served 48 million customers since 2013, whilst maintaining a customer satisfaction score of 97 per cent.

It is easy to stand in this Chamber and talk about Service NSW. I have to be one of its strongest advocates. The work it does in delivering outstanding service to the people of New South Wales is second to none. It is world-leading, groundbreaking customer service. I am privileged to have a Service NSW office at Erina. The look on customers' faces when they walk in the door and are greeted by someone who asks them how they can help them is priceless.

Mr David Mehan: They are paid to smile at you, mate.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I acknowledge the interjection from the Parliament's librarian opposite. I noticed that he had to whip over and check with the member for Wyong about the location of Service NSW offices on the Central Coast. For his edification, they are in Gosford, Toukley, Erina and Tuggerah, which is in the electorate of the member for Wyong. Those services are just outstanding. Since the Erina Service NSW office opened earlier this year more than 30,000 people have been through the door. The level of customer satisfaction is running at 98 per cent. That was almost unheard of during the 16 years of Labor Government, when the level of complaints would have been at 98 per cent.

Service NSW is revolutionising the way in which transactions with the State Government are being done. I am so proud that offices are opening across the State. It is almost three years since Service NSW was formed. As I said earlier, 48 million customers across the State have had the benefit of that fantastic service. We have seen tremendous growth in the number of digital transactions in just one year, with approximately 45 per cent of the transactions now being completed via digital channels. This is, of course, an ongoing process. Service NSW continually reviews, revises and removes complex processes and duplication to improve effectiveness and efficiencies across the network. Additional digital service transactions are complemented by the telephone service and network of 66 one-stop shops across New South Wales.

Customers can make a booking so they can visit a Service NSW centre at a time more convenient to them, avoiding peak times when they wish to do so. They can also check wait times on the new Service NSW app. Since July 2013 Service NSW has opened 66 service centres and eight new digital stores and transitioned 28 store-in-a-stores or council agents. The further good news—unfortunately, the member for Bega is not in the Chamber—is that there are plans on track to deliver more one-stop shops, with one in Bega. It is also a pity the member for Mount Druitt is not in the Chamber because his electorate will also benefit in the coming months from a Service NSW centre.

Service NSW is making it easier for people wherever they live to do business with the New South Wales Government. The Government has begun improving the way that customers do business by digitising forms such as birth certificate and Seniors Card applications, removing the need for print forms. For the first time, licence renewal has been digitised, with 20,000 completed since launching in early June 2016. The Government is currently reviewing forms required for owner-builder permits, and more will be done to reduce duplication and make it easier for customers to interact with the Government. The Government has launched the Service NSW app, with more services to be provided through the app later this year. This is like saying, "There is more; there is always more."

Ms Melanie Gibbons: But wait—there's more.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I agree with member for Holsworthy: There is always more. Service NSW is moving ahead with a whole-of-government payment platform to make it easier for customers to use the latest in digital payment solutions. The fact is that customers are increasingly transacting online at their convenience. Service NSW is responding to the changing environment by streamlining processes and increasing the number of transactions available digitally. It is about expanding services and putting more services online so they are more easily accessible for the good people of New South Wales. That is why this motion has been accorded priority.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:08): That was a groundbreaking contribution from the member for Terrigal. He referred to something as being ground breaking, and that was certainly inspiring and ground breaking but it could not be further from the truth. The member has introduced a new definition of "irony". I feel a little sorry for him because he has been stitched up like a grandmother's quilt. Whoever got the member for Terrigal to move this motion has got it in for him. The changes have occurred at a cost to customers who require services throughout our growing regions. The first part of the motion by member for Terrigal states:

- (1) Notes the success of Service NSW as a single, integrated and revolutionary platform for citizens to interact and transact with government.

Let us put some facts into that statement. Fewer service access points have been established. As key objectives of the initiative were to improve citizen access and satisfaction with government services, the reduction of service

access points is a significant change to the approved business case, and a reduction in the anticipated benefits to the community. The key targets for 2014-15 were not reached. That is groundbreaking. Take smart branches, for example. They are smaller service centres that have limited counter services as they focus on customer self-service. The target amount was 25 smart branches; none was achieved. Store-in-a-stores are smaller versions of smart branches inside government buildings, including local councils. The target was 39 stores; only 29 were achieved. I am 10 short. I am putting some facts into the groundbreaking contribution from the member for Terrigal.

Service centre usage is significantly lower than planned. The second business case reported that Service NSW would conduct 33.5 million transactions by 30 June 2015. The Auditor-General found that the approximate number of transactions conducted by Service NSW was 4.95 million, which is a significant shortfall when compared to the target. Only 15 per cent of the target was achieved. The performance by the member for Terrigal was groundbreaking. We might need to flip open a dictionary. We have heard the irony, but we should find the word "groundbreaking" because we might see a picture of the member for Terrigal.

User agency shopfronts have closed. Before the initiative, there were 125 Roads and Maritime Services motor registries across New South Wales. On 9 November 2015, 68 motor registries were still in operation. Reported customer satisfaction reflects the experience of less than a third of Service NSW customers. I note that the customer satisfaction exceeds 95 per cent. I take nothing away from the good staff who work in our public service because, ultimately, it is their goodwill, effort, contribution and service to the people of this State that provides these results. It has nothing to do with the member for Terrigal and nothing to do with the Baird Government, which took services away, particularly in my region, which is one of the fastest-growing regions in New South Wales. There are user agency concerns about the lack of resources now that they have been removed. User agencies have advised of instances where Service NSW has been unable, because of the lack of resources, to provide necessary information.

Concerns have also arisen about the mail-out of licences, which can lead to identity theft and other matters. I remember when my predecessor in the electorate of Campbelltown was at Mawson Park. They had dusted off the mayor, who was with the Minister, who had cameras, to promote a brand new motor registry to be opened in Campbelltown. All the while they either had not been told or knew that Ingleburn, Campbelltown and Narellan registries would be closed only to have a new one built in a green space. It was never intended for Campbelltown to receive a new motor registry. Shamelessly, the mayor was expected to endorse what was nothing more than a misleading statement that came at a cost to the people in my electorate and the people of New South Wales. This motion is a shameful display of self-promotion. There is no promotion like self-promotion, and it has been no better displayed than by those opposite and the Baird-Grant Liberal-Nationals Government.

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (16:13): In only a few short years Service NSW has established itself as a key delivery agency within New South Wales. Through the omnichannel approach, we have made government much more transparent, services are easier to access, and customers in Albury have been given the same service as those in Sydney. Under those opposite, we constantly had severe concerns about the timely delivery of government services, but Service NSW has brought a corporate, customer-focused, efficient and effective service right to the doorstep of regional and rural residents. It is city service at long last in country locations. The Albury centre was opened in March 2015. Customers can now access more than 40 different government agencies across the counter in one location.

