



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 15 September 2016

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 15 September 2016

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

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[Notices of motions given.]

Documents

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt, in accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, of the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled "Monitoring Food Safety Practices in Retail Food Businesses: NSW Food Authority", dated September 2015, received this day and authorised to be printed.

Bills

ADOPTION AMENDMENT (INSTITUTE OF OPEN ADOPTION STUDIES) BILL 2016

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 24 August 2016

No. 1 GRNS No. 2 [c2016-066]

Page 3, Schedule 1 [4], proposed section 175A. Insert after line 42:

- (3) Before entering into arrangements for the disclosure of information under this section, the Secretary must consult with the Privacy Commissioner in relation to those arrangements.

No. 2 GRNS No. 4 [c2016-066]

Page 5, Schedule 2 [1], proposed section 254A. Insert after line 37:

- (3) Before entering into arrangements for the disclosure of information under this section, the Secretary must consult with the Privacy Commissioner in relation to those arrangements.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (10:13:0): On behalf of Mr Brad Hazzard: I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

Motion agreed to.

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2016

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Jillian Skinner, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (10:14:4): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. The bill repeals the New South Wales Institute of Psychiatry Act 1964 and seeks to make a number of miscellaneous amendments to various health Acts, being the Health Administration Act 1982, Health Services Act 1997, Mental Health Act 2007 and the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990. I will turn first to the New South Wales Institute of Psychiatry Act 1964, which establishes the Institute of Psychiatry. The institute has been a longstanding provider of quality mental health education and training and currently provides a number of higher education courses accredited through the Commonwealth regulatory body the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency, hereafter called TEQSA. In 2013, a review of the institute was undertaken on behalf of the Mental Health Commissioner.

The review found that the institute's functions would be more effectively undertaken by the Health Education and Training Institute, known as HETI, which would better align mental health education with other

health education. The HETI is a statutory health corporation established under the Health Services Act to provide health education and training. These recommendations were accepted, and the institute's administrative and financial functions were transferred in a staged process to HETI in January 2014 and the educational staff were later transferred in September 2015. The transfer of the organisation's higher educational functions to HETI and the repeal of the New South Wales Institute of Psychiatry Act are critical aspects of the implementation of the recommendations of the review.

There has been ongoing monitoring of the transition by an oversight committee, which has been chaired by the New South Wales Mental Health Commissioner. A key element of the transition of the education functions from the institute to HETI is for HETI to be accredited as a higher education provider with TEQSA, which is the Commonwealth statutory authority established to regulate Australia's higher education sector. It registers entities as higher education providers and accredits the qualifications and courses provided by those entities. The Institute of Psychiatry has held accreditation as a higher education provider for a number of years. As part of the transition, HETI has applied to be registered as a higher education provider against redesigned institute courses.

Accreditation of HETI as a higher education provider is not only a key element of the transition of the institute's functions but will also be a huge asset for the broader health system in terms of other education opportunities to support identified workforce needs. To further the transition and recommendations of the review, the bill will repeal the New South Wales Institute of Psychiatry Act. However, the commencement of the repeal of the New South Wales Institute of Psychiatry Act will only take place once HETI has obtained TEQSA accreditation and the institute has completed all its obligations to students in the 2016 academic year as a current higher education provider.

It is expected that once the transition is complete, HETI will establish a new portfolio relating to mental health higher education, training and community education, which will assist in ensuring that quality mental health education and training continues to be a priority in New South Wales. The institute has provided a wonderful contribution to the people of New South Wales. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all past and current members of the institute for the dedication and hard work in the field of mental health education training and I look forward to HETI continuing to provide quality mental health education and training in New South Wales.

The bill also proposes other changes to mental health legislation. The Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act has a number of provisions relating to forensic patients. There are two categories of forensic patients: those who have been found not guilty of a crime by reason of mental illness, and those who are unfit to be tried for an offence and who are detained following a "special hearing". A special hearing determines whether, on the basis of the limited evidence before the court, a person committed the offence. If found to have committed the offence, the person can be given a "limiting term" and detained. A limiting term is the maximum period for which the patient can be detained. However, the patient can be released earlier if the Mental Health Review Tribunal decides that they are not a risk to the public.

The tribunal must review all forensic patients at least every six months. Under section 53, six months before the expiry of a forensic patient's limiting term, if the tribunal considers that the patient will still need ongoing involuntary care, it can make the patient a civil patient. As a civil patient, the patient is subject to the Mental Health Act. Such a power is important to ensure that if a forensic patient requires ongoing care, such care can be provided in the civil system. However, occasionally a limiting term forensic patient will not only require ongoing care but also will continue to pose an unacceptable risk to the community.

As such, in 2013, schedule 1 was included in the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act. Schedule 1 allows the Attorney General or the Minister for Health to make an application to the Supreme Court to extend a forensic patient's forensic status beyond their limiting term. The Minister and Attorney General can make such an application only six months before the expiry of the patient's limiting term. The court can make an order extending the patient's forensic status only if the patient poses an unacceptable risk of causing serious harm to others and the risk cannot be adequately managed by other less restrictive means.

The interaction between schedule 1 and section 53 can have unintended consequences. If the tribunal exercises its powers under section 53 and makes a person a civil patient, the patient ceases to be a forensic patient. This means that the Minister for Health and Attorney General cannot exercise their powers to make an application to the Supreme Court to extend the patient's forensic status. For public safety reasons, it is important to ensure that the tribunal cannot exercise its powers under section 53 until the Minister and Attorney General have considered whether or not to exercise their powers under schedule 1.

As such, the bill amends section 53 to provide that the tribunal cannot exercise its powers until it has been advised by the Minister and Attorney General that they will not be making an application under schedule 1. However, if such an application is made but not successful before the expiry of the patient's limiting term, the tribunal will be able to exercise its powers under section 53. Under schedule 1 of the Mental Health (Forensic

Provisions) Act, if the Attorney General or Minister makes an application to extend the patient's status, the Court can make an interim order extending the patient's forensic status. The interim order allows sufficient time for the court to hear the matter and to make a final determination.

If the court's final order is after the patient's limiting term expires and the court does not extend the patient's forensic status, the patient will be automatically released as the person will no longer be a forensic patient. However, the patient may continue to be unwell, even if they do not pose an unacceptable risk to the community. An automatic release that does not allow for an assessment as to whether or not the patient requires involuntary care or treatment as a civil patient may not meet the therapeutic needs of the patient. Accordingly, the bill amends schedule 1 to allow the Supreme Court, when it dismisses an application, to order that the patient be detained for 24 hours to allow for the patient to be assessed to determine if the patient requires involuntary care or treatment as a civil patient under the Mental Health Act.

Appropriate safeguards have been included in the amendments to protect patients: detention for the purpose of an assessment can only occur for 24 hours; the detention can only occur where the Supreme Court makes an order; and the patient must be released if the assessment finds that the patient is not a mentally ill person or a mentally disordered person. If the assessment finds that the patient is a mentally ill person or a mentally disordered person, the patient will be subject to the Mental Health Act and all of the safeguards in that Act. Other amendments to the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act included in the bill are more administrative in nature.

The bill updates the old references to the Department of Human Services, allows the powers of Ministers and Secretary to be delegated, clarifies that the Minister for Health and Attorney General can appear before the tribunal when the tribunal is reviewing a patient following an apprehension of the patient under section 68, clarifies the period in which appeals under section 77A can be made, and ensures that information between the Minister for Health and Attorney General can be appropriately shared.

The bill also amends the Mental Health Act to provide that if a sitting judicial officer is appointed as president of the Mental Health Review Tribunal, the president will maintain their judicial status and continue to receive their judicial salary and entitlements while serving as president. This will bring the Mental Health Review Tribunal into line with other similar bodies, such as the Civil and Administrative Tribunal of NSW. Schedule 1 makes minor administrative changes to the Health Administration Act by updating the references to the Health Secretary and the Ministry of Health.

I turn now to the amendments to the Health Services Act, which are set out in schedule 2 to the bill. The Health Services Act provides for the establishment of a number of different health entities, particularly local health districts [LHDs] and specialty health networks [SHNs], which run hospitals and other health services, and the health "pillars", which are the statutory health corporations [SHCs] that provide statewide expertise to support LHDs and SHNs. While SHNs are statutory health corporations, the Health Services Act provides that generally the same governance arrangements that apply to LHDs apply to the SHNs.

There are inconsistencies in the governance arrangements for the boards of LHDs and SHCs in both structure and content. For example, the governance provisions for LHD boards are set out in the Health Services Regulation, while the governance arrangements for SHC boards are set out in the Act. In addition, there are differences in relation to the appointment of board deputy chairs and the power of the board to rescind or vary board resolutions. The bill moves the board governance provisions relating to LHDs from the regulation into the Act. This will ensure that the key governance provisions relating to the health system are set out in primary legislation.

The bill also seeks to align, where appropriate, the board governance arrangements for the different bodies. For example, the bill gives the Minister the power to appoint a deputy chairperson to the board of an SHC, clarifies that a board of an SHC can vary or rescind resolutions of the board, and extends the pecuniary interest requirements to any committee of an SHC board. The bill also includes a new board governance provision for local health districts. On the commencement of the Government Sector Employment Legislation Amendment Act 2016, the board of a local health district will exercise employer functions in respect of the chief executive, including appointment of the chief executive.

Board members may include an employee of the local health district, in respect of whom the chief executive in turn exercises employer functions, or a person with a clinical appointment made by the chief executive. This dual role of those board members—of being employed or appointed by the chief executive whilst at the same time exercising employer functions in respect of the chief executive—has the potential to create a real or perceived conflict of interest. To deal with conflict, the bill provides that a board member who is employed or otherwise holds a clinical or other prescribed appointment with the local health district must not sit on any deliberations or participate in any decisions relating to the board's exercise of the employer functions in respect of the chief executive, including appointment. However, the bill will allow employee board members or persons

with a clinical appointment to provide advice to the board about employment matters affecting the chief executive. As noted earlier, these changes will also apply to specialty health networks.

The bill also makes changes relating to the process for making by-laws for local health districts and SHCs. Currently, while the Health secretary or the Minister can make model by-laws, the approval of the secretary or Minister is still required before these bodies can make by-laws, even where the model by-laws are adopted. The bill simplifies this process for making by-laws while retaining the existing consultation requirements. The bill amends section 39 to allow the Health secretary to make model by-laws for local health districts. A local health district will then be able to either adopt the model by-laws or modify the model by-laws with the approval of the secretary, or, where a model by-law does not cover a particular matter, the local health district will be able to make a by-law on that matter provided that the additional by-law is not inconsistent with the model by-laws and the Health secretary is notified. Similar changes will be made to section 60 in respect of SHCs.

The bill also makes other changes to the Health Services Act: extending the possible term of office for local health district board members from four to five years, with a maximum period of 10 years; and including a new section 116H to clarify that the Health secretary is the respondent in any industrial relations proceedings involving NSW Health staff. The bill updates the protection from personal liability provision in section 139 to cover all reviews and inquiries conducted in relation to the operation of the public health system rather than the existing narrow protection provided only in respect of reviews into conduct, performance or disciplinary matters.

The bill also includes a new section 139A in the Health Services Act. Section 139A will provide a protection from personal liability to staff of the NSW Health service who in good faith assist a registered health practitioner in providing treatment under the Guardianship Act or the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act. This will ensure that individual staff members such as assistants in nursing or security staff who assist, in good faith, registered health practitioners in providing lawful treatment are not personally liable in the event harm to the patient occurs. Rather, the bill clarifies existing common law principles to make clear that any liability arising from the treatment will be borne by the relevant public health organisation and not the individual staff member. This bill is part of the Government's regular review of legislation and will assist in ensuring that legislation falling within the Health portfolio remains up to date and relevant. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Motions

CENTENARY OF ANZAC

Debate resumed from 25 August 2016.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (10:34): I am very pleased to be able to add briefly to the debate in this House on the Centenary of Anzac. The debate, introduced by the member for Wagga Wagga in May last year, has elicited many fascinating and poignant stories from members who have contributed to it. This is a very important milestone and one that I am happy to report was commemorated in my electorate of Lake Macquarie, with record crowds turning out to mark the 100th anniversary of the landing of Australian and New Zealand forces on the Gallipoli peninsula. I can also report that while crowds for centenary services were at levels never seen before, they were equalled—and in some cases bettered—at this year's events, meaning that the Anzac spirit and the community's desire to remember our fallen, our injured forebears and those who were placed in harm's way at the behest of our nation has not waned but is getting stronger.

As the years go by, our fascination with the Anzac story appears to grow. The times and values that drove these young men to enlist and lay down their lives for a principle seem somewhat removed from those of modern Australia, although perhaps not when we consider the commitment of today's service men and women who carry that same spirit into conflict zones around the world. We have a lot to learn from the original Anzacs—their selflessness and dedication and, perhaps most of all, their camaraderie. Those youthful, wide-eyed men carried high expectations and a heavy burden on their young shoulders, yet their actions did not disappoint.

Each year my office produces a booklet that I mail to every household in my electorate. Called *The Spirit of Anzac*, it includes stories about the Anzac heroes who came from our local area and it includes a comprehensive guide to Anzac Day services. It is always very well received and in itself has become quite an Anzac tradition. It is where we remember or learn about the likes of the Greenfield brothers from Killingworth, who were all lost on the battlefields of the Great War. The death of Private Albert Greenfield just days before Christmas in 1916 was shocking news for his parents, Samuel and Isabella, who had already lost two family members on the battlefields. Albert was killed in France on the Western Front on 16 December not long after his brother-in-law Private Thomas Wood was killed on the Turkish peninsula. Albert's older brother, Private Stephen Greenfield, was killed only months earlier while fighting at Pozieres in France.

The loss of two sons and a son-in-law in the space of 15 months left the Greenfield family bereft. In a letter to Defence Base Records, Mrs Greenfield said that she was keen to have her sons' belongings returned as a keepsake of their service to their country. "It is a sad blow to any mother," she wrote, adding that the loss of two sons and her daughter's husband had taken "a very personal toll". It is also where we learn of Frederick Ball from Boolaroo, who marched off to war with his family's blessing in 1915. He arrived in Egypt with the 30th Battalion reinforcements just as the Gallipoli campaign was ending, but troops were soon sent to the Western Front and Frederick battled on throughout 1917. In October of that year he was killed in Ypres in Belgium.

The centenary of the Great War marks a significant milestone in Australian history. It was deemed to be the war to end all wars but sadly, as we know, it was not. Anzac Day traditionally provides an opportunity to remember not only those who fought in the nation-defining battle at Gallipoli but also the service men and women who have contributed to the defence of Australia throughout all overseas conflicts. At home in Lake Macquarie, we have a special connection with World War II through the former RAAF Catalina flying boat base at Rathmines. The base was the largest flying boat base in the Southern Hemisphere at that time. It is our direct link to what was, for better or for worse, one of history's most significant events.

In February this year, a commemorative service was held at the new memorial at Rathmines. Seventy-three years earlier, 11 crew aboard Catalina A24-25 belonging to 11 Squadron were killed when their aircraft crashed in waters south of Cairns. The squadron was based at Rathmines and flew out on an anti-submarine mission in February 1943 but never returned. The wreckage was found in 2013, but the remains of the 11 young men who perished with it were not recovered. They fought and died together and will continue to rest together, entombed in the wreckage. The discovery did, however, provide some closure for the families and descendants of those men. In 1945 a crew of nine men from 20 Squadron failed to return from a mine-laying mission in the Pescadores Islands. News of the lost flight hit those at the Rathmines base hard. None of the crew were ever found but their names are listed on the Labuan Memorial in Saba, Malaysia, and of course on the new memorial at Rathmines.

I wish to add some names to those who served at the Rathmines Catalina flying boat base. Attie Wearne was a former base commander and his family still live in the area. My good friend Penny Furner is his daughter. Attie Wearne was also a squadron leader based at Cairns. While swimming in local waters he was attacked by a shark and lost his right leg below the knee. He used a prosthesis and continued to serve as a commander and fly a Catalina aircraft. I also acknowledge Lyn Hurt, whom I was pleased to have met some years ago and knew briefly before he passed away. As a Catalina commander, Lyn Hurt led many missions. One that he relayed to me was particularly striking. He led a flight into battle but they overshot the Japanese base target. As the lead aircraft, he was able to reposition those following him, but he told his crew that they would be going around again in a lumbering Catalina, leaving them exposed to the guns that were now heavily mobilised. Such people are true heroes, and I look forward to placing on record further stories from this era.

Debate adjourned.

Bills

WYONG SPECIAL AREA (PROTECTION) BILL 2016

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr David Harris, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (10:45): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It disappoints me that I have to reintroduce the Wyong Special Area (Protection) Bill 2016 to stop mining in an important water catchment that is significant not only to the Wyong electorate but also to the whole Central Coast. I will not go into specifics about the bill because members can read my original second reading speech, which details the bill's provisions. In this second reading speech I will outline why this issue remains important not only in my electorate but also across the Central Coast. It is sad that the first application by Labor in 2011 was rejected. We remember when Barry O'Farrell, on that fateful day at Mardi, made his infamous promise of "no ifs, no buts, a guarantee—no mine" and said that if elected he would introduce legislation to that effect. The Parliamentary Secretary at the table, the member for Castle Hill, was present when Mr O'Farrell gave that solemn commitment to the people of the Central Coast.

We heard recently about a new concept called "social licence" during the greyhound racing debate. Not only has the Wallarah 2 coalmine never had a social licence, there is less reason for it to have one now, given it is predicted—as announced last week—that 76,000 extra people will live in the area by 2036, increasing the

population of the Central Coast to 415,000. People familiar with the Central Coast will know, as I detailed in my original second reading speech, that the Wyong River, Jiliby Creek and Porters Creek flow into a catchment and water is drawn from the Wyong River and pumped into the Mardi Dam. That water, by way of a \$120 million pipeline, is then pumped up to the Mangrove Mountain Dam, which secures the water supply for the entire Central Coast. This proposal seeks to build a long wall coalmine underneath an important part of that catchment.

People must understand that the Mangrove Mountain Dam is not a catchment dam, it is a storage dam. The water that sits in it and will supply the potential population of 415,000 by 2036 is drawn, mostly, from the important Wyong water catchment. It is designated and gazetted as a water catchment. Interestingly, a petition about a mining proposal in the Southern Highlands was circulated and the Minister for Mental Health, Pru Goward, the member for Goulburn, rightly stood up on behalf of her community to oppose that mine on the basis that it was in a water catchment. The member for Wollondilly, Jai Rowell, also opposed it and outlined the importance of protecting that water catchment. In line with my promise during the election campaign—and as Barry O'Farrell promised on behalf of the Liberal Government—I am introducing special legislation to protect this important water catchment.

I note that my colleague the member for Lake Macquarie, Greg Piper, is in the Chamber. He has been a strong advocate against this mine for a long time for the same reasons as I have: mining should not occur under water catchments. Mining should not occur under a catchment that supplies water to such a large population. At a meeting last night, the new Central Coast Council, which was created by the Premier with an administrator appointed by Minister Paul Toole, reiterated not only the opposition of the old Wyong Shire Council and Gosford City Council but also stated its opposition to the project. I will read a little from the press release issued by the council. It goes to show that opposition to the mine is not coming from a group of rabid environmentalists who oppose any mining; it is a serious issue affecting an important water catchment that supplies a massive urban population. The council's press release, which is headed "Council remains opposed to Wallarah 2 coal mine", states:

Central Coast Council concerns about the effect of the mine on the drinking water catchment, environment and residential areas are central to its submission to the amended Wallarah 2 project.

Walarah 2's modified plans have recently been put on exhibition. The modifications seek to introduce a coal conveyor, realign the sewer connection and introduce a new rail loop and line on the site.

Council was given an extension to the deadline so its submission could be brought to a Council meeting and made public. Council will now add its voice to the over 700 submissions already lodged, the majority of which also oppose the coal mine.

Administrator Ian Reynolds said Council's overall concerns about the impact on the water catchment had not changed and now had new concerns about the impact on the new rail loop on nearby residents.

"Council is concerned about the impact of this proposed rail loop on surrounding residents particularly in relation to noise and air quality which were not adequately addressed in this proposal.

"There has also been no proper assessment done on the effects on local flora and fauna, the visual impact and dust mitigation and overall community impact.

"Our concerns relating to the effect on the drinking water catchment, environment and residential areas of the mine operation remain and are not addressed in this proposal at all.

"We maintain our strong opposition to the Wallarah 2 coal mine and have made this position clear in our submission."

The former Wyong Shire and Gosford City Councils united in their opposition to the mine, due to the potential impacts on drinking water catchment areas, in March 2014.

There we have it. Last night the council that was appointed by the Government with an administrator appointed by the Government, reiterated its opposition to this mine—and for very good reasons. The Mandalong Coal Mine operates in the northern part of the Central Coast, in lower Lake Macquarie. I did not oppose that mine because it did not have a major impact on the community. I and the community oppose this proposal because it will have an impact on the Central Coast community. The environmental impact statement [EIS] for the project was prepared in April 2013 by the Wyong Areas Coal Joint Venture. In 2014 the Planning Assessment Commission [PAC] reviewed the project and conducted a public hearing in Wyong. The PAC then prepared a review report that made a number of recommendations. The Australian Coal Alliance, which is opposed to this mine, has outlined the recommendations:

...the Commission considers that, if the recommendations concerning improved strategies to avoid, mitigate or manage the predicted impacts of the project are adopted, then there is merit in allowing the project to proceed. However, if the recommendations are either not adopted, or adopted only in part, then the Commission's position would probably change in favour of a precautionary approach. This particularly applies to water-related impacts.

The majority of the PAC's principal findings and recommendations relate to subsidence and water-related impacts. In relation to water, it said "the project predicts risks of reduced availability of water for the Central Coast water

supply", wherein the PAC recommended there should be no impact on potential catchment yield. The Australian Coal Alliance continued:

The Central Coast water catchment supply in the Wyong valleys is at real risk of destruction due to massive subsidence and loss of potable water to the mine area below.

None of the PAC's recommendations for improved strategies have been implemented.

The PAC said clearly that if that did not happen it would change its approach to the mine in favour of the precautionary approach, which means that it would deny it. Nothing in the new submission that is currently under assessment suggests that the mining company has addressed any of those issues in any way. The submission from the Australian Coal Alliance goes on to say:

In July 2014, the Proponent prepared a Response to the PAC Review Report and subsequently has prepared an amended development application (Amended DA) for the Project. According to the Proponent, the Amended DA involves changes to the proposed coal transportation infrastructure and the re-alignment of a sewer connection. All other aspects of the Project will remain as previously proposed.

So the proponent admits that it has made no amendments—no changes—to its original submission.

Mr Greg Piper: Business as usual.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Exactly. As the member for Lake Macquarie says, it is business as usual. The proponent has ignored the PAC recommendations. The Australian Coal Alliance continued:

The Amended DA documents do not include amended Appendices in relation to subsidence, groundwater or surface water. The Amended DA does not propose to change the number, depth or location of the longwalls.

In general terms, all the objections to the project remain valid. The only reason the company has made this amended application is that the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council denied the miner access to the land. This amended application seeks to go around the Aboriginal land—land locking the Aboriginal land—and makes no other changes. That is an absolute disgrace. Returning to the PAC's recommendations, the Government should support this private member's bill not only because it told the people of the Central Coast in 2011 that it would move special legislation but also because the mining company has thumbed its nose at the PAC. That is more evidence of why the Government should say no to this project.

Other reasons have come to light since I introduced the original bill. In June 2016 the *Korean Times* reported that the project's parent company, South Korean Government-owned Korea Resource Corporation [KORES], is to quit its overseas development operations. KORES became actively engaged in overseas resource development during the former President's administration but a price plunge in global resources has dealt it a deathly blow. KORES' debt ratio stands at a staggering 6,905 per cent. According to the Korean Board of Audit and Inspection, a total of \$35.8 trillion won was invested in overseas resource development, with little gains so far. KORES will also be slashing 118 international jobs.

The announcement that the company is withdrawing is of great concern to the people of the Central Coast and to others opposing this mine. The problem is that the remedial and rehabilitation work that the mine company undertook to do in its original application could well be unrealised because the proponent, Wyong Coal Pty Limited, has paid-up capital of only \$400. Therefore, the total liability of this company is limited to the total amount of its paid-up capital. It could simply walk away and leave the Central Coast community and the State Government having to bear the burden of the cost. Given the reported financial woes of the parent company and its move to withdraw from overseas resource development, it is highly unlikely that the current proponent would want to develop the mine and would wish merely to onsell an approved licence. That should also be taken into account.

I move now to the effect on the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council. In addressing the Government requirements for this amended development application, the proponent must take into account other community interests. In its proposal the proponent mentions nothing about the development that is currently being examined for Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Council land via a planning proposal that intends, initially, to subdivide 500 building lots on land directly adjacent to the mine project boundary. The Australian Coal Alliance received legal advice that the department is bound to take into account the proposed development of Darkinjung land under the planning proposal, given that it has progressed to a stage where the department has determined that the planning proposal should proceed and has directed Central Coast Council to make the local environmental plan.

That legal advice further states that the requirement to consider the planning proposal falls within section 79C (1) (e), which requires the department to consider the public interest when assessing applications; likewise, the department is also required to consider the planning proposal under section 79C (1) (b), which requires the department to consider the social and economic impacts in the locality of the development. In both cases it is

necessary to show that the impact of the coal project on the development proposed under the planning proposal is relevant and that the department is bound to take that into account because of its relevance. So far, it has failed to do so.

There are 500 houses on the boundary of the coal loader that have not been taken into account. Moreover, the new proposed coal loader, which is nine storeys high, is approximately 300 metres from the suburb of Blue Haven in my electorate. The people who live in those areas knew nothing about this proposal and the impact on them will be significant, not just in relation to dust but also in relation to noise. The mining company has failed to address those issues. The Government—including the two members who spoke to the Southern Highlands community—now has an opportunity to support Labor's private member's bill and fulfil the promise that was made in 2011 to support special legislation that would block this mine. There is no case now for approving a mine under water catchments when the area is experiencing massive urban population growth.

Right across the State pressure is being put on land for the provision of accommodation, and rightly so, to address the need for affordable housing. Coalmines that potentially, and in this case probably, will affect water supplies do not go hand in hand with areas of urban population. This should not be a political issue between Labor, the Liberals, The Greens and everybody else throwing mud at each other. It should be remembered that Labor blocked the mine originally, the Liberal Party made a promise to stop the mine, and that at the last election I, as the local member, made a commitment to remove this legislation.

This bill is an opportunity for every member of the House not only to protect the water supply of the Central Coast but also to put the interests of our community first rather than the interests of big business and big money, which may withdraw from the whole project and leave the Central Coast community and the State of New South Wales with a liability that will never be met. I endorse this legislation and I hope the Government thinks very seriously about it. This bill gives the Government an opportunity to meet its social licence obligation which was inherent in the commitment made by Barry O'Farrell in 2011—a commitment that was made to the people of the Central Coast and the people of New South Wales. I urge the Government to ban mining in the Wyong water catchment.

Debate adjourned.

CRIMES AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (VILIFICATION) BILL 2016

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 2 June 2016.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Attorney General) (11:03:3): The Opposition Crime and Anti-Discrimination Legislation Amendment (Vilification) Bill 2016 seeks to amend the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 and the Crimes Act 1900. The explanatory note for the Opposition bill says that it has been prepared in response to the 2013 report of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice, entitled "Racial Vilification Law in New South Wales". However, the Opposition bill seeks a significant change to our law that goes far beyond the recommendations handed down by the Legislative Council's committee in its report. In fact, the Opposition bill seeks changes that were expressly rejected by the committee. The most obvious question to ask when significant changes to law are proposed is not only what do we in Parliament think but also what does the broader community think about the proposed changes? The answer in this case is that the Opposition does not know.

In his second reading speech, the shadow Attorney General said nothing to indicate the Opposition has made any attempt to consult with key stakeholders and the broader community on this bill. The Government cannot support this bill without knowing where the people of New South Wales stand on it—a bill that does not represent a broad consensus within community. Accordingly, the Government opposes the bill. The inquiry into racial vilification law in New South Wales was referred to the Legislative Council Committee on Law and Justice by a former Premier, Barry O'Farrell, in December 2012. The committee's unanimous report ultimately recommended limited changes to the elements of the serious racial vilification offence and a number of procedural changes to clarify the process for investigating and prosecuting serious racial vilification complaints. However, the Opposition bill does not simply implement the committee's recommendations, it goes much further. First, the bill substantially lowers the current bar to prosecuting a serious vilification offence. The existing section 20D (1) of the Anti-Discrimination Act states:

A person shall not, by a public act, incite hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of, a person or group of persons on the ground of the race of the person or members of the group by means which include:

- (a) threatening physical harm towards, or towards any property of, the person or group of persons, or
- (b) inciting others to threaten physical harm towards, or towards any property of, the person or group of persons.

In this context, the Opposition bill proposes to replace the word "incite" with "promote". As the shadow Attorney General said in his second reading speech in making a change to this section, Labor wishes to lower the current bar to prosecution. The Legislative Council committee, on the other hand, considered the word "incite" in this provision and decided in paragraph 4.70 of the committee's report:

Given that there was no clear consensus on an alternative, the Committee believes that, at this time, the current provision should be maintained.

On the issue of amending the elements of the serious racial vilification offence generally, I quote from the foreword to the committee's report, written by the Hon David Clarke, MLC, who was the then committee chair and Parliamentary Secretary for Justice:

There were also a number of issues raised during the Inquiry relating to the substance of s 20D, such as whether the requirement to prove incitement should be modified or whether the means element should be amended or repealed. The Committee has made few recommendations on these issues as we wish to see the effect of our procedural recommendations first. The Committee believes that if the procedural issues with s 20D are resolved then many of the other matters raised during the Inquiry may no longer be an issue, or as significant of an issue.

Labor has blatantly ignored this preferred unanimous approach of the committee and has gone its own way. The committee also devoted three pages of its report to considering the location of the serious vilification offence. That offence is currently located in section 20 of the Anti-Discrimination Act. In concluding its views on this issue, the committee stated at paragraph 5.100:

The Committee makes a number of proposed amendments for serious racial vilification prosecutions in Chapter 6. We believe that amendments will address concerns about the investigation process, particularly police involvement in matters. As such, at this time the Committee does not support relocating s 20D to the Crimes Act. Yet again the Opposition's bill has ignored a unanimous recommendation of the committee and moves all serious vilification offences from the Anti-Discrimination Act to the Crimes Act, which brings me to another significant variation between the Legislative Council committee's report and the Opposition's bill. The committee inquiry was limited to racial vilification, and as such the committee only sought public submissions on racial vilification, and its commentary and findings were similarly limited in scope. Now, without any consultation or detailed analysis, the Opposition seeks to extend all changes to the serious racial vilification provision to the provisions in the Anti-Discrimination Act relating to serious vilification on the grounds of transgender, homosexuality and HIV-AIDS.

The Government does not express a view as to whether those other grounds of serious vilification should be amended. What we do say is that the people of New South Wales deserve the right to share their views about these proposed changes. Interested stakeholders have not had any opportunity to comment on whether the recommendations of the Legislative Council committee on racial vilification are suitable for the other grounds of transgender, homosexual and HIV-AIDS vilification. There has been no proper assessment of these changes. Labor is putting this to Parliament without any input from stakeholders that would no doubt help members make an informed decision about the bill.

But perhaps we should be happy the shadow Attorney General at least mentioned all of these changes in his second reading speech. What is perhaps even more concerning are the changes the shadow Attorney General decided not to mention to the House. Currently, section 49ZT (2) (c) of the Anti-Discrimination Act, which makes homosexual vilification unlawful, contains an exemption for a public act, done reasonably and in good faith, for religious instruction and discussion purposes. Sections 38S (2) (c) and 49ZXB (2) (c) make similar exemptions for a public act, done reasonably and in good faith, for religious discussion or instruction purposes, in respect of transgender and HIV-AIDS vilification respectively.

In merging the serious racial, homosexual, transgender and HIV-AIDS vilification provisions, the Opposition bill removes these exemptions for public acts, done reasonably and in good faith, for religious discussion or instruction purposes. The explanatory note for the Opposition bill and the shadow Attorney General's second reading speech do not explain why it has been proposed that these exemptions be removed. Nowhere are these amendments even mentioned and we know that, like the rest of the provisions of the bill, the Opposition has not consulted stakeholders on this material change to the current law, which was not part of the Legislative Council committee's inquiry. It begs the questions: Why not highlight these significant changes? Is it sloppiness or simply arrogance?

Laws and policies should not be made on the run. Decisions to create laws, to change laws around important issues such as vilification, should be made with a considered and fully consultative approach. In fact, the shadow Attorney General failed to give any explanation or justification as to why this Opposition bill makes significant changes to the law, the most significant changes being the ones that completely depart from the committee's unanimous recommendations. The committee, of course, comprised representatives from across a range of parties, including two members from the shadow Attorney General's own party.