What is more, the facility brought six new jobs to the area. The interior, fixtures and fittings and layout were revolutionary compared to the old concrete bunker that was the motor registry under those opposite. Now when we walk through the door, we are greeted by a concierge who assists us in completing our business in a timely and efficient manner. There is an opportunity for customer feedback, which those opposite would not be aware of, but it is now taken seriously. A most dedicated professional team at Service NSW is being led by the forever smiling, enthusiastic and extremely knowledgeable team leader, Carolyne Hartwig. Service NSW agencies are also present at council offices in places those opposite would not know about, such as Corowa and Tumbarumba. This is part of a wider program to boost access to government services across the electorate.

Day in and day out my office receives compliments about the local office, which is in stark contrast to the way it was in the past under those opposite. Service NSW is about providing customers with choice about how and when they can access government services. Customers can visit the 66 Service NSW centres, call the 137788 number of the contact centre, or log on to the Service NSW website or mobile app to complete transactions 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In addition, Service NSW is continuing to deliver new options to respond to the growing appetite from customers for mobile digital services. Service NSW is the key contributor to the State priority of having 70 per cent of government transactions conducted through digital channels by 2019. Service NSW is spearheading the digital journey for customers with approximately 44 per cent of Service NSW

transactions being conducted through the digital channel. This has increased from under 30 per cent in 2014. That is the tip of the iceberg. There is much more in the way of digital innovation underway at Service NSW.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:17): I thank my colleagues for the welcome. I address this issue from the point of view of The Entrance electorate and the wider Central Coast community. It is a regional community and when we talk about the delivery of government services, the benchmark we should be setting is that we should try as best as we can to ensure all our citizens receive equal access to the services of the State, regardless of where they live. That is not the case with Service NSW. The 17 February 2016 report of the Auditor-General entitled "Realising the benefits of the Service NSW initiative" was clear:

As key objectives of the initiative were to improve citizen access and satisfaction with government services, the reduction of service access points is a significant change to the approved business case, and a reduction in the anticipated benefits to the community.

As the member for Campbelltown highlighted, key targets for 2014-15 were not reached. For example, smart branches are smaller branches with limited counter service and although 25 smart branches were promised, zero were achieved.

Mr Chris Minns: How many omnichannels?

Mr DAVID MEHAN: I do not know how many omnichannels were promised, but of the 39 store-in-a-stores, which are smaller versions of smart branches inside existing government buildings, including local councils, only 29 were achieved. I note that Central Coast Council asked for a store-in-a-store to be delivered in The Entrance community when the local motor registry was closed down. The council offered the library and the tourist information centre, and the local shopping centre offered its premises for a store-in-a-store Service NSW outlet. They were all denied. The community request was not backed by this Government.

The experience on the Central Coast is illustrative of the ways regions have been let down by Service NSW and its promises of service. Before Service NSW the Central Coast had five motor registries—Woy Woy, Erina, The Entrance, Toukley and Wyong. It also had the NSW Fair Trading office at Gosford and the Office of the Public Guardian at Gosford. I ask the member for Terrigal: How many access points is that? That is seven access points. How many access points do we have now? We now have four access points. That is less access than we had before. When those opposite talk about service they mean self-service; they do not mean public service. They just want to get rid of public service and have everybody look after themselves.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (16:20): By leave: Along with the member for Campbelltown and the member for Macquarie Fields I support Service NSW and I thank them for their ongoing support. Gregory Hills in the Macarthur region has the biggest Service NSW office in the State. It services more than 1,000 people a day. It has extended hours and Saturday openings. The member for Macquarie Fields has mentioned, quite rightly, the extremely successful pop-up store at Macarthur Square, which is servicing the people of his electorate and my electorate. Service NSW has gone from having smaller Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] offices to offices servicing thousands more people per week. I am trying to remember a term; it is not "the happiness rate", it is "customer service". The level of customer satisfaction has been 96 or 97 per cent. This is an extremely good model.

We have not only the largest Service NSW office in the State but also increased public transport services to Gregory Hills to help service that location. The completed upgrade of Camden Valley Way also helps. This has been an outstanding success, not only for the people of Camden but also for the people of the Macarthur region. It has brought a number of inefficient agencies into one big superstore. If we couple this office with the one at Macarthur Square we can see why the people of the Macarthur region are saying that this is, without a doubt, a fantastic model. Minister Perrottet has delivered these services, which have been a resounding success. I call on the members on the other side of the Chamber to get behind this service and not talk to it down. If members do not talk the service down they will be encouraging members of their communities to realise what a good service it is and get behind it. With the support of those opposite I look forward to the Service NSW office servicing the whole region.

[Business interrupted.]

Visitors

VISITORS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I recognise in the gallery this afternoon visitors from UrbanGrowth NSW. We welcome them here this afternoon and trust they are enjoying this debate.

SERVICE NSW**Priority**

[Business resumed.]

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:24): In reply: I thank the member for Campbelltown, my colleague the member for Albury, my very good friend the member for The Entrance, and also the member for Camden. No matter what has been said earlier, the reality is that Service NSW has been an outstanding success for all of those across New South Wales who have had the benefit of utilising the services. Only recently the people of Erina in the Terrigal electorate had the privilege of seeing Minister Perrottet officially opening the Service NSW office there. It would be remiss of me if I did not pay tribute to Robyn Hodgson and her team. I think it is around 13, compared to the nine people who were at the previous Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] office. The job satisfaction levels are sky high there. The staff are really taking the bull by the horns at Erina, where there is a 98 per cent customer satisfaction level.

Unfortunately, the member for Wyong is not in the Chamber. Since the Tuggerah service centre opened, more than 45,000 people have used it. While it is not quite at the standard of Erina yet, all credit should go to the team at Tuggerah because it is getting a customer satisfaction level of 96 per cent. The Service NSW model works exceptionally well. When there was a debate in this place about these service centres opening up I recall that the member for Wyong remained very quiet. When I asked him across the Chamber, "Why are you being so quiet?" he said, "I have two, and I am very happy."

It is very telling that those on the opposite side of the Chamber pontificate on this matter to a degree but all of those who, like me, have Service NSW offices in their electorates, benefit from those services. If those members want to talk down Service NSW they should go right ahead, but they should be ashamed for doing that because these offices offer cutting-edge technology and service the people of New South Wales. I offer all credit to Service NSW and the Minister for continuing to roll out this brilliant model across New South Wales. We have no doubt that there will be more to come over the next 12 months.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion of the member for Terrigal be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes46
Noes33
Majority.....13

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Constance, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V
Fraser, Mr A
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Humphries, Mr K
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Petinos, Ms E
Provest, Mr G (teller)
Skinner, Ms J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Ms L

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Coure, Mr M (teller)
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Greenwich, Mr A
Henskens, Mr A
Johnsen, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C
Piccoli, Mr A
Rowell, Mr J
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

Ayres, Mr S
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Perrottet, Mr D
Piper, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Foley, Mr L
Haylen, Ms J

NOES

Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Robertson, Mr J
Washington, Ms K

Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Park, Mr R
Smith, Ms T
Watson, Ms A

Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Parker, Mr J
Warren, Mr G (teller)
Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Kean, Mr M

Smith, Ms K

Motion agreed to.*Bills***RURAL FIRES AMENDMENT (FIRE TRAILS) BILL 2016****Returned**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

*Private Members' Statements***SCENIC HILLS CEMETERY DEVELOPMENT**

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (16:34): To say that the public's trust in our elected institutions, such as this Parliament, and its members has reached an all-time low is an understatement. Time and again the public has been let down by the people and institutions who have not acted as they ought, and today I address this Chamber about another betrayal of the public's trust—this time by a public institution, the Joint Regional Planning Panel [JRPP], and in particular the Sydney West panel. The JRPP has undertaken a tarnished process. I am outraged at its recent decision to approve 136,000 gravesites on the Scenic Hills that forever will destroy one of the last historical, heritage and unique environmental landscapes in metropolitan Sydney.

It is a decision that goes against prolonged and persistent community opposition over many decades as well as reasoned arguments that have been put forward to protect and preserve the Scenic Hills in south-western Sydney. Such a decision further erodes public confidence and trust in our planning system when community voices are not heard whereas better-resourced and powerful vested interests always get their way. The JRPP had two weeks in which to inform the community of its decision since the hearing on 25 August, but made its public announcement on the first working day after the local government elections. This action makes a mockery of electoral accountability and goes against our standard caretaker conventions: Of the two councillors who sat on the JRPP, one was not recontesting and was therefore unaccountable for his decision, and the other may have not been re-elected if his decision to approve the proposal had been made public prior to the local government elections.

I put to the JRPP, both in writing and in person, that in the interests of accountability, procedural fairness and public trust, the hearing should be postponed. After the public hearing I wrote to the chair of the JRPP and raised concerns about any delay in announcing the panel's decision until after the 10 September elections. Surely, if the panel could not be stopped because the process could not be delayed, it was only fair that the members of the public knew the outcome before they voted. The appropriateness of holding a public hearing—with two council representatives making a major decision on behalf of a council in caretaker mode—is more than completely dubious; it is wrong.

Just because the JRPP finished its deliberation, that is not the end of the matter. I, as the member for Macquarie Fields, my community and my colleague the member for Campbelltown will not go away. We will not give up the fight on this most important issue for which we have been fighting over many decades, but we will be seeking every option and starting every campaign to save what is precious to us. I call on the Minister for Planning to reject the JRPP's decision to destroy our Scenic Hills and reject its tarnished decision-making process. I urge the Minister to listen to the thousands of voices in our communities and I urge him to take advice from the submission of the Heritage Council—an independent statutory authority with its own legislation—that urges this

136,000 gravesite cemetery application, replete with its "formal lawn graves, mown areas, memorial terraces, increased site car access, car parking, roads, signage, condolence rooms and formal lines of trees", be rejected.

I say to the Minister for Planning that ignoring consistent community concern and independent statutory advice makes a mockery of our planning system and further erodes public trust. At a time when public discontent with politicians is growing and at a time when public confidence in the planning system is declining, the Minister for Planning must use his powers in this instance to stand up for our communities' concerns and stand with us in rejecting the JRPP's tarnished process as well as its cynically timed public announcement that was designed to avoid electoral accountability.

People all across New South Wales, and in particular south-western Sydney, made their voices known on Saturday with massive double-digit swings against the Baird Liberal Government. If the Minister for Planning chooses to ignore this political reality and side with the JRPP and the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust [CMCT] on the Scenic Hills proposal it is just further evidence that this Government does not care what the community thinks, and the public perception of powerful vested interests taking over our planning system will only continue to solidify. I invite the Minister for Planning to join my community and protect as well as preserve our Scenic Hills. I urge the Minister to reject the JRPP's ill-considered recommendation.

MATER DEI SCHOOL

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (16:39): Last week I attended the annual fundraiser ball for Mater Dei, one of my local schools. Mater Dei is a coeducational school for students from kindergarten to year 12 who have been assessed with mild to moderate cognitive disabilities as their primary disability. The school is within the Wollongong Catholic Diocese under the auspices of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan. The sisters have always made sure each individual student is offered a holistic education in a safe, non-threatening environment. Mater Dei was established as an orphanage by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan Order in 1910, and in 1957 the school was established. The sisters still have a role in Mater Dei today.

The school is a special school providing a community-based organisation for early intervention therapy services, education and residential programs for babies, children and young people with an intellectual disability or developmental delay. Mater Dei has a reputation throughout Camden and the wider Macarthur district as a school that gives dignity and uniqueness to each student. Every student is given the opportunity to one day live as independently as possible. Year 12 students participate in a work experience program giving students the confidence to work and relate to others in the big, wide world that awaits them.

My office participates in this program and we currently have a student, Nicholas, a very keen and enthusiastic young man who enjoys helping my office staff with their daily work. The students gain so much from their work experience and I am thrilled each time a new student attends my office. We all learn from them. This year I had the opportunity to present a cheque for \$20,000 to Mater Dei, which will go towards the fit-out of the new hospitality teaching space. This donation was very well received at the foundation dinner as a great way to kickstart the fundraising evening. The students will learn all aspects of working in an industrial kitchen. Principal Tony Fitzgerald asked me to pass on his heartfelt thanks for the support the school and its community receives. Mater Dei is a unique school that focuses on the positives of its students and encourages them to have dreams like anyone else.