Careful consideration must be given to any change to law in this area. Consideration must be given to finding the correct balance between freedom of speech, a core component of our democratic community, and protecting people from violence. I can inform the House that this Government is consulting on the recommendations of the Legislative Council committee report, with a strong commitment to obtaining views from across the community to ensure that any reform strikes the right balance. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the Opposition. The Government opposes this bill.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (11:14): In speaking in debate on the Crimes and Anti-Discrimination Legislation Amendment (Vilification) Bill 2016, I note that in the Attorney-General's comments a lot was made of the upper House committee recommendations. Members of the Labor Party propose that those recommendations be implemented as soon as possible, and I will return to this point a little later in my contribution. For a long time there has been criticism of the existing racial vilification provisions in the Anti-Discrimination Act, particularly section 20D. I can well imagine that some people in this State would say quite genuinely that they have been a victim of discrimination as defined by the current Act, and yet there have been no prosecutions under this section of the Act. That means that something is amiss, especially when we know that there have been at least 30 referrals by the Director of Public Prosecutions under this section.

In 2013 the O'Farrell Government referred the issue to the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice. The committee produced a report and made a number of recommendations in 2013. The Government's response was disappointing. On 3 June 2014 at 4:49 p.m. on the day of its required response to the committee report, the Government issued a response that actually and symbolically demonstrated its lack of interest and courage. The response was in 66 words. What a bureaucratic response. It felt like, "Thanks for the report, committee members. We will get back to you". Here we are, in September 2016, and the people of New South Wales are still waiting for action on hate speech.

At this time in our country and in this world we see the devastating effects of hatred. We are waiting for a discussion paper, and I look forward to reading it. In the meantime, NSW Labor has taken up the mantle. I am proud of the fact that in late 2015 Luke Foley, the Leader of the Opposition, announced that State Labor would make a series of policy changes to demonstrate necessary leadership on this issue. This bill picks up the unanimous changes recommended by the committee, but it also goes a bit further. We on this side of the Chamber are unapologetic in stating that this bill does lower the bar for prosecution by replacing the word "incite" with the word "promote" in relation to hatred. We are also conscious that moving the operative section of the Crimes Act sends a strong message, and that strong message is intentional.

What does this bill do? My colleague the member for Liverpool has done a fine job in setting out the precise proposed changes to the Crimes Act 1990 and the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977, so I will not repeat the changes in full except to reiterate that the target of this bill is hate speech. It is directed at people who promote or advocate violence based on race, gender or sexual orientation. We must also give thought to the inclusion of religion, and I will come back to that later in my contribution. The bill, amongst many other things, provides that unlawful vilification under the Anti-Discrimination Act occurs when a person, by a public act, intentionally or recklessly promotes rather than incites hatred towards identified groups.

I will focus my time on reinforcing the overriding need for these changes and I will address the opportunity, as I see it, for the scope of this bill to be broadened to potentially look at including religion. I note that in other forums my colleague Mr Paul Lynch has called for other changes to be made—first, and fundamentally, that the State Constitution ought to declare that every citizen of this State can exercise freedom of religion; and secondly, that the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 should provide that discrimination on the basis of religion is unlawful. Interestingly, I think that the average man or woman on the street would assume that freedom of religion is protected in this State.

Most people of faith in this country, who have passed through their lives practising their faith unhindered, hopefully will never be in a position where they feel vilified or discriminated against and therefore would have no need to look to the State for protection. But until you have been on the receiving end of vilification or discrimination because of your religious beliefs then you cannot really appreciate how that feels or how damaging that is, particularly over time and particularly when it feels like a pattern of behaviour that is either actively or passively accepted by the State.

We only need to look to an inaugural speech made in the Federal Senate last night in which there was an emphatic and unambiguous attack on Australians who belong to the Muslim faith—people like me and my family—in this, one of the most significant weeks of the Islamic calendar, Eid al-Adha. Speeches like that, with the spotlight and the privilege offered by the national Parliament and aimed at breakfast television audiences, are unencumbered by fact and rely largely on opinion. Those speeches fuel the flames of resentment, disharmony and ultimately, in my view, racism. If the past is a good predictor of the future, over the coming days and weeks we

may see some people harbouring a range of grievances about their lot in life convert those feelings into action. They will feel emboldened by that speech.

I wish it were not so. I certainly hope we do not see what I have seen and heard in the past: women who wear the hijab being spat on or having their scarves pulled off, or kids being mocked at school. A few weeks ago I was walking down the street in Brisbane with a friend. As we walked past, a total stranger mockingly started to call out "Allahu Akbar" and all sorts of other offensive things. My friend proved his dignity and walked straight past. But I could not accept this. It was a purely random act performed by somebody based on things he had heard rather than on knowledge. He took opinion and made it into fact.

I am sure that Australians who belong to the Hindu and Sikh faiths also have similar experiences. Certainly Jewish Australians and those from a number of other groups are very concerned. I acknowledge the Keep NSW Safe campaign mobilised by Mr Vic Alhadeff from the Jewish Board of Deputies and by many other groups. Imagine how casual and not so casual racism feels, day in and day out. Imagine how corrosive it is. But let us also bring this perspective: for all the divisive and unhelpful talk of "us and them" and the tension it causes, a modern, inclusive, diverse Australia is actually one of the great stories of the world and of history. I refuse to accept the alternative picture being promoted in some quarters. With just a few tragic exceptions, we are an affluent, pluralistic, harmonious, peaceful community. Ethnic and religious diversity in my electorate is a living testament to that.

How did we achieve that? The member for Liverpool made the point that we have not achieved this relative harmony just through luck. The very foundation of this success has been public institutions and the appropriate legislative frameworks at both State and Federal levels. Police have acted to recognise the rights of various diverse groups and set clear standards about what is and what is not acceptable in this country. Our diversity and our harmony is our strength, but it has to be protected and nurtured. I reflect on the profound and historic impact of the proclamation of the Federal Racial Discrimination Act 1975. At the time, the then Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, noted that the legislation was intended to:

... entrench new attitudes of tolerance and understanding in the hearts and minds of people.

This was a strong signal to the old Australia that the White Australia policy was gone and that Australia was embracing multiculturalism. Did attitudes to migrants change overnight? Certainly not. It has been a long journey, and we still have a long way to go. It is hard to change attitudes. Anyone who works with human beings will tell you that, while it would be great to first change attitudes, it is actually much easier to change behaviours. With luck and perseverance, changed behaviour will sometimes lead to personal reflection and ultimately a changed mindset.

The bill we are debating today is pragmatic. It has a focus on behaviour, and it sends a very clear signal about behaviour that cannot be tolerated if we are to evolve as an inclusive society built on mutual respect and an increasing understanding of one another. For those who are troubled by the proposed amendment that replaces the words "promote and incite" with "incite" and note that it lowers the bar for prosecution, I say take up the challenge. If you are speaking or acting in public, as defined in this bill, I say think about what you are doing, think about what you are saying. How much of your view is based on fact? If you are making judgements about a person different to you, whether in religion, sexual orientation or anything else, do you really understand them? Take the time to reach out to them, to understand and to seek more clarity. This especially applies if you are a public or a high-profile person. [*Extension of time*]

As everyone knows, my previous life was that of a schoolteacher, but the thing I loved doing most was working with other groups, whether they were interfaith groups or other community groups. The one thing I learnt was the more time that we can spend together, the more we can understand and learn from one another and the better we can relate to one another and create a better society. People talk of tolerance, but it is not about tolerance; it is about accepting and understanding. We cannot allow society to go ahead without noticing that. My proudest moment was when I was an Australia Day Ambassador travelling to small country towns to share different stories, because what I saw was an Australia made up of a mosaic. Everyone is a little bit different, and there is nothing wrong with difference. It is all about how those pieces of the mosaic come together to form the beautiful sculpture of the nation we have created, where there are two stories: the story of the Indigenous people and the story of everybody else, who are all migrants to this nation. Together we bring something that makes our country stronger and better all round.

Hate, racism and discrimination go across the board and we cannot leave them unattended much longer. Three years ago there was a review and a promise made, and there has been a protracted and unclear consultation process—all the while allowing the conditions for people to discriminate against and vilify others simply because they can. All members of this House made a promise to make things better when we came into this place. Vulnerable people and people who are discriminated against need us to make life better for them. Much was made

of the upper House recommendations, as I said, and I would like to see them implemented as soon as possible. As is clear from my speech today, I have the strong view that this bill would benefit greatly from a number of amendments, but I also think there is time to have a really good look at the inclusion of religion as one of the protected attributes.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (11:25:3): I speak in opposition to the Crimes and Anti-Discrimination Legislation Amendment (Vilification) Bill 2016. I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Lakemba. I stand here as an extremist—these are not my words, but the words of the shadow Attorney General, who, in his second reading speech, accused the Government of being frightened of and controlled by "extremist forces" who hide behind "declarations about the importance of free speech". If declaring one's support of free speech makes one an extremist in this day and age, then I am proud to call myself one.

This bill represents the creeping arm of government, reaching ever deeper into Australians' lives. It represents the fundamental belief by those opposite that the people of New South Wales need the Government to tell them what they can say, what they can think, what is right and what is wrong. It represents the fallacy that government knows best and that citizens must toe the approved government line; if they do not, they can expect to face the full force of the law. Its proponents claim that it is necessary for a united Australia; in fact, it divides. In his second reading speech, the member for Liverpool said:

Contemporary Australia is a complex, diverse society. Its diversity on a racial and cultural basis is as broad as it is anywhere in the world. It functions, I think, remarkably well.

He said:

... this comparative success does not exist purely by luck or happenstance. It requires appropriate institutions and appropriate legislative frameworks.

It is not because of bills like this that Australia is one of the most successful pluralistic societies in history; it is in spite of bills like this. The reality is that this bill and others like it divide our community. This bill is the bluntest of blunt instruments, and those opposite seek to wield it to drive a wedge between Australians. The bill removes any subjective requirement that a public act be done with full knowledge, bluntly creating a summary offence with which to bludgeon the young, the old and the outspoken. It unashamedly lowers the bar for prosecution from "incites hatred, contempt or severe ridicule" and replaces it with the mere need to prove that somebody's opinion has "recklessly promoted hatred, contempt or severe ridicule".

These changes were not recommended by the standing committee. These changes are not an objective test of offence. Already, the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 provides protection against racial, transgender, homosexual or HIV vilification. These protections are enshrined in a safe space, cocooned by the legislation. Yet others who are maligned—including religion, as indicated by the member for Lakemba—are simply left to fend for themselves. In October last year, the Leader of the Opposition said:

No-one's ever been successfully prosecuted under these provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Act. ...

There needs to be a new offence created. This is a very worrying comment. The Leader of the Opposition seems to be suggesting that if members of the community are not being prosecuted by the Government there is a problem. It is almost as though he is willing people to be prosecuted, with calls such as this. This is the major problem with the Labor Party's approach to this debate. It is about using the force of law to change what is, at heart, a cultural problem. Yes, we can all agree that it is wrong to incite violence and that there should be measures prohibiting it. However, by amending section 20D of the Anti-Discrimination Act, the balance is also tipped and freedom of speech is threatened.

What is meant by this? A common argument used by the Left in debates such as these is that there is no such thing as a slippery slope, and that if one has done nothing wrong, one has nothing to fear from government force and prosecution. The problem with this argument is that we are already seeing the effects of heavy-handed discrimination laws around the country. One of the most obvious and high-profile examples of this involved the Archbishop of Tasmania Julian Porteus being hauled before the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Commission by Greens political candidate Martine Delaney.

What was Bishop Proteus' offence? It was distributing a pamphlet defending the position of natural marriage in Catholic schools. Shock, horror! A Catholic archbishop was defending Catholic teaching. The commission ordered the archbishop to defend his opinions until Delaney, not the commission, dropped the case. But the damage was done. In future, people will question their judgement and decide not to speak out. Is this the future we want? Do we want people to be afraid to speak out for fear of State-sponsored persecution on issues they believe are important? What is the future for Christian churches, schools and agencies? There is a very real threat that they will face litigation for simply teaching traditional Christian values.

Our society has become victim to some of the most toxic debate with the promotion of identity politics. This is the idea that our views are legitimate or acceptable only if we belong to a certain approved identity group, and only if we espouse approved positions. The introduction of Federal section 18C was a result of the rise of

identity politics. The section provides that we can be prosecuted if we "insult, offend, humiliate or intimidate" a person on the basis of race. That is extremely subjective and it is simply bad policy. It is a policy that is reflective of the degeneration of political discourse that results in the degeneration of basic freedoms.

Only yesterday we heard Federal Leader of the Opposition Bill Shorten and Greens members such as Adam Bandt denounce the proposed plebiscite on gay marriage. We have seen headlines in leading newspapers heralding the "summer of hate" in preparation for a debate on gay marriage. If these are not attempts to shut down and demonise an opposing point of view then I do not know what is. We have Bandt on one hand calling for love and tolerance and in the same speech denouncing Christian groups who would "spread their hate speech through a plebiscite". He also called Lyle Shelton from the Australian Christian Lobby a bigot. Love and tolerance indeed.

Those on the Left are continually looking for excuses to demonise and vilify our culture. We have seen this numerous times. For example, in the wake of the terrible incident that was the Lindt Café siege, a trendy hashtag #I'll Ride With You went viral. It was supposed to combat the apparently inevitable and terrible retribution that racist Australians were certain to direct at Muslims. The only problem is that there was no backlash. There was an outpouring of love with the beautiful Martin Place tribute, a strengthening of community ties, and a society uniting in the face of tragedy, not dividing. That is the problem with this bill: it is well intentioned, but misguided at best and authoritative and oppressive at worst.

By amending the Act to include the word "promote" rather than "incite", the door is left too wide open to interpretation. I have serious reservations about the effect that this will have on religious freedom. Again, no-one is arguing that there should not be sufficient protections in place for those under the threat of violence that is incited by hate speech. However, what effect will this legislation have on the promotion of violence? Labor's bill goes even further because it seeks to make it unlawful to intentionally or recklessly promote—rather than incite—hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule and so on. The bill seeks to outlaw the "promotion" of "serious contempt" for groups of society. We as legislators should be very wary of this. Bills such as these are rife with unintended consequences, as is often the case when big government creeps into our lives. [*Extension of time*]

British Philosopher John Stuart Mill summed up this debate in the eighteenth century when he wrote:

Truth and the best long-term consequences are most likely to emerge when people are free to say anything short of advocating physical harm to others. They can mock you, ridicule you, offend you, humiliate you, you name it. Because in the cauldron of competing ideas bad ideas lose out, eventually, and good ideas get tested and have to earn their place. So to live in a free society, citizens have to grow a thick skin. Because once government gets in the speech-regulating game, they will always over-extend, over-reach and over-regulate.

We are at somewhat of a crossroads in this debate. We must be vigilant in our fight against discrimination and hatred. However, this bill represents a misguided, overly heavy-handed and authoritarian approach. As I have said, the reality of this bill is that it will further divide, not bring together, our society. Controlling people's speech, controlling people's views, and controlling people's thoughts, are not the way forward. I oppose the bill.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (11:36): I commend the Crimes and Anti-Discrimination Legislation Amendment (Vilification) Bill 2016 introduced by the member for Liverpool and shadow Attorney General. This bill targets people who promote or advocate violence based on race, gender or sexual orientation. Every person in New South Wales should be able to go about their business, their everyday lives, assured that they will not face hostility, violence, discrimination or exclusion by others. Hate speech undermines this essential public good. There is widespread agreement that New South Wales anti-vilification laws are inadequate. This sentiment was reflected in the Legislative Council Standing Committee Law and Justice inquiry that specifically examined section 20D of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977, which sets out the criminal offence for serious racial vilification.

So far, there has been no prosecution under this provision. That is not because there have been no examples of hate speech while the provision has been in force. In contrast, 30 referrals have been made to the Director of Public Prosecutions [DPP] under this section. Late last year the DPP was unable to charge Al-Wahwah, leader of the pan-Islamic party Hizb ut-Tahrir, after he called for a "jihad of Jews". Our hate speech laws in their current form are failing us, and this bill aims to address that failure. It is a travesty that the Baird Liberal Government has not already introduced to do so. I say this because last October the Attorney General spoke to the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies and promised to introduce legislation in the first half of this year. The Attorney General stated:

It's clear the Act is not working as intended. It must be changed to meet its objectives ... to protect our community from hate speech, to better protect our community from violence or from threats of violence, to secure that inclusive, tolerant, harmonious community of which we are very proud. I note that during that speech the Attorney General repeatedly referred to the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice report tabled nearly three years ago entitled "Racial vilification law in New South Wales". Why has the Government not acted to implement the recommendations contained in that report? The effectiveness of section 20D has been hindered by a number of procedural impediments, including the harm threshold. Under section 20D of the Anti-

Discrimination Act the conduct in question must "incite hatred towards, serious contempt for or severe ridicule" of another person or group of persons. This is a much higher harm threshold than the Commonwealth Act equivalent. The Commonwealth Act requires the impact of the conduct in question to be gauged from the perspective of a hypothetical reasonable member of the victim group, whereas the New South Wales Act requires that the impact of the conduct in question be measured from the perspective of the ordinary, reasonable member of the community.

The Commonwealth Act is concerned with the emotional response felt by a member of the victim group by the act in question, but the New South Wales Act is concerned with the emotional response to members of the victim group by ordinary members of the community as a result of the act in question. It is this ordinary, reasonable member of the community and not a hypothetical reasonable member of the group targeted who must be incited to feel hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of others on the grounds of their race because of the respondent's conduct. It is this higher harm threshold that has made it so hard for the courts to prosecute under this section. The obvious response is to make alterations to section 20D.

This bill achieves this through lowering the bar for a successful prosecution by replacing the word "incite" with "promote". It also relocates the provision to the Crimes Act instead of the Anti-Discrimination Act. I was recently contacted by my constituent Ean Phalk, who had been racially abused in public. Her story highlights why this legislation change is needed. Ean was racially vilified in a McDonald's car park at Warners Bay. She was waiting for her breakfast to be delivered at the drive-through waiting bay with her young son. It was here that a lady in another car, with her own child, yelled at her and, in Ean's words, said something along the lines of: "You [expletive] Asian, [expletive] off and go back to your own country."

This language continued until Ean drove away. This intimidating and unacceptable event should never have taken place. The member for Epping claims to be concerned about divisiveness. This act against Ean was the essence of divisiveness and should not be tolerated. This bill goes towards that. Ean lodged a complaint with the Anti-Discrimination Board and it took a month to receive a response, which was that it was unable to accept her complaint for investigation. The reasoning it gave for this determination was:

The racial vilification provision of the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act states that it is unlawful for someone to do a public act which incites hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of a person, or group of persons, on the grounds of their race.

Please note, however, that the anti-vilification provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Act do not cover all instances of offence language or conduct. For derogatory words to amount to unlawful racial vilification it is not sufficient to show that they expressed hatred, serious contempt or severe ridicule towards you on the part of the person using them.

To establish unlawful vilification, it must be apparent that the alleged public conduct involved the use of derogatory words which were capable of incitement of other ordinary persons who may have witnessed the conduct to feel hatred, serious contempt or severe ridicule of you on the grounds of your race.

I note the woman who was shouting at Ean had her child in the car with her. The determination continued:

Having considered the information you have provided I have formed the view that there does not appear to be any conduct by the unnamed driver which in the given circumstances could amount to:

- (a) Discrimination conduct within one of the designated areas of public activity; or
- (b) A public act involving incitement of others to feel hatred, serious contempt or severe ridicule towards you on the grounds of race.

This is clearly an inadequate response. The harm threshold clearly needs to be changed to take into account not ordinary members of the community but the hypothetical reasonable member of the group targeted. There will always be those who argue that hate speech legislation restricts people's right to free speech, and we have heard it said in this place today. But rights must also be limited by respect for others and the needs of society as a whole. Although free speech is an important value it is not the only one. Human dignity, equality, freedom to live without harassment and intimidation, social harmony, mutual respect and protection of one's good name and honour are also central values that deserve to be safeguarded.

There is also no evidence that hate speech laws stifle public debate on important issues. While enforcement of such laws has seen some of the crudest edges removed from the commentary, Australians are as willing as ever to express robust views about a broad range of matters, from Indigenous land rights to same-sex marriage and immigration and refugees. Contemporary Australia is a complex, diverse society that functions well. The success of our multicultural society has not come about through luck. Our multicultural society was built with appropriate institutions and appropriate legislative frameworks. Our laws need to continue to evolve to reflect our society's composition.

That is why this bill is also introducing appropriate frameworks to legislate against vilification and discrimination on the basis of gender or sexual preference. This bill will amend the Crimes Act 1900 and the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 in relation to racial, transgender, homosexual and HIV-AIDS vilification. Specifically, the bill moves the offence of serious racial, transgender, homosexual or HIV-AIDS vilification by means of threat or incitement of physical harm into the Crimes Act 1900 from the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977.

The bill also brings together into a new part all the provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Act dealing with racial, transgender, homosexual and HIV-AIDS vilification and makes those provisions consistent.

The bill provides that unlawful vilification under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 occurs when a person by a public act intentionally or recklessly promotes—rather than incites—hatred towards, serious contempt for or severe ridicule of a person or group of persons on racial, transgender, homosexual and HIV-AIDS grounds. Legislative change is needed for progress. Legislative change ensures our laws support the diverse and inclusive society most of us wish to live in and many of us champion. That is why legislation such as this that deals with vilification and hate speech is central to contemporary Australia. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (11:46): I speak in support of the Crimes and Anti-Discrimination Legislation Amendment (Vilification) Bill 2016, and I support the comments of the members representing the electorates of Liverpool, Lakemba and Charlestown in support of this bill. In 20 years we have not seen a single successful prosecution for inciting hatred despite many obvious examples of this, most notably during the Cronulla riots. Clearly, the current law is inadequate. The Opposition is seeking to lower the bar for prosecution. That needs to occur; the bar is too high. There are clearly problems in this area and those problems are not being addressed. Too many people are being hurt by hate speech, and the link between hate speech and action is clearly demonstrated time and again in Australia and overseas.

The most grotesque example of this in my lifetime was the precursor to the Rwandan genocide. Radio commentators day after day were referring to Tutsis as "cockroaches" to be crushed and exterminated. That was of course followed by the genocide of a million people in Rwanda, which probably would not have occurred without the incitement and promotion of their murder on radio on a daily basis at the time. Like the member for Lakemba, I would like to see these provisions extended to include religion. I know that is a very contentious proposition. The Council for Civil Liberties disagrees that religion should be included because people choose their religion. Religion is closely tied to culture and for most people it is accepted from their families and their wider culture. Religion is imparted to people through their family links. For most people it is not chosen. Those who convert choose their religion but for most religious conversion is not a part of their life experience.

For that matter, discrimination on the basis of religion does not always make provision for those who are agnostic or non-practising of their religion. I have many friends who are non-practising Muslims who still feel the same pain every time the Muslim community is maligned in this country, as they were last night in Pauline Hanson's inaugural speech. But their pain is not nearly as great as the experience of Muslim women who are spat on in public because they choose to wear a veil. They bear the brunt of the appalling things people say that vilify the entire Muslim faith. It is ironic that when people complain about the actions of a small number of mostly male Muslims that it is the women who are victimised for their choice of modest dress. It is ridiculous and unfortunate that that happens.

The proposed changes to this legislation will protect people and will prevent them being vilified because of their race. The fact that it has been 20 years without a successful prosecution is testament to the fact that our Anti-Discrimination Act, in particular section 20D, is inadequate to protect the citizens of New South Wales. It is not only people like me who believe that the legislation should be strengthened and extended to include religion. Recently I attended the Abraham Conference, which is an interfaith conference organised by the Mission and Reverend Dr Manas Ghosh. More than 200 people attended the conference in Parramatta. The conference has been held for a number of years and the theme this year was on hate speech in the context of race and religion.

The keynote speaker this year, Rabbi Dr Ben Elton from the Sydney synagogue, spoke about the direct link between hate speech and violence. He participated in a panel discussion together with leaders from Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths. All of them concurred that there is a problem with hate speech and discrimination against people because of their religion. We have seen evidence of that in the past few weeks with the revolting graffiti targeting the Jewish community that has appeared in different places in Sydney. Throughout the past 20 years we have seen examples time and again of people being marginalised because of their race. Sometimes it is closely linked to their religion, but not always. We have seen many examples of people being targeted; the example given by the member for Charlestown is quite grotesque.

I have seen people vilified on public transport because of their race. Once, on boarding a NightRide bus, I heard a passenger up the back say that no Asians were allowed on the bus. The Asian people who were boarding the bus were so frightened by the comment that they alighted straightaway. The next bus did not arrive for another hour, and it was the middle of the night in the middle of Sydney. I do not know how they managed to get home, but they were too frightened to catch that NightRide bus. I hope nothing happened to them in the following hour. It was quite sickening to see that happen; I am sure we have all seen such things happen time and again. In the past few years we have seen, in videos that have gone viral, such behaviour challenged by other public transport passengers. While it is great to see people standing up for their fellow passengers, it is disgraceful that it should

even happen in the first place. What is more disgraceful is the fact that it is almost impossible to prosecute anyone for those actions.

I note that Vic Alhadeff is in the gallery. Vic is currently leading an important campaign about keeping New South Wales safe. I recognise the important work he is doing in that area, together with leaders of different faiths in our State. When we talk about these issues, we hear complaints about the small number of people who have been radicalised and become involved in terrorist acts. To ensure that those people do not receive sympathy, we must have a society in which all faiths are recognised and treated equally so that the crimes of a few are not ascribed to the entire community. We must look at the causal factors that lead to that radicalisation. Often they are the same causal factors that lead to people discriminating against others, which result in the nonsense we heard from Pauline Hanson last night. Those factors include long-term unemployment, poverty, disrupted schooling, poor access to training careers, casualisation of work, people being denied shifts at work and suddenly seeing somebody else get their job, mental health problems, and negative interactions with police.

These factors are not limited to any one group, but they often result in people having a negative view of the world and a negative view of others. They ascribe the fault for their own problems to society as a whole or to small groups within that society. The best way to deal with those problems is to confront them directly and honestly, not to do as Pauline Hanson has done and suggest that multiculturalism is the reason that people are unemployed or that the burka should be banned. The current anti-discrimination laws in our State do not deter people from making speeches—whether they be about race, sexuality, or religion—that promote violence against others in society. This bill introduces an important reform that is long overdue.

[*Business interrupted.*]

Visitors

VISITORS

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery members of Kogarah Community Services, guests of the member for Kogarah, Chris Minns. I also welcome Vic Alhadeff. It is good to see him here. I commend Vic for his insightful article in the *Australian Spectator* earlier this month. Well done.

Bills

CRIMES AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (VILIFICATION) BILL 2016

Second Reading

[*Business resumed.*]

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (11:56): In reply: I thank the Attorney-General, the member for Lakemba, the member for Epping, the member for Charlestown, and the member for Granville for their contributions to this debate. I shall make a truncated reply to this debate so that the matter can proceed to a vote. First, I will respond to some of the comments that were made. The Attorney General was entirely critical of my bill on a number of bases. She spent most of her time saying that the bill went far beyond the recommendations of the upper House committee from three years ago. Logically, that would be a valid criticism if she had done anything to implement that committee report from three years ago. It is a preposterous argument to say my bill goes too far and that it goes beyond committee recommendations, which she is holding up as the acme and the absolute solution. It would have been good for those recommendations to have been implemented, but she has not done it. So she has no grounds to criticise my bill for going further than that committee report.

The Attorney General also said it would be a much better idea to proceed with the committee recommendations and to implement a small incremental change rather than the slightly larger changes that my bill proposes. Maybe that is so, if she had done it—but she did not. She also quoted from paragraph 4.70 of the committee report. She might want to go back and read the entire paragraph, in particular, the comments from Peter Wertheim, whom I know far better than she does. She will see what he said about the difference between the various terms that were discussed. The member for Epping said that there should be no change at all to the provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Act, which is in stark contrast to what the Attorney General has been saying for some time. It is a fascinating conflict between the two of them. The remainder of the speech made by the member for Epping seemed to be about section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act. As interesting as that is, it is entirely irrelevant to the bill before the House.

The Attorney General said that the law is broken and that it needs to be changed. She is right about that. She said she would introduce legislation in the first half of this year. She did not; the Opposition has. Her continuous mantra about consultation is wearing thin. There must be some action in this space rather than

discussion and consultation. I briefly note the responses I have had to the bill from a range of people. I had a meeting with Ian Baker and Jim Hanna from the Catholic Education Commission. I have known Mr Hanna for some time; indeed, our daughters went to school together.

I confirm now what I said to him, that proposed section 50AB (3) does not intend to weaken the provisions presently contained in section 49ZT (2). I also note the letter from the Law Society, dated 22 August 2016, which is entirely supportive of the provisions currently in the bill. A suggestion was made about the definition of "harm", but otherwise the Law Society entirely supports the substantive parts of the bill. The Government has had a committee report for three years; it has done nothing. It is offensive that it has taken so long to do so little about an issue that is so important. I commend the bill to the House.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

The House divided.

Ayes31
Noes48
Majority.....17

AYES

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	Minns, Mr C
Park, Mr R	Piper, Mr G	Robertson, Mr J
Smith, Ms T	Warren, Mr G (teller)	Washington, Ms K
Watson, Ms A		

NOES

Aplin, Mr G	Ayres, Mr S	Baird, Mr M
Barilaro, Mr J	Berejiklian, Ms G	Bromhead, Mr S
Brookes, Mr G	Conolly, Mr K	Constance, Mr A
Coure, Mr M	Crouch, Mr A	Dominello, Mr V
Elliott, Mr D	Evans, Mr L	George, Mr T
Gibbons, Ms M	Goward, Ms P	Gulaptis, Mr C
Hazzard, Mr B	Henskens, Mr A	Hodgkinson, Ms K
Humphries, Mr K	Johnsen, Mr M	Kean, Mr M
Lee, Dr G	Maguire, Mr D	Marshall, Mr A
Notley-Smith, Mr B	O'Dea, Mr J	Patterson, Mr C (teller)
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

PAIRS

Mihailuk, Ms T	Anderson, Mr K
Smith, Ms K	Davies, Ms T
Zangari, Mr G	Grant, Mr T

Motion negatived.

*Motions***REPUBLIC OF KOREA NATIONAL FOUNDATION DAY****Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (12:07):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that National Foundation Day of the Republic of Korea is celebrated on 3 October.
- (2) Recognises the close economic and cultural relationship between New South Wales and the Republic of Korea.
- (3) Notes that New South Wales has greatly benefited from the contribution of the Australian-Korean community.

I note that 3 October is recognised as National Foundation Day for the Republic of Korea, a day of national pride for Koreans all over the world. The day celebrates Korean culture and the achievements of the Korean people. 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' largest trading partners, conducting nearly \$7 billion worth of bilateral merchandise trade in 2013-14. Trade links are obviously very important but equally important is the Australian Korean contributions to our society. I pay tribute to Consul-General of the Republic of Korea, Mr Sangsoo Yoon, who was appointed to this esteemed position in April 2016. Consul-General Yoon is an accomplished diplomat and a highly qualified appointment.

It is an honour to have Consul-General Yoon represent his nation here in Sydney. I look forward to joining the consul-general and his wife, Heeyoung Shin, and the wider Korean community to mark National Foundation Day celebrations at the Korean Cultural Centre in Sydney. I also thank the Korean Cultural Centre for its support of the Korean Film Festival, which brings Korean culture and film to Australia with displays of feature films and short films from the diverse genres of Korean cinema. The centre is the cultural ambassador for all things Korean in Australia.

Australian Koreans have excelled in all parts of society, and their achievements extend to the areas of business, education, veterans affairs, politics, media, arts and community groups. The Australian Korean community is entrepreneurial in business and has started many small businesses that have grown to become major players in their fields. Elizabeth Ryu and Max Ryu, under the stewardship of their father, Byoung Soo, are successfully building and expanding their business Happytel, which is a leading national retailer of mobile accessories and repairs. Their success is being replicated as they expand into the United States market. I acknowledge their significant achievements in business. Susan Lee and father, Jack Lee, have grown their businesses throughout Australia and New Zealand. I have seen the generosity of Susan Lee firsthand through her sponsorship of many community events. Without that assistance many such events would not be possible.

In Parramatta I also recognise Reverend Dr David Kwon, who is the Dean of the Korean Language Program at Alphacrucis College. Dr Kwon is a highly accomplished academic and published author as well as a strong voice for Christianity in our community. There are more 300 Korean-speaking students and 20 lecturers at the Alphacrucis College. I have visited the college on several occasions and have been impressed with the commitment to education and strong moral values. In the area of veterans affairs I recognise Lieutenant Colonel Paul Kim (Retd), who is a passionate supporter and promoter of the close bonds between Australia and Korea. Paul is proud of his distinguished service in the South Korean Armed Forces. Paul Kim is an active volunteer in the Korean community and was a member of the multicultural advisory committee of the Parramatta council as well as a member of the Ethnic Communities Council NSW Inc.

In politics, Steve Yang is a prominent local voice in the Korean community and served previously as a local councillor. Steve Yang makes himself available as a translator for the Korean community and has a strong passion for bringing the Australian and Korean communities closer together. Councillor Sang Ok is a prominent local Korean Australian in the Strathfield-Burwood area, serving not only as a local councillor but also as the mayor of Strathfield. Councillor Ok is known for his passionate representation of his community at a local level and he aspires to lead his community to continued success. In the media, it is important to recognise Mr Jason Koh, whose media career has made him an important member of the community. In 2009 Jason launched the *Korea Times Australia*. The paper has established itself as a trusted source of news and current affairs. Since its launch, the paper has expanded its readership through its reputation and now reaches a significant section of the Australian Korean community. I thank and pay tribute to Jason Koh for the outstanding quality of journalism that he continues to produce.

Community groups also play a vital role in our society. I pay tribute to Agnes Shim and her team at the Sydney Korean Women's Association, which is a not-for-profit organisation that helps to promote the welfare of the Korean community and supports and assists new Korean migrants. Among its many activities, the association organises the annual Korean Women's Day to promote cultural harmony and understanding. The association does some fantastic work in Parramatta, Canterbury, Bankstown, Ryde and Auburn, and is based at St Anthony's church

in Marsfield. The Korean Society of Sydney has been described to me as the most important organisation for Korean Australians. The society continues to make vital contributions to our State. I thank the President of the Korean Society of Sydney, Seung-Guk Paik, the past president, Luke Song, and all the volunteers for their ongoing work in bringing the community closer together.

I also again recognise Susan Lee, who is the Chair of the National Unification Advisory Council, Australian chapter. Susan and her committee have been strong advocates across all levels of government and have sought to bring to the attention of government and community leaders the human rights breaches that continue to occur in North Korea. In recognition of Susan Lee's outstanding contribution to the community, the South Korean Government presented to her the Order of Moran, which is one of the highest medals and equivalent to the Companion of the Order of Australia. It is clear that the Australian Korean community has made, and continues to make, valuable and lasting contributions to our State and society, particularly to Parramatta.

The Australian Korean community embraces the values that are important in Australia—hard work, an entrepreneurial spirit, the importance of education for children and whole-of-life education for adults, and the importance of the highest moral values. The Australian Korean community is committed to the belief in the family as the centre of the community and that it is only through community work that we can achieve a better society. On behalf of the New South Wales Government and the New South Wales Parliament, I send my best wishes to the Australian Korean community as it celebrates this important day, National Foundation Day—Republic of Korea. I commend the motion to the House. Jeongmal kamsahamnida.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (12:19): I am pleased to speak on this motion that recognises the Republic of Korea's National Foundation Day. Approximately 6 per cent of my community are Korean Australians and they make an enormous contribution to the local community of Strathfield, in particular. In fact, South Korea is the fourth most common country of birth in my electorate and Korean is the fourth most common language spoken at home, behind English, Mandarin and Cantonese. One has only to walk the streets of the Strathfield town centre to see the vibrancy that the Korean restaurants and shops bring to the area.

So significant is the Republic of Korea to Strathfield that a sister-city relationship has been established with Gapyeong, a county in Gyeonggi Province of South Korea. Recently I visited Gapyeong, which is an area well known for its natural beauty and for neighbouring the mountainous province of Gangwon. The famous Han River flows through the area. While nearby Seoul is a bustling city with high-rise buildings lining the skyline, Gapyeong is a much quieter and certainly a much more beautiful area. With more than 50 million people living in South Korea, the challenge is always to resist overdevelopment and preserve natural beauty where possible. Despite its relative closeness to Seoul, this is being achieved in Gapyeong.

The sister-city agreement between Gapyeong and Strathfield was signed in August 2011, marking 60 years since the end of the Korean War and the 50-year anniversary of diplomatic relations between Australia and South Korea. During my trip to South Korea, I visited the Australia and New Zealand War Memorial to pay my respects to those Australians who died during the Korean War. Gapyeong is home to this important memorial that recognises the battle of Kapyong, which is one of the most significant and important battles for Australian troops in Korea. The Australian War Memorial records describe the battle in April 1951 when the Chinese launched their spring offensive with the aim of retaking the city of Seoul. Thirty-two Australians were killed and 53 were wounded in playing their part to stall the Chinese advance and prevent Seoul from falling into enemy hands. The contribution of Australian troops is certainly remembered in Gapyeong. I was pleased to lay a wreath at the memorial on behalf of the community of Strathfield.

The aim of my visit to South Korea was to gain a greater understanding of the culture and the issues that are important to my community. In recognising the Republic of Korea's National Foundation Day in this Parliament, I think it is important to reflect on what is important to the Korean Australian community and of course its connection to Australia, New South Wales and communities like mine in Strathfield. One of the issues is reunification with North Korea. In my conversations with leaders of the Korean community here, I am regularly reminded of their wish to see a united and peaceful Korea.

I also mention the issue of sexual slavery because this has become increasingly relevant to my community with the recent unveiling of a comfort woman statue in Strathfield. For the information of the House, I mention that comfort women were women and girls who were forced into sexual slavery by the Imperial Japanese Army in occupied territories before and during World War II. During my visit I also had the privilege of meeting with representatives of the Korean council for the women drafted for military sexual slavery by Japan. The women involved in this movement in Korea are thankful to the community leaders here who have sought to recognise the issue of sexual slavery with the establishment of a comfort woman statue in Strathfield.

According to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the relationship between Korea and Australia is one of the strongest and most complementary economic relationships in the Asia-Pacific region, with almost

\$7 billion in trade conducted between the two countries. I think Australia has much to learn from Korea, with its focus on innovation and smart industries driven by companies such as Samsung, Hyundai and LG. Technological advances are celebrated and supported in Korea. The Korean culture is largely Confucian, and therefore values the concept of respect. I see this in the contribution made by my community, which is based on mutual regard, hard work and a deep faith.

In acknowledging the importance of National Foundation Day, I also recognise the many community groups who add to the cohesion and social fabric of my community. Groups such as the Australian Korean Welfare Association, the Korean Society of Sydney, the Strathfield Korean Business Association, the Korean Australian Young [KAY] Leaders and the Korea Australia Chamber of Commerce are regular and important contributors to my community. These groups support first-generation Korean Australians, who without their attention would be largely isolated by the barrier of language. They provide activities that connect Korean Australians with traditional Korean culture, and they support the commerce and business that add to the economy of New South Wales.

Importantly, KAY Leaders bring together young Korean Australians to support leadership initiatives, inspire role models and enhance participation in community life. Their mission is to empower Korean Australian young people to conceive and create for themselves, their families and their communities a brighter and more culturally rich future by together developing a greater voice in the broader Australian community. KAY Leaders recently hosted a forum where they invited representatives from Young Labor and Young Liberals to discuss political participation. It is initiatives such as these that I wish were replicated across culturally and linguistically diverse communities in New South Wales. In speaking to this motion, I also acknowledge the importance of the Korean Consul-General to Sydney. In my time as the member for Strathfield I have had the privilege of working with Consul-General Mr Whi Jin Lee and the current Consul-General, Mr Sangsoo Yoon. I thank them for their efforts to support Korean residents.

National Foundation Day is traditionally known as Gaecheonjeol, which translates as "Opening Sky Day" or "Festival of the Opening of Heaven". The day celebrates the formation of the first Korean state of Gojoseon more than 4,000 years ago, which is regarded as the time when the Korean nation was founded. National Foundation Day is a national holiday in Korea and is recognised on 3 October. It is a day when families come together, work is forgotten and the Korean culture is celebrated. And there is much to celebrate. I consider myself fortunate to represent a significant Korean Australia community and to be their voice in this Parliament. I wish them a happy National Foundation Day. Haengbog gaecheonjeol.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (12:22): I also support the motion moved by the member for Parramatta acknowledging the Republic of Korea's National Foundation Day, which is celebrated annually on 3 October. We ought to consider the many parallels that run between Australian and Korea, as well as the rich relationship these similarities have afforded. National Foundation Day bears a strong parallel to the Federation of Australia, and we take this time to remember and celebrate the planting of the democratic seed in both countries. We celebrate the advent of a nation wherein Australia would find a dear friend and faithful ally. In doing so, National Foundation Day reminds us of the close economic and cultural relationship between Australia—and in particular, New South Wales—and the Republic of Korea. We are reminded of the fact that New South Wales and the Seoul Metropolitan Government are bound together in resolve and purpose through a sister-state agreement. By virtue of the Korea Australian Free Trade Agreement, both countries enjoy the benefits of greater trade, cultural, technological and educational networks.

In my electorate of Epping, I thankfully have the pleasure of witnessing firsthand the contributions that the Australian Korean community make to society. By virtue of their culture, they are an honest and charitable people. As intrinsic as it is to Australian culture, so too does the Australian Korean community place a high priority on the values of family, education and sincere work ethic. The integrity and virtue of the Australian Korean community that we see today gives Australia good reason to believe our efforts and sacrifices in the Korean War under the Menzies Government were not in vain. In fact, Australians should hold their heads high knowing that our willingness to come to their aid has left a wonderful legacy in the genuine goodness of the Australian Korean community.

Such integrity is witnessed and exemplified well in several notable individuals whom I shall take time to thank. Reverend Jun Seck Ra, Pastor of the Sydney Sae Soon Presbyterian Church; William Seung, the former President of the Korean Society of Sydney; Agnes Shim, President of the Sydney Korean Women's Association; Stephen Kang, former President of the Australia-World Federation of Overseas Korean Traders Association; Young Kim, Director, OZ KOR Industries; the redoubtable Paul Jong Kim, President of the Korean Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia-NSW Branch, who was mentioned by the member for Parramatta; Jason Koh, President of the Korean Chamber of Commerce in Eastwood, Ryde and Epping; Mick Jung, the Director of Cheil Finance; Lieutenant Colonel Don Lee, the Advisory President of the Federation of Korean Societies of Oceania;

and Arnold Cho, the General Manager of Sydney Sae Soon Presbyterian Church. There are many other Korean friends whom I have not mentioned. I wish them all a very happy National Foundation Day.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (12:25): Also known as the "Festival of the Opening of Heaven", Republic of Korea National Foundation Day commemorates the traditional founding of Korea by Tangun in 2333 BC. I join with many people in my electorate of Davidson and across New South Wales who will mark this occasion and who continue to contribute to strengthening ties and exchanges between Korea and Australia, especially New South Wales. I note that the Australia-Korea Business Council and the Korea-Australia Business Council will hold their thirty-seventh joint meeting on 17 and 18 October 2016 in Seoul, Korea. These entities seek to foster friendship and understanding between the business communities of Australia and Korea, and to promote technical and economic cooperation, trade investment, education and tourism between the two countries.

In July, along with the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, Stuart Ayres, I attended the grand opening of the Sydney branch of Shinhan Bank, one of the largest banks in South Korea. Among those at the bank launch was Korean Consul-General, Mr Sang Soo Yoon, whom I met previously in my capacity as vice president of this Parliament's Asia Pacific Friendship Group, along with secretary Mark Coure. We had a good meeting and a lunch in Parliament House. Such interaction and international investment in New South Wales is undoubtedly positive, as is international free trade generally, including between Australia and Korea. The benefits of free trade are much greater than any costs—that is the conventional wisdom among economists based on the value of specialisation and principles of comparative advantage. This Government believes the future of New South Wales lies with global engagement, and Korea is one of our target markets. This was assisted by the signing of the Korea-Australia Free Trade Agreement—or KAFTA—in 2014.

I commend the then Federal Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, Andrew Robb, and the Government of the time for signing that agreement, along with others promoting free trade. Opponents of free trade often want to take a short-term, potentially populist, view and protect vested interests. There sometimes can be an illusory benefit in being protectionist. But this Government realises that New South Wales taxpayers can save and benefit from international free trade by purchasing goods or services from ethical countries like South Korea that also enjoy lower labour costs. That is not to say that this Government does not realise the importance of local employment. Indeed, we have delivered employment rates consistently and clearly above the national average for a long period—something that the previous New South Wales Labor Government consistently failed to do.

I do not want to harp on the criticisms from the other side in terms of international engagement, trade and investment flowing between South Korea and Australia, but I do want to highlight that in New South Wales employment is much higher under this Government than it was under the former Labor Government, relative to averages across Australia—and the statistics undoubtedly demonstrate that. Further, the trade that occurs is positive. We honour Korea's National Foundation Day on 3 October and look forward to a strong and growing multifaceted relationship between our respective lands and people. I commend the member for Parramatta for bringing this motion before the House.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (12:30): In reply: I thank the members for Strathfield, Epping and Davidson, who have unanimously supported this motion. It is great to see in this Chamber a unity ticket for supporting Korea's National Foundation Day, which is celebrated on 3 October to mark the creation of the first Korean State, which began 4,000 years ago. I understand the member for Strathfield has just been to Korea. It was great to see her contribution of placing flowers on the war memorial and recognising that the Korean community, one of the more important community groups in Sydney and New South Wales, is one of hard work and deep faith.

The member for Epping gave exceptional insight, matched only by his intellect. He is one of the two smartest people in the party room, apparently. It was great to hear his view of the parallels between Australia and the Republic of Korea in terms of democratic foundations, our close economic and cultural ties and the city-State relationship between Seoul and New South Wales. It was wonderful to hear him extol the virtues of the free trade agreement. He spoke on his positive relationship with the Australian Korean community, praising and characterising members of the Australian Korean community as honest, reliable, highly virtuous, and also mentioned some notable individuals. The member for Epping is certainly a credit to his electorate. The member for Davidson gave us an economic lecture, as one would expect from the Parliamentary Secretary for Trade and Investment. He is someone with a deep appreciation for not only the foundation and theory of economics but also its application to how the world works.

Mr Mark Coure: I got a mention, too.

Dr GEOFF LEE: The member for Oatley was mentioned in that he attended a lunch. What a great contribution that was from the member for Oatley. The member for Davidson was quite right in his outlining of

the theoretical position and application of the free trade agreement. He talked about the value of specialisation and competitive advantage versus protectionism. On this side of the House we believe—and I am sure those on the other side of the House have similar views—you need the right balance in a free trade agreement, and the benefits to Australia of having a free trade agreement with South Korea make a lot of sense. It sets up some great Australian industries—mining, technology, education, tourism—for the future. There are many different areas in which both countries can develop a closer relationship for mutual benefit. I finish by congratulating all the Australian Koreans who have chosen to live in Australia. The second and third generations are now making their way and developing fantastic businesses and lives, adding so much to the vibrancy and diversity of Australia. I wish everybody the best for National Foundation Day. Kamsahamnida.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): The question is that the motion of the member for Parramatta be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ELECTRICAL LICENCE TESTING

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:34): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the McKell Institute has released research examining electrical licencing in New South Wales and the need to focus on skills and safety as a primary outcome of electrical licence testing.
- (2) Notes that, in contrast, legislation in Victoria mandates an independent body, Energy Safe Victoria, to deliver electrical licence testing.
- (3) Calls on the Ministers for Skills, Innovation and Better Regulation to consider and discuss the findings and recommendations of the McKell Institute report with the view of implementing a similar independent testing model in New South Wales.

The State's electrical licensing structure is in urgent need of an overhaul, according to the report by the McKell Institute and the information from the Electrical Trades Union [ETU]. The Smart and Skilled policy program introduced by the Government saw massive deregulation of the tertiary and further education sector in New South Wales. TAFE was given more latitude regarding the allocation of resources and the decision on courses, but that was at a price. The State's TAFEs were challenged by funding cuts, job losses and insurgent private training providers.

The ETU received negative feedback from members of the community regarding the reduction in the number of face-to-face teaching hours for technical training within TAFE electrician courses. Though the union has worried about the decline in face-to-face hours and broader funding cuts, the focus of the McKell Institute report commissioned by the ETU was on electrical licensing in New South Wales and how to fix it. Further, it is my belief that greater rigour in our New South Wales TAFEs in the electric trade courses will mean more teaching hours. As it stands, the institution that delivers the trade training administers the qualification test—in effect, especially in light of the Smart and Skilled program, it is a for-profit training provider that decides whether an individual is skilled enough to attend or enter the electrical trades rather than an independent arbiter.

As Paul Lister, operations officer with the ETU, told me, this would be like a driving school delivering a driving test and issuing a driver licence. The danger here is self-evident: A student who may not be quite up to scratch might be passed by an overzealous instructor, as an institution with a high fail rate might find it difficult to sign up more students. The student, licensed but not confident, would then be able to ply his or her trade with potentially disastrous consequences. Luckily, an alternative model exists and has been deployed with great success in Victoria, and Queensland is looking at instituting a similar system. In Victoria, an independent State-run body develops and delivers electrical licensing testing. Under the model a school delivers the training and an independent government body delivers the test and issues the licence, Lister says. Sue Sizer, a licensed electrician analytical inspector who holds a Masters of Education in VET and works as a compliance officer for Energy Safe Victoria, was quoted in the McKell Institute's report as saying:

It is my strong view that Victoria's Licensed Electrician's Assessment scheme represents a best practice approach for awarding qualifications and licences to electricians.

The Assessment itself is highly focused on the issue of safety and risk ...

... is strongly supported by businesses and retail consumers specifically because it provides a strong safety assurance, as well as quality assurance. The McKell Institute report highlights that much of the process surrounding the licensing and certification of electricians in New South Wales is established by regulation rather than legislation, and reform could be achieved easily at any time. I call on the Minister to consider the findings and the recommendations of the McKell Institute report; namely, that the Government establish a licensed electricians assessment process modelled on the successful Victorian scheme, that it establish a tripartite committee consisting of representatives from organisations, industry groups and employee representative groups to discuss and design the structure of the proposed scheme, and that it take a broader approach and assess whether its reforms have

had similar impacts in areas beyond electrical licensing testing. I urge all members to take this matter seriously, and to approach it collaboratively and constructively.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (12:40): I thank the member for Wallsend for moving this motion with great sincerity and passion—as she always does. However, having listened to her contribution, I am at a loss to understand which problem she is seeking to solve by moving it. I am aware of the excellent work of the McKell Institute, but I cannot discern what problem we are trying to solve by agreeing to this motion. As we all know, the regulation of any industry must strike the right balance between community safety and supporting business sustainability. As some members know better than I do, working with electricity is inherently dangerous and safety must be paramount.

An electrician's licence is required in New South Wales before any electrical wiring work can be undertaken, regardless of the cost of the work and whether the work is residential, commercial or industrial. This recognises that performing electrical work is a serious undertaking, and that the skill and safety of professionals undertaking it is critical. Equally, the safety of people living or working in buildings or using electrical appliances must be protected. Electrical wiring work is defined in the Home Building Act 1989 for licensing purposes as having the same meaning as it has in the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2004. Electrical wiring work means the actual physical work of installing, repairing, altering, removing or adding to an electrical installation or the supervision of that work. An electrical installation means any fixed appliances, wires, fittings, apparatus or other electrical equipment used, or incidental to, the conveyance, control and use of electricity.

It is an offence in New South Wales to undertake electrical wiring work without a licence or certificate. The fines that may be imposed for doing unlicensed electrical work range from \$22,000 as an individual or \$110,000 as a company. The New South Wales regime for licensing of electricians, and other specialist and building trades, is overseen by the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation under the Home Building Act, which is administered by NSW Fair Trading. A number of pathways can be taken to attain a licence in this State. The essentials of the different pathways are that the applicant must demonstrate that he or she has undertaken a certificate III level training course or apprenticeship in electro-technology through the vocational education and training system. The applicant must be able to demonstrate certificated proficiency as an electrician, and must demonstrate skills, knowledge and experience in applying the current Australian/New Zealand Standard for Wiring Rules.

If an applicant has out-of-date or superseded qualifications, the applicant can be required by NSW Fair Trading to complete an assessment of competency in applying the up-to-date wiring rules. That competency assessment is conducted independently by the Open Training and Education Network [OATEN], which is a registered training organisation managed by TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute. The member for Wallsend referred in detail to the Victorian licensing system for electricians. That process is administered by Energy Safe Victoria, and the pathways and requirements for training or apprenticeship, proficiency and experience are essentially the same as those in New South Wales. However, for some pathways the Victorian system also requires the Licensed Electrician's Assessment to be undertaken, and that assessment is conducted by a body approved by Energy Safe Victoria. As the New South Wales regulator, NSW Fair Trading oversees both the licensing regime, and the program of compliance and enforcement of the conduct of electricians in business and in our community.

NSW Fair Trading is not aware of any evidence or any compelling argument for imposing post-qualification testing requirements on applicants for electrical licences in addition to the existing requirements. Again, the member for Wallsend is perhaps presenting a solution in search of a problem. The requirements and pathways for qualification as an electrician in New South Wales are appropriate and effective. They ensure that an applicant for a licence has the knowledge gained from formal training or an apprenticeship, has verified proficiency in electrical work, and has a proven record of experience and skills in compliance with the Australian wiring rules. The New South Wales system is already founded on ensuring that skills and safety are primary outcomes of electrical licence requirements. On that basis, I urge members to oppose this motion.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (12:46): I support the important motion moved by the member for Wallsend. I hope that some day we are not in this place discussing a coroner's report on a death because this House did not do the right thing today. Deregulation of the vocational education and training sector has resulted in a wide range of intuitions providing electrical trades training, and the training offered by some of those groups has been found wanting. As the member for Wallsend said, the McKell Institute has recommended that New South Wales have an independent body charged with issuing licences to ensure that everyone undertaking electrical work is evaluated according to the same standard.

Students studying electrical trades courses at TAFE colleges in this State have reported that the number of training hours they are doing has decreased dramatically. The New South Wales TAFE Teachers Association has also reported that in some cases courses that previously involved 864 hours of training have been cut back to 546 hours, and that course duration in some places had been reduced from 35 to 34 weeks to 30 weeks and from

eight hours a day to seven hours a day. Reducing training hours leads to cutting corners and students are not necessarily achieving the required competencies.

TAFE students are asking their teachers for additional tuition because they fear they will fail their exams. The Opposition has this information because members have spoken to people involved in the TAFE system and in registered training organisations. Instead of offering face-to-face teaching, some teachers are now showing students a 40-minute video explaining how to do high-tension electrical work and ticking them off as being competent. That is what is happening in the real world. As a result, some young person might be killed because he or she does not have the knowledge needed to do the job.

Perhaps another step could be, rather than New South Wales having a body and Victoria having a body, a national body that does all licensing so that we have the same standard across the country. This is absolutely vital. Electrical trades are dealing with a very dangerous industry. I note that there are employers that have been supportive of this as well because they are getting young people in who are not trained properly, particularly with high voltage work, and who have to be retrained on the job because they do not have the knowledge that their licence says they should have. They are trying to protect people against injuring themselves.

What the member for Wallsend is proposing on the back of the recommendations from the McKell report is very sensible. Rather than the Government pooch-pooching it again and talking about "more regulation" and that sort of thing, this is actually about protecting consumers and lives. I would hate for us to be back here looking into a coroner's report because it is proven down the track that shortcuts have been taken in training and there is not proper certification. I therefore very much support the motion moved by the member for Wallsend.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (12:50): In opposing this particular motion on behalf of the Government I say that there is probably only one person in this Chamber more qualified than I am in the safety inspection of electrical devices and that is the member for Blacktown. I welcome his contribution to this motion. I put on the record that about 12 years ago when the safety inspection of electrical devices, including power tools, electrical power cords and so on—basically any electrical appliances used in the workplace—was regulated it was felt that it would place a great onus or burden on electricians. Given that it was a rather simple test to evaluate the safety of a power cord or other power equipment, including power tools, it could therefore be provided by people who were less qualified than a full electrician.

At the time TAFE advertised courses to people who may have been involved in businesses, as I was at the time, that encouraged people to become qualified to test and tag electrical safety equipment. I went along to become qualified and certified as an electrical safety inspector and I now hold that qualification. It was an onerous course. It was two nights of intense work for two hours at a time at Mt Druitt TAFE and then we went back for the very onerous and anxiety-inducing test, which took all of half an hour. At the end of the day you are using a device that you plug in to test electrical power equipment.

I became qualified and tested in this particular field. I suppose one could say I am somewhat of an expert. Not wanting to pat myself on the back, my company, the wonderful former Glenorie Bus Company, decided that because nothing is more important than safety—we can never overstate the importance of safety when dealing with any electrical devices and electricity—it would continue to employ the qualified electrician to oversee that function, if he had the time. Our electrician was very well qualified. He was coming to the end of his career and when he was not out fishing he was available to test our power equipment.

Certain steel-bodied tools like nibblers and other power tools, which I had been using for many years, were ruled to be unsafe and electrical cords throughout our workshops were found to be unsafe so they were discarded and reported. Since that time, 12 or 15 years ago—the member for Blacktown might correct the record if I am wrong—I have not heard of a specific accident or incident caused through the incorrect tagging of electrical devices. I therefore say to the member for Wallsend that if she has that information please place it on the record. If there has been an accident because something has been incorrectly tagged by people like me who are completely qualified, we on this side would be quite prepared to undertake the necessary reform. But if that is not the case after 15 years, then this motion deserves the action that the Government will take—it will be opposed.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown) (12:54): This speech, unlike many that are made in this Chamber, is one that I know something about. That comment is primarily a reflection on those on that side of the House and the last contribution. The motion from the member for Wallsend is significant for a number of reasons. Electrical safety is important for everyone in our community and we should be constantly looking to review and monitor what is going on in that sphere. That is largely what this motion is about. The McKell Institute has undertaken research and made a series of recommendations that the Government ought to consider.

I have been around long enough to remember when businesses were saying we should get rid of electrical licences. I remember many of the industry organisations saying we did not need electrical licences to ensure the

safety of the community. I am probably showing my age, but they were legitimate arguments that were advanced at the time. Fortunately, we have moved on to a point at which we recognise that licensing of electrical work is absolutely critical. Electrical safety is particularly critical when we consider people building new homes or renovating.

I have worked in the building industry and I have talked to many different people over those years and I have heard a lot of tradesmen in other trades say they would try anything but they would never try electricity because you cannot see it when it is there. In and of itself that highlights the significance of this issue. We must ensure that we are constantly monitoring and looking to update, and leading the way when it comes to safety regardless of what it is—in this instance, electrical licensing. Electrical licensing is a critical piece of the jigsaw to ensure quality for consumers, to ensure that when a job is done it is done properly and if it is not done properly that someone is held to account. Licensing allows that to occur. The motion moved by the member for Wallsend calls on the Government to look at McKell's research and recommendations, and determine whether there is a better way to do it.

I am reminded of the outsourcing of licensing in areas like scaffolding. Probably only five or six years ago tickets for scaffolding were outsourced. Suddenly the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] conducted an investigation and, lo and behold, scaffolding tickets that were issued by the private sector had to be withdrawn because people were paying to get hold of them. This recommendation from the McKell Institute seeks to ensure that we continue to modify and monitor behaviour, and not compromise safety in these areas.

I think the electrical trade is the king of the trades, and I have said that for some time. That is reflected not only in my being in the New South Wales Parliament but also the member for Cabramatta is part of that great trade, as are the re-elected Penrith councillor John Thain and my good friend Jeff Collins, who was just elected for the Labor Party in the Northern Territory in the seat of Fong Lim. Jeff Collins, John Thain and I spent our youth in the second year of our apprenticeships at Meadowbank TAFE, the three of us sitting together in the class learning all the things that are important to get an electrical licence. We have shown that it is a great trade that can lead to better things, but, more importantly, that electrical licensing is critical to ensuring the safety of our community.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (12:59): Previous speakers have demonstrated how the requirements for electrical licensing in New South Wales set and maintain the standards that keep the community and industry safe and how they support ease of doing business in New South Wales. Electricians are managed by a single regulator, which is an effective and cost-efficient practice. The obtaining and maintaining of a licence in New South Wales is an important obligation imposed on persons and businesses that want to provide services to the New South Wales community and includes the element of consumer and community protection, which is required. The obligation applies to electrical work undertaken in New South Wales. The requirements and pathways to gaining a licence and the penalties for non-compliance have been set out by members on both sides.

It is important to ensure that the process of licensing is not a red tape burden on business, industry, and, in particular, small business. Red tape is reduced significantly by having a single regulator across the building and construction sectors in New South Wales. There is a benefit in having a genuine customer service commitment and that is why this Government has introduced reforms such as the establishment of Service NSW centres across the State. These centres provide a one-stop shop when dealing with government agencies. A centre has opened in my electorate in the past 12 months and there is one on the Central Coast.

Ms Anna Watson: What is he talking about?

Mr MARK COURE: If the member for Shellharbour listened she would understand what I am saying. Persons applying for an electrical licence in New South Wales can make their application at any new Service NSW centre, and while they are there they can renew their vehicle registration and pay bills.

Mr Ray Williams: The most important part.

Mr MARK COURE: Of course. The simplicity of transactions and time saved means that business owners will spend less time waiting in queues and more time focused on running a successful, profitable business and more time is available to them to provide safe, quality services to the New South Wales community. Members have spoken about the benefits to the New South Wales community in having a single efficient and cost-effective regulator of occupational licences in building and construction, including electrical licences. The New South Wales system maintains high standards to protect traders, workers and the community. The members opposite might want to pay attention to this. It is important; it will make the 6 o'clock news. The commitment of the New South Wales Government to customer services also ensures that effective and efficient systems are delivered as simply and as quickly as possible so that business owners can spend their time making a success of their business, instead of wasting time standing in queues. I urge all members to vote against this motion.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (13:03): In reply: I acknowledge the contributions from the member for Northern Tablelands, the member for Wyong, the member for Castle Hill, the member for Blacktown, and the member for Oatley. It was an interesting and sensible debate, but some comments were slightly off topic. The member for Northern Tablelands kicked off with some sensible arguments, but I wonder why he was at a loss as to understanding the problem. The problem is obvious. We must ensure that people are licensed and qualified to Australian standards. He acknowledged, as do all members, the importance of safety and having the correct skills and qualifications to undertake this important role. He talked about fines and provided a good summary of existing training requirements. He suggested in his conclusion that I was presenting a solution in search of a problem. I am trying to present a solution to a problem; I am too busy to present solutions before the problems exist.

The member for Wyong spoke eloquently. He talked about the ramifications of safety and what happens when it is too late and people have accidents because tradies are not qualified or have not been adequately trained. He talked about the implications to TAFE. For example, when we start reducing hours in TAFE courses overall—not just in electrical technology or other electrical courses—standards drop and we end up with apprentices who are qualified but do not have the competent skills. The member for Castle Hill also made some interesting comments. I am pleased that he is qualified in testing and tagging. However, I was at a loss as to how that was relevant to the report of the McKell Institute. He gave us a summary of his four hours of training to become a tester and tagger. Unfortunately, my motion is not about qualifications; it is about qualified licensed electricians. Four hours of training for testing and tagging is not what we are talking about.

The member for Blacktown was a tad biased when he said the electrical trade was the king of all trades. However, I understand why he feels that way because of the importance of safety and the need to be qualified in this field. He recognised that being licensed to undertake electrical work is critical. He also said that the industry wants to update its skills. The Electrical Trades Union is also interested in this issue. What do we need to ensure that electricians in 2016 are the most qualified in Australia? If Victoria is doing better than New South Wales, we must copy what it is doing to achieve the same success. The member for Oatley also made some interesting comments.

Mr Mark Coure: Be gentle.

Ms SONIA HORNER: I am being gentle. He acknowledged the importance of licensing and consumer protection, with which all members agree. I was perplexed by his red tape argument. I was not sure how that related to the recommendations. He also talked about Service NSW centres and, again, I am not sure how Service NSW and a one-stop shop relates to the McKell report. The member for Oatley can explain what he meant on another day. This is an important and sensible motion. I am not asking the Government to do anything except to examine the issue of electrical licence testing. I urge members to support this important motion.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes31
Noes47
Majority.....16

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McKay, Ms J
Park, Mr R
Smith, Ms T
Watson, Ms A

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Piper, Mr G
Warren, Mr G (teller)

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Foley, Mr L
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Minns, Mr C
Robertson, Mr J
Washington, Ms K

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S

NOES

Brookes, Mr G
 Coure, Mr M
 Elliott, Mr D
 Gibbons, Ms M
 Hazzard, Mr B
 Humphries, Mr K
 Lee, Dr G
 Notley-Smith, Mr B
 Pavey, Ms M
 Piccoli, Mr A
 Rowell, Mr J
 Stokes, Mr R
 Tudehope, Mr D
 Williams, Mr R

Conolly, Mr K
 Crouch, Mr A
 Evans, Mr L
 Goward, Ms P
 Henskens, Mr A
 Johnsen, Mr M
 Maguire, Mr D
 O'Dea, Mr J
 Perrottet, Mr D
 Provest, Mr G (teller)
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Taylor, Mr M
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Ms L

Constance, Mr A
 Dominello, Mr V
 George, Mr T
 Gulaptis, Mr C
 Hodgkinson, Ms K
 Kean, Mr M
 Marshall, Mr A
 Patterson, Mr C (teller)
 Petinos, Ms E
 Roberts, Mr A
 Speakman, Mr M
 Toole, Mr P
 Ward, Mr G

PAIRS

Mihailuk, Ms T
 Smith, Ms K
 Zangari, Mr G

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

Motion negated.

SOUTH COAST INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (13:14): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the ALP candidate for the House of Representative seat of Gilmore, Fiona Philips, stood against the Government's Rebuilding NSW program when she stood as the unsuccessful candidate for the seat of South Coast at the last general election for the Legislative Assembly.
- (2) Notes that Rebuilding NSW also includes the Albion Park Rail bypass.
- (3) Notes that the Opposition has offered no support for the Albion Park Rail bypass.
- (4) Considers that the biggest threat to upgrading the roads of Gilmore is the ALP candidate for Gilmore.

Before I commence the debate on this motion I acknowledge in the gallery Gerhard and Maria Baden, residents of Rose Valley. They are well regarded in the wagyu beef sector. I welcome them to Parliament House and I hope that they enjoy this afternoon's debate. I want to provide some historical context in relation to this motion. It was first moved prior to the Federal election, when Labor's candidate for Gilmore, Fiona Phillips, had been a candidate for the South Coast. She had been on the Opposition's team and was arguing against the long-term lease of poles and wires. From the long-term lease of poles and wires, this Government has been able to invest record sums in State infrastructure. Instead of tying up capital in an asset that was falling in value on our balance sheet, the Government was able to shift capital from one side of the balance sheet to the other and invest in new assets. Rather than having to raise taxes on businesses and having to cut spending, the Government has been able to invest in infrastructure. We have taken old assets and invested them back into new assets.