The entertainment was provided by the school performers: Jordan Anderson, Kayla Anderson, Miles Andrews, Breeana Bruin, Justin Buda, Ebony Capitani, Mischa Castaneda-Abalos, Saul Castaneda-Abalos, Charbel Chaghoury, Jett Charlton, Luke Corcoran, Jade Di Girolamo, Emma Dowdy-Pitt, Breanna Durrant, Ciaran Ellis, Victor Fineanganofu, Reilly Galway, Adriana Gatterllari, Kaylee Glassington, Harrison Golden, Rachelle Hadchiti, Heidi Johnston, Hayley Jones, Olivia Leadbeatter, Eliza Madeley, Shae-Lea Mally, Sommer McClelland, Paige McCue-Shore, Kyle Miller, Chelsea Morris, Tom Perrin, Nicholas Pithio, Bethany Raymond, Ben Savich, Lachlan Simon, Erik Sinclair, Charlotte Skinner, James Tabone, Sylvia Tan, Sarah Vassallo, Chris Vassallo, Olivia Veneran, Daniella Violentis and Alexia Vitale.

I thank all these wonderful students who added so much pleasure to our evening. Of course, without the very supportive sponsors, this event and the support of the school would not be possible. I single out the board of directors, chaired by John Adam, which is to be congratulated on its continued guidance to make Mater Dei the success it is and, of course, the dedication of the staff and volunteers who make every day a special day for the students and their families. I thank the Mater Dei Foundation Dinner Committee, chaired by Jim Marsden, OAM, along with John Adam, Kevin O'Keefe, Martin Cascarino, Tony Fitzgerald and Sharon Pascoe Thomas who again had a very successful annual fundraiser, and I look forward to next year's event. Mater Dei is a wonderful school in my local community that contributes so much. I thank Tony Fitzgerald and his amazing staff for their efforts and for everything they do for the young men and women who enter the gates of Mater Dei.

GLEN INNES OPPORTUNITY SHOP

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (16:44): I share with the House the story of the Glen Innes Opportunity Shop. It is a remarkable story and one that demonstrates again the basic goodness in most people—something that can often be overlooked in the doom and gloom stories that bombard us every day. The Glen Innes Opportunity Shop had its foundation more than a century ago, when it began life as the Wartime Tea Rooms and Comfort Fund. During the Second World War the tearooms became known as the Patriot Shop, or Pat Shop for short. The Pat Shop volunteers baked cakes and sold second-hand clothing to raise money for the Australian Comforts Fund to provide clothing and food parcels for servicemen away at war. They also spent their time knitting socks and making camouflage nets to help with the effort.

At war's end, the Pat Shop became known as the Glen Innes Opportunity Shop. One of the main priorities for the volunteers was to support the Food for Britain campaign, which they did with great gusto for a number of years. As the years turned into decades, the focus of the Glen Innes Opportunity Shop turned closer to home, donating to local groups in the Glen Innes community including the Apex Children's Library, the Far West Children's Association and the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Money is raised in the shop by selling donated goods and clothing, mainly second-hand or pre-loved. Every dollar from every item sold goes directly into the kitty for that financial year. The shop has occupied a number of premises in Glen Innes over the decades and currently operates from a large modern shopfront that resembles a veritable Aladdin's cave. But a building is a building, and it is in fact the amazing spirit of the volunteers, who turn up to work there 5½ days a week, generously donating their time and energy to help out their community, that makes the op shop so special.

The Glen Innes op shop is not only bursting at the seams with a mind-boggling array of goods but also bursting at the seams with community spirit and generosity. As an example, I mention the op shop's former patron, the late Mrs Delsie Stumbles, who was riding her motorised scooter the two-kilometre drive to the op shop to volunteer for a few hours before trundling home again. Mrs Stumbles was in her nineties at that time, and they certainly made them of stern stuff in Glen Innes. In fact, the bulk of the current 45 op shop volunteers are well into their seventies and eighties, putting many younger people in the community to shame for their huge voluntary contribution at their age.

The Glen Innes op shop is a unique model. It operates solely for the benefit of the Glen Innes and district community. It is not affiliated with a larger institution or corporation; it is run by the volunteer members, who also have a say in how these funds are distributed at the end of every financial year. Glen Innes' Denise Pryor has presided over a team of volunteers for almost a decade now, and I commend her and her executive for continuing the fine tradition: Vice President Colleen Holliss, Secretary Christine Price, Treasurer Eileen Webster, and Vice Treasurer Yvonne Hill. Yvonne is filling in for Eileen, who is recovering from a nasty fall. I wish her a quick recovery. The op shop patrons are legends in the community. They have served as volunteers for decades. Beryl Clibborn is a remarkable woman—now 92, she continues to support the Glen Innes Opportunity Shop. The other patrons are Barbara Pringle and Merle Elliott. They are well into their eighties and still working hard most days of the week at the op shop.

I recently had the pleasure of joining Denise and her committee at the annual Op Shop Giveaway. This is where the committee and volunteers meet to announce all the recipients of their income from the last financial year. You might think that from selling a few second-hand clothes and a few trinkets they might have a couple of thousand dollars to spend in the community. Think again—this year the Glen Innes Opportunity Shop giveaway distributed \$126,750 to 37 local community groups. Last year it raised \$112,000, so it has increased its income markedly. The funds raised will go to the Westpac Rescue Helicopter, the Glen Innes Rescue Squad, the Glen Innes Pipe Band, the Glen Innes Arts Council, the Chapel Theatre, the Showground Trust, the high school and many other charitable organisations. This is an inspiring example of how the goodness of people can work to achieve enormous benefits for their neighbours. The Glen Innes Opportunity Shop has done this for more than 100 years. It is remarkable. Well done to Denise Pryor and her team. Well done to all the volunteers of the Glen Innes Opportunity Shop, both past and present.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (16:49): I commend the member for Northern Tablelands for making his private member's statement on the Glen Innes opportunity shop. I remind all members of the great work that volunteers do across our regions in New South Wales—particularly volunteers in our State Emergency Service [SES] at times like this when many regions are experiencing flood conditions. We urge people to drive according to the conditions and not to drive across flooded causeways, putting their lives and the lives of our volunteers at risk. Volunteering for charitable organisations extends to our emergency services. I commend the member for Northern Tablelands for raising this issue.

REDEEMER BAPTIST SCHOOL

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (16:50): Redeemer Baptist School has successfully established an outstanding reputation in the community, guided by a Christian world view. Redeemer is recognised for producing well-rounded and successful students who embrace academic excellence through learning at the highest levels, as well as sport and extracurricular activities, personal development and exemplary community service. Students are well prepared for their future role as global citizens.

It is the community service component—strong leadership and service to the community—that I wish to bring to the attention of the House. At this year's annual Sir Harold Wyndham Medal and Awards Dinner hosted by the Australian College of Educators on 5 August, Redeemer Baptist School was awarded the New South Wales Community Service and Social Justice Award for its Gala Day initiatives supporting disadvantaged Indigenous communities. The award was received by the principal, Jonathan Cannon, and coordinating teachers of Redeemer's year 10 classes, Lindy Nutt and Ken Shaw, on behalf of the Redeemer school community.

Redeemer's Gala Day program involved year 10 students as leaders of their school community. They raised funds to help establish programs or to provide resources to assist disadvantaged or impoverished communities. In previous years, Redeemer student Gala Day projects have supported needs in La Pouse, Walgett, Bourke, Muli, Marysville in Victoria, Kenya, Uganda and Papua New Guinea. This year, Redeemer students raised more than \$20,000 towards two projects. They assisted remote Indigenous students from Canteen Creek and Harts Range in the Northern Territory to benefit from secondary education at Redeemer, because secondary education is no longer available in these remote communities. In addition, they contributed to the lock-up stage of construction of the Oasis Ministries centre, a community facility at Boggabilla, during National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee [NAIDOC] Week.

Twelve year 10 students gave up their mid-semester school holidays to work alongside volunteer licensed builders and tradesmen on the Boggabilla project, including Eunice Aaron Kumar, Priyanka BC, Andrea Burns, Connie Ghader-Darvishi, Jessica Kulasuriya, Aisling Mulvaney, Mary-Anne Poyitt, Alethia Yosaviera, Ambaye Akele, Steven Laloutsos, Christopher Morozoff and Samuel Wibawa. All of these students not only raised funds toward the projects but also became personally involved in the Boggabilla community through extensive practical involvement in the construction at Boggabilla.

A week after returning from Boggabilla, another team of Redeemer students and alumni led by Redeemer's principal, Jonathan Cannon, travelled to Redeemer's remote Barai tribe sister school at Itokama, Oro Province, Papua New Guinea. I have previously informed the Parliament of Redeemer's contribution to Barai villages including Itokama, such as its involvement in medical missions providing better health care through vaccinations, supporting Professor Alice Lee at the Macquarie University Hospital; providing solar lighting and solar power for Itokama's jungle school classrooms; and providing a mechanical slasher for maintaining Itokama's airstrip.

In July this year, the Redeemer team—including past and present students Jeremiah Bolton, Nicholas Bolton, Bethany Poyitt, Grace Forrester, Krystina Jones and Simeon Cannon—installed four 1,000 litre water tanks in Barai villages. Every day of their lives until now, Itokama residents—including older women—had to climb about 60 metres down a slippery slope into a ravine to fill their aluminium water pots and then climb back up carrying the additional burden of a pot full of water. But Redeemer volunteer Robert Ongley had an idea that would significantly improve the quality of life at Itokama.

He suggested that the Redeemer team install in the spring a mechanical pump that was not reliant on electricity. This pump uses the water pressure in the spring to push some water back up the hill and into the tank. The day after installation of the tanks and pump, the tanks were full. The older ladies lined up their pots in two rows leading to the tanks and gave thanks to God for what he had given them through the Redeemer visitors. Some of the old Barai women expressed their gratitude, saying, "We thought that God had forgotten us. Now we know that God has not forgotten us."

We take so much for granted. Through many opportunities to lead through serving and inspired by the commandment of Jesus Christ to "love your neighbour as yourself", Redeemer students are given not only the opportunity of an excellent education but also the empowerment to see the needs of others and discover ways of becoming personally involved in helping to make a difference in the world. I am proud to have this opportunity to commend Redeemer Baptist for the important work it is doing to help others. It exemplifies what it means to be a good global citizen.

PORT STEPHENS KOALA FATALITIES

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:55): Today I will share something truly distressing that is happening in Port Stephens: Our koalas are dying. Today I pay tribute to some of the lives lost. Mortel, a

male koala around six years old, was hit by a train and suffered a broken nose and severe head trauma. Carers were initially amazed at how little damage appeared on his X-rays. After Mortel showed significant mobility problems, hopes were raised when he could be seen wandering around his carer's backyard and exploring his environment in the weeks after his injury. But hopes for his recovery were sadly dashed when he finally succumbed to his head trauma. Russell C, a large alpha male, was recently hit by a car. He was still alive but unresponsive when rescuers arrived. During trauma treatment he began fitting and passed away. The local carer who took him home later said:

He was bleeding profusely and my home now looks like a crime scene, with my white walls sprayed with blood. This is what our carers and rescuers deal with on a daily basis.

Little Bloke, a younger male koala, was found by the side of the road. He had been hit by multiple cars and was found clinging to life on the shoulder of a major road. After being struck multiple times he had dragged himself off the road, leaving a trail of intestine showing the horrific distance he had travelled. I can only imagine the traumatic scene rescuers encountered. Their efforts were made all the more difficult when passing motorists refused to slow down or stop while they collected Little Bloke from the side of the road. Rescuers did their best to comfort Little Bloke before he too passed, like too many koalas on our roads. The Hunter Koala Preservation Society reports that over the last five years on the same stretch of road more than 30 koalas have been killed and many injured.

Honey Bunch, a five-year-old female, was found lying flat on her stomach on the side of the road following reports she had been hit by a car. She had previously suffered a fractured femur when she was hit by a car in 2013 and was taken into care again this year. With an eye infection and poor body condition, she stopped eating, lost weight and passed away soon after. Mr T, a large male, suffered extensive head injuries from a dog attack. The dedicated vet stitched up his scalp and inserted a drain before carers took him home and treated him in an intensive care cot. Again, despite carers' best efforts and around-the-clock care, Mr T passed away a short time later.

Cody, an elderly female from Middle Rock Park in One Mile, was also rescued after suffering a dog bite. She too passed away as a result of her injuries. Tommy Chong, a male in his prime, was a repeat visitor to rescuers. He was taken in when found sitting on the ground near a busy road. After extensive tests Tommy Chong was transferred to Port Macquarie's Koala Hospital for further investigation before he too passed away. At 16 years of age, twice the average life expectancy of eight years, Maxine became known to many during the campaign against the Fishermans Bay development. While developers disputed the presence of koalas in the area, Maxine was a clear symbol of their error. She passed away earlier this year after suffering a number of health issues. Cookie, a young female joey, was orphaned in a 2015 storm. After many months of care she was developing well and transferred to Port Macquarie's Koala Hospital before her release back to the wild. Cookie was later found dead at the bottom of her tree, and an autopsy was ordered.

Louise, a female joey, was separated from her mum during a recent severe storm. Louise weighed only 356 grams when she was rescued from Hawks Nest and was taken in by a carer. Under the care of talented volunteers, Louise grew to more than 675 grams, almost double her weight when she was found. Louise, or Lou Lou, as she became known, was beginning to explore her environment when she became sick and passed away. The Hunter Koala Preservation Society has worked with a professor of veterinary science at the University of Sydney to conduct an autopsy.