At the last election, the Labor candidate for the South Coast said, "We do not want any of those new assets; we want higher taxes on business. We want people to work longer and to work harder because government knows all, and we need to ensure that all of these assets remain as they are." She said that in spite of the economic-factored consequence that the asset would have continued to fall in value and we would not have been able to gain the huge advantage that we have been able to gain. It is not just me who says that. Former Labor premiers such as Bob Carr and Morris Iemma have said that recycling assets into new assets is a sensible use of government assets. People in this place often talk about the projects that they would like to see occur. They talk about the infrastructure that they want to see delivered.

Mr Mark Coure: Talk is cheap.

Mr GARETH WARD: As the Deputy Government Whip says, talk is cheap. Actions speak louder than words. Since I became the member for Kiama I have seen the Gerringong upgrade. That was talked about for years. I am sure that the Badens would acknowledge that the road upgrades at Gerringong have made a huge

difference to the lives of the people at Gerringong—by saving lives and by making roads much safer and much more user friendly. We are seeing the Berry upgrade—a \$580 million upgrade, which is so important. We have also seen funds set aside for the Albion Park Rail bypass, which is so important for the future of our community because it will remove sets of traffic lights and free up that section of road from congestion.

In the New South Wales State budget of 2016-17, the Government allocated \$15 million to continue planning and pre-construction for the future of the Princes Motorway bypass of Albion Park Rail. The New South Wales Government announced the preferred option for the proposed Albion Park Rail bypass on 29 October 2014. I will never forget standing with the Premier in the run-up to the last election announcing that this project would go ahead. Who opposed that policy? Labor opposed that policy every single step of the way. The Opposition loves talking about all the projects that this Government commits to. Members of the Opposition say, "Yes, we would do it too", and "Yes, we will get on with that project". But they had 16 years in government to do these projects. Traffic congestion at Albion Park Rail did not start on 26 March 2011. It was there for the entire 16 years of the former Government with no planning and no action taking place.

Ms Anna Watson: That is not true.

Mr GARETH WARD: I acknowledge the interjection by the member for Shellharbour. Given that she was parachuted in from Sutherland and is not really from the area, I can understand why she would not understand traffic and traffic congestion in Albion Park Rail. The project will include a 9.8 kilometre extension of the M1 Princes Motorway to provide a bypass at Albion Park Rail between Yallah and Oak Flats. The proposed lanes will improve travel times by bypassing 16 intersections. The bypass will improve freight connectivity, will reduce crash risk and the impact of flooding, and, very importantly for a growing area, will cater for future growth in the area. The proposed bypass will provide easy access to Dapto, Albion Park and Oak Flats, with two lanes in each direction and a 100 kilometres per hour speed limit.

The proposed bypass also will travel through the Croom Regional Sporting Complex. Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] is working closely with the Shellharbour City Council and sporting groups from the complex to minimise impacts. I thank all of the sporting groups that have acknowledged the importance of this road and have come on board to ensure that they will get new facilities. Moreover, the project will shorten the route, which is so important for providing the efficient movement of traffic.

Mr David Harris: When?

Mr GARETH WARD: I acknowledge the interjection made by the member for Wyong. I am so pleased that he said "When?" At the last election, Labor took to the election its 10-year infrastructure plan for New South Wales. If a Labor government had been elected, that would have been the plan for New South Wales. In that plan, Labor did not once mention the Illawarra. Opposition members ask when the Government will commence the project, but the Government said at the last election it would start in the next term of government—over the next four years.

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

Mr GARETH WARD: If Labor had been elected to occupy the Treasury benches, another decade would have passed—a decade of traffic congestion and problems that impact on residents.

Mr David Harris: So it hasn't started yet. It is still a promise.

Mr GARETH WARD: Despite the facts, the member for Wyong continues to interject. My advice to him, respectfully, is to remain silent and be thought a fool instead of opening his mouth and remove all doubt, which is what he is doing at present.

Mr David Harris: It still hasn't started.

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

Mr GARETH WARD: It has started. I am sure that the member for Wyong is offending every single staff member of the RMS who has worked so incredibly hard on the project—a project of which I am very proud. As I said in relation to the Croom Regional Sporting Complex, any facilities directly impacted will be replaced. The environmental impact statement for the project was placed on display for community feedback on 28 October 2015 and identifies potential impacts associated with the project. I am proud of building roads and I am proud of infrastructure. One of the reasons I was interested in being elected as a member of this House was to get on with the job of building roads in my electorate. Those who oppose that sit opposite.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (13:22): This motion is yet another example of the member for Kiama wasting the time of this House on a Thursday. It is neither the first nor the last time that will happen. The member for Kiama really should have had the good grace to withdraw this pointless motion from the *Business*

Paper. The member for Kiama attacks Ms Fiona Phillips because he is embarrassed: she cut in half the margin held by the member for South Coast at the 2015 State election. That is what is really bothering him. The member for Kiama attacks her because she came within a few hundred votes of knocking off the Federal member for Gilmore, Ann Sudmalis, in the Federal election.

The member for Kiama appears wounded by the setbacks of the Liberals at the State and Federal elections in his area. No doubt he also feels disturbed that at the weekend the Liberals were trounced—I repeat, trounced—by the result of the mayoral election for the Shoalhaven City Council. I know he is upset about that. The attacks on Fiona Phillips at the last two elections on the South Coast by the member for Kiama are attacks on an outstanding local Labor candidate for Labor and should be seen for what they are: sour grapes. If the Government's record is as good as claimed by the member for Kiama, one would have expected Fiona Phillips to have polled very badly, but she did not. Instead, the record shows a very different story.

I say to the member for Kiama: the mob have worked out him and the Liberals. The people of the South Coast electorate are not interested any longer in self-congratulatory motions moved in this House by the member for Kiama or in his back patting. They want services and infrastructure promised and delivered without the fanfare. He should take heed of the clear message of the recent elections on the South Coast. He should stop playing petty politics and just do the job the people of the South Coast elected him to do. The member for Kiama mentioned the Albion Park Rail bypass. He claims, again without foundation, that the Opposition has not shown any support for the project. I have been calling in this place for years for this project to start. I have moved motions in this place requesting a timetable for construction. I have made speeches in this place that pleaded with the Government to get on with the project.

How can the member for Kiama keep making the silly claim of lack of support for the project? The *Votes and Proceedings* of this House show that on 18 February 2016, he and the Government voted against my motions to start the Albion Park Rail bypass. To this day, the member for Kiama still cannot provide a start date for this project. He announced funding for the project in the middle of the last State election campaign, but still no date has been announced. Nearly two years on from that election, we still do not have a start timetable for the project. In fact, he cannot provide one because \$350 million of the project's funding went up in a puff of smoke after the Federal Government canned the electricity sell-off a few weeks ago. The Albion Park Rail project has a massive black hole in it. The member for Kiama is quoted in the *Illawarra Mercury* on 5 June 2015:

Obviously we've got to make sure that we get the revenue as expected and now that we've got the bills through, we've got to go through the process of leasing the assets in order to have the cash and that's what we'll do.

That shows the incompetence of the Government in delivering this vital piece of road infrastructure for the southern Illawarra. The member for Kiama makes much of the Rebuilding NSW program, but the chairman of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] directly criticised the privatisation agenda of the New South Wales Government. On 27 July 2016, Mr Sims was cited in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as saying:

Of course you get these lovely headlines in the Financial Review saying 'Gosh, what a successful sale ...

Mr Sims does not buy into the rhetoric of a lease. He stated further, " ... look at the multiple they achieved". He went on to state:

Well of course they bloody well did: the owners factored in very large price rises because there's no regulation on how they set the price of a monopoly. How dopey is that?

Labor's opposition to the privatisation agenda of the Government has been vindicated by none other than the ACCC.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order. I respect the fact that the member has to read from the union talking points, but Standing Order 76 applies. The member for Shellharbour is not addressing the Albion Park Rail bypass but has embarked on a diatribe on privatisation, which is not relevant to this debate. Mr Assistant Speaker, I ask you to direct her to confine her remarks to the leave of the motion.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I note that when the member for Shellharbour and the member for Kiama are on opposite sides of the table on most occasions they broaden the debate far beyond the motion that is before the House. However, I suggest that as the member for Shellharbour has behaved fairly well, she should return to the leave of the motion.

Ms ANNA WATSON: Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker, I will. As the ACCC says, it is a dopey agenda. I expect that the member for Kiama in his reply will run his usual rehearsed lines, matched with insults and abuse, but I ask him to instead reflect on the thousands of motorists who are stuck in increasingly congested sections of the Princes Highway at Albion Park Rail every day. They do not care about his silly motions in this place, but they do care about his attacks on former political candidates whose only crime is to have shown up the Liberal Party on the South Coast at the ballot box at two elections. They do not give a right stuff about the

shenanigans of the member for Kiama in this place. I plead with the member for Kiama to show some good grace, just for once, and withdraw this silly motion. He should show the people of the South Coast that he has more to offer than just petty political pointscore, rehearsed one-liners, attacks, and abuse of people who are not even in Parliament. If he refuses to withdraw this motion, the Opposition will vote to oppose it.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I will now leave the chair and the House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome all our guests in the public gallery who have joined us for question time. In particular I extend a very warm welcome to the Hon. Phillip Ruddock, the second-longest serving member of the Australian House of Representatives, and the Reverend Jay Bacik, former Chief Executive Officer of Life Education Australia and Life Education NSW. We welcome you both very warmly to the Chamber this afternoon.

I welcome to the Chamber the student leaders and parents attending the Ryde Electorate School Leadership Program from Melrose Park Public School and Ermington Public School, guest of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, and the member for Ryde.

I welcome Mr Gerhard Baden and his wife, Maria, to the public gallery, guest of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, and the member for Kiama.

I welcome students, teachers and parents from several schools, whom I was very pleased to meet this morning: Hambleton Public School; John Palmer Public School; Mary Immaculate Primary School; Norwest Christian College; Parklea Public School; Riverstone Public School; Scofields Public School; John XXIII Catholic Primary School; St John's Primary School; Australian Christian College; Riverbank Public School; and Quakers Hill East Public School. They are attending the Riverstone Junior Youth Leadership Assembly and are guests of the member for Riverstone. I also welcome the students and staff from Wyoming Public School, who are guests of the member for The Entrance.

Question Time

THE NATIONALS PREFERENCES AND ONE NATION CANDIDATES

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:20): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing. Will the Minister make the same commitment as Labor and direct The Nationals to place One Nation candidates last on all of your party's how-to-votes cards at future elections?

The SPEAKER: I direct the Leader of the Opposition to the standing orders in relation to questions. Questions should refer to factual information, not party matters. As the Deputy Premier has indicated he would prefer to not take this question, I rule it out of order. Members will come to order.

STATE GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (14:21): My question is addressed to our great Premier. How is the Government delivering on its plan to keep New South Wales the number one State? How does that compare to the plan of those opposite?

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: The question contains an opinion and therefore should be ruled out of order.

The SPEAKER: The question did not ask for an opinion at all. It asked how the Premier was planning to deliver on a certain plan.

Mr John Robertson: To the point of order: The question contains an opinion. The member for Wollondilly said: "My question is to the great Premier." That is opinion.

Mr Anthony Roberts: To the point of order: That is just a matter of fact.

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:23:0): I thank the great member for his question. He does an outstanding job in his electorate. The good member, like every member on this side of the House, is getting on with providing great government for New South Wales. Wherever one goes, the Government is doing everything it can to make a huge difference—whether it be the \$73 billion in infrastructure spending that has been allocated to schools, hospitals, roads and rail; whether it be delivering better services to the people of this State through the health system, with 6,000 additional nurses on the front line helping

patients every day; whether it be the National Disability Insurance Scheme and doing everything we can to support those with a disability, and more than 60,000 extra people with disabilities will have services because of what we are doing; or whether it be maintaining New South Wales as the strongest economy in the nation.

It is another great day for the Treasurer. I am sure those opposite saw that New South Wales again had the lowest unemployment rate in the country. For 15 straight months that has been the position, and the Government continues to do everything possible to create more jobs in New South Wales. That is what the Government has done and there were cheers about that, but it is not like that every day. Part of the reason we are seeing growth and jobs is the infrastructure investment the Government is undertaking, and part of that is delivering WestConnex, the M4 and the M5, which are going to make a difference across Western Sydney.

Ms Jodi McKay: Tolls!

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I have seen the member for Strathfield's work. If people are in Parramatta when that project is complete, they will be able to get to the airport 40 minutes quicker. If they are in south-western Sydney on the M5, their journey will be on average 15 minutes quicker. What a little ripper—a great project being delivered. We thank motorists across the city for their patience, because we need to get the job done—

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: A few alarm bells have gone off because we know what it is like when Labor is in charge of infrastructure projects. The member for Strathfield, the shadow Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, was on the radio today. This is what she said: "Our concern is that this project is being rushed. Indeed, it wants to get this road open before 2019. This is going to impact motorists enormously." That is right: There is going to be a benefit that comes to motorists. Then the shadow Minister went where she should not: All of a sudden she went into policy. She said, "You should only do the work at night"—or something to that effect.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: If the Premier is going to quote me, he should get the transcript and get it right. I am very happy to have a debate on facts; those are not facts.

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I do not think she denied it! What will happen under the shadow Minister's plan? The project will be delayed by three years. That is what we see from Labor—delaying infrastructure projects at a cost of up to \$3 billion. It all came back to me. I remembered what it was like under Labor. Labor never actually built anything, and that was a problem. Members opposite delayed; they cancelled. I thought, "Let's have an assessment of what this Opposition offers. What does it stand for? What does its leader offer? What does its leader stand for?" The Opposition is very different from the Government. It has no plan for New South Wales. What has the man of principle, the Leader of the Opposition, come up with? He supported the GST. He was against it. He was not quite for it. Within three days he was not quite sure. On the port transaction it was very clear: He was against it. He stood against it here in Parliament. He became Leader of the Opposition and then said, "What a great idea! I love it." Not only that but he also took the money and spent it in the Opposition's election plan.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: Standing order 73, personal reflections. It is a valid point of order, with personal reflections all the way on—

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. I refer the member for Maroubra to the first question he asked.

[Extension of time]

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I would not call that a spirited defence from the member for Maroubra. We have seen the patron of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals voting for animal cruelty. Opposition members are the most anti-public transport group of people I have ever seen: "Don't want it! Can't stand it! Cancel it! Against it!" He was for light rail; two weeks later he was against light rail. Now the Opposition thinks the Metro is uneconomic and does not want it. It is very clear it stands for nothing. We on this side stand for plenty. Since this Government has come in, the economy in this State has gone from number eight to number one. New South Wales has gone from number eight to number one. We know that as a result of the collective work of this Government we have put 10,000 extra teachers, nurses and police officers on the front line. That is what we stand for.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. If the question asked the Premier to tell us how good he is, his answer might be relevant. Whatever he is talking about now is well off the beaten track.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The member does not like the fact that under our Minister for Police we have delivered the lowest crime rate in 20 years across all the major categories. That means safer communities. This Government has also provided infrastructure across regional New South Wales and delivered record spending in the health sector. The Princes Highway and the Pacific Highway, which were neglected by members opposite when they were in government, are being upgraded by this Government. We are doing everything possible to work for New South Wales, but we are only getting started.

THE NATIONALS PREFERENCES AND ONE NATION CANDIDATES

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:30): I direct my question to the Deputy Premier. When will he direct his party to place One Nation candidates last on all Nationals how-to-vote cards?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Fairfield to order for the first time. He has been uncharacteristically loud today. That was a ridiculous question.

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) (14:30): That is what we usually get from members opposite.

The SPEAKER: Order! It really is lineball.

Mr TROY GRANT: The Leader of the Opposition should realise and understand that decisions about by-elections are made by the party.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier is endeavouring to answer the question. The member for Blacktown will come to order.

Mr TROY GRANT: Those discussions will involve the state director, the chairman of The Nationals, and me. When we make decisions about how we will approach the Orange by-election—

Mr Luke Foley: I am not asking you about the by-election, although I know you are wetting your pants about it.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order. The member for Keira will cease interjecting. Government members will also come to order.

Mr TROY GRANT: The boys and girls in gallery should understand that that is the guy who wants to be Premier. That is the best the would-be Premier has to offer.

The SPEAKER: Order! Some Opposition members will be removed from the Chamber without further warning if they continue to interject.

Mr TROY GRANT: Since coming to office, The Nationals have put the communities of regional New South Wales first, and we will continue to deliver as we have done in the electorate of Orange. Investment in that electorate alone is unparalleled, historic and unbelievable. The Government has invested in Parkes and Forbes hospitals, and in the Peak Hill Multipurpose Service. This is critical health investment in the electorate of Orange that members opposite promised for more than a decade—

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maitland will not point. She should let me do my job. She can do it one day if she wishes. We never know; it might happen. She will then be able to get her own back, and she would love that.

Mr Ryan Park: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The Deputy Premier's answer has absolutely nothing to do with the question asked.

The SPEAKER: Order! Sometimes when members ask bizarre questions they get the answers they deserve, and that is what the Opposition is getting.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: I thank the Speaker for the invitation to take her job. However, I point out that the Deputy Premier was addressing the gallery. He should be addressing his comments through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member will have to do better than that if she wants to be Speaker. There is no point of order.

Mr TROY GRANT: As I said, this Government's record in the health sector in Orange is a clear demonstration of its commitment to the electorate. There has also been record investment in road infrastructure in the area. Guanna Hill is a—

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira is now annoying me. I have told Opposition members that if they ask bizarre or ridiculous questions they will get the answers they deserve.

Mr TROY GRANT: Members do not understand the relevance of my answer because they do not understand that when we are elected to this place it is our job to get things done at the State Government level.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: We must establish who is the best person to do that. We have that person in Scott Barrett, who will be The Nationals candidate for Orange.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bankstown will stop shouting.

Mr TROY GRANT: We respect everyone's opinion and their democratic right to voice it.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not appreciate members screaming at other members and telling them to sit down. That is my job.

HOSPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (14:36): I address my question to the Minister for Health. How is the Government delivering on its \$5 billion record investment in hospitals across the State to improve health care for public patients?

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind Opposition members, especially those already on calls to order, of my previous ruling.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (14:36): I thank the member for his question and note his long commitment and deep interest in providing the best possible hospital and health care for his constituents. That is why I am delighted to tell him and the House about an exciting initiative that will see a number of new hospitals delivered faster, bigger and better than originally announced. This Government has a great track record in delivering health infrastructure. That was just demonstrated by the Deputy Premier when he told us about what has been delivered in the electorate of Orange.

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

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: The Government has committed more than \$5 billion to upgrade New South Wales hospitals in this term of government alone. That includes more than \$400 million being spent on a major new Maitland hospital; \$250 million on the redevelopment of Shellharbour Hospital; \$200 million on a major expansion of Wyong Hospital; \$120 million on the redevelopment of Goulburn Base Hospital; and \$50 million on increasing services at Bowral and District Hospital.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Shellharbour will come to order. This is not a debate.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: I mention those hospitals for a particular reason.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! Ministers will come to order. If they do not they may also find themselves removed from the Chamber.

Mr Ryan Park: That normally happens to me.

The SPEAKER: Order! They are not silly enough to get themselves put on a call by saying silly things.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The question asked about what the Minister has done, not about the promises she made five years ago.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not even remotely a point of order. There is a book called the *Standing and Sessional Orders*. The member for Maitland should read it.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: I mention those particular projects for a reason. There are upgrades that are urgently needed. Since coming to office, we have already opened more than 60 new major hospital redevelopments worth more than \$5 billion, which were badly needed after years of neglect and promises by Labor that were never delivered. That meant almost 50 per cent of our hospitals were more than 50 years old, neglected and in need of replacement. Tackling these challenges requires an innovative approach, which is why I am excited to announce today that the Government will be inviting established non-government hospital operators to enter into a partnership program with the New South Wales Government to design, build, operate and maintain these new facilities. Quality public health care is a cornerstone of our—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mount Druitt will come to order. I call the member for Bankstown to order for the second time.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: Madam Speaker, you would think Opposition members would be interested in their hospitals.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order or I will direct the Clerk to restart the clock. I place the member for Mount Druitt on three calls to order.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: Quality public health care is a cornerstone of our Australian society. This approach brings together the expertise of both public and non-government systems to deliver the best outcomes for patients. These hospitals will be publicly funded and run by established non-government hospital operators that already have an Australian track record.

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

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: I stress that public patients admitted to any of these hospitals will continue to receive their care free of charge, just as they do now. Healthcare for public patients will continue to be publicly funded. The non-government sector has a long history of providing health services in our communities.

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

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: For example, St Vincent's Hospital has been a key part of our hospital network since 1844. [*Extension of time*]

The Mater in Newcastle is another great example of a non-government, not-for-profit hospital that provides free public patient care, contracted and paid for by the Government. More recently, we have established a new partnership to deliver the Northern Beaches Hospital. This has allowed us to save \$1.5 billion over the life of the contract—money that we will reinvest directly back into health services. A partnership approach will allow us to leverage the capital and expertise of non-government hospital operators and might mean we can build a new hospital rather than upgrade an existing one. It might mean we can offer more complex services locally so that patients no longer have to travel out of area to access services that are currently unavailable. It represents an opportunity to maximise the benefits to the community of the New South Wales Government's investment, resulting in increased patient choice, expanded clinical service provision, enhanced patient outcomes and greater opportunities for staff. In short, we will be getting more for our money—modern, high-tech buildings, more services and better value for our investment.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation on the Government benches.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: The projects identified for the program will benefit from increased capacity, with the potential for an extended range of health services such as colocated primary health care or aged care—or even medihotels. The approach is about putting patients and communities first. The partnerships that result will ensure that patients receive the same high quality of service regardless of their status as public or private patients. Under any contract entered into, hospital operators will be required to treat every public patient who presents to the hospital. Madam Speaker, may I speak for an additional 30 seconds because of all the interruptions?

The SPEAKER: A further extension of time is granted.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: Thank you. Non-government operators will have the same obligations to the State as public hospital operators and will have to meet the same standards of service. Staff will have more opportunities and there will be more jobs. More than 1,000 new jobs will be created across these five new state-of-the-art facilities. However, I must stress that this is an expression of interest process only; it is not a done deal. We are seeking to test the market to see whether there is interest in a partnership approach. If we cannot get a better deal for patients then the hospitals will be delivered using traditional means. However, I believe this approach could form the basis of a new era in delivering world-class, sustainable healthcare for our communities now and into the future.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Bankstown to order for the third time.

HOSPITAL CHEMOTHERAPY TREATMENT

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (14:44): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Given Professor David Currow will tomorrow deliver to her his report into chemotherapy underdosing to patients at Orange and Bathurst clinics, will she give a commitment to release the report tomorrow?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (14:45): In fact, Professor Currow was asked by the Secretary of NSW Health to do that review so the report will be provided to the secretary, not to me. It is due to be provided to her tomorrow. I understand that the secretary will consider that report over the weekend

and intends to make it available, with a government response, early next week. I will be with her making that response.

OFFENDER REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (14:45): My question is addressed to the Minister for Corrections. How is the Government targeting reoffenders and what impact will that have on community safety?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (14:45): I thank the member for Oxley for her genuine interest in recidivism and reoffending. The New South Wales Government has committed to reduce adult reoffending by 5 per cent and the Premier has made it a personal priority to reduce domestic violence. The Government has recently announced a \$237 million investment in a new plan to tackle the rate of reoffending in New South Wales. This focuses on high-risk offenders and persistent domestic violence offenders who are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime. The Government will get prisoners and parolees into more programs, improve staff training and target persistent domestic violence offenders. This investment can make a real and lasting difference to the people of New South Wales. It means reducing the number of reoffenders and victims and helping to keep our community safe.

As Minister, it gives me no joy to visit correctional centres across the State knowing that almost half of those who are incarcerated will reoffend and return to jail within two years of release. This is unacceptable and the Government will not turn a blind eye to it. This funding seeks to punish offenders for their crimes while simultaneously intervening to rehabilitate them and put them back on the right track. This Government's \$237 million strategy against reoffending will expand participation in violence, addiction and sex offender programs for prisoners and parolees in the community; introduce one-on-one case management and intervention for priority domestic violence offenders after they are charged but before they are sentenced; and improve training for staff. Inmates serving sentences of six months or less for any crime will for the first time have access to rehabilitation programs. Those inmates do not currently participate in programs to address their behaviour.

An additional 345 psychologists, community corrections officers and other skilled staff will be employed by Corrective Services as part of this record spend on rehabilitation. Current staff will also receive more training. Ten high-intensity program units will be established to deliver rehabilitation programs to about 1,200 prisoners each year serving short sentences of six months or less. Higher-risk offenders will be subject to increased supervision at all stages of their sentences. Currently, large numbers of higher-risk offenders may not participate in reoffending programs until they are in prison because there is limited intervention available in the community. Targeting this group earlier and at all points in their contact with the justice system will have the greatest impact on reoffending and improving community safety. There is also funding to improve exit planning and reintegration support such as housing and employment for offenders leaving prison on parole.

This Government takes a holistic approach to Corrections and seeks to get on with the job. It would be reckless for the Government not to invest in infrastructure to increase the New South Wales prison capacity and to relieve the current bed pressure. However, we do not want to see inmates return to prison. We want them rehabilitated, literate and ready to contribute to society on their release into the community. That is why we have invested \$3.8 billion in infrastructure to provide immediate and ongoing relief to the current bed pressure. That is why we are recommissioning Berrima jail. That is why, since the beginning of this year, we have added new beds to the Metropolitan Special Programs Centre, Long Bay Correctional Complex, the Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre, and Dillwynia, Silverwater, Glen Innes and Kariong correctional centres.

An extra 1,000 beds will be built at Cessnock Correctional Centre, creating up to 450 jobs during construction and 430 permanent jobs when complete. The Junee Correctional Centre will be expanded to house an additional 480 inmates, adding 130 jobs to the local economy. In the longer term, the construction of the new Grafton Correctional Centre will provide 2,350 beds and add hundreds of jobs to the region during the construction period. There is no silver bullet for reoffending, but a \$237 million reoffending strategy targeting persistent offenders at all points of their contact with the justice system will have the greatest impact on reoffending and increasing community safety.

GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY BAN

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (14:50): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. The Coonamble Greyhound Festival will be held on the long weekend. What compensation will be paid to hotels, motels, caravan parks and small businesses in Coonamble for the financial losses that the Government's greyhound ban will inflict on them from next year?

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) (14:50): I thank the member for her question on behalf of the community of Coonamble, which is located—

[Interruption]

I lived there. That is why I know where it is.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: I moved there in February 1997 and left when I was promoted to Walgett in March 1998. My wife was the community development officer for the Coonamble Shire Council.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Shellharbour will come to order. The Minister is attempting to answer the question. The member for Londonderry will come to order

Mr TROY GRANT: I am happy to answer the question. Coonamble is a wonderful community in the Barwon electorate. It has a number of significant events, and the greyhound carnival is one such event that provides significant economic contribution to that community over the long weekend. Collectively, a limited number of TAB meetings are brought together at one time in the calendar year so that they can maximise—

Mr David Mehan: What will they do now?

Mr TROY GRANT: If the member for The Entrance will let me answer the question instead of rudely interrupting, I am happy to tell him.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for The Entrance will cease interjecting. The Deputy Premier is attempting to answer the question. I remind the member for Mount Druitt that he is on three calls to order.

Mr TROY GRANT: Other significant events are held in Coonamble. Throughout the June long weekend it holds one of the biggest rodeos in New South Wales, which attracts visitors from across Australia.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: It is a good question because it shows the diversity of issues that the Government is taking into account through the coordinator general, Dr John Keniry, and how the structural adjustment package can help communities like Coonamble when events such as the greyhound festival no longer occur. It is a matter for the community, but the Government has many opportunities to help in other ways. When I lived in Coonamble I organised a significant country music concert, headlined by Tania Kernaghan. On that night we raised \$38,000 for charity.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: Coonamble residents love their music and they already have a significant rodeo, but government agencies such as Destination NSW—

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order: The question was quite clear. What compensation will be paid to hotels, motels and caravan parks?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier is exploring a number of options relating to the question. The member for Shellharbour should listen to the answer.

Mr TROY GRANT: I am not sure that in my time here I have been more relevant to a question than this one. I do not think I could answer a question more fully. There is an endless range of opportunities. It is a diverse community that loves its rugby league. It has a strong Little Athletics group. It runs along the Castlereagh River, which is unusual because it runs mostly under the bank. They might want to hold a significant event like Alice Springs does and have a massive carnival. We will take on board what the community wants. Once that information is gathered, as I have said in this place, I will table it as part of the structural adjustment packages when Dr Keniry and his task force have completed their work. I look forward to doing so because this Government will continue to support every regional community in New South Wales, including Coonamble.

REVENGE PORN

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (14:55): My question is addressed to the Attorney General. How is the Government working to protect victims of revenge porn?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Attorney General) (14:56): I thank the member for Holsworthy for her question and commend her for her strong commitment to protecting victims of crime. We know that technology and the popularity of social media can be a force for good, but in the wrong hands we know it can hurt, threaten, abuse and humiliate people. The sharing of intimate or sexually explicit images without

consent—sometimes known as "revenge porn"—fits into that category of cowardly and spiteful acts. Even the use of the word "revenge" is deceptive, because victims never deserve this conduct against them. No-one ever deserves to have their trust abused in this way. Our laws must stay up to date with new types of offending, and that is why the Government is acting. There is no stronger deterrent than the force of the criminal law and when considering revenge porn. We need a twenty-first century law to deal with a twenty-first century crime.

The New South Wales Government understands that the trauma caused by those gross violations of privacy punishes victims, and we must punish the offender. Today I say proudly that I have released a discussion paper so that we can draft the best laws to address this crime. I am asking for feedback on things such as: What is the definition of an intimate image; how are images shared; how are they distributed; what penalties should apply, including the potential for jail penalties for this crime; and how should the law apply to children and young people? Another important element to consider is whether we require offenders to delete or take down these offending images, because we know the fact that they remain creates great distress to the victims of revenge crime.

In March this year the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice released a report entitled "Remedies for serious invasions of privacy in New South Wales." The Government's intention to criminalise this appalling behaviour is in response to that committee's report. I thank members of the committee for their input and dedication to this important work. All members in this Chamber agree that new laws are needed to better protect people's privacy and to make it clear that this type of behaviour is totally unacceptable.

Members in this Chamber know that most of the victims of this appalling behaviour are women who have had their trust broken. Sadly, we often see this behaviour in the context of domestic violence: Bitter and disgruntled ex-partners often use the online world to punish someone they once loved dearly. We should never excuse this behaviour as something that just happens when people have fights or break up. Of course, revenge porn is not unique to our State nor our nation; it is common across the world. I am pleased to say that New South Wales will be joining Victoria and South Australia, which already have such laws. I also welcome the announcement this week from my counterpart in Western Australia of that that State intends to move in the same direction. I am determined to deliver the best possible and practical responses to this crime. The victims deserve no less. I believe—this Government believes—that creating a criminal offence will send a very strong message to our community that this type of behaviour is simply unacceptable. I look forward to bringing legislation to this Parliament shortly.

NEPEAN HOSPITAL

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:00): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. What is her response to the comments by the Director of Emergency at Nepean Hospital, Dr Rod Bishop, who on 7 September said, "I have been here for 27 years, and this is as bad as it gets."

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (15:01): I know Dr Bishop; I have known him for years. I congratulate him and all of his staff at Nepean Hospital, who work so very hard to provide the best possible healthcare to their patients. Even though they have had a tough time with increased demand, and they have struggled because the member for Prospect's side of politics failed to upgrade the emergency department and stopped upgrading the hospital halfway through the project, the reality is that despite all of that, in terms of seeing patients within four hours—having them through the department in that time—the hospital has increased from 41 per cent when I became the Minister to 50 per cent.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cabramatta will come to order. The member for Prospect will come to order. The member for Rockdale will come to order.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: So there has been an improvement despite the increased demand and despite the failure by the other side of politics to upgrade the emergency department.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Londonderry will come to order. This is not a debate. The member for Prospect will come to order.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: So where do those opposite get off in failing to take any responsibility for what they left the hospital with?

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

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: As I did in this Chamber yesterday, I give thanks to the marvellous work of the member for Penrith. I give a commitment to Dr Bishop and to others out there, many of whom I know personally—they are my personal friends—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Londonderry will come to order. This is her final warning.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: I ask the people in the gallery to look at what I have to put up with; I can hardly hear myself think.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warned them about that earlier.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: A commitment was made to Nepean Hospital staff—including the marvellous nurses, one of whom was mentioned to me by an Opposition member yesterday—that we will provide resources to do a major upgrade when we have completed the planning for the hospital. I assure the member that it will be a major upgrade and it will cover things that the Opposition failed to deliver when Labor was in Government.