Tough Bugger, was a koala who became internationally renowned after entering a Port Stephens home and setting himself up on the couch in front of the television. Unfortunately, only days after he was rescued and released, he was struck by a car and died on his way to the vet. Rupert, a 9.5 kilogram alpha male, was well known around the Mambo wetlands. In July this year, rescuers were called out following a report of a koala having been hit by a car, and they were distressed to find their old friend with severe injuries. This is a terrible list, and urgent action is required to ensure that Port Stephens' koalas are not lost for ever.

UPPER HUNTER YOUTH FRONTIERS MENTORING PROGRAM

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (17:00): I take this opportunity to inform the House of the outstanding success of the Youth Frontiers mentoring program that was recently conducted in my electorate of Upper Hunter for a second year. It was a pleasure to be associated with Youth Frontiers, a New South Wales Government program that focuses on leadership and civic engagement. It targets years 8 and 9 students with the capacity to benefit from having a mentor. Singleton High School nominated nine students to participate in this worthwhile program. I congratulate Julie Stevens and her team from Max Potential on delivering the Youth Frontiers program and Singleton High School for its support.

Students participating in Youth Frontiers received a minimum of 30 hours mentoring, including at least 15 hours of one-on-one mentoring. The program gave the students an opportunity to build life skills and

self-confidence by working collaboratively with their mentors, who volunteered their time, to undertake a project that makes a difference in the local community. On Monday 12 September 2016, nine students from Singleton High School who participated in this beneficial program presented an inspirational and informative showcase for the community at the Singleton Diggers Club, which was highly commended by those who attended. I congratulate the students and their mentors.

Student Josie Bates and her mentor Rachel Murray participated in the general category, and her project was entitled "Read, Know, Learn, Go!" The aim of the project was to promote reading to the youth of Singleton and to understand its importance. Student Bowen Flockhart and his mentor Jesse Nash also participated in the general category, and his project was entitled "Helmet Safety Awareness". The project was aimed at raising awareness of safety and of the dangers of not wearing a helmet. The project also aimed to have a sign erected at Singleton Skate Park. Student Piper Francis and her mentor Emma Graham participated in the Centenary of Anzac category, and her project was entitled "Legacy Awareness Campaign". It was designed to raise awareness of the Legacy charity. Student Kaitlyn Griggs and her mentor Kathleen Whiteman participated in the general category, and her project was entitled "Animal Rescue Support". It involved collecting items for donation to the local animal shelter.

Student Emily Holloway and her mentor Sarah Lewis participated in the general category, and her project was entitled "Care Bears for Emergency Kids". It involved making bears for children in hospital who need something to bring them hope and joy. If they needed something to hug or to take the pain away, they could hug the bear if their parents were not available. Emily will also be making Care Bear kits for people to continue the tradition of Care Bears. Student Harry Lewis and his mentor Ronel de Wet participated in the youth mental health category, and his project was entitled "Mind Matters". The project was aimed at relieving stress by colouring in or by using other creative distractions, such as playing with a stress ball or magnetic sand. Student Katelin Pascoe and her mentor Julie Stevens participated in the general project category, and her project was entitled "Reduction of Animal Euthanasia". The aim of the project was to raise awareness of and to reduce the euthanasia rate at local shelters.

Students Riley Stewart and Markus Taylor, whose mentors were Greg Woodward and Bryan Evans, participated in the community harmony category, and their project was entitled "Understanding Nursing Homes". The project involved research and communication about life in a nursing home. Again this year, I had the pleasure of meeting the students from Singleton High School and their mentors. I commend both students and mentors for the commitment, enthusiasm and professionalism they all demonstrated. I again congratulate Julie Stevens and Max Potential for the guidance and expertise they offered to these wonderful students, who will no doubt in years to come be role models in the community. I look forward to the continuation of this wonderful project for students who wish to participate in it.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID FISHER

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) (17:04): I pay tribute to a dedicated and committed man who was taken from us too soon. Sadly, David Fisher, whose most recent job was as the government relations manager at UrbanGrowth NSW, passed away suddenly on 22 August from an undiagnosed brain tumour at the young age of 41. I am making this contribution as the member for Pittwater, and note that David's sister-in-law lives on the Northern Beaches. I am told by David's colleagues and family that he spent a lot of time—weekends and holidays—with his family up on the beautiful beaches of Pittwater and Wakehurst, even though he was a proud Western Sydney boy through and through. I acknowledge David's sister Deb, who is in the public gallery this afternoon, and a number of David's colleagues from UrbanGrowth NSW who are also present today.

David joined the Government and Industry Relations Team at UrbanGrowth in August 2014. His colleagues tell me that he quickly became a highly valued member of the organisation. He immediately bonded with the Parramatta North team and worked closely with it on government and community relations. His role also included working on other Western Sydney and Newcastle-based projects. His work in North Parramatta in particular has been invaluable to the success of that project. In July last year, David was promoted to government relations manager and he took on the challenging role of managing the ministerial and parliamentary services function in addition to his Western Sydney responsibilities. He was highly respected by my office for his diligence and his commitment to his work.

David previously worked in this place, first as an electorate officer and then as a ministerial adviser to the former Assistant Minister for Planning and member for Mulgoa Diane Beamer. Most recently, David worked closely with many members of this House, ensuring that they were kept up to date on the progress of UrbanGrowth NSW projects. I acknowledge the member for Parramatta, Dr Geoff Lee, who had a good working relationship with David when they worked together on Western Sydney projects in his electorate of Parramatta. Geoff attended David's funeral, and I acknowledge the respectful relationship they enjoyed. David successfully

negotiated memorandums of understanding with Newcastle City Council and the councils along the Sydney Metro Northwest route. He was an outstanding manager who provided guidance and support to younger staff and senior management. David has been described as the calm in the chaos.

David was much loved by his colleagues and many friends at UrbanGrowth NSW. He somehow acquired his nickname Slippery—based on his last name—which he took in good humour. He was somewhat less enamoured with Fishcakes. David's love of *Stars Wars* and science fiction was the basis of many interesting conversations, and the inspiration for several sci-fi themed cakes for morning tea. As I said, David was a Western Sydney boy through and through. He grew up in St Marys and was a lifelong supporter of the Parramatta Eels and a passionate follower of the Western Sydney Wanderers. He occasionally steered his colleagues in the wrong direction in the office footy tipping competition. I am advised that he did that to improve his tipping record.

David's love of Bruce Springsteen saw him travel all over the east coast to attend concerts, including one in the Hunter Valley with his wife and then five-week old daughter in tow. His friends at UrbanGrowth will miss David's quick wit, his friendly sledges, his calm response to every crisis, and his diligence, commitment and passion, but most of all his friendship. I remember David from my contact with him years ago when he was working with the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales. I found him to be a man of great integrity, great intelligence and instinctive warmth. It was clear to me that he loved people.

In the planning profession, which is ultimately a profession that is all about people, he was uniquely equipped. David is survived by his wife, Alison; his daughter, Isabelle; his parents, Brian and Jill; and his sister, Deb. We share in their loss. Vale, David. You will be sorely missed. On this occasion I recall a quote by former President Teddy Roosevelt, who, in summary, said: "The sum of our lives is to do what we can with what we have in the time we have got." On that measure, David Fisher lived a very full and excellent life.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): Before I call the next speaker, I also pass on my condolences on behalf of the House to David Fisher's family. The sentiments expressed by the Minister today are a reflection of both sides of the House.

BANKSTOWN-LIDCOMBE HOSPITAL

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (17:09): On Wednesday 7 September I was proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with approximately 100 frontline hospital staff and members of the Health Services Union [HSU] and the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association at a rally outside Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital to protest against cleaning shortages and poor cleaning standards at the hospital. Cleaning at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital should be of the highest possible standard at all times to ensure that patients receive the best quality care in a hygienic environment. It goes without saying that the cleanliness of the hospital reduces the risk of cross-infection and cross-contamination.

I thank Gerard Hayes and Brett Holmes, the two general secretaries of the unions, for the kind invitation to join them on that day. Members of both unions made it very clear that they were seeking the intervention of the Minister for Health to support them in not only better resourcing the hospital but also ensuring that the cleaning staff shortages are addressed. Hospital cleaning department vacancies caused by workers on sick leave or other leave were not filled properly, which caused serious staff shortages that could affect the running of the entire hospital. This matter became quite urgent a while ago. It became clear that other frontline staff and nurses were concerned about the cleanliness of the hospital. It is particularly important that operating rooms and other areas remain clean.

I take this opportunity to note that there was particular media interest in the rally. The local newspaper ran a significant article showcasing the staff who protested, including cleaning staff who came out to show their concern that the Minister had not intervened sooner. The cleaning department has not had a manager for six or seven months and now has only an acting manager. There are currently many acting positions in the managerial staff at Bankstown hospital, and this is causing considerable concern and unrest amongst the staff. Our community is still reeling from the tragedy that occurred at the hospital six or seven weeks ago. We were all shocked to learn of the tragic death of a newborn boy at Bankstown hospital and the condition of another baby who suffered permanent brain damage as a result of a gas mix-up. I again extend my heartfelt sympathy to both families who have undoubtedly experienced immeasurable pain and grief as a result of those tragic events.

There is no doubt that when it comes to health we are lurching from one crisis to another in this State. I would have thought Bankstown hospital would receive some attention right now. I urge the Minister to consider the open letter that was prepared by both unions on the day and signed by many staff members. I urge the Minister to consider immediately the issues put forward by the union relating to the cleanliness of the hospital. I thank the unions for bringing the matter to the attention of our local community and the broader community.

There is no doubt that yet more concerns will be raised at the hospital, given that there are so many acting positions and that there is yet to be a full, independent inquiry into the tragic death of the two babies in the past six or seven weeks—and in fact what has occurred in the past year and a half. The Government is not focused on ensuring that proper resources are being put into hospitals that are crying out for them. I reiterate that many families and communities are reliant on Bankstown hospital, which is situated in a growing area. I pay tribute to the staff and the community who have gone through so much. I pay tribute to those union members who came out and made sure their voices were heard. Staff need the hospital to be clean for patients.

Bills

SCRAP METAL INDUSTRY BILL 2016

Returned

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

Matter of Public Importance

FOSTER CARE WEEK

Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (17:15): It is with great delight that I lead for the Government in discussing and recognising Foster Care Week in New South Wales. I am sure we have all been touched but also shocked and amazed that there are people in our communities who are able to step up when children need support. Foster carers throughout New South Wales—some 13,000 households—are amongst many of the angels who live and work alongside us every day. It is important that we celebrate Foster Care Week as an annual celebration of the thousands of individual families who open their hearts and their homes to some of the most vulnerable children and young people in New South Wales.

Foster carers are the heart of our child protection system. There are around 20,000 children and young people in out-of-home care in our State who cannot live safely with their parents or family and who need a safe home. In my electorate of Oxley, which is also surrounded by the communities of Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie—the mid North Coast region—an extraordinary number of children are in out-of-home care. In fact, there are 700 or so. That is a tragedy and it reflects very poorly on our society that so many children need protection and care. We thank those carers who step up. I have been looking at some of the foster care websites and reading through the information displayed there. A husband and wife from Coffs Harbour in my region deserve special recognition. They are an incredible couple.

Helen and Alex have cared for more than 350 foster children in addition to their own seven children over the past 32 years. I found this information on the Fostering NSW website. In their time, this mid North Coast couple have provided crisis, short-term, long-term and pre-adoptive care. Now in their late sixties, they still offer respite care to children whose foster carers need a break. All carers need a decent break; it is not always easy being a foster parent. Every child deserves to be raised in a caring, stable family environment. That has been the goal of Helen and Alex, and they have certainly lived and breathed that motto. But they are not alone. There are 13,000 households like that in New South Wales, which is an extraordinary contribution.

I acknowledge the amazing work of Burran Dalai, which is in the middle of the Oxley electorate. It is an Aboriginal out-of-home care service that provides support to children in the Nambucca Valley, the Macleay Valley and up to Armidale. Dana Clarke, the chief executive officer of the organisation based in Kempsey, received the prestigious honour of being named the NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year last year. That is an incredible achievement, and she is genuinely respected.

Recently I met with her executive officer, Norma Kelly—who is a member of the famous Kelly clan of the Dunghutti people in the Macleay Valley. Norma and her family play an important role throughout the region, providing support through these services. It is vital that we not only support foster carers but also acknowledge that we are short of approximately 660 foster carers in New South Wales. It is important that we get people thinking about fostering. My husband and I have spoken about caring for children when we no longer have commitments and our own children have left home. I genuinely want to care for children who need love and support. It is vital to provide stability, love, routine, healthy food, sleep and exercise to children aged from nought to five. They are the simple basics of life. Many children never have an opportunity to experience a routine in life, which they deserve. I believe a child can come into your heart, regardless of whether they came from your womb. Children need to be loved.