COAL SEAM GAS EXPLORATION

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:03): My question is directed to the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy. Given the lead taken by the Victorian Government, will the Government consider banning fracking across New South Wales?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) (15:03): I thank the member for Ballina for her question. However, the Government will not be following Victoria's lead in banning fracking. The Victorian Labor Government has taken the easy political route and imposed a ban. This Government has taken the responsible route and put in place a plan. Labor has a more traditional three-point plan. The first point is: Do not get caught. The second point is: If you do get caught, lawyer up. The third point of the plan is: Hope for home detention. The NSW Gas Plan incorporates all 17 recommendations of the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, Professor Mary O'Kane, and it is our clear, strategic framework that will deliver—in fact, it is delivering—world's best practice with respect to regulation of the gas industry. That is what we are delivering for the people of New South Wales. Our plan secures vital gas supplies for the State's 1.3 million families, 33,000 businesses and 500 heavy industrial users, who rely on a secure gas supply each and every day.

Without a secure gas supply, businesses and manufacturers will shut down. Without a secure gas supply, hundreds of thousands of people in this State will be out of work—that is hundreds of thousands of mums and dads who can no longer support their families. It will mean that there will be no gas to power restaurants—where Labor members meet to discuss how to gouge union membership fees from workers who have just lost their manufacturing jobs under Labor, and where they enjoy the traditional Labor Party banquet to convince Jason Clare to move to Auburn. Labor's hypocrisy in this area knows no bounds. Rather than allowing an independent assessment of the Santos project near Narrabri, Labor wants to shut it down.

If Opposition members had done their homework they would know that the Santos Narrabri proposal does not involve fracking. I repeat: The Santos project does not involve fracking. Labor is happy to import fracked gas from interstate but members opposite somehow have an issue with non-fracked gas in New South Wales. Perhaps Labor members plan to collect their contributions to debates in this place and extract the methane from them. If they extracted the methane from their contributions they could power not just New South Wales but—

Dr Geoff Lee: South-East Asia.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Yes, South-East Asia. I thank the member for Parramatta. There is nothing like a party with principles, and the Labor Party is nothing like a party with principles. Labor's regulation of the State's gas industry was so poor that it made its economic performance seem okay—although at the time it was the worst in the nation. Under Labor, petroleum exploration licences covered more than 60 per cent of this State's land mass. Following our buy-back scheme, it is now less than 8 per cent.

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

Mr Stephen Kamper: Point of order: The question was about whether the Government will follow Victoria's lead.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has answered the question and he remains relevant. There is no point of order.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: The Greens have always stood firm in this area, unlike the flip-flopping on the other side of the Chamber, where members of the Labor Party say one thing to communities and something else to manufacturers.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: What did Opposition members do to protect aquifers and groundwater? They did nothing. The Government introduced an aquifer interference policy. What did Labor members do to protect the environment? They did nothing. We introduced a code of practice for well integrity. What did the

Labor Party do about harmful benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene [BTEX] chemicals? The party allowed them to be pumped into the ground. This Government banned harmful BTEX chemicals. The list of Labor's failures goes on and on. This Government has cleaned up Labor's mess across each and every portfolio. We will deliver best-practice regulation of the gas industry because that is what the people of New South Wales deserve. I sincerely thank the member for her question and assure her that this Government will continue to deliver world's best regulation of the gas industry and the wider resources sector.

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

REGIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY INVESTMENT

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (15:08): My question is addressed to the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy. What is the New South Wales Government doing to support renewable energy investment in regional New South Wales, and are there any related matters?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) (15:09): I thank the member for Northern Tablelands for his question and I congratulate him on his recent appointment as Parliamentary Secretary for Northern New South Wales and Renewable Energy. For the information of members who may not be aware, the electorate of the member for Northern Tablelands hosts a number of renewable energy facilities. I know the member for Northern Tablelands is a strong advocate for the jobs and other economic benefits that those projects deliver. New South Wales leads Australia in large-scale solar projects. Over the past five years, the share of New South Wales-based solar generation has increased sixfold. The New South Wales Government provided approximately \$65 million to the Nyngan and Broken Hill solar plants under the Solar Flagships program. I recommend that people visit the Nyngan plant, which is the largest solar plant in Australia. It can power more than 33,000 New South Wales households.

I am proud to inform the House that just last week the Federal Government announced it also would provide funding for five new projects in Dubbo, Griffith, Parks, Manildra and Glen Innes, which of course is in the electorate of the member for Northern Tablelands. To support those projects, the New South Wales Government has asked the supplier of electricity to all its buildings and institutions to purchase up to 92 gigawatt hours of energy from those projects, which is enough to provide power to approximately 700 schools. We need that type of power generation capacity because our schools are getting bigger and there are so many of them—and we will have many, many more. That new initiative will assist in reinforcing this State's substantial national lead in large-scale solar production and build on the State's competitive advantages. The projects will support up to 800 jobs during construction and, when fully operational, will provide enough clean energy to power approximately 62,000 homes or 2,800 schools. As a government, we have to get this done and we have to be fast to meet the demand from the number of schools that are being built.

The Government's investment underscores the growing importance of the New South Wales solar industry and the role it will play in providing for the State's future electricity needs. Currently New South Wales has approximately 1,000 megawatts of large-scale solar projects in the planning system or awaiting development approval. Those projects represent an estimated \$2 billion of investment and up to 1,600 full-time jobs in construction and operation—and, for the information of the Deputy Premier, most of this will be located in regional areas. I congratulate the Deputy Premier—well done. Unlike Opposition members, who for some unknown reason continue to attack renewable energy projects in New South Wales, Government members are very strong supporters of it. Last year renewable energy contributed 14 per cent of the generation output in New South Wales. In the five years to March 2016, the share of generation from solar, wind and bioenergy sources more than doubled. More than a quarter of the generation capacity installed in New South Wales is renewable generation.

In New South Wales, the renewables sector employs approximately 5,000 people directly and supports a further 15,000 jobs. At the same time as the Government is supporting and encouraging investment in renewables because of the jobs and benefits that the industry brings, it is disappointing that Labor and The Greens have policies that will result in jobs and investment leaving the State. Attempts of those two political parties to shut down mining in the State—while at the same time hypocritically wanting to continue mining, if their Steel Industry Protection Bill is any indication—shows that, when it comes to energy policies, they do not have any. It gives me no pleasure to inform the House that The Greens policy is to allow the mining of only 600,000 more tonnes of coal in New South Wales. Given that in this State we currently mine approximately 200,000 tons of coal per annum, that means The Greens want the industry to be shut down in just three years.

Let us not forget the member for Blacktown's plan to shut down the mining industry in this State. He had someone working on a policy and a plan to shut down the coalmining industry, and that someone was none other than the current Leader of the Opposition, who has developed a policy that will result in the closure of the coal industry in New South Wales. I understand that the policy has been completed. The only question that remains is

whether Labor will shut down the coal industry in three years, or five. What do those policies mean for New South Wales? It will mean that 27,000 direct industry jobs will be gone under Labor. More than 100,000 indirect jobs, which rely predominantly on the mining history, will be gone. Approximately 8,000 small and medium businesses that mining supports will be gone under Labor. Tell that to the families in Newcastle, Maitland, Cessnock, Wyong and Keira.

Mr Kevin Anderson: And Gunnedah.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: And Gunnedah. Labor's plan will mean that \$11.5 billion in wages and business purchases that go directly into local economies will be gone. Almost \$17 billion in export revenue also will be gone. [*Extension of time*]

Approximately \$1.2 billion in annual coalmining royalties, which contribute to funding for roads, hospitals, schools and emergency services, will be gone under Labor. All that I have mentioned will be gone in just three years under The Greens or in five years under Labor, and that will not be the only cost. Almost all of the former coalmining workers will need retraining at a further cost that could be as high as \$350 million. The Greens and Labor should not be worrying about the Steel Industry Protection Bill because there will not be any coal left to produce the steel. Where do those political parties think that the power to manufacture steel is coming from—hemp? Apparently they have not worked it out that we need coal to produce steel. For the information of the basket weavers on the Opposition side of the House, I point out that it takes 88,000 kilograms of coking coal to produce one wind turbine.

Without coal, we would not even have one single wind turbine. Those political parties must understand that we cannot rely on a plan that relies on some magical phenomenon that will deliver solar, wind turbines or steel. Labor and The Greens are living in some sort of fairytale fantasyland—except that it is not a nice one. It is a fantasyland that involves a cave, no heating and having to walk everywhere. The future energy mix of New South Wales and Australia is changing. Renewables will continue to play an important role in the State's energy mix. The New South Wales Government will continue to support and develop renewable generation, such as large-scale solar plants. I assure the House and the people of New South Wales that coal and gas also will continue to play a key role in ensuring that the State's energy supplies remain secure and stable while supporting more and more renewables.

THE NATIONALS PREFERENCES AND ONE NATION CANDIDATES

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) (15:15): By leave: In response to a question asked of me this day by the Leader of the Opposition, I inform the House that although One Nation is registered as a political party with the Australian Electoral Commission—

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Deputy Premier to wait until Opposition members cease interjecting. The Deputy Premier has the call.

Mr TROY GRANT: As I was saying, although One Nation is registered as a political party with the Australian Electoral Commission—

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Bankstown that she is on three calls to order. I remind the Leader of the Opposition that this is not a debate. The Deputy Premier is attempting to provide additional information. Members will listen without interjecting.

Mr TROY GRANT: One Nation is not registered as a political party with the New South Wales Electoral Commission. As such, it is currently ineligible to nominate candidates for New South Wales State elections, including the 12 November by-elections. Further, I inform the House that pursuant to section 66FA of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912, in order to nominate a candidate for a New South Wales State election, a party must have been registered with the New South Wales Electoral Commission for at least 12 months prior to the close of nominations for that election. As such, it is not possible for One Nation to register in the future and nominate a candidate for any of the 12 November by-elections.

The SPEAKER: Order! I urge the Deputy Premier to continue, despite the ridiculous and stupid interjections. The Deputy Premier has the call.

Mr TROY GRANT: I note the genesis of the question by the Leader of the Opposition is likely to be corporate bookmakers, who have One Nation paying \$21 to win the seat of Orange. I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition get off the bookies' websites, do some real research, and not put his money on an impossible mission—which is a lesson he could apply to every aspect of his job. You fool!

*Committees***COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION****Membership**

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That Geoffrey Keith Provest be appointed to serve on the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption in the place of Adam John Marshall, and that a message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

Motion agreed to.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

Powerhouse Museum Ultimo

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

National School of Art

Petition requesting that a long-term lease be provided to the National School of Art for its site, that it remain independent and that the Government continue its funding, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Surry Hills Light Rail Station

Petition calling on the Government to build a second light rail station in Surry Hills at the Wimbo Park-Olivia Gardens site, using appropriate landscaping to minimise visual and noise impacts and provide a quality park for the local community, received from **Ms Jenny Leong**.

Route 389 Bus Service

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

Pymont and Ultimo Bus Services

Petition requesting the improvement and expansion of bus services to Pymont and Ultimo, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Ferry Services

Petition requesting new inner city ferries, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Social Housing

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

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**.

Pet Shops

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

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

Public Housing

Petition opposing the sale of public housing in Millers Point, Dawes Point and The Rocks, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

*Committees***JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER GENERAL****Report: Report on the Tenth General Meeting with the Valuer-General**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:21): I speak to the committee's report on the tenth general meeting with the Valuer General, which was tabled in the House on 13 September 2016. It follows the committee's established practice of examining all annual reports issued by the Valuer General. The tenth general meeting was conducted against the background of the comprehensive inquiry into the land valuation system in New South Wales conducted by the previous Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General in the Fifty-Fifth Parliament. The report tabled this week reviews both the 2013-14 and 2014-15 reporting periods, when evidence was taken from the Valuer General and the Director of Valuation Services.

The current inquiry has followed up shortcomings in fairness and transparency previously identified, and the committee has made further recommendations to improve overall governance and the manner in which the Valuer General and his delegates interact with landowners. The report makes nine recommendations, including strengthening accountability measures in the valuation process applied to various types of land, taking steps to improve the quality and consistency of complex land valuations, and the implementation of new policies and procedures relating to determinations of compensation in cases of compulsory acquisition. The committee supports a more customer-centric objections process and welcomes the Valuer General's efforts to ensure maximum consultation, transparency and procedural fairness in negotiating with landholders when handling compulsory acquisitions and objections to land valuations.

The committee is pleased to report that accountability measures governing the land valuations process have been significantly improved. This has been achieved by the publication of policies documenting valuation methodologies applying to various types of land. Having robust systems in place to ensure that valuations are formulated on the basis of accurate and reliable data do not eliminate the possibility of error. Notwithstanding the strengthening of risk management in the valuation system, the committee recommends the Valuer General further expands research into the best methodologies to be used in the formulation of complex land values and monitors the approaches taken in other jurisdictions. The report also makes a number of recommendations relating to transparency, fairness and consistency in land valuations and the need for increased consultation with landholders to improve the current process.

The committee appreciates the Valuer General has implemented new policies and procedures in compensation cases involving compulsory acquisition. The committee is assured by the Valuer General that proactive communication with landholders is given primacy in the new determinations of compensation, such as in the compulsory acquisitions for WestConnex. The committee questions whether these reforms will be compromised by the greater workload on the Just Terms unit at Land and Property Information, and recommends further engagement with landholders. This is particularly important for those who have received compulsory acquisition notices, where greater efforts must be made to document their experiences.

While the committee appreciates that the Valuer General is not usually involved in court actions, the report calls for more information in relation to appeals made against land values under the Valuation of Land Act. This includes appeals made against compensation decisions lodged under the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act. It should also incorporate an analysis of information regarding the number of appeals made. The committee commends the Valuer General for taking the initiative to seek independent evaluations on the quality of key services provided by Land and Property Information and quality assurance processes underpinning the valuation system.

However, the committee urges the Valuer General to continue testing the integrity of the valuation system. The committee is supportive of the innovative approach taken by the Valuer General in launching the *Globe Search* website, which empowers landholders to research and, if necessary, query the basis of their land valuations. In closing, I thank the Valuer General and the Director of Valuation Services in Land and Property Information for providing evidence at the tenth general meeting. I also thank my committee colleagues and the committee secretariat for their hard work, support and contributions to this inquiry. I commend the report to the House.

Report noted.

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**Report: Review of the Annual 2015 Report of the Advocate for Children and Young People**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:25): I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to the recent work of the Committee on Children and Young People, in particular the Inquiry into the Review of the Annual Report 2015 of the Advocate for Children and Young People. The report I tabled on Tuesday outlines the process that the committee undertook in relation to this important review. The review drew on the Advocate's 2015 annual report and a public hearing held with the Advocate, Mr Andrew Johnson. The annual report of the Advocate was truncated because the Office of the Advocate was not established until 9 January 2015, and therefore the reporting period was only six months.

However, those six months proved to be very productive in the Office of the Advocate. The office has undertaken consultations with children and young people across a diverse range of backgrounds and is developing a whole-of-government strategic plan for children and young people. I know this work will help us to deliver happy childhoods and brighter futures for this generation and hopefully many more to come. In addition to consulting with children and young people, the committee was pleased to hear that the Advocate has been actively seeking input from both government and non-government organisations in the preparation of this three-year strategic plan for children and young people in New South Wales.

The committee looks forward to hearing about the ongoing work of the Advocate, particularly in the context of his Participation Advisory Committee, which includes Professor Anne Graham, from Southern Cross University; Ms Gillian Calvert, the inaugural NSW Commissioner for Children and Young People; Ms Samia Michail, from UnitingCare; Mr Jono Nicolas, from ReachOut; Dr Tim Moore, from the Australian Catholic University; Ms Robyn Monro Miller, the Chief Executive Officer on Network of Community Activities; Ms Peta Gillies, the Chief Executive Officer NSW and ACT Girl Guides; and Ms Lynne Searle, Principle of Gosford High School.

The committee thanks the Advocate for his leadership during both the establishment of the office and the research phase of the strategic plan. The committee notes the work of Mr Gregor Macafie and the staff of the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People during this review and thanks them for their assistance. I take this opportunity to particularly thank my colleague in the other place the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, who has been a great contributor to the work of the committee. She brought a clear perspective, an inquiring mind, and a good deal of wit and intellect to the work of the committee, and I am sure that these qualities have led to her elevation to the position of parliamentary secretary. The statute that provides the framework for the work of the Committee on Children and Young People, the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014, unfortunately precludes parliamentary secretaries from serving on our committee. For this reason, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor has been discharged from the committee. I was pleased to hear just yesterday that she has been replaced on the committee by the Hon. Ben Franklin, whom I am confident will be a great contributor to the work of the committee. He joins me and my colleagues in this place—Mr Damian Tudehope, Mr Michael Johnsen and Ms Jodie Harrison—as well as our colleagues in the other place—the Hon. Greg Donnelly and the Hon. Paul Green—in the important work of monitoring and reviewing the Advocate for Children and Young People and the Children's Guardian e were ably assisted in the preparation of this report by the secretariat, especially Dr Abby Groves and Jackie Linnane. I thank my colleagues for their work on this review and their other work, particularly the inquiry we are currently deliberating on, the report of which I hope to deliver next week. I commend this report to the House.

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 24/56**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:30): I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak about the Legislation Review Committee's twenty-fourth digest for the fifty-sixth Parliament. I will briefly discuss the committee's comments in respect of the two bills introduced into Parliament last sitting week. The committee also commented on seven regulations. The Criminal Procedure Amendment (Summary Proceedings for Indictable Offences) Bill 2016 provides that certain indictable breaking and entering offences can be dealt with summarily.

The committee commented on the right to a trial by jury, but noted the aim of a timely resolution of matters and associated benefits to the accused.

The second bill is the Scrap Metal Industry Bill 2016, which seeks to bring a statutory framework to a previously unregulated scrap metal industry. The committee noted that requiring industry participants to report stolen goods and answer questions may impact on the right against self-incrimination and the right to silence. The committee highlighted that providing the Local Court with the power to close a business premises and remove a right to compensation where the premises was re-opened may unduly trespass on personal rights.

The committee commented on the power of police to enter scrap metal businesses without a warrant and associated powers to take items, noting that this may impact on property rights, the right to silence and the right against self-incrimination. The committee also noted that the issuing of penalty notices reverses the onus of proof. The committee highlighted the power of the commissioner to order the interim closure of scrap metal businesses for up to 72 hours and the inclusion of an unspecified fee in the legislation that businesses must pay to operate. The committee also noted that the legislation empowered the regulations to create offences not exceeding 10 penalty units.

The committee commented on seven regulations. The Fire Brigades Amendment (False Alarm Charge) Regulation 2016 increases the subsequent false alarm call-out fee by more than the consumer price index [CPI]. The Health Practitioner Regulation (NSW) Regulation 2016 requires the compulsory reporting of the mental health status of health practitioners and students, and the keeping of records in relation to the partners of specified patients. The committee noted that these requirements impacted on the right to privacy. The Mining Regulation 2016 includes a ministerial decision-making process with no right of review. The regulation also empowers the secretary to set fees not specified in the principal legislation or the regulation.

The Public Lotteries Regulation 2016 requires individuals to claim their lottery winnings within six years, after which time any right they may have in relation to those funds expires. The regulation has a presumption in favour of publishing the identity of lottery winners, which may affect their privacy. The Sporting Venues (Invasions) Regulation 2016 establishes that individuals banned from one stadium on a list are also banned from the rest of the stadiums on the list. The regulation also requires that individuals provide their names and addresses to officers, which may impact on the right to silence.

The Terrorism (Police Powers) Regulation 2016 ousts the role of the Review Council and the Official Visitor, and prevents legal practitioners from meeting and corresponding with individuals who are detained under a preventative detention order. The committee highlighted that these rights may be fundamental to an accused person when seeking relief and or mounting a defence in the courts. The committee also noted that this was being achieved through regulation, rather than by a scrutinised bill. At this stage I note that nearly all of these regulations have no actual change from their previous situation.

The Workers Compensation Regulation 2016 prescribes certain circumstances in which an employer responsible for a work injury is not liable to pay compensation to the relevant employee. The regulation also limits the number of medical reports admissible in workers compensation proceedings, placing restrictions on advertising and capping certain costs. That concludes my remarks on this digest. I thank the committee staff and members for their contributions, and I commend the digest to the House.

Report noted.

Matter of Public Importance

BIODIVERSITY MONTH

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:34): I am pleased to speak today on this matter of public importance, Biodiversity Month. Biodiversity encompasses every living thing that exists on our planet and the environment in which they live. Biodiversity Month is important in celebrating what is known as the web of life, the interconnectedness of all things in our environment. Biodiversity Month is in September each year and aims to protect, conserve and improve biodiversity. It is absolutely critical that our environments, ecosystems and habitats are preserved for our future generations. Our wellbeing and our enjoyment of life depend on biodiversity, as do our food, our recreation and tourism, our clean water, our rainforests, our woodlands and our oceans.

I acknowledge the good work of peak environmental groups, including the Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales, the Wilderness Society New South Wales, the Environmental Defenders Office NSW, the Blue Mountains Conservation Society and the Colong Foundation, as well as our Landcare groups, our Bushcare groups and our First Peoples' expertise in this space. It is important to note Labor's strong record of acting to protect the environment and delivering every significant environmental reform in Australia. I particularly note the achievements of the Carr Labor Government in New South Wales. Nature conservation was a priority for the

Government in 1995—for example, Carr prevented logging in parts of south-eastern New South Wales by creating the South East Forests National Park along the New South Wales coastal range from Batemans Bay to the Victorian border.

Through a string of new national parks, 120,000 hectares or 300,000 acres of old growth forest and wilderness areas were protected between 1995 and 2000. In 1999 the Carr Government declared 100 new national parks between Nowra and the Bega Valley. It is important that, as the member for Blue Mountains, I acknowledge and pay tribute to my predecessor, Bob Debus. He was the longest-serving and the best Minister for the Environment in any Australian jurisdiction and oversaw the expansion of the national park system of New South Wales by more than one third. He undertook other environmental policy initiatives, including the first program in Australia to successfully purchase water licences for the restoration of environmental flows in inland rivers, cleaner production and remediation laws and the introduction of the first extended producer responsibility laws in Australia.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): The Minister for Corrections will come to order.

Ms TRISH DOYLE: Environmental decisions are rooted in social justice and it is inevitably the poor who pay the most for environmental degradation. It is important for us in this place to acknowledge the impact economically as smart economies gear up to capitalise on the clean energy future proudly draw upon this history and these values in advocating for environmentally sustainable, evidence-based legislation. It is important to acknowledge that the electorate of Blue Mountains is within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. My electorate is unique in that it is a city within a national park. As is well documented, the electorate of Blue Mountains is one of the most fire-prone areas in the world. That was once again sadly demonstrated by the 2013 bushfire emergency. The UNESCO world heritage listing involves particular obligations on the part of Federal, State and local governments. World heritage status requires from us a long-term commitment to environmental protection. During Biodiversity Month it is important that we look to the reasons we need that awareness.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:40): I thank the House—

Ms Trish Doyle: You are very keen.

Mr MARK COURE: This will be on the 6 o'clock news. The Coalition has a long and proud history of protecting the environment. It should be noted that the first Minister for the Environment was appointed by a Liberal-Nationals Government—the Fraser Government.

Ms Trish Doyle: And everything has gone downhill since then.

Mr MARK COURE: No, it has not. Since then, the Coalition has implemented some wonderful initiatives, and I will focus on two of them in my contribution today. When I was a mere candidate for the seat of Oatley—

Ms Trish Doyle: Now look at you.

Mr MARK COURE: I have come a long way since then. The Coalition fought tooth and nail to have Dharawal State Conservation Area declared a national park. In 2001, the then Premier Bob Carr promised he would do that within 12 months, but it did not happen. In contrast, the Coalition Government secured the declaration within 100 days of coming to office in 2011. Of course, that saved the area from mining by BHP-Billiton and prevented pollution of the Georges River. The Georges River headwaters flow through the beautiful Dharawal State Conservation Area, which is in the electorate of Wollondilly, and sprawls into the electorate of Heathcote and other electorates.

More recently, this Government has announced that a container deposit scheme will be rolled out next year. That is yet another practical solution that the Coalition Government has implemented to address pollution. This Government has led the debate on container deposit legislation across New South Wales and Australia, and a scheme should have been introduced decades ago. This State once had a container deposit scheme. However, it was abolished, and it has taken a Liberal-Nationals Government to reinstate it. The Labor Government had 16 years in which to implement one, but it was never mentioned in any of its environment policies during its time in office.

During September we celebrate Biodiversity Month, which aims to promote protecting, conserving and improving our unique biodiversity. This Government is delivering on its election promise to reform the State's complex biodiversity laws to create a modern, comprehensive approach to conserving our biodiversity. The proposed biodiversity reforms will deliver on the 43 recommendations made by the Independent Biodiversity Legislation Review Panel to cut red tape, to facilitate ecologically sustainable development, and to conserve biodiversity in this State.

Under the status quo, the quality of vegetation and biodiversity in New South Wales has continued to decline. That is why we need a system that delivers targeted and strategic investment in conservation to restore our degraded landscapes, which is what the Labor Government failed to do. It is the biggest conservation program on private land in New South Wales, and Bob Carr was never able to deliver it. He could not deliver on a credible and robust conservation program. The Government released a draft package of land management and biodiversity conservation reforms and provided for an eight-week public consultation period. More than 50 stakeholder engagement activities were undertaken across the State, reaching more than 1,600 people. This State has come a long way with biodiversity and preserving the environment since the Coalition was elected. It is delivering practical solutions and saving the environment.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (15:45): During September we mark Biodiversity Month, which gives us the opportunity to celebrate the natural world around us and to take stock of our impact on the creatures with which we share this planet. It also gives us the opportunity to support the community groups and countless volunteers who work tirelessly to nurture our environment. Unfortunately, Australia is one of the worst offenders in the world when it comes to rates of extinction of fauna and flora. More than 1,000 plants and animals are now facing extinction in New South Wales. The best course of action we can take is to stop the bush from being cleared and to protect the habitats of our native animals. Here in our city we must cherish our beautiful, wild places—our parks, our beaches, our backyards and our rivers. We must preserve our city's natural and built heritage and remember that progress does not need to cost us the planet.

Like many people in New South Wales, I am concerned about this Government's attitude to our natural environment. The Premier is tearing up trees along Anzac Parade when other alternatives could have been found. We are losing hundreds of trees across the inner west for the WestConnex project, including the beautiful remnant forest in Wolli Creek, again when other alternatives could have been found. Ausgrid and its contractors continue to butcher trees in Haberfield, Ashfield, Leichhardt, and Annandale without a word of criticism from the Government. This Government's brutal land clearing legislation will result in the destruction of countless hectares of bush, all of which is vital habitat for this State's native animals. The legislation is so bad that even the NSW Farmers Federation does not support it.

Why are our wild places under siege? It is because this Premier will not let our invaluable urban and natural environment stand in the way of developer profits. We see that again and again. However, there is another way. I am proud to belong to a party that has a strong record of protecting biodiversity. As the member for Blue Mountains said, the Carr Government reduced land clearing from 100,000 hectares a year to only 12,000 hectares a year, and that had a direct impact on biodiversity. It is estimated that 53,000 native mammals have been spared from death each year as a result of that action. We can protect our environment if we want to.

I saw a great example of that in my electorate last weekend. Tempe Lands was a tip 20 years ago. However, community groups, including the Tempe Birdos—who have now spotted more than 100 birds in this beautiful, newly created wetland—have worked hard to bring the area back to life. Every Biodiversity Month we congratulate the wonderful community groups like the Birdos, the Mudcrabs, the Cooks River Valley Association, and the countless volunteers who work so hard to protect our precious biodiversity and our wild places.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (15:48): By leave: Like all members, I believe we should be good custodians of the Earth. Biodiversity Month is a great opportunity for us as the parliamentarians of New South Wales to ensure we all understand the need to maintain our planet and to pass it on in better condition than it was when we inherited it. I am horrified when I hear the political drivel from members opposite about having the moral high ground when it comes to the environment. The member for Oatley correctly stated that it was a Federal Liberal Government that appointed the first Minister for the Environment.

What the member for Oatley was not able to say in his allotted time is that this Chamber was the home of the very Premier, Tom Lewis, who introduced royal national parks to this State. It was a Liberal Premier who introduced the notion of the national park. Members of this House who want to present themselves as having environmental credentials need to read history and make sure that the appropriate level of recognition is given. It was Nick Greiner and Wal Murray, on forming government in 1988, who established the Environment Protection Authority [EPA].

Those opposite—while making all sorts of promises during the years they were in government and when Bob Carr himself was the environment Minister—failed to establish a jurisdiction such as the EPA through which the environment would be protected. Members opposite talk about the trees on Anzac Parade. What they do not say is that the ultimate benefit of the Anzac Parade redevelopment will be better, cheaper and more reliable public transport, which, one would hope, will mean fewer cars on the road and less carbon dioxide in the environment. I do not understand how turning a public thoroughfare into a public rail network is a bad thing. Is that not what

we want and need in our cities? The introduction of more public transport makes our cities more environmentally friendly.

Ms Jo Haylen: We just suggest that you should look at alternatives.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: The member for Summer Hill interjects. I suspect she has never spent a day on a farm. If she did, she would know that farmers are the best environmentalists because they rely on the soil on which they toil for their living. If those opposite are opposed to farmers and think they are so much better than this side of the House, they should read the history. If they did, they would understand that this side of the Parliament is the natural protector of the environment. [*Time expired.*]

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:51): By leave: I thank the member for Blue Mountains for raising this matter of public importance today. All the screaming and carrying on in this debate means that members are very passionate about the environment. I think that is excellent, but I do not know that parties claiming a badge of honour around environmentalism is useful. My electorate of Ballina is the most biodiverse area in the State. Until recently my father had a hobby farm, both my grandparents were farmers, and my great-grandparents on my father's side were farmers. I agree with Minister Elliott that farmers are at the heart of biodiversity. We saw that today when our future farmers attended Parliament House and talked to members from both sides of the House about their concerns relating to soil quality and preserving our diversity of species. Many people are concerned about the environment, and a lot of people have been contacting my office about legislation that removes no-go zones in particular.

Biodiversity is the variety of all species of plants, animals and microorganisms and the ecosystems within which they live and interact. The core of the issue relating to changes to the law is that biodiversity is extremely complex. The Government has proposed legislation that suggests that biodiversity can be transplanted or offset, despite the unique character of those many interactions. It suggests that our biodiversity can be picked up from one area and put down elsewhere. In fact, the passage of the proposed amended biodiversity legislation will mean the destruction of species in the naive or mistaken belief that we can recreate them somewhere else. As anyone with an understanding of science knows, that is impossible. Biodiversity and its unique chaos of plants, animals, organisms and microorganisms occurs in situ. It cannot be relocated.

The Greens are concerned that if we accept that biodiversity can be relocated, then high-value areas will be zoned for development, if people pay money to do so, and destroyed. The proposition is that an area of native trees that have stood there for decades, if not hundreds of years, can be destroyed and a similar area can be created elsewhere with new plantings. It is not the same; this proposition is nonsense. The original area and its ecosystem will be destroyed and its replacement elsewhere with young plants will never, ever offset the original biodiversity area. The Greens will support any improvements the Government makes to this legislation. Again, I acknowledge the member for Blue Mountains for raising this very important issue. It may not be on the 6 o'clock news but it should be.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:54): In reply: I acknowledge the contributions to this matter of public importance on Biodiversity Month. I thank the member for Oatley, the member for Summer Hill, the member for Baulkham Hills and the member for Ballina. Whilst celebrating those who do good work and raise awareness in this space, it is important that any legislation brought before this place ensures that there are no significant increases in land clearing and destruction of precious native vegetation; it does not reduce habitat for native animals including species under threat of extinction; it does not degrade soil quality and increase erosion which impacts on future food production; it does not reduce water quality and damage creek and river ecosystems; it does not significantly increase development along the coast; and it does not increase carbon emissions that contribute to climate change. That is why in Biodiversity Month we celebrate the efforts of the many environmentalists, groups, individuals and community organisations that work in each of our electorates, including Landcare and Bushcare groups, and who come together across the political spectrum for the protection and conservation of our environment.

I finish by acknowledging today we had a special environment briefing and a screening of the short film *Restoring Earth*, which brought together farmers from across the State. It reminded me of my growing up on a big sheep property and seeing the gullies, the soil erosion and the salinity issues that occurred from large-scale land clearing. It is important for us not only to talk about the issues but also to learn from the images of the degradation of our earth in order to ensure that we do not leave a degraded environment for future generations. I presume in a very short time we will again be debating environment legislation in this place. I acknowledge the work being done by our Indigenous elders and our farmers who are raising awareness about native vegetation clearing. I again thank the members who contributed to this matter of public importance. I urge members to keep talking about Biodiversity Month.

*Community Recognition Statements***THE HILLS ORANGE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL**

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (15:57): It is my pleasure to inform the House of this weekend's highly anticipated Orange Blossom Festival in the Hills shire. The fifty-sixth annual festival is a large-scale, all-embracing community gathering. It encompasses everything that makes life vibrant in my electorate of Baulkham Hills, including food, sport, the arts, community services and local competitions. All of these activities will be celebrated in Saturday's parade and will be followed by evening fireworks. I congratulate the large number of participating groups and especially the organisers who spend all year planning the festival. They incorporate the latest local trends and special events to keep this festival fresh and zesty. It is a fantastic celebration of the community's prosperity, where everyone's interest is catered for and everybody is welcome.