I wish to acknowledge an inspiring lady with whom I spent an enormous amount of time on Sunday. She has two children in her care through Kinship Foster Care who have had a rough start to life, but they are now blessed being in her home. This lady has gone through incredible personal tragedy over the past few months but

she is still caring for those foster children. It takes a special person to be a foster carer. It is a beautiful facet of our society that we have people who are prepared to protect children in their time of need, and I encourage more people to do it.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (17:21): I take this opportunity to speak about Foster Care Week. I thank the member for Oxley for bringing this matter before the Chamber because it is a wonderful opportunity for the House to pay tribute to the thousands of carers who open their hearts and their homes to thousands of children in need in this State. We have close to 22,000 children in out-of-home care in New South Wales and there are approximately 13,000 carers. In fact, 18,000 are registered—depending on whether they are registered at a number of different agencies. There is no doubt that we always need more carers, which is the point that the Minister for Family and Community Services and I made to the many carers and organisations who came to Parliament this morning. Today we had the opportunity to thank them. We heard from a number of carers from Barnardos, who gave us a bit of an insight into some of the challenges they face as carers, but also some of the blessings and opportunities they have received through being a carer in this State.

There is no doubt that there are challenges. Irrespective of who is in government, there will always be challenges to ensure that carers have the right support structure in place, that they receive training, skill development and respite care, and that they are not worse off financially. That is an important debate that must be had, especially when considering taxation and other difficulties that some carers face when they are burdened with additional costs while caring for foster children. We are grateful because no child protection system can function in any State without having in place an important structure for carers. The member for Oxley remarked that foster carers are the backbone of our child protection system. There is no doubt that we are reliant on and in awe of the many thousands of carers who provide children in need with such valuable care.

Like the member for Oxley, I often think about whether I could be a carer one day. I know how difficult it is. Often we want to give opportunities to children who are suffering and who have not had the same chances and privileges as our own children. It is important when we have those opportunities in life to perhaps take the time to become carers. I pay tribute to the Hon. Penny Sharpe, who has been a foster carer. I know that other members in this House also—

Ms Melinda Pavey: Mick Veitch.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: The Hon. Mick Veitch in the upper House has also been a carer. It is a delight to see people like the Hon. Mick Veitch and the Hon. Penny Sharpe in their respective roles taking the time to be foster carers. Foster Care Week is about encouraging people to take up the opportunity to be foster carers, but the Government must ensure that carer support structures and incentives are in place. The various non-government organisations that are charged with recruiting carers in this State should also be supported. It is important to have regimes and a regulatory framework in place so that carers can be screened and monitored to ensure that they are fit to care for children in this State. I am sure that carers are also pleased that those processes are in place.

I welcome the discussion on this matter of public importance and the opportunity to think about foster carers this week and what we can do for them. They are often not considered in the child protection system. We are so focused on the children and the organisations that provide the many aspects of child protection that the carers can be overlooked. On behalf of the New South Wales Opposition, I say a big thank you to all the carers who open their hearts and their homes to children in need of care in New South Wales.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (17:26): I have great pleasure in joining my colleague the member for Oxley in speaking on this matter of public importance—Foster Care Week. I thank her for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. Foster Care Week, which is now in its twenty-sixth year, is an opportunity to acknowledge the foster carers in New South Wales who provide a safe, stable and loving home to the State's most vulnerable young people. Foster Care Week runs from 13 to 19 September, with celebrations being held across the State honouring the essential role played by foster carers in our community. The theme for Foster Care Week 2016 is simple: Be part of an amazing journey and foster a child's future. Foster carers take on a role that has been denied to some children and hopefully they will provide foster children with an opportunity for a secure long-term future.

As a parent who was raised in a loving family—and hopefully I have showed the same love and attention to my own children—it is hard to understand how anybody could not want to care for a child. Being able to have children is one of the great gifts we enjoy in society. Sadly, too many children are neglected and abused, and suffer severe traumatic outcomes that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. That is why we turn to carers to pick up the pieces left behind by irresponsible people who cannot love and care for the children they have given life to. There are different types of foster care to suit individual circumstances, including emergency, respite, short-term and long-term care. Every type of care is important. Children and people who require foster care tend to come from complicated family situations. They are likely to face difficulties in their lives and some have

experienced neglect or abuse. Common issues in their families can be drug and alcohol misuse, domestic violence and sexual abuse.

Therefore, the amazing work of foster carers in New South Wales can only make a difference in a young person's life. There are few things more important for a child than growing up feeling that they are important and cared for. I place on record the name of a particular lady who has been an outstanding carer in my electorate—Jean Burrows. She has fostered three girls with severe physical and mental impairments. Sadly, the girls had been abused by their father and on-traded by him. Those abusers are disgusting vermin and a public flogging would be far too good for them. Jean is an absolute champion and an unsung hero of our community. On behalf of our Government I thank her and other foster carers for the work they do.

Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (17:29): In reply: I thank the member for Castle Hill and the member for Bankstown for their contributions to this discussion. The Minister for Family and Community Services, Brad Hazzard, launched Foster Care Week in Parliament House today. We are very lucky to someone like Brad Hazzard in this role. It is an extremely difficult portfolio with many issues, but Minister Hazzard deals with them with true compassion and integrity. He has a very good legal mind and is able to get across the many complicated aspects of the portfolio. His launch today was very good indeed.

Today was the twenty-sixth launch of Foster Care Week, which was first celebrated in 1990. I thank all the people involved in raising its profile—it is deserved—so that people are encouraged to fill the 660 places needed. Foster carers across the State have sent a strong message that they gain so much from loving and caring for children. It is incredibly rewarding to be part of a child's life and to set them on a course of betterment and happiness. It is most important, and to be part of that journey would be quite extraordinary.

I also acknowledge the work of the Premier in making child protection a priority. That is why in this financial year we will spend \$1.9 billion—almost \$2 billion—to ensure that children and young people are better protected from abuse and neglect. It is important to realise that that money is needed because of crises and problems. It is incumbent on us as a society, as a community and as a Parliament to consider the statistics and some of the trends and to ask ourselves some pretty tough questions about why problems continue to grow in such a privileged society and a magnificent country. What is going wrong? It is not great to have a record spend in this portfolio, but we need to focus very strongly on the issues. As the member for Castle Hills said, we owe it to our children to consider the issues. But this discussion is about recognising foster carers. We thank them very much and encourage others to come along on this journey: Open your hearts and open your homes.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 17:33 until
Thursday 15 September 2016 at 10:00.**