WEST WARATAH PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (15:58): West Waratah Public School is terrific. I congratulate teachers and students at the school on their great achievement at the Hunter Electric Vehicle Festival this month. Lukas, Callum and Daniel took out first place for the fastest car in the Solar Car Sprint Challenge, which is a straight track of more than 20 metres. The boys beat a number of teams from much bigger schools around the region at the competition held at Cameron Park. The race is aimed at first-timers who want to have a bit of fun and learn some engineering and photovoltaic skills. It provides the perfect example of the principles of science, technology, engineering and mathematics in practice.

OLD BAR GUARDIAN PHARMACY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:59): I inform the House that Old Bar Guardian Pharmacy has won the New South Wales Community Engagement Pharmacy of the Year award for 2016. Their success was announced during the recent Pharmacy Assistant Annual Conference. The award is designed to recognise pharmacies that strive to develop a positive team culture and actively engage in a meaningful and consistent way with their customers and community. A member of their staff, Rea Irving, was a finalist for the Assistant of the Year award. The pharmacy has been heavily involved in a number of community events and fundraisers, as well as supporting charities and making donations. I congratulate Manager Jenny Graham and the dedicated staff at that pharmacy. The State award means the pharmacy is now in contention for the national award, which will be announced on the Gold Coast in March 2017.

CITY OF LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:00): I recognise the City of Liverpool and District Historical Society, which celebrated its fiftieth annual Ward and Olive Havard Memorial Lecture on 27 August 2016. The lecture is named after previous presidents of the society, both of whom are well known as local historians not only in the Liverpool historical society but also in the Royal Australian Historical Society. The guest speaker at the lecture was Peter FitzSimons, who spoke on Lawrence Hargrave and his role in aviation. Apart from the inherent interest in the fascinating story of Lawrence Hargrave, it is worth noting that the current suburb of Warwick Farm was once known as Hargrave Park and featured a Hargrave Air Park, making that topic particularly apposite for the Liverpool society. Peter FitzSimons is the president of the Australian Republican Movement, and made a number of appropriate comments in that regard. The event was emceed by society president Glen op den Brouw. The Liverpool society has a long and impressive history, reminding everyone of the significance and importance of local history.

EGGTOBER FOUNDATION

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:01): I acknowledge the work of the Eggtober Foundation and thank it for the work it has done to raise funds to purchase a surgical robot for the Liverpool Hospital. The Eggtober Foundation is a Liverpool-based charity that supports promoting the control and treatment of gynaecological cancers. The charity has recently donated \$200,000 to Liverpool Hospital to help purchase Australia's first da Vinci surgical robot and simulator. The system allows surgeons to operate through a few small incisions and has a magnified 3D high-definition vision system and tiny-wristed instruments that bend and rotate greater than the human hand. This foundation was established seven years ago by Linda Chamberlain and Catherine Potter after Linda had spent some time at the gynaecological unit at Liverpool Hospital. Members may remember that we wore the Eggtober ribbon last session when foundation members came to visit. On a personal note, I am proud that my parents, Scott and Rhonda Gibbons, are ambassadors for this wonderful organisation. I congratulate and thank the Eggtober Foundation.

THELMA DALEY NINETIETH BIRTHDAY

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:02): On 11 September 2016 I had the great pleasure of attending the ninetieth birthday celebration of Thelma Daley at Cabra-Vale Diggers. Thelma was born in Shanghai, China, on 12 September 1926 to Edward and Minnie Bouvier. Thelma has always been a giving and community-minded person. At a young age she sold badges in Shanghai to raise money for the Red Cross. When she arrived in Australia, she helped the Community Aid Office building to become a reality. Thelma also helped in starting up Meals on Wheels. Thelma has been involved with many associations and organisations. She was president of the Fairfield Loins Club, a Justice of the Peace for more than 60 years and a marriage celebrant. She is also a life member of Lions International, Cabra-Vale Ex-Servicemen's Club and the Red Cross. She was also Fairfield Citizen of the Year. Thelma is a true inspiration. I wish her a long and happy life. I look forward to celebrating many more birthdays with her.

OATLEY ELECTORATE SCHOOLS BOOK WEEK

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:03): Last month I had the pleasure of participating in a number of activities at schools in my electorate to celebrate Book Week 2016. The theme this year was "Australia! Story Country" and the event was supported by the Children's Book Council of Australia. I had a great morning at Hurstville Grove Infants School where I was asked to read the *Brave Bear* to students. It was a joy to read the book with Hurstville Grove students in their refurbished library. The school received \$13,000 from the New South Wales Government to paint, carpet, and purchase new furniture for the library, which is now a lovely welcoming place to be. Students shared with me their favourite stories and characters and why they enjoyed reading. Many of them said they enjoyed reading with their parents, which reinforced the importance of reading to my son, James. Book Week is an opportunity to share the joy and pleasure of reading with children, which can open a world full of adventures and experiences.

BISHOP OF PARRAMATTA STUDENT EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (16:04): On Thursday 8 September I had the privilege of attending the Bishop of Parramatta Student Excellence Awards. The awards recognise one year 12 student from each Catholic secondary school within the diocese for their contribution to their school and local community. I congratulate the following students from schools within the electorate of Londonderry on receiving this prestigious award on the night: Isabel Pinaroc from Montgrove College, Orchard Hills; Kristian Vulcik from Wollemi College, Werrington; and Brayden Farnham from Xavier College, Llandilo. They are impressive young people. I particularly mention and congratulate Chantelle Al-Khouri, who received an award on the night. She attends my old school, Caroline Chisolm College, which is a great school. Well done to all the recipients. I wish them all the best as they prepare for their Higher School Certificate exams.

PETER CLARK, BEST NEWS PHOTO AWARD

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:05): I congratulate the *Central Coast Express Advocate* photographer, Peter Clarke, on winning the Best News Photo award at the Community Newspapers of Australia awards for excellence. At a gala dinner last week, held at the Museum of Contemporary Art, NewsLocal won 11 awards out of 16, which is an outstanding result. Community Newspapers of Australia covers 180 titles across the country and represents all major publishers. Peter Clark has been a local photographer for many years and is the consummate professional in capturing the true Central Coast and its people. I congratulate Peter Clark today on his award and wish him many more years of success in his profession.

FRAN CAMERON 100TH BIRTHDAY

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:05): Last month I attended the special celebration of the 100th birthday of Fran Cameron at the Swansea Workers Club. Fran is a Swansea local. She was born in Cessnock to a vaudevillian performer and performed professionally from the age of four until her marriage in 1933. A singer, dancer and acrobat, her enthusiasm for cutting a little rug has never wavered, as was demonstrated by the conga line at her birthday party. Fran has always been an activist, contributing to progressive movements throughout her lifetime. She was a member of the Union of Australian Women, the Peace Movement and the Vietnam Moratorium Movement, and she has been a member of the Australian Labor Party for more than 20 years. Fran continues her advocacy through her involvement with the Swansea Pensioners Group. As her daughter Nicola says, "If there's a cause worth fighting for, Fran will be there." Fran is a mother to six children and has devoted much of her life to her family. It was a privilege to be able to celebrate with the Camerons on this special occasion.

SCOTTS HEAD SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (16:06): Today Scott Balfour from the Scotts Head Surf Lifesaving Club was awarded Rescue of the Month at a ceremony at Parliament House in Canberra. He was awarded his

certificate by the Federal member for Cowper, Luke Hartsuyker. Scott also accepted certificates for other club members involved in the rescue: club president Jason O'Donnell, Peter Dyba, David Brunsdon, Cath O'Donnell and Barry Clow. Scott and Jason used an inflatable rescue boat to save a kayaker who had been knocked off his kayak and washed out to sea in dangerous weather conditions during the east coast low in June. Scott and Jason went above and beyond the call of duty in horrendous weather conditions. Without their bravery and dedication there is little doubt that the stranded kayaker would have died that day. He owes his life to Scott and Jason and the other members who assisted with the rescue. I acknowledge that Scott is also an incredibly respected member of the Rural Fire Service and runs an impressive accommodation business near Scotts Head. I salute the Scotts Head Surf Lifesaving Club.

SYDNEY INNER WEST VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:07): The Sydney Inner West Volunteer of the Year awards ceremony for 2016 was held on 31 August at Lakemba. This event highlighted the outstanding service of volunteers from the Lakemba, Drummoyne, Strathfield and Newtown electorates. Volunteers can easily be described as selfless, caring and compassionate, but those volunteers are heroes. They are more than our everyday heroes and contribute not only to saving the world but also to improving the lives of those around them. In particular I extend my congratulations to the overall recipient of the Volunteer of the Year award, Lakemba resident Ms Farhana Mostofa from the Probashi Bangladeshi Women's Association.

I also congratulate Ms Rose Cox, Ms Elisabeth Pidd, and the Association of Free Migration Agents who received awards for their dedication and service to the community. More than 100,000 people volunteer in New South Wales every year. This event was a great reminder of the importance and power of grassroots community building. I especially congratulate Gemma Rygate and her team on putting together a great event to recognise the value of volunteering across the State.

SEVEN HILLS STUDENT SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:08): It was a great privilege this week to present young Seven Hills constituent Anna Norton with an award for her great efforts representing the State playing soccer. An energetic and superbly talented year 6 student at Metella Road Public School, Toongabbie, Anna comes from a long line of female soccer players. Her mother and older sister also reached high levels in the game. Anna has proudly participated in soccer competitions in Melbourne, New Zealand and Western Australia. Anna is a fantastic example of a young person from the Seven Hills community who is doing the local area proud. I say well done to Anna and, just as importantly, I say well done to Anna's mum and older sister for all that great coaching.

KATOOMBA HIGH SCHOOL BIRIBAN BUSHCARE GROUP

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:09): Last week I had the pleasure to attend the launch of Katoomba High School's Birriban Bushcare Group and cultural space. The group was established as a means of increasing Aboriginal cultural awareness based on the impacts of wet, dry and fire as well as humans on flora and fauna. As part of the learning process, students participate in cultural awareness training. Students then apply this knowledge to the Aboriginal garden. A team of 23 students worked regularly and tirelessly to rehabilitate the school's land. The Birriban group has won a number of awards, including the Junior Landcare Team and Indigenous Land Management Awards.

I acknowledge some of the fantastic Landcare team, including Monica Nugent and Nick Franklin; the fabulous, dedicated teaching and support staff, including Michelle Pauley and Becky Chatfield; and the inspirational mentors, including Peter Christmas, David King, Gary Rule, Elly Chatfield, Steve Ahern and Josh Dodson. I commend the school's leadership in Jenny Boyall and Emma Le Marquand, particularly, and their willingness to engage community in both respecting and celebrating culture and country.

NGUNYA JARJUM

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:10): I offer my congratulations to Ngunya Jarjum on celebrating 20 years of service to our Indigenous community, caring for our kids and providing culturally appropriate care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across the North Coast. I had the pleasure of representing the Minister for Family and Community Services at its twentieth anniversary celebration in Casino last Friday, and it was a wonderful evening. Congratulations to chairwoman Larissa and the board; chief executive officer Lenore and her staff; and all the foster carers for their dedication and hard work. Their only focus is on taking care of our children. From very humble beginnings, and working with a minimal budget, they have transformed not just the organisation but the lives of hundreds of Indigenous kids across the North Coast. They currently foster 141 kids in out-of-home care. On behalf of members of this House, I sincerely thank them for their dedication to caring for our kids.

EMANUEL TSARDOULIAS COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:11): Former Marrickville Councillor Emanuel Tsardoulis loved Dulwich Hill, loved his inner west community and, most of all, loved reading to his kids. There is no better way to remember the light Emanuel brought to all our lives than by naming a beautiful, light-filled library in his honour. The Emanuel Tsardoulis Community Library opened to the public this past weekend. It is a hub for young and old; a quiet place to gather, study, keep connected and read materials in many different languages, or enjoy story time. This vibrant community space is the perfect reminder of how much better Dulwich Hill is thanks to Emanuel's service. Emanuel was a dedicated local representative serving as Deputy Mayor of Marrickville in 2012-13. He was an active member of the State Emergency Service, the chamber of commerce and Rotary. Above all else, he adored his family. I am pleased that Zoi, Stavros and Dimitri have a place to remember their husband and dad. Emanuel was a dear friend and colleague we lost too early.

MACKILLOP LEGAL JUSTICE FUND

Ms LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (16:12): I acknowledge the year 12 legal studies students at MacKillop Senior College, Port Macquarie, for their extraordinary efforts in helping victims of domestic violence. The idea was born from their knowledge of the sickening reality that one woman is killed every week in Australia at the hands of a violent partner. This in turn has a terrible effect on children and extended family members involved.

In reaction to this tragic statistic, the students have established the MacKillop Legal Justice Fund. This fund will help women in the Port Macquarie-Hastings district who are fleeing a violent relationship to access one free appointment with a lawyer to better understand their legal rights and potential family court requirements. The students have started a GoFundMe page and hope to present their first cheque before they graduate in late September. The Domestic and Family Violence Support Service will distribute the funds to its clients. I congratulate all the legal studies students of MacKillop Senior College on creating a legacy that will benefit women and children fleeing violent relationships in their own community.

CENTRAL COAST LIVING OPTIONS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (16:13): Central Coast Living Options Inc. is a non-government, not-for-profit, community-based organisation funded by Ageing, Disability and Home Care and the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services. Its motto is to provide the highest quality care and support, responding to the changing needs of people with a disability. Central Coast Living Options [CCLO] was established in 1996 and is a community based, not-for-profit organisation providing services for the disabled. CCLO is operated by a board of management, including chairperson Judith Andrews, and the very good chief executive officer, Kevin Johnson. Last Saturday night I was pleased to join them as they celebrated their twentieth anniversary at Crown Plaza, Terrigal, with a Roaring Twenties theme. I congratulate the board and the dedicated staff who work tirelessly to meet the needs of disabled and elderly residents on the Central Coast. I have visited several of their group homes in Woongarah. I know they are trying to build some new homes at Gorokan, and I wish them all the best for the future.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) (16:14): I congratulate Newton Real Estate, winner of the best real estate agency award at the recent Sutherland Shire Business Awards. Founded in 2001, the Newton Real Estate team deals in buying, selling and leasing properties across the Sutherland Shire. I congratulate David Newton, the principal. I congratulate the Burraneer Bakery and Deli, winner of the best bakery award at the recent Sutherland Shire Business Awards. The Burraneer Bakery and Deli operates in Woollooware Road, Burraneer, offering a wide variety of goods ranging from cakes and baked desserts to coffee, sandwiches and wraps.

I congratulate Best Fresh Farm Markets on winning the best delicatessen and gourmet food award at the Sutherland Shire Business Awards. It operates at the Village Shopping Centre, Caringbah, and offers a wide range of market fresh fruit and vegetables. I congratulate operators Frank Mirabito and Victor Zappia. I congratulate Loaf Sandwiches, winner of the best new business award at the recent Sutherland Shire Business Awards. Loaf Sandwiches recently reopened at a new, larger location in Cronulla Street, Cronulla. Loaf Sandwiches provides made-to-order sandwiches and serves specialty coffee and a wide variety of baked goods made by the owners Annie, Sam and Kirsty, or their mums and their nan. I congratulate all winners.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS NEW SOUTH WALES BOCCE COMPETITION

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:15): Over the weekend I was fortunate to be invited to the 2016 Special Olympics New South Wales Bocce Competition at Charlestown Bowling Club. The Special Olympics provides sport and leadership opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. Through sport, they foster acceptance and inclusion of all people, especially those with intellectual disabilities. Many of the athletes strive to achieve success, win medals and represent their clubs, their State and Australia, but others come along just to socialise and have fun. No matter what their reasons for getting involved, everyone is made to feel welcome.

This year's competition was the biggest one yet, with 55 athletes and their families and supporters travelling to Charlestown for the weekend to compete for a place in the New South Wales team at the 2018 National Games. It was great to spend time talking with our athletes, families and volunteers about the great impact that sport has on their lives. There was much laughter and talent on show. The Hunter Valley competitors did us proud, proving that having a disability does not have to hold you back. Well done to the Special Olympics New South Wales bocce competitors and the Charlestown Bowling Club.

KIAMA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL AWARD

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:16): I congratulate Kiama Municipal Council on winning an award at the recent Heart Foundation NSW Local Government Awards. Kiama council won this award for prioritising health in our local community through a dedicated health plan and strong alignment with its Community Strategic Plan. The implementation of creative initiatives were also delivered at a relatively low cost through the Garden to Table and the Healthy Cooking for Solo Seniors programs. I acknowledge Kiama councillor Kathy Rice, and Nick Guggisberg, Manager of Community and Cultural Development, who were both in attendance to accept the award on behalf of Kiama council. I also acknowledge Andy Mark, Regional Health Promotion Coordinator for the Illawarra-Shoalhaven Region at the New South Wales Heart Foundation, for the great work he continues to do in our community.

SENIOR CONSTABLE STEFANIE MURRAY RETIREMENT

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (16:17): New South Wales police are some of the State's unspoken warriors, and this is certainly the case for Senior Constable Stefanie Murray, who retires from the NSW Police Force after 36 years of service. Senior Constable Murray commenced her duties with Mosman police in 1980. During her service with the NSW Police Force, Senior Constable Murray also had a short stint with North Sydney Highway Patrol before resuming with Dee Why detectives. The question is: What has Senior Constable Murray not done? She has spent time in Special Operations, and most recently was the Youth Liaison Officer at Ku-ring-gai Local Area Command, where she has participated in many local youth initiatives, including our very own Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Youth Forum at which she was a panellist.

Senior Constable Stefanie Murray leaves the NSW Police Force having made in an incredible impact upon the Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai communities. Her dedication and incredible work ethic is outstanding. Today, we thank Senior Constable Murray for her 36 years of service and wish her all the best for her retirement. Senior Constable Murray represents what is best about the NSW Police Force, what is best about our community and what is best about our country.

PAINT BANKSTOWN READ INITIATIVE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (16:18): On 7 September I was delighted to help launch the Paint Bankstown REaD initiative at Paul Keating Park. It was part of the wider Paint the Town REaD campaign to promote literacy in early childhood. According to the Paint the Town REaD organisation, more than 20 per cent of Australian children arrive at school without the skills required for early childhood education. Paint Bankstown REaD aims to promote literacy in early childhood by motivating parents to read, talk, sing and rhyme with their children so that they are best placed to learn to read and write when they begin school.

I congratulate the Bankstown Community Resource Group and the many different organisations that were part of this great initiative: Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre, Coolaburoo Neighbourhood Centre, Greenacre Neighbourhood Centre, the council, the local Family and Community Services branch, and particularly the Arab Council Australia, which helped launch a booklet encouraging Arabic-speaking families to read to their children in Arabic. It is the fifth year in a row that we have celebrated this great Bankstown reading event.

RAISE FOUNDATION

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (16:19): I bring to the attention of the House the impressive efforts of the Raise Foundation. Raise is a youth mentoring organisation operating in schools across Australia. Over the course of two school semesters, the foundation works with students who are at risk of disengaging from education. Through mentoring, the Raise Foundation supports young people around issues such as physical and mental

wellbeing, relationship building and substance abuse. The mentoring program was established at Burwood Girls High School in 2015, with more than 30 students and TAFE-accredited mentors participating. I congratulate the volunteer mentors and of course the student mentees, who graduated from the program at Burwood Girls High School, which was celebrated on 12 September 2016. The foundation practices by the motto, "It takes a village to raise a child", and it is wonderful to see that such a worthwhile initiative is empowering the young people in my community. I again particularly congratulate the student mentees, who have put so much effort into the program.

MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE SPORTSMEN

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:20): I inform the House about two men from the Myall Lakes electorate. First, I commend a 16-year-old Manning hockey player Wade Harry, who has been selected in the Australian All Schools team to tour Europe next year. The young striker was selected from the national championships that were played in Melbourne and in which Wade represented New South Wales. Wade has persevered through injury for much of the past year, at one point fearing he would have to withdraw from the New South Wales representative team. Wade has been a regular in New South Wales teams for both indoor and outdoor hockey since he was in public school. He has been to Australian championships on 11 occasions, but this will be the first time he has made it to become a member of a national squad.

Secondly, I congratulate Mark Rutledge from the Manning Aquatic and Leisure Centre, who was recognised recently as New South Wales' best lifeguard. The former police prosecutor took on a role at the centre after retiring and is now the team leader at the YMCA NSW run centre. He was named the Aquatic and Recreation Institute's Lifeguard of the Year 2016 at a ceremony in the Hunter Valley. I congratulate both Mark and Wade.

PARALYMPIAN ELLIE COLE

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:21): Today I congratulate Granville's Ellie Cole on her incredible success in winning three medals at the Paralympic Games in Rio. Ellie has won silver medals in both the S9 50 metres freestyle and 400 metres freestyle as well as a bronze medal in the S9 100 metres freestyle. Rio is not Ellie's first Paralympics: She competed at London and at Beijing. In London, Ellie won four medals: gold in the 100 metres backstroke and 100 metres freestyle and the 4 x 100 metres freestyle and medley relays as well as winning bronze medals in the 50 metres and 400 metres freestyle. Ellie has also played representative basketball and in 2014 was recognised with the award of a Medal of the Order of Australia and *Cosmopolitan* magazine's 2015 Sportswoman of the Year. Ellie is an absolute champion. Congratulations, Ellie—everyone in Granville is proud of you.

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS 200TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:22): As the member for Davidson, and Parliamentary Secretary for Trade and Investment, Major Events and Tourism, I highlight the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, 200th anniversary. The gardens are a wonderful attraction and a joy to people who just want to walk on the grass, smell the flowers, hug the trees, listen to the birds, see some Indigenous attractions or have lunch on the lawns. Today I visited the gardens at lunchtime and noticed that "Sweet Addiction" is the first exhibition to open at the Calyx, which is a world-class horticultural space and Sydney's newest must-see attraction. Whether people want to succumb to the seductive sensation of sweet chocolate or just want to take a sanity break from this place, it is worth wandering down to the Sydney botanic gardens and experience all that it has to offer. I congratulate the board of trustees on this wonderful place. I encourage staff from Parliament House and elsewhere to visit it, as it is a special place in Sydney.

LIVERPOOL LOCAL ABORIGINAL EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE GROUP AND COMBINED SCHOOLS NAIDOC CELEBRATION

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:23): I recognise in this House the Liverpool Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and Combined Schools National Aboriginal Islander Day Observance Committee [NAIDOC] celebration, which was held on Wednesday 7 September 2016 at the Miller Public School. The principal of the Miller Public School is Bronwyn York, who played an important role on that day. The students involved were from years 3 to 12 across a range of schools in the area. Particularly involved in the organisation were Brad Bevis from the Liverpool West Public School and Kristy West from the Cartwright Public School. Support was also provided by KARI—or KARI Aboriginal Resources as it is more correctly known—and by the Marumali Aboriginal Health Service. NAIDOC events are important to celebrate, involving as they do a celebration of the oldest continuing existing culture in the world. It is critical for Indigenous students so that they understand their own heritage and have a sense of identity. I congratulate all who were involved.

MIRANDA ELECTORATE BRAVERY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:24): Today I acknowledge Kane Mood and Shane Barrow, two surfers from Caringbah who have been commended for brave conduct in the latest Australian Bravery Awards. The pair were involved in rescuing a group of people from a capsized fishing boat while the surfers were holidaying in Narooma last year. The boat was attempting to cross the Narooma bar when it was swamped by a wave, causing it to capsize and throw all five passengers overboard. With the help of their surfboards, the men helped to get the victims back to shore. While the rescue took only approximately 15 minutes, the quick thinking and bravery of Kane and Shane in that short time saved lives. Kane and Shane are local heroes although, being as humble as they are, they will not admit it. Kane said that most people would have reacted in the same way; yet their calm response is a true testament to their bravery. I take this opportunity to thank both Kane and Shane and congratulate them on their awards, which were truly deserved.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL NOLAN

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:24): Earlier this year I received correspondence from Mr George Smith, who praised a Charlestown constituent, Michael Nolan. Mr Smith described how Michael has done so much for so many people around him. Michael teaches students music and he gives his time freely and donates funds to Young People's Theatre in Newcastle to promote drama, music and the performing arts to children and adults alike. Michael has also helped raise money for breast cancer research and support and has organised fundraising concerts for the Singleton hospital, John Hunter Children's Hospital and Newcastle surf life saving.

Mr Smith wrote that he did not know any other person who at only 26 years of age has given so much to our community and who has flown so quietly under the radar, never seeking thanks or anything in return. After meeting with Michael, I nominated him for a New South Wales Community Service Award. I was truly impressed with his dedication to educating children in music and the performing arts. Last month I was honoured to present Michael with the Community Service Award at the assembly of his former school, St Pius X High School, Adamstown. Michael, you are a worthy recipient.

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE FEMALE FOOTBALL TEAMS

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (16:25): The Wollondilly Knights Senior Australian Football Club has begun to develop its first-ever female team this season. This is part of an overall growth of female participation in the sport and has coincided with the local Wollondilly Redbacks Junior Australian Football Club also looking to establish a junior female team. According to Chris Underwood, President of the Wollondilly Knights, the team will take part in the Australian Football League Sydney Division 2 women's competition. Steps like this are an important part of beginning to ensure that there is female representation at all levels of society, which includes sport. I congratulate both the Wollondilly Knights and the Redbacks on their dedication to making this a reality and urge as many young women in the electorate to get as involved as possible. I welcome all the people who are present in the gallery to support the provision of palliative care services.

BISHOP OF PARRAMATTA STUDENT EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:26): Today I acknowledge all winners of awards at the Bishop of Parramatta Student Excellence Awards that were presented last Thursday. Forty Catholic high schools from across the diocese were represented and a student from each school was acknowledged for their work—not just their academic achievements but also their contributions to their community and to their church communities. I particularly acknowledge three students from my electorate who won awards: Amelia Menouhos from Cerdon College in Merrylands, Rachel Tuala from Delaney College in Granville, and Pierre Saba from St. Pauls Catholic College in Greystanes. They are all making a wonderful contribution to their local communities, which is very welcome.

HOLY TRINITY CRAFT AND FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:27): Today I congratulate the Holy Trinity Craft and Friendship Group in Lurnea on celebrating 40 years since the organisation started operating. This organisation was started by two community nurses who worked at Lurnea Public School and Liverpool West Public School, and it was a way for housebound and isolated people to get out and socialise with other members of the public. The organisers of the group also aim to keep it cost effective—charging only \$1 per session and averaging approximately 40 attendees a week. Organisations such as this are important to the community as they assist in giving elderly residents the opportunity to create new friendships and they provide social interaction. I again congratulate everyone involved with the Holy Trinity Craft and Friendship Group on achieving this wonderful milestone.

BELMONT NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE MANAGER RETIREMENT

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:28): Last month the Belmont Neighbourhood Centre said goodbye to a very special person within its organisation. Sheena Harvey has been the manager of the centre for the past six years and has poured her heart and soul into building her community. She built the Belmont Neighbourhood Centre into a warm and welcoming space for people of all ages and backgrounds. In Sheena's time there the community garden has flourished, establishment of the men's shed has provided a space for men to come and socialise, and a place has been provided for community organisations such as OzHarvest to connect and reach out to people who need help. I have always been moved by the generosity and compassion shown by Sheena and her colleagues at the Belmont Neighbourhood Centre, and the tireless volunteers who help bring it all together. It was sad to attend Sheena's farewell as I know she will be missed, but I also know that she will continue to make an enormous contribution in her new role as a youth worker in Lake Macquarie. Best of luck, Sheena.

TERRIGAL TROJANS RUGBY UNION CHAMPIONS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:29): I congratulate the Terrigal Trojans as they celebrate their first grade premiership win in the Central Coast Rugby Union Grand Final held at the brand-new Woy Woy Oval Stadium last weekend. Their opponents, the Avoca Beach Sharks, were a tremendous challenge to the Trojans throughout the whole game but they were defeated. Before a packed oval, the Terrigal Trojans led the game from the beginning and sealed a 29-19 win over the Avoca Beach Sharks. Well done to the Terrigal Trojans for an outstanding year of rugby union.

EQUESTRIAN CHAMPION KIRSTIE APPLEBY

Ms LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (16:29): I recognise and congratulate Kirstie Appleby on her outstanding performance at the Riding for the Disabled 2016 State Dressage Championships, which were held recently at the Sydney International Equestrian Centre. It was the first time that Kirstie and her horse, Arabella, had competed at the Sydney International Equestrian Centre, but that did not hold them back from winning blue ribbons.

First up, on Saturday morning Kirstie placed first in the Section C Grade 2 test 2.1. She then rode on to win the freestyle test, which is performed to music, on Saturday afternoon. Kirstie followed up these fantastic results by winning her 2.2 test on Sunday. Kirstie combined well with team mates Sui Watts and Samantha Hawes, and their scores saw them placed second overall in the championships. I congratulate Kirstie on her brilliant achievements, which I am sure are just the beginning of a very bright equestrian future. I wish her and Arabella the best of luck in their upcoming events.

*Petitions***PALLIATIVE CARE****Discussion**

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (16:30): The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that New South Wales residents receive appropriate care that meets their palliative and end-of-life care needs. In addressing the petition, it is important to outline the New South Wales provisions for palliative and end-of-life care that currently exist and to highlight the Government's commitment to growing both the specialist palliative care and primary care workforces. In New South Wales, specialist palliative care services are delivered in a range of settings, including in public and private hospitals, in hospices, in community clinics, in residential aged-care facilities and at home. Palliative care in New South Wales is provided through a networked arrangement, with specialist palliative care services supporting and complementing the care provided by our primary care services. This allows some patients to have their palliative care needs fully met by a range of primary care and non-specialist palliative care options.

Under our devolved system, local health districts assess local community needs and provide tailored care to meet these needs. The number of specialist medical and nursing staff alone is not necessarily a good measure of the extent to which the needs of people who are dying and their families and carers are met. A networked approach, which includes formal partnerships, pop-up models of care, multidisciplinary care and consultative arrangements, provides patients with a coordinated and responsive approach to their needs. Additionally, a networked approach provides patients with sustained coverage of their palliative and end-of-life care needs. This is particularly true and important in rural and remote districts, where recruitment and retention of staff specialists is particularly challenging.

The introduction of the New South Wales Government's last-days-of-life home support service in late 2013 complemented existing palliative care service delivery and is an example of a networked approach to

palliative care delivery. To provide patients with more choice in the care they receive at the end of their life, the Government has made significant funding enhancements over the past four years. This funding includes a commitment of \$35 million over four years from 2012-13 for community-based palliative care initiatives; \$3 million announced in the 2014-15 budget for renal palliative care; \$32 million over four years announced in 2015 for community-based palliative care programs; and \$3.45 million for an additional 30 senior nurse positions directed to the support and provision of palliative care.

The focus of these community-based initiatives is to improve access to care and support for people who are dying, their families and their carers including providing home-based packages of support to help patients to die at home, if this is their wish. The three providers of the last-days-of-life home support service—Silver Chain, a consortium led by HammondCare and a partnership led by the South Western Sydney Local Health District—are working with the local health district to offer packages of home-based support to patients and their families and carers. Since 2013, more than 5,000 packages of home-based support have been provided across the State. The total number of packages for 2013-14 was 419, including 179 rural packages. The total number of packages for 2014-15 was 1,985, including 621 rural packages. The total number of packages for 2015-16 was 2,801, including 1,104 rural packages.

This indicates a progressive increase in package uptake over the period 2013-14 to 2015-16 across the State. Earlier this year the Government also launched new after-hours telephone support aimed at patients, families and carers located in rural and remote areas. The Government is committed to growing the palliative care workforce, and has been since 2011. Two new palliative medicine training positions have been established at the Gosford and David Berry hospitals. In addition to these positions, five other palliative care training positions have been funded by the NSW Ministry of Health in previous years. Three training positions have been established for rural generalist trainees in palliative care. I have a personal interest in palliative care. My best friend died in 1988. I was with her when she died and I believe her death was dignified. It was made possible by the marvellous quality of palliative care that she received in the last six months of her life.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:35): Earlier this week I spoke on the issue of palliative care. I welcome and note the interest of those in the gallery, who are here today to bear witness to this petition, which has attracted more than 83,000 signatures from people across the State in support of funding for this vital area of palliative care. I pay particular tribute to Dr Yvonne McMaster, who instigated the petition and is a key campaigner in this area. I acknowledge the efforts of the Cancer Council, particularly Sally Keir and Shayne Connell from the Hunter who have both advocated strongly with me on this issue.

Palliative care is one of the most important and yet unrecognised areas of health care. We spend so much time planning how we are going to live our lives, yet far less time on how we will embrace our death. It is ironic in one sense as no-one knows how long we will walk this earth, but we know we will all inevitably experience death. We are reluctant to discuss our death with our families and loved ones, and yet our preparation for this difficult time can make a huge difference to the impact of our passing on the lives of those we love. With research showing that medical advances mean far fewer of us will die a sudden death, the conversation about how we spend our last days, weeks and sometimes months must also cover how we are looked after. We know that 70 per cent of people want to die at home, surrounded by their loved ones in a safe and comforting place. Unfortunately, only 14 per cent of us get the opportunity to do so.

In my electorate of Maitland and nearby Dungog 79 individuals are currently receiving palliative care so that they, like the Minister's friend, can die with dignity and surrounded by love at home with their families. On Monday the *Maitland Mercury* ran a front-page story on the restrictions of our local palliative care service due to a lack of funding by the New South Wales Government. Fiona Murphy of Rutherford was diagnosed with terminal cancer and given only weeks to live. Her only wish was to die at home surrounded by her family. Between 8.30 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. palliative care nurses provided Fiona with pain relief but, due to a lack of government funding, this care stopped at 5.00 p.m. This meant that Fiona suffered discomfort and pain during the night. With no palliative care nurses available, she could not be administered any pain relief. No-one should have to experience this.

A month ago I made an urgent representation to the Minister for Health after I was contacted by another woman in my community whose father receives palliative care. She too was distressed and agitated due to the lack of available 24-hour palliative care services. Her father also suffered unimaginable pain and discomfort during the night. All she asked for was more funding to ensure that there are more nurses on the ground. To date, I have not received a response to my representation—not even an acknowledgment, not even after I raised the matter in Parliament earlier this week and not even after the Murphy family outlined their concerns in our local paper.

The Minister must listen to our community and act urgently. Our local palliative care service is short staffed and stretched to the limit. More government funding is needed. I find it appalling that not all our palliative

care nursing positions are filled, as it places more stress on the rest of the palliative care team. Lynne Bickerstaff, the Lower Hunter Sector General Manager of the Maitland Health Committee, admitted that two of our nursing positions are unfunded and she recognised the need for a 24-hour service. If, as the Minister says, these decisions are up to the local health district why have they not been funded?

Fiona Murphy's last wish was to die at home, surrounded by her family and in a dignified way without pain. Only a 24-hour palliative care service would have guaranteed that. We must ensure that no-one else has to suffer like she did in her last days. Families who provide palliative care pay a huge emotional, physical and financial price to give people like Fiona Murphy a dignified death and in the process they save our hospital system money and free up beds for those who will recover from their illnesses and injuries. As representatives of our communities we all have a responsibility to fight for vital services. Individuals, families and professionals are calling out for more funding. I urge the Minister to help communities across the State by funding proper palliative care services.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:40): I also acknowledge the people in the public gallery and thank them for presenting this petition. The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that palliative care services meet existing and anticipated future demands in all areas of the State and in all types of institutions or other places where patients require care. This is demonstrated by the Government's annual commitment to specialist palliative care, which supports the delivery of services to be undertaken in a range of settings including public and private hospitals, hospices, community clinics, residential aged-care facilities and in the home.

The Government's commitment is also made evident through the guarantee of funds for community-based palliative care initiatives and programs that are focused on expanding community-based palliative care services, particularly in rural areas; integrating primary care, aged care and specialist palliative care services across the State; expanding support for families and carers; and extending the capacity of palliative care services in New South Wales. These community-based initiatives are complementary services that encourage linkages between specialists, general practitioners, community nurses and other allied health professionals to provide a networked approach to palliative care delivery. This approach to care enables the needs of palliative care patients to be fully met by a range of primary care and non-specialist palliative care opportunities.

My wife, an oncology nurse, was diagnosed with stage four metastatic breast cancer. We have already taken steps to inquire about advanced care directives and we have given thought to palliative care for her in the future if the need arises. It is important for her to have that choice and to have the best care that can be provided when it is needed. In order to ensure the sustainability of a quality trained workforce in palliative care throughout the State the Government has funded five specialist training positions. As the Minister said earlier, one position will be in Gosford Hospital on the Central Coast where I live and another will be at David Berry Hospital.

In addition, three training positions are being established for rural generalist trainees in palliative care. These positions will provide general practitioner trainees with specific training in palliative care medicine. Thirty senior nurse positions, directed to the support and provision of palliative care, have been funded to ensure that quality palliative care services are delivered. The Government is also committed to leading innovation in the way in which health services are delivered and financed. In an Australian first, the New South Wales Government will be exploring options to develop social impact investment initiatives to complement existing palliative care. I have a personal link to palliative care and will do everything I can as the member for Terrigal to work with the Minister in this regard.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:43): I acknowledge that this is the third debate on a petition with this wording presented to the New South Wales Parliament by Dr Yvonne McMaster. Dr McMaster is a tireless advocate for palliative care reform and has to date worked with many people to collect more than 83,000 signatures in support of Push for Palliative reforms. I acknowledge in the gallery today Rita Martin, representing the Nurses and Midwives' Association, as well as people who have travelled from all over New South Wales—from as far as Taree, the Southern Highlands, the Central Coast, the Hunter and the Blue Mountains, to name a few—testament to the breadth of concern for these issues in diverse and disparate communities throughout the State. I also acknowledge the good work of the NSW Cancer Council and advocates throughout the State.

I have met with Dr McMaster in recent months and I spoke in this place a fortnight ago about the need for the New South Wales Government to do more to improve end-of-life care for patients in our hospitals and aged-care facilities and for people who wish to die with dignity in their homes with their families and community support teams around them. Dr McMaster has shown how investment in community-based palliative care would provide net savings to the State while at the same time offering dying people the quality end-of-life care they are calling for. Her colleague Dr Anthony Ireland has estimated that an additional investment of \$27 million would meet the funding gaps and lack of capacity within our health system for quality palliative care.

They calculate that such an investment would reduce costs elsewhere in the health system by some \$140 million, with reduced presentations at emergency departments and shorter average length of stay for patients who attend a hospital. Currently there are around 36,000 deaths per annum where a person had visited a hospital in the year preceding their death, with an average of four hospitalisations per person. This adds up to around 30 hospital bed days per death at a cost of almost \$1 billion. Not only is the use of emergency departments in a hospital an expensive way to manage palliative care; it also produces less than ideal outcomes for patients.

I note the Minister's written response to this petition in which she refers to funding and staffing within the broader health system that will apparently be deployed to provide palliative care on an ad hoc basis. In my view, this is an inadequate response to a growing area of need within the health system. I implore the New South Wales Government to make direct and targeted investments in palliative care, in line with the recommendation of experts like Dr McMaster and Dr Ireland, to ensure better outcomes for the dying and to relieve pressure on our already overstretched emergency departments.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (16:46): By leave: I too recognise in the gallery today all the advocates of palliative care, but in particular Oana McBride, Margaret Pearce and Peter Hurley from the Central Coast, and Dr Yvonne McMaster, who is an advocate along with all of us for this very important cause. I will read some correspondence I received from Oana McBride, entitled "Elsie Green's dream". It moved me to become part of a movement on the Central Coast to raise funds to establish a palliative care hospice, which is something we currently do not have but which is badly needed in the mix of services on the Central Coast. Oana writes:

A palliative hospice with a twist. Who was Elsie? Elsie was my friend and neighbour, a retired RN who was living independently at home despite suffering from cancer. Elsie was single. Elsie devoted a lot of her time to the elderly and would take her 93-year-old friend shopping as well as to and from various appointments.

Elsie loved the children in the neighbourhood and they loved her. Elsie knew she was dying but only had her brother and sister-in-law who lived in Kempsey to care for her.

Elsie lived independently until approx 3 weeks before her death. Elsie had a short hospital stay and then was placed in a nursing home to pass within a week. Elsie felt she was not in the right place to die. She died in pain in an environment which was not designed for end-of-life care.

She had a dream, that a homelike facility could be built so that those unable to end their days in their own home would be given a choice, such as a facility to enable their family and friends to be a part of the dying process in a good way. This would be in a less stressful environment with all the privacy and comforts of home. Elsie delegated her dream to me and hoped that I would achieve this in her place as if walking in her shoes. True to her word, she has been a strong advocate as she and others on the Central Coast raise funds to build a hospice. I hope that in a bipartisan way through members such as the member for Terrigal the New South Wales Government will support the building of a hospice on the Central Coast and we will have the full mix of palliative care services. My father currently has melanoma on the lung. He is not well and is receiving treatment. He does not have private health insurance and will end his days in hospital surrounded by strangers when he passes away. I do not want that for anyone else in our community. I will do everything I can to help this dream come true.

Private Members' Statements

SAMWEL GERGES VISA APPLICATION

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:50): I advise the House of the quite extraordinary treatment by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, primarily by the Australian Embassy at Cairo, of an application to migrate to Australia by Samwel Gerges. These issues have been raised with me by the brother of Samwel Gerges, who is a resident of the Liverpool region, Mr Bessada Gerges. It has also been raised with me by constituents who are involved in and leaders of the Liverpool Coptic Community, including religious leaders. It is a little unusual—although certainly not unheard of—to raise immigration matters in this Parliament, but the fact that I do stresses how extraordinary this case is. Inevitably, because of the nature of my electorate, I have some acquaintance with immigration issues. In 20 years I have never seen a case like this. I have never seen a case where the behaviour of Australian authorities has been so outrageous.

The simple story is that Samwel Gerges applied to come to Australia. The Cairo embassy rejected the application. The applicant, Mr Gerges, applied to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal [AAT]. He won in the tribunal. The tribunal remitted the issue with a recommendation that the applicant met the relevant criteria. The Cairo embassy still refused to issue the visa and has once again rejected the application. He won his case, but the embassy still will not issue the visa. This arrogant contempt of the decision of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal is completely unacceptable.

There is only one of two possible explanations for the Cairo office's behaviour. Either it has a malicious and arguably corrupt determination to make sure Samwel Gerges does not come to Australia no matter what and regardless of whether he complies with the rules set by Parliament, or it is so hopeless administratively, so incompetent and unprofessional and so lacking in proper administrative process that it did not assess his application properly and completely to begin with but assessed only one aspect, waiting for a successful appeal to then find another way to deny him the visa, thus prompting further appeal to the AAT and so on ad infinitum.

If that is what has happened, I would simply say it is in the first two weeks of law school that you learn about principles relating to the finality of justice and the finality of legal processes.

The first application was made by Samwel Gerges to Cairo in September 2013. In January the applicant was interviewed in Cairo. Subsequently, the embassy repeatedly contacted the applicant, sometimes asking for information already provided. In September 2014 a refusal decision was conveyed. An application to the tribunal was lodged in October 2014, resulting in a positive decision in February 2016 remitting the application to Cairo. A phone interview occurred between the applicant and the Cairo embassy in March. Almost six months later, in August, the refusal arrived. It is worth looking at the written decision of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, which I have read. The formal decision reads:

The tribunal remits the application for a child (migrant) (class AH) visa for reconsideration, with the direction that the applicant meets the following criteria for a subclass 101 (child) visa:

- Public interest criterion 4020 for the purposes of cl. 101.223 of schedule 2 to the regulations;
- Cl. 101.211 of schedule 2 to the regulation.

The original Cairo decision criticised a document presented on behalf of the applicant. The tribunal described Cairo's investigations of this as "confused, unhelpful and unsatisfactory". The tribunal found that actions that Cairo viewed with concern were in fact "unremarkable". The tribunal also recorded that it viewed one suggestion made by Cairo as "bizarre". The tribunal pointed to a procedural fairness letter sent to the applicant by Cairo and described the letter's construction as confusing. It followed a different analysis path to that set out in Cairo's decision record. It also points to other inadequacies in the letter.

This was all related to the primary basis upon which Cairo rejected the application. The tribunal's finding was not just crystal clear; it was obviously critical, and some might say scathing, of the original decision-making in Cairo. The fact that when this scathing decision was remitted to Cairo the application was rejected leads to the obvious suspicion that the Cairo decision was motivated by revenge. Of course, it may not have been, and it may simply be pursuing the disgraceful process of not properly assessing the application in the first place. They just get a successful appeal and then try to find another basis on which to reject it.

When the details of the second refusal are considered, the behaviour of Cairo is even more scandalous. They knocked the applicant back because he was not enrolled in full-time study in Egypt. Granted that he had appealed to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and believed he was going to come to Australia, that is hardly surprising. The delay between the Cairo phone interview in March 2016 and the decision to refuse in August—a delay of several months—suggests Cairo may have been waiting to make sure that he was not enrolled. The academic year in Egypt ends mid-year. Additionally, Cairo did not notify of any intention to refuse and did not take into consideration the humanitarian issues it was obliged to consider.

The Federal department's handling of this issue has been a complete disgrace. I contacted the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection subsequent to the Federal election in July when Cairo appeared to be delaying the issue of the visa despite the tribunal decision, but Assistant Minister Alex Hawke replied, refusing to intervene. Perhaps the Assistant Minister and the Minister might care to attempt to ensure that their department adheres to the rule of law, that it not treat tribunals with contempt, and that it not behave in the scandalous manner in which it has in this case.

HOLSWORTHY ELECTORATE SPORTING ADVANCES

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:55): I will provide the House with an update on the sporting advancements that have been made within the electorate of Holsworthy. Last week I attended an event at which the Minister for Sport, the Hon. Stuart Ayres, announced funding for the Liverpool City Archers. I am happy to report that the Government is investing \$200,000 in this wonderful sporting organisation to construct the State's first international standard indoor archery centre. This venue is expected to boost the sport of archery in Sydney, specifically Western Sydney, and will be used for training for the Olympic Games, the Paralympic Games, the Commonwealth Games and the Invictus Games. While I was at the centre the Minister and I saw a gentleman training for the Invictus Games, and I wish him well.

I advise the House that Jonathon Milne won a bronze medal in archery today at the Paralympic Games. I know that all members congratulate him on his achievement. It is particularly exciting because it is the first medal Australia has won in archery at the Paralympic Games in the past 32 years. This new facility will allow the club not only to grow but also to be at the forefront of archery in New South Wales. The club's secretary, James Lavern, summed it up best when he said:

We will have the first indoor archery range in New South Wales allowing us to hold more competition indoors as well as outdoors ... It is going to be good for the sport in New South Wales and in Liverpool.

Dr Geoff Lee: It should be in Parramatta.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: Not everything goes to Parramatta. Liverpool is doing very well.

Dr Geoff Lee: Because of your efforts.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for that endorsement. Aside from the construction of the indoor centre, the money will also be spent on resurfacing the outdoor target area, replacing the target butt stops, and resurfacing the entry road to the facility to make access safer and easier. The club has been operating for the past 40 years out of Helles Park in Moorebank. I have had the pleasure of attending some events, and shooting an arrow, most recently at an archery charity event held to raise funds for cancer research. The Minister for Sport also shot an arrow and almost hit the bullseye. It was phenomenal. I am looking forward to the new facility taking shape.

I am also excited to see the improvements in the overall experience for our archers, from our new starters to those competing at the highest level in this sport. I thank Minister Ayres for his dedication to progressing sport in New South Wales. I also thank Liverpool City Archers committee members Warren Rankin, Norm Lumby, James Larven, Richard Ronnie, Scott Carter, Bianca Gibbons and Mark Stephens for their work in raising funds for this project. This grant from Minister Ayres will go a long way in helping this organisation to move towards its goal of fostering the growth and the development of future Olympic Games and Commonwealth Games archers.

Earlier this year, we were also lucky enough to receive \$50,000 for different sporting organisations in the electorate of Holsworthy through the Local Sports Grants program. Successful applicants included Moorebank Baseball-Softball Club, which received \$17,928 towards the upgrade of drainage on the main diamond at Hammondville Oval; Liverpool City Robins Sports Club, which received \$5,000 towards the purchase of training and game day equipment; Chipping Norton Baseball Club, which received \$5,000 towards subsidising their junior team's uniforms; Moorebank Netball Club, which received \$3,000 towards the purchase of a shipping container for storage at Hammondville Park; and Fairfield Liverpool Cricket Association, which received \$19,072 towards the construction of a new cricket wicket at Paciullo Park, Lurnea.

The main aim of this program is to increase regular and ongoing participation opportunities in sport and active recreation in New South Wales. In the Holsworthy electorate we have seen a number of important upgrades that will make a big difference to our local clubs. The new cricket pitch for Paciullo Park will make a big difference to players, young and old, in our community. I commend the efforts of the hardworking and dedicated Fairfield Liverpool Cricket Association in securing this grant.

It has also been a very exciting time for the Liverpool region and this State with Liverpool's own Chloe Esposito winning gold at the Rio Olympics. Her monumental achievement has been an inspiration to many young women who want to follow their sporting dreams. I was happy to invite the Minister for Sport to attend a civic ceremony at Casula Powerhouse to honour all of Liverpool's Olympians, including Chloe's brother, Max Esposito, and her father who is a past Olympian. This wonderful event truly celebrated the sporting spirit of Liverpool, one that continues to grow. The Liverpool community loves sport and I am happy to see the Liberal-Nationals Coalition Government delivering programs and opportunities to community organisations to further participate in this area.

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (17:00): I commend all State Emergency Service [SES] volunteers across New South Wales—

Dr Geoff Lee: And in Parramatta.

Mr ANDREW FRASER: I note the interjection of the member for Parramatta. In particular, this evening I wish to commend five Coffs Harbour City SES volunteers. In June this year an east coast low caused a huge amount of damage, if not angst, in the Coffs Harbour community and down the coast to Sydney. Indeed, a disaster was declared shortly after that east coast low went through. The next morning I went to look at the damage at the Coffs Harbour marina—it was a Monday or Tuesday morning. The boardwalk had been absolutely smashed and the pontoons in the marina had moved. The amount of destruction really had to be seen to be believed. Over that weekend the SES volunteers were obviously called upon many times. One volunteer was reported in the local media as having said:

The night before the rescue—
referring to the marina—

we'd been out doing all sorts of storm jobs, flood rescues and road crashes ...

All of Saturday was full-on and then about 1.30 a.m. on Sunday we got a message to say water police wanted us at the marina.

We didn't know what the rescue was, we were just told to bring a ladder.

... It was a long, cold night for the volunteers who finished the rescue about 5 a.m.

We made sort of a bridge from the walkway down to one of the pontoons with waves crashing over us ...

We were told to crouch down when the waves came over—they just kept on coming—and to hold on.

One woman panicked when she put her leg through a ladder rung and had to be talked into continuing, but we managed to get everyone to shore.

The five volunteers were surprised to receive a letter last week notifying them of the award.

It was the State Emergency Service Commissioner's commendation for courage. Those volunteers were: Mark Wyborn, Roger Flack, Mike Bergin and two women, Peta Jardine and Susie Moore. The waves that were coming over the north wall into the marina shifted concrete blocks about eight or 10 feet square—they just smashed the pathway—yet those people were out there forming temporary ladders to pontoons in order to rescue people from boats. The average wave height that night was 11 metres; I think they peaked at 13.2 metres. Millions of dollars of damage was done to the marina and boats, yet we had five SES volunteers, people who do this because they are interested in looking after their community, out there having spent a full day on Saturday and the night before conducting road rescues and the types of things the SES do—cutting up trees that fall across houses and roads et cetera.

They were out there at 1.30 a.m. for 3½ hours rescuing people from boats in the marina in the conditions I have just described. I commend them in the highest possible manner for the work they did that evening, putting their own lives at risk and rescuing people from those boats in the marina. Quite often we just take it for granted. I heard on the news this morning that the SES in Adelaide had more than 600 calls for assistance last night. This is the type of assistance these people give so selflessly to us as the public. I commend these brave people, and not just the ones who have been commended but those who do not get commended, who are out there doing the dangerous work while we are all tucked up nice and warm in our beds. I commend each and every one of them for the great service that they give to our community.

SENATOR PAULINE HANSON COMMENTS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (17:05): Yesterday One Nation Senator Pauline Hanson gave her inaugural speech in the Australian Parliament again, and again she chose to malign hundreds of thousands of Australians in a divisive, negative and callous way. Twenty years ago Hanson warned that we were in danger of being swamped by Asians and now she thinks we are in danger of being swamped by Muslims. She is as wrong now as she was then. I am not sure how she is going to react when she realises there are hundreds of millions of people in the world who are Asian and Muslim. She talks of high unemployment and escalating crime and attributes these directly to immigration and multiculturalism even though unemployment and crime rates are much lower than when she was first elected.

I am proud to represent one of the most culturally diverse electorates in this place. More than half of the residents of Granville were born overseas in a non-English speaking country and three-quarters have at least one parent born overseas. Almost 10 per cent of the population are Hindus and almost 10 per cent are Muslims. Many of the Middle Eastern and Asian migrants are devout Christians too. It is a great place and I love it. In the 20 years since Pauline Hanson was first elected, hundreds of thousands of migrants have come to Australia from Asia, particularly from India and China. Overall they have made a great contribution to the communities we represent. Trade between Australia and both China and India has grown enormously, as has cultural interaction.

Personally, my life has been enriched by travelling to India a number of times and sharing in the cultural and religious traditions of the many different Indian communities in my area—Gujarati, Punjabi, Telugu, Bengali, Tamil—and many communities, Hindu, Muslim and Jain. Just last weekend I joined the Telugu community to celebrate Ganesha and then the Gujarati community's Garba event, very different and very significant events for each community. I can say the same for the other Asian countries I have visited and the communities I represent. Returning to Pauline Hanson's latest pet hate, the Muslim community, she is wrong and her views are abhorrent. She claims:

Muslims ... bear a culture and ideology that is incompatible with our own.

This is just utter nonsense. There is no one Muslim culture or ideology. It is an Abrahamic faith with similar origins to Judaism and Christianity—the faith of over one billion people. Hanson claims:

Australia is now seeing changes in suburbs predominantly Muslim. Tolerance towards other Australians is no longer the case.

That is also utter rubbish. Members of the Muslim community have more in common with their neighbours than she is prepared to acknowledge. This is evident in places like Merrylands, Granville and Guildford where Muslims live alongside other Australians. Their passionate football loyalties are divided between the Eels and the Bulldogs,

just like everybody else. Everyone debates which of Granville's Lebanese chicken shops is the best or which Afghan or Persian restaurant in Merrylands is better and everyone complains about the lack of parking at Merrylands station or Westmead Hospital when they finally make it to the top of the waiting list for an appointment. It is not unusual to see women in hijabs taking their kids to Christmas carols in my area, nor is it unusual for non-Muslims like me to be invited to iftar dinners in family homes during Ramadan.

Hanson's other comments about the burqa and halal certification are equally divisive and ridiculous. Women should be free to wear whatever they want, even the tiny number of women who wear burqas. A ban on the burqa would be just as grotesque to enforce as the ban on the burkini in France, where police are demanding women remove their clothes at the beach. As for halal certification, it is not a cost for businesses so much as an investment in being able to access an export market of more than a billion people.

Contrary to what Pauline Hanson said last night about terrorism, the Grand Mufti and other leaders are quick and strong in their condemnation of terrorism whenever it occurs. So to blame all Muslims for acts that are contrary to their religion, even if committed in the name of their religion, is wrong—and not just wrong, it is hurtful. Anti-Muslim sentiment becoming part of public discourse has consequences, as we have already seen, and it must be challenged, not by patronising comments about the level of education of Hanson and her supporters but by argument and facts. The facts are on our side. I was very disappointed that the Deputy Premier did not join Labor in committing to put One Nation last on how-to-vote pamphlets in future elections in New South Wales. His pointing out that they are not yet registered was to avoid challenging Hanson and Hansonism.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Point of order: The Deputy Premier made the point today that the One Nation party is not even running in the by-election. So it is an unnecessary comment for the member to make and she should stick to her topic.

Ms JULIA FINN: I referred to future elections.

Mr Brad Hazzard: That is exactly right, future elections.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! When making private member's statements, members should speak about their electorate and not make political points. The member will return to speaking about her local area.

Ms JULIA FINN: To those who, like the Premier, say Pauline Hanson has a right to hold those views, I say they have a responsibility to challenge them. As a public figure she has a voice, but most people in the communities she chooses to malign do not. The Premier represents them and he should step up. Pauline Hanson has a responsibility as a legislator to make decisions based on information, not misinformation, and on truth, not "truthiness", as Stephen Colbert described things that people do not like to believe, and to represent all Australians, including Asians and Muslims. In making hateful comments, Pauline Hanson, like all bullies, does not like to be refuted or corrected. Like all bullies, she only believes in extending freedom of speech to the person delivering the insult, not to the people she insults who want to respond to and refute her hurtful nonsense.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (17:11): To launch an unsolicited, unfair, unreasonable and unfounded attack on the Coalition was a disappointing and disgraceful use of a private member's statement. This came from a member of the Labor Party, which is part of a body that has recently accepted donations from foreign entities in the cash for comment scandal. We will not be lectured by the Labor Party on these issues. Private members' statements are meant to be used for proper purposes.

Ms Julia Finn: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member cannot take a point of order on a response to a private member's statement.

Mr MATT KEAN: I commend the member for Granville for standing up for her community, but private members' statements should not be used to make political points.

STORM DAMAGE INSURANCE INDUSTRY RESPONSE

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing) (17:12): I raise some issues in relation to the storms that hit New South Wales on 5 and 6 June this year. Members will recall that a very substantial east coast low hit our coastline and caused a great degree of damage up and down the coast, but in my electorate, through Collaroy and parts of Narrabeen, it was particularly profound. Before I comment specifically on the issues I wish to raise, I thank each of the emergency workers who responded at the time of the storm and in the following days, when we were in fear of another east coast low, to try to do the work that needed to be done. It was quite incredible. There were members of the State Emergency Service and other volunteer organisations working through the night; members of our local council,

Warringah Council, were on the front line, the oceanfront, moving sandbags and rocks; and at one point a message went out to all the surf clubs and hundreds of surf club members suddenly appeared early in the evening and worked through the night.

It is not broadly known, but one of the volunteers told me that Premier Mike Baird and Minister Rob Stokes showed up, without attending media, in their surf club uniforms and worked side by side with others. It was a community effort and I thank everybody who helped. Some months later I expressed a level of concern, which I will not raise to boiling point, that some owners of properties who had suffered badly have not been given the same sense of community response that was given that night. The insurance companies are responsible for that lack of community response. Some insurance companies have been obliging and, recognising that people suffered badly during that time, have made every effort to support the owners of properties along the Collaroy beachfront. Unfortunately, I know at least one company that has not done so.

I want to ensure that those insurance companies pick up their game. I will not name today those companies that I am disappointed with—one in particular—but I put those companies and the insurance industry on notice that when life is tough they have an opportunity to show that they are part of the community. They have an opportunity to show that they will step up and go beyond the interpretations of their policies. As I said, some insurance companies have been fabulous in helping residents, but one or two have not been so fantastic. It is sufficient to say at this point that I would not insure with them and many other people would also take that view.

In the public news releases, a number of the insurance companies, and one particular umbrella insurance company, talked about the number of claims. Many thousands of them were noted. I will not identify exactly how many because it would identify the particular insurance company. As I said, I will be respectful to that company and its group of companies. In the news release they highlighted that thousands of claims were lodged and that they were trying to do the right thing and had hired additional employees to deal with the claims. Those people and their families that have suffered are in much need of support. Insurance companies can stand behind the words in their policies or they can duck and hide behind them. In this case, I understand there has been a little too much ducking and a lack of preparedness to support the local community. I make it clear to those insurance companies that we expect better. I will be back in this place and I will name those companies in detail if they do not honour what they claim they will, that is, to support the community.

MILTON-ULLADULLA HOSPITAL MATERNITY SERVICES

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (17:17): I take the opportunity in this limited time to speak about the provision of vital maternity services at the Milton Ulladulla Hospital in my electorate. Despite conducting various reviews and meetings concerning the issue of birthing services at the hospital over two years, the ultimate withdrawal of services by senior general practitioner obstetrician Dr Brett Thompson has led to the inevitable decision made by the Illawarra Shoalhaven Health Service on 1 August to cease birthing services at the hospital. The decision was not made on the basis of funding cuts but on the basis of safety because other doctors had also withdrawn their services. Another experienced general practitioner obstetrician was on maternity leave, which left the hospital without adequately trained obstetric staff to fill the rosters for birthing services.

All birthing services for now will be provided at Shoalhaven Hospital. I emphasise "for now". Understandably, this decision has enraged the Ulladulla community, given the distance from Milton to Nowra and the possibility of road closures on the Princes Highway, which is the only way from Milton to Nowra. While this decision was perhaps unavoidable, it is also infuriating considering the efforts of Margot Mains, Chief Executive Officer of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Health District, and others and their years of work in trying to resolve this issue. I remained optimistic throughout those years that we could achieve an outcome, but the decision was made that it was not to be.

Over the past few years it has been cited that births have been declining at the hospital, but it must be understood that this is not due in any way to a declining birth rate in the area but rather to a determined health service that recommended pregnant women elect to give birth at Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital. A simplistic checklist presented to pregnant women indicated that those who were short, had blood pressure—not stated as necessarily high or low—were Aboriginal or were giving birth to their first or fourth child, to name a few criteria, should elect to give birth at Shoalhaven hospital. Understandably many mothers elected to give birth at Shoalhaven hospital, accepting advice that now needs to be and must be reviewed.

Shoalhaven hospital is an hour away and obviously mothers would be away from their families and their community—clearly not an acceptable situation for any mother, let alone those who could give birth at Milton Ulladulla Hospital without complications. The plight of the Milton Ulladulla Hospital is very close to home for me, as all three of my children were successfully delivered by caesarean section there—albeit more than 30 years ago and under a distinctly different health system; this decision affected me deeply and personally. For almost two years I have lobbied the local health district, the Minister, the hospital and its board advocating always that

we needed at all cost, at any cost, to retain birthing services, which makes the decision more disappointing to me than most people could ever understand.

Unfortunately, some community members have sought to use—and did seek to use before the Federal election—this issue for their own political gain, playing on the concern, fear and understandable outrage of local communities, young families and young mothers. Again I say that the cessation of Milton's maternity services was not an issue of funding but of safety. However, during a recent public meeting on the issue attended by the local area health service, many in our community were heartened by the health service announcement that birthing services would be restored to Milton Ulladulla Hospital and that arrangements were underway to bring about that outcome as soon as possible. I stated at the public meeting that whilst the announcement to restore birthing services was welcome, the community needed to be involved—as it should have been all along—and consulted every step of the way. With this in mind I have invited a number of local mums to be the official consultative group for the community.

Already our group has met to discuss our role and are now members of the model of care group and the steering committee reporting back to the group and the community regarding progress of the return of birthing services. I am indebted to these already busy women who are now involved in the process who are offering their experience and local knowledge to the health service to ensure that the health service lives up to its promise of returning maternity services to Milton Ulladulla Hospital. I sincerely thank some of them—Alison Pakes, Katrina Condie, Rebecca Cameron, Corrine Lynch, Jody Quinnell, Sarah Barker, Katie Greenacre, Sunnee Ord, Anne-Maree Kitchener and many others who have volunteered their time for this battle and to become strong advocates for our community. I make these comments in the House today so that the issue remains foremost in the mind of the local health service until it is resolved and until maternity services are not only restored but also enhanced as soon as possible. I will report back to the House when this occurs.

REDFERN-WATERLOO INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (17:22): Today I pay tribute to the truly revolutionary Clean Slate Without Prejudice youth mentoring program. Started in 2009 as a collaboration by the Redfern Local Area Command and the Tribal Warrior Association the program is the brainchild of the Redfern Local Area Commander, Luke Freudenstein, and Tribal Warrior founder, Shane Phillips. What began as an idea to help address youth crime, school truancy and youth unemployment in the Redfern-Waterloo area has been heralded a success and garnered immediate results for the local Redfern-Waterloo community.

Redfern, to many, is synonymous with the Block and its Indigenous residents. Often, at times, the Redfern-Waterloo Indigenous community is belittled and ridiculed by those with no comprehension of the struggles they face. When all people hear is "how useless your lot are" or "you're a burden on the public purse" they begin to accept that. Why would a child want to attend school, listen to their teachers or obey authority when that child believes that the people who run these institutions think they are worthless? One can imagine how powerful the Clean Slate Without Prejudice program has been to the many young people who have had the opportunity to participate in it.

The program is open to youths between 14 and 20 years of age. Mainly targeting youths with a juvenile record or those identified as being at risk of breaking the law, the program has had remarkable success, particularly with Indigenous youths. The program is no meet-and-greet morning tea affair. It aims to instil routine and discipline in its young participants through boxing and fitness training. The program starts at 6.00 a.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence in Redfern. After the gym, participants also receive numeracy and literacy lessons. After its first year, the effectiveness of the program and its value to the Redfern-Waterloo community was evident. Superintendent Freudenstein attributed a sharp fall in robberies in the Redfern-Waterloo area to the impact of the program on local youths, particularly Indigenous youths.

For individual participants, the gains are immeasurable. The program connects participating youths to mentors and provides them with goals to challenge them, and, most importantly, creates expectations of them. For the participants, the fact that there are people in the community who care so much about their welfare instils hope, self-worth and dignity. It shows not only that they are valued by the community but also, more importantly, that they are part of the community. Stereotypes and barriers are broken down because of the involvement of the local area command and its commander—the ultimate symbol of authority for many. Superintendent Freudenstein is so proud of his officers and the patience, care and hard work they put in for the youth of Redfern-Waterloo. However, the local area command is only one part of this partnership. Local Indigenous leaders such as Shane Phillips—who grew up in the Block—and Millie Ingram have done a great job in getting through to Indigenous youths.

What happens in the gym at the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence is beyond measure. Young people learn to trust not only the police officers and their mentors, but also the institutions that they have grown

to resent. So successful has the Clean Slate without Prejudice program become that the concept has been expanded. In August 2015 the Never Going Back program was initiated. It is geared to Indigenous young people who are currently serving time in prison. Every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday Superintendent Freudenstein transports seven young offenders from Long Bay jail to the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence for 5.00 a.m. sessions. The program aims to rehabilitate young offenders by reconnecting them to the community, providing them with employment training and helping them to locate work. The Never Going Back program is ground breaking in that it removes young offenders from behind prison bars and allows them to be rehabilitated in controlled settings within the community. At the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence gym family members who want to participate in boxing and exercise programs can take part in an offender's rehabilitation.

Program participants spend time on the *Tribal Warrior* boat, where they are taught how to become deckhands and given an insight into captaining the vessel. Along the way they learn social and trade skills, and gain valuable employment training. To me, this is important. It is a realistic approach to rehabilitation that takes place in the community, which young offenders, when released, are expected to become members of and contribute to. As a result, when young offenders are released the outside world is not so isolating to them and they have skills to help them secure a job and the confidence to interact with others in the community. I am advised that two of the initial seven participants have now been released and are engaged in employment. The Never Going Back program is in its early days. However, like its sister program, it is about building trust and relationships with young offenders who are at risk of spending their lives in and out of prison and the community.

LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:28): For the past four years the Liverpool region as enjoyed prosperity, growth and forward thinking. The Liberal-led council has brought Liverpool into the twenty-first century, securing two new universities to operate out of Liverpool, funding new and exciting cultural events, advocating for the community against the Moorebank Intermodal and Moorebank Recyclers proposals, and lobbying the Federal and State governments to provide essential infrastructure to the region. Unfortunately, I fear this is all about to change with a new Labor mayor who looks likely to lead a Labor majority on council, with council possibly returning to the chaos and mismanagement of the Labor years in Liverpool.

The new Liverpool mayor, Councillor Wendy Waller, was formerly the deputy mayor when the council was placed under administration. The administration of the council was brought about by the planned \$800 million Oasis project, for which Councillor Waller voted. A preliminary report on the Oasis project by Professor Maurice Daly found that the council had committed to the construction of the Oasis complex without a business plan, without seeing the financial modelling prepared by Macquarie Bank and without fully appreciating the risks involved. Liverpool cannot afford this kind of mistake and mismanagement, and it is unfortunate that we may see it occur again with this new council.

During the most recent council election campaign Liberal candidate Tony Hadciti and other Liverpool Liberal Party candidates ran on the message, "No ice room in Liverpool". The basis of this message was that Labor had voted against a council proposal to issue a statement making it clear that council will never support a program that encourages the use of illicit drugs in our local government area. Labor did not attempt to amend the motion or to rescind it but voted against the motion, showing it supported a program that encourages the use of illicit drugs in the Liverpool area, such as an ice smoking room. Councillor Wendy Waller and the Labor team had the audacity to say that the Liberals were running an "illegal campaign" as a scare tactic and that this type of decision "wasn't up to council". That hypocritical statement follows the Labor "Mediscare" campaign in the recent Federal election.

Councillors are the voice of their community and have a strong influence on matters such as this. The community has a right to know how their councillors will vote on matters that concern the safety of residents and their families. I have spoken to local residents in relation to this issue and it is evident that the community does not want the program to progress in Liverpool. I have gathered almost 1,000 signatures on a petition indicating that the community is against this proposal. Labor supported the program on the council floor but changed its position in the media just days before the election, when it was politically convenient to garner votes.

This year Labor councillors, with the support of the Independents, passed a budget that defunded the Liverpool Men's Shed, the successful Starri Sari Night festival, the Liverpool Night Markets and the closed-circuit television program. It will possibly cost some council workers their jobs. All these cuts and losses to the community were implemented with an amended council budget that was not balanced or put to the community for comment. These cuts show that Labor does not care about the elderly in Liverpool; the multicultural population, consisting in the main of Indian and Fijian Indian communities; small business; or community safety.

The party of unions does not care about keeping council employees in employment. The change of mayoralty means that the council risks losing the strong fiscal management and community growth that it has

seen over the past four years. We will see instead the decline of a successful Liverpool if Labor's past failures are repeated. Let us hope, for Liverpool's sake, that they are not. I hope that Liverpool will have a successful four years but I fear that it will return to the dark old days.

CLARENCE VALLEY YOUTH SUICIDES

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (17:32): A recent story in the *Daily Telegraph* reported on the abnormally high rate of youth suicides in the Clarence Valley over the past 18 months. It is a sad indictment on the direction in which our society is heading. It is not current news: The Clarence Valley community has ruminated for more than 12 months on why this is happening. It reinforces the fact that the tragedy of youth suicide is not going away. There is no simple solution.

It is difficult to get an exact number of people who have taken their own lives because often the family does not want to talk about it or the cause of death is not definitive. I believe it goes some way to explaining why we cannot find a solution. As a family, as a community, it is still very much a taboo subject. It signals that something is wrong with our family, our school, our community—in fact, our society. We have to talk about this problem openly and frankly. The fact remains that one young person committing suicide is one too many and we have a responsibility to do whatever it takes to protect our young people. That means being involved in their lives, not the virtual lives that exist on Facebook, Instagram or some other social media facade.

Quite frankly, I think this is where half the problem lies. Young people spend 95 per cent of their lives on their mobile phones or tablets talking to their 1,000 Facebook friends and trying to live up to a Walter Mitty image. Alternatively, they open the door to their souls and divulge their most hidden secrets to someone they have never met or had a conversation with. They send personal details and photos of themselves to a total stranger. They have forgotten who the real person is inside them. They replace with a cyber person their family, their schoolfriends, their workmates and the friends with whom they grew up, and it seems that whatever this cyber person tells them or directs them to do is gospel.

The bullying and vilification that comes from social media has a profound effect on young people and has a lot to answer for when we consider their state of mind. As a local member I have had a significant number of young people come to me with their parents to complain about the bullying they receive on social media. It is clear to me that young people cannot filter their Facebook page and many parents have difficulty controlling the cyber conversation and content that rules the lives of many of our kids. I profess I do not know the answer, but it is clear to me that we must develop some social media education and protocols for our children to enable them to maximise the benefits of the digital age as opposed to becoming victims of the technological phase the world is going through. Those conventions should be in place in the home, our schools and the workplace. Our lives—and, in particular, young lives—are ruled by social media. We need to take control if we want build a caring and inclusive real society—like the one we lived in before Pokémon Go came on the scene, when it was fun to catch real crickets and bugs in the garden as opposed to virtual creatures. After all, we live in the real world.

I am not suggesting by any means that living in a virtual world is the root cause of the human tragedy of suicide, but it certainly is at the nub of the matter. Rather than looking to government to solve the problem—because by then it is already too late and anyway government is an institution that provides an institutionalised solution—we as individuals must be more caring. Yes, we do need more mental health services in our hospitals and yes we need headspaces for those who are suffering from acute mental health problems. But just as importantly, we must stop people from reaching the depths of despair whereby they need to be hospitalised or they take their own lives. We must become a more caring and inclusive community. We must watch for signs in our kids, our friends, our workmates, and we must talk to them or their family about what their problem is. We have to put ourselves out there and become immersed in their turmoil. We also need to have mental health services and agencies available for referral.

I know that we have mental health services and agencies available in the Clarence Valley. A recent mental health forum in Grafton carried out an audit of mental health service providers in the Clarence Valley and the number of services surprised the attendees. There is clearly a need to promote those services to the broader public so that people do not feel alone. There is no silver bullet for solving the youth suicide problem in the Clarence Valley. It will take the adoption of a multifaceted approach by the whole community. I know the loss of our kids is hurting the community and they are doing their very best to cope. My call on the New South Wales Government is to provide psychiatric services at the Grafton Base Hospital as a matter of urgency for those people who are in current need while we work as a community on early detection and prevention measures.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (17:35): I thank the member for Clarence for bringing this important issue to the attention of the House. I acknowledge the work he has done to fight for young people against cyber bullying in his community. It is appropriate that he raises this topic because this year more people will die from suicide than will be killed on our roads. Yesterday I had the privilege of hearing the inaugural speech of the

Federal member for Berowra, Julian Leaser, which included a powerful and personal account of the issue of suicide. He was awakened one morning by his mother, who came into his room to tell him that his father had taken his own life. Julian's story is not unique. This year alone hundreds of thousands of Australians will be affected by similar issues. We as a government and as a community need to do more. It starts with a simple conversation. I again thank the member for Clarence for raising the issue in the House tonight.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I thank the member for Hornsby for his comments. I know he has personal experience of this issue.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:39): It is with enormous pride that I congratulate my friend and new Mayor of Lake Macquarie City Council Councillor Kay Fraser on her historic victory at the weekend. Kay has served the Lake Macquarie community as a councillor for the past 12 years. She has significant experience, working across all levels of government throughout her life. When Kay says that as our mayor she will fight for the underdog, I know she will do just that. It is in her DNA to put people first. I was delighted to back Kay, both in her preselection and at the local government election. With Kay leading our Labor team we achieved an outstanding result. Defying the odds, having been written off by many and preferenced last on every ticket in town, Kay's campaign was boots on the ground, grassroots action aimed at listening to the thoughts and suggestions of as many people as possible. The hard work paid off. More than 50,000 Lake Macquarie residents voted for Kay Fraser to become Labor Mayor of Lake Macquarie.

Labor's historic win proves that with hard work and dedication to serving our community we can achieve great results together. It shows that when a candidate is a longstanding member of the local community, knows what is important to residents and is driven by a strong sense of social justice, fairness and equality, people will place their trust in them to lead the community into the future. Labor has set the bar high in Lake Macquarie. I know that Kay will be a fantastic mayor. She is passionate and intelligent and will always put the residents of Lake Macquarie first. I look forward to working closely with Kay as we continue to build on Labor's success in Lake Macquarie. Labor set a very high standard in selecting its candidates for Lake Macquarie City Council—

Mr Matt Kean: Here we go.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I note the interjection. Government members should listen. The same cannot be said for the Lake Macquarie Liberals. In light of the recent release of the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] report on Operation Spicer, which examined electoral fraud and corruption, it is important to consider the choice of candidates the Liberal Party made to represent our community. Government members may not like to hear about it, but I will give it to them in spades. The ICAC report revealed that East Ward councillor-elect Nick Jones was present at every key meeting between his former boss and other senior Liberal staffers where they discussed what to do about having accepted envelopes from property developers.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order—

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: Members cannot take a point of order in this debate.

Mr Gareth Ward: I absolutely can. The standing orders provide that I can take a point of order.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: The ICAC found that the donation in question was deliberately in breach of electoral funding laws. I was surprised.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Swansea will resume her seat while I hear the point of order.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: Mr Temporary Speaker, would you please stop the clock? I had to listen to the same thing from the member for Holsworthy, and I did not utter a word. I was not as disrespectful.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for Swansea will resume her seat.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: The member is using this place to defame people. This is entirely irrelevant to the substance of private members' statements. I ask that she be brought back to the leave of the debate.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Swansea has the call.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: The candidate in the North Ward, Kevin Baker, ran a website that was racist and sexist and contained highly offensive jokes. He was disendorsed by the Liberal Party in 2013. I was surprised that Mr Jones and Mr Baker remained the endorsed candidates following the Premier's comments last week about the local government elections. As members would know, the Premier gushed that the Liberal Party had

preselected outstanding candidates. By endorsing these candidates the Liberal Party and the Premier appear to condone the type of behaviour that they claim to condemn.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order—

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: It is a shame for the Liberal Party—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The member for Swansea will resume her seat.

Mr Gareth Ward: This is an abuse of privilege. It is an abuse of private members' statements. The member has been asked to return to the leave of the debate. She is abusing the privilege of this House to slander people.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! There is no point of order.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I recognise the efforts of our other outstanding councillors Daniel Wallace and Chad Griffith. I also congratulate the member for Charlestown, Jodie Harrison, on the successful four years she spent as Mayor of Lake Macquarie. I note her gracious account of her time as mayor as leading an organisation that quietly got things done. I acknowledge the incredible legacy that she has left for our local community. Her sound leadership has led to a fiscally sound administration.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I thank the member for Swansea and note her time has expired. I direct the member for Swansea to remove herself from the Chamber until the conclusion of private members' statements.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Swansea left the Chamber at 17:44 p.m.]

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (17:45): I, too, congratulate the previous Mayor of Lake Macquarie, the member for Charlestown, on her distinguished service to the community. She is an outstanding community advocate who has served her community with distinction. I also congratulate the new Mayor of Lake Macquarie on her recent election victory. I am glad that the member for Swansea pointed out that the Labor Party has preselected a good community-minded candidate, because this same Labor branch preselected Milton Orkopoulos. I believe Milton Orkopoulos is currently in jail, having been convicted of the sexual assault of a minor. I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Swansea and I congratulate the Labor Party on finally preselecting a community-minded candidate.

POPULATION GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (17:46): I represent concerns that have been raised with me by the people of Hawkesbury on how the Government is managing future population growth. One hundred years ago this year, in 1916, the New South Wales Legislative Assembly passed a bill for the construction of what would become the Sydney Harbour Bridge. This project was not without its controversies, challenges and detractors. But over time, it became more than just another infrastructure project. As Premier Jack Lang noted at the official opening in 1932, the Sydney Harbour Bridge was "a symbol of the things Australians strive for, a bridge of understanding between those who have similar aims and ideals".

This bridge became the sign of a city and a nation coming into its own, a triumph over the dark days of the Great Depression, a mark of dreams realised and ambitions achieved. More than one hundred years later, this same bridge is still being used by hundreds or thousands of us every day—it is the very backbone of our city. And as we benefit from the bridge, we cannot help but be thankful for the foresight, courage and vision of those who came before us for delivering such a project, despite facing so many difficulties. Roads and rail are the arteries of our great city and State, without which we would not function. Today they are more important than ever.

This week we learned that the population of our State will grow to nearly 10 million over the next 20 years, while Sydney, our great global city, will reach 6.4 million people over the same period. Our new citizens and their new families will need smart and targeted investment—such as roads and rail—to increase their quality of life and maintain our reputation as one of the greatest place on this earth to live. No-one can argue against the fact that for many years, under the previous Government, this State was falling behind, as many things were simply deemed too hard. We became used to neglect, mismanagement and failure. We tolerated, and came to expect, mediocrity. We lost faith in our future. But just over five short years ago, this Liberal-Nationals Government was elected with a vision of what New South Wales could be, and we have relentlessly pursued our ambition of once again making it the premier State.

A brighter future is not just a plan; it is carefully created by taking the right decisions today. That is why we are building the infrastructure of the future, now. The Light Rail project will better connect our city to the east. The WestConnex will open up new opportunities for the working families of Western Sydney. The Sydney Metro

will extend rail from our booming north-west region, beneath the harbour, through new underground central business district stations and beyond to Bankstown. New stadiums are being built. New cultural institutions are opening in Sydney's west. A new convention centre will be opened shortly befitting a modern, global city. Our heritage precincts, like The Rocks, are being restored and preserved. Darling Harbour is being revitalised, Circular Quay upgraded, Barangaroo opened and Wynyard refreshed. Everywhere we look, the very basic fabric of our State is being transformed, making it a better place to live for our citizens and families.

We are building a city and a State of which we can be proud. This is our contribution to the world of tomorrow. I know some have concerns over population growth and the challenges that come with it. But I believe that human capital is our biggest asset; that a growing population is a sign of a healthy society; and that our greatest wealth is our people. It is imperative that we do not make the same mistakes as Europe, where forecast population declines will have drastic consequences for its economic system and way of life. As Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said, "Demography is our destiny." Instead, we should understand that when the number of people grow, communities grow, economies grow and opportunities grow.

It is up to us in government to provide the opportunities and the environment where everyone's has the ability to flourish. This is not just growth, but growth done well. We are building on the past while working on the future. This is why governments should be farsighted and forward-looking. Today we celebrate and remember the names of those who built the Harbour Bridge—Premier Jack Lang and engineer John Bradfield. But no-one today remembers the names of those who opposed this great initiative—their short-sightedness is forgotten, as it should be. This Government is building the modern-day harbour bridges all across New South Wales, connecting people and planning the future of the State. We are doing this because we believe in a better life and more opportunities for all our citizens. And ultimately, this is what we are striving for.

PRISON TEACHERS

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (17:51): I am proud to support our teachers and senior educators in New South Wales prisons who stand to suffer under the Baird Government's cruel plans for correctional education. Most particularly I place on record my support for all of the staff at John Morony Correctional complex in my own electorate of Londonderry who do transformative work every day, despite facing significant cuts from this Government. It is well known and well documented that correctional education is one of the most important things that governments can do to ensure that people can be rehabilitated and be given a second chance. Therefore, it makes zero sense to me, and to many people in communities across this State, that this Government would cut the number of educators in our State's prisons and by doing so, provide fewer opportunities for inmates to be given a second chance.

Under the Baird Government's plan there will be no teachers at all at John Morony Correctional Complex. These cuts not only affect the lives of people who are in these jobs, but, most importantly, they remove the educational opportunities and, just as importantly, cause an increased risk in recidivism and trap people in a senseless cycle of criminality. Under the Government's cuts to correctional education, new plans for prison education programs will see 22.5 full-time equivalent positions, including senior education officers, education officers and teachers turned into a total of three clerical positions. This will mean at John Morony Correctional Centre cuts to all 10 full-time positions; at Dillwynia Correctional Centre, cuts from 5½ full-time positions to one full-time position; and at the Outer Metropolitan Multi-Purpose Correctional Centre, cuts from seven full-time positions to one full-time position.

These teachers do remarkable jobs in some of the toughest work environments. I am sure none of us could understand just how difficult it would be to work in a prison teaching inmates to give them a second chance to get out into the world and make valuable contributions to society. The risk of inmates reoffending is mitigated by providing a good education to assist with this rehabilitation. It is simply cruel and it makes no policy sense to remove these opportunities—the opportunities that will allow many inmates the chance to gain meaningful employment later in life. The roles being created by the Minister do not require new teachers to hold any tertiary education qualifications in teaching. This begs the question: Why are these teachers being attacked? It is because they have the audacity to have a tertiary qualification.

It certainly says a lot about the priorities of this Government—and we have learned a lot about those priorities in the last couple of months—that it would lower the standard of education for some of the most disadvantaged people in this State. No-one can deny that teaching at a prison is a highly professional job, and any members of this place who have spoken to prison educators know it is a highly professional and specialist job. No-one should be denying people the right to an education and the right to support on the path to rehabilitation. Lowering educational standards by replacing professional, qualified teachers with clerical staff will not help anyone. This is nothing but a complete cop-out from the Baird Government—another example of how cuts will do more harm than good.

This is why I have used my private member's statement this afternoon to put on the record my proud support for the NSW Teachers Federation in its campaign against this nonsensical decision. Firstly, I support it for the remarkable work that it does each and every day in standing up for our teachers, and particularly the teachers in our jails. The Government likes to come in here and crow about teachers and police but we know it is sacking lots of teachers across a range of areas, and particularly in TAFE, for which I am shadow Minister. Secondly, I add my support to the industrial action that the teachers took this week. The Baird Government needs to be sent, loud and clear, the strongest possible message about cutting teachers in our prisons.

AUSTRALIAN CHINESE COMMUNITY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:57): I acknowledge the significant and outstanding contribution of the Australian Chinese community. I wish each and every member of that community a very happy Chinese Moon Festival. Chinese Moon Festival, the Mid-Autumn Festival, is one of the most significant events in the Chinese community and is marked by the coming together of families and the sharing of a piece of mooncake. Celebration of the Moon Festival highlights the richness of the Chinese culture and reminds us all of how lucky we are to be in a diverse and welcoming society.

Our ties with China go beyond the Moon Festival. This year marks 108 years since the first Chinese consulate in Australia was established, and today China is our largest trading partner, our biggest source of international tourists and a key priority market for our great State. The New South Wales Government is determined to build on this relationship. Two-way trade between New South Wales and China as a priority trading partner already exceeds \$28 billion per year, a figure that is growing at an astonishing 29 per cent each year. Exports from New South Wales to China exceed \$6 billion, with mining, agribusiness and advanced manufacturing leading the way in export products. China is also our largest and most valuable tourist market, with over 300,000 visitors from China each year. That is a 97 per cent increase in Chinese tourists since 2010.

It is an honour and privilege to represent the largest Chinese community in Sydney, a community known for its traditions and its hard work, reflected in the successful businesses built and the contribution made to our local economy. In the electorate of Oatley, almost 18 per cent of the population has a Chinese background. I am aware of the enormous contribution the Chinese community has made to my electorate, the St George community and of course New South Wales. It is a contribution that spans business, culture, innovation, education, tourism and trade.

On Thursday 8 September I hosted an event to celebrate the Moon Festival. I was joined by the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, Victor Dominello, along with more than 200 members of the local Chinese community. We enjoyed traditional Chinese songs performed by Sunny Peng and Peisheng Shang and performances by the Sydney Chinese Dance group. The standout performance of the evening was a group of young musicians called the Musicool Ensemble, who delighted us with Mozart.

I thank Minister Dominello for attending and for his warm, heartfelt speech about the Moon Festival and the significant contribution of the Australian Chinese community in my electorate and across New South Wales. I know the Minister enjoyed the event, in particular the mooncake served. At the centre of Moon Festival celebrations is family. For many Chinese it is a time to reunite with family and friends, light lanterns, share meals and pay homage to the moon. I was lucky to be invited to a number of Moon Festival events in my electorate and across Sydney, including by the Australian Minnan Association and the Australian Fuqing Association.

The New South Wales Government appreciates the many contributions of Chinese-Australians to the economy, culture and social life of our State. Our excellent relationship has been built over generations. I am confident it will continue to grow with future generations regardless of what people such as Senator Pauline Hanson might say. Highly regarded for family values and business skills, the Chinese community is well respected and admired. Their cultural contribution is also appreciated, as is the community's openness and generosity. I wish all of my Chinese constituents and friends a happy Moon Festival. I hope they enjoy time with their families throughout the festivities and indulge in some mooncake.

SAMARITANS RECOVERY POINT PROGRAM

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (18:00): Most people leave prison and rehabilitation programs with the hope of successfully reintegrating into society and starting their lives anew. However, this is not easy and people face many challenges during the re-entry process. Too often people are left feeling alone and vulnerable, making it all too easy for them to fall back into old routines and temptations. That is why I am proud to have the Recovery Point program, run by the Samaritans, servicing my electorate of Charlestown. The Recovery Point program, which I visited a few weeks ago, assists people in the Hunter leaving prison or alcohol and drug rehabilitation centres on their journey to successfully reintegrating and transitioning back into society. They have created a place where these often isolated people can feel safe, accepted and that they belong.

The Recovery Point program is currently funded by the Ministry of Health Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services Program and is now in its fourth year. Each year the program has contact with approximately 150 individuals who have exited corrective services facilities. One of the programs is called Ice Brake, which was developed in collaboration with former ice addicts to help raise awareness of the impacts of ice use and ways to get help. It assists people with recovery and offers them a safe space to talk about any concerns they may have in their day-to-day situations. Another initiative the Samaritans has developed is the Being a Bloke program, which is designed to assist men to become better role models and develop healthier and more fulfilling relationships with the children in their lives. The Spirited Women program helps women with their personal healing and covers topics including values, goals, forgiveness and mindfulness. The Friday Fun Day Activities program addresses social isolation by giving people who have recently exited prison the opportunity to meet new people, have new experiences and learn new skills including cooking, gardening, swimming, ten pin bowling and bushwalking.

It is impossible, however, to address drug and alcohol issues without first addressing essential services. Homelessness is an ongoing issue for people exiting corrective institutions. That is where the Recovery Point aftercare program steps in. It assists people to access essentials such as housing, clothing, internet access and ID and to make contact with Centrelink, health workers and Legal Aid. On site there are weekly visits from Centrelink and Legal Aid staff and twice weekly visits from pharmacological subscribing medical practitioners. Medical, social work and community service students also do placements at the centre to provide further assistance and increase community awareness of the benefits of the program. The programs have led to some amazing success stories. For example, the centre has helped one young woman graduate from the Drug Court with no breaches, which is nearly unheard of.

This young woman has now graduated from TAFE with a certificate IV in community services, and has started a double diploma in mental health and drugs and alcohol. She recently left her partner, who was serving time for the same crime for which she was imprisoned. These choices have helped this young woman to turn her life around. She has now commenced the process to regain custody of her daughter, who was removed from her at birth. This young woman now leads the Recovery Point Consumer Advisory Committee, and in doing so influences the types of programs that are run.

The centre is also expanding its programs to assist people with family members struggling with addiction. However, these programs do not fit into the current funding model. The Community Reinforcement and Family Training program teaches family and friends effective strategies for helping their loved ones to change. The program works to affect the loved one's behaviour by changing the way the family interacts with them. It teaches the family and friends how to help move the person towards treatment and gives them ways in which to help reduce the affected person's alcohol and drug use, whether or not they have engaged in treatment.

The Get Your Loved One into Treatment program is for family members of people addicted to ice. It gives them a new way of relating to their family members who are struggling with addiction. The first group that did this program saw all of the participants have their loved ones make contact with the program. That is an amazing result. Every day the Samaritans recovery program is transforming people's lives. I commend their work and encourage the Government to provide ongoing funding for it and programs like it to ensure that people who leave Corrective Services facilities and those with drug problems can transition back into society.

FORSTER-TUNCURRY GIRL GUIDES

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (18:06): I call on this House to join me in supporting the Forster-Tuncurry Girl Guides request for a \$5,000 grant. As all members know, Girl Guides Australia has played a fantastic role in our communities for many decades. The member for Charlestown has just told us about the impact of ice on our young people, and we know of the many other things that are destroying young lives. That highlights the important role that the guides play. Like other Girl Guides groups, Forster-Tuncurry Girl Guides plays an extraordinarily important role in the electorate of Myall Lakes and in the Great Lakes area.

Members of Forster-Tuncurry Girl Guides have raised \$15,000 to refurbish their hall and to install disabled toilets and a bathroom. As members know, refurbishing buildings can reveal many unseen issues. Unfortunately, when the builder started work he discovered problems with the concrete slab. Rather than using it as a base for the new facilities, he had to install a floating floor. As a result, the \$15,000 that was raised is now insufficient to complete the project. Of course, because the work has been commenced it must be completed. As the local member, I am seeking the Minister's support with a grant of \$5,000. It would take a long time for the group to raise the money by holding lamington drives and so on. This situation is not their fault; I am sure many people have commenced renovation projects only to discover that more extensive work is required, and that means extra costs.

It is not like a home where you can ask your bank for a bit extra on your mortgage or you might be able to ask your relatives to lend you a bit of money so you can get this done. The Girl Guides are not in that position.

This is an important issue to the extended family of the Girl Guides and the local community. As I said, Girl Guides play an important role in the community. We want to encourage every organisation that works with young people and keeps them doing things for the good of the community. Once again, I call on the Government to help the Girl Guides with this \$5,000. I congratulate Suzie McNally, who is an outstanding citizen in the Great Lakes area, on bringing this matter to my attention. I am sure with the support of Suzie and the Girl Guides, who are raising a petition to get as many people in the community to support this, and acknowledging that the Government is sympathetic to these types of causes, we may be able to raise the money. I will continue to fight for this funding.

SUTHERLAND TITANS FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (18:10): Tonight I celebrate the commitment and enthusiasm of the volunteers and players of the Sutherland Titans Football Club. I know this cause is also very close to the heart of Mr Temporary Speaker Lee Evans. The Titans is a unique club that does big things for special needs kids by getting them involved in games with teams in the Sutherland Shire Football Association that have a bye on the weekend. Competing against children from mainstream football clubs is beneficial to the sportsmanship of both teams and epitomises the importance of team spirit. Not only is the Titans the first club of its kind in our region, it is also the only club in New South Wales made up of players who require further assistance playing alongside teams in the mainstream regional football associations.

The club membership comprises inspirational shire residents, many of whom have disabilities, including autism, cerebral palsy and Down syndrome. The club has modified field sizes, teams and playing times to cater for all different abilities and to allow as many children and adults to be involved in the sport as possible. Stewart Teale and his family first founded the Titans in 2004 in order to allow their daughter with special needs to play football—a sport that most of the family members played. In 2004 the Titans started off with eight players aged from eight to 16, and by 2010 that number had grown to 60 and the age intake was expanded to 40. The club has suffered ups and downs since then.

The club now provides players aged between five and 42 with the opportunity to play against competitive teams in the Sutherland Shire Football Association. The opportunity to play against teams in a structured environment provides members with the opportunity to develop confidence in their own abilities and fosters a healthy lifestyle. The club achieves this by encouraging players to play without assistance on the field but also provides them with the opportunity to have their parents play alongside them. Since its beginning in 2004, the club has grown to 134 players and has moved from success to success. It is indisputable that the Titans is truly the embodiment of the community spirit of our shire.

I was proud to join the Minister for Sport, Mr Stuart Ayres, to recently announce that the club is set to benefit from a massive \$200,000 Government grant to relocate to Coachwood Reserve at Alford's Point. This special funding grant, which will provide a brand new home and upgraded facilities at Coachwood Reserve, will be delivered on behalf of the Government by Sutherland Shire Council. Improving this infrastructure will meet the needs of the club to help ensure that our kids benefit from the social, health, educational and cultural benefits of football. The patron of the Titans Football Club, Olympic gold medallist Dawn Fraser, AO, said she was overwhelmed by the generosity of the Government. She said:

This is a very deserving club, and this funding now cements a home for these very special and enthusiastic players.

I acknowledge those who are instrumental to the success of the Titans. I acknowledge the committee: President George Lazarou, Vice President Gordon Watson, Secretary Paul Jenkins, Treasurer Emma Hutchinson, Child Protection Officer Sophie Evans, Ground Control Manager John O'Connor and Uniform Officer Steve Burke. I also thank the general committee: David Cornish, Linda O'Connor and Rachel Spencer. I extend my sincere thanks to each of these individuals for their dedication to making the club a success and for providing the players with confidence and friendship.

The Sutherland Shire Titans committee is a full-time working committee and the club would not be operating without the tireless devotion of these people. I also acknowledge those other buddies who are not currently serving on the committee but who still diligently support the Titans—Adam Powell, Kristie Parker, Bryan Parker, Erin Casey and Amanda Cox—for their day-to-day efforts in assisting the Titans. I also acknowledge former president Matt Brady whose leadership of the club has allowed it to flourish and grow. It is also my pleasure to acknowledge Mr John O'Connor. Mr O'Connor is the parent of one of the players and sets up the fields week in and week out. Without the dedication of all those mentioned, the Titans would not be the resounding success that they have become.

It would remiss of me not to acknowledge the hardworking and consistent support of the Sutherland Shire Football Association, particularly Jeff Stewart, who has been crucial to the success of the Titans. With just over 19,000 players, Sutherland Shire Football Association is the largest grassroots sporting association in the Southern Hemisphere. I am truly delighted that so many people with a disability will be able to engage in this sport due to

the unprecedented grant from Minister Ayres. On behalf of my community I thank the Minister for his support of football in the Sutherland Shire and his particular interest in the Titans.

WYONG ELECTORATE GROWTH

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:15): This evening I raise the issue of growth in my electorate. Last week I spent a couple of hours walking 10 kilometres around the new estates that are springing up in the Warnervale-Wadalba area. I walked along Johns Road, Wadalba; Virginia Road, Warnervale; Louisiana Road, Hamlyn Terrace; Orchid Hills, Wadalba; the new housing development that is being built behind Wyong Hospital; Hiawatha Road, Woongarra; and various locations along Warnervale Road, Warnervale. The growth that is occurring in the area is unprecedented.

There are hundreds and hundreds of new houses that result in thousands more people living in the Wyong electorate. That is a good thing. We have a good lifestyle and people obviously want to live in our area. What I am concerned about is the speed at which infrastructure is being rolled out to cope with that growth in population. Unfortunately, in the past four years since the upgrade to the Sparks Road intersection was completed the only new infrastructure is the building of a new church in Warnervale Road by the Uniting Church. No other new infrastructure is being put in place.

A few issues need to be addressed. I am very worried that the Central Coast regional strategy is still in draft form and has not been completed. I am also worried that we do not have positive timelines for some of the works that need to be done. I will list some of that work now. There is the link road that goes between Sparks Road and the Pacific Highway at Watanobbi. A commitment was made in the lead-up to the election to build this road. It will reduce travel times and take traffic off the Pacific Highway for people wanting to get from Wyong to the freeway via Sparks Road. It is a very important road and one that we need to get finished as quickly as possible.

The North Warnervale railway station is a very interesting one. When I was formerly the member for Wyong—between 2007 and 2011—planning was under way for the North Warnervale railway station. We even had the brochures printed because the work was about to begin. Well, guess what? I lost in 2011 and the brochures were pulped. We have seen nothing about the station since. When I ask the Department of Transport where the station is up to it says it is monitoring passenger numbers even though four years ago when Labor was in power it was ready to start construction.

The Warnervale town centre is a real worry. Woolworths owns the top of the hill where the shopping centre is supposed to go. Woolworths has hit financial problems and is cutting back on its developments but I am hopeful that after a meeting with the local council the town centre will be clearly on their agenda. It is next-door to where the railway station is supposed to be. Both Labor and Liberal governments—credit where credit is due—have built the intersection. The Liberal Government built the intersection into where the new shopping centre is going to go and Labor part funded, along with the council and businesses, the access road into the shopping centre. We have a beautiful intersection with lights and four lanes—it looks great. We have an access road that goes up the hill. You can see it winding its way up to the trees at the top of the hill and then nothing else. The local government and the State Government have done their job and it is now up to Woolworths to meet its commitment and build the new shopping centre that will meet the needs of all these hundreds and hundreds of new houses.

One thing I am really having trouble getting on the agenda is a new high school for Warnervale. Currently we have Wadalba Community School, which was built in 2000, but since then we have not had another high school in that area. The school has about 1,100 students, but with all these new houses and the fact that Woongarra Public School and Warnervale Public School, which were built in the past 10 years, are now full—one is at 96 per cent and the other one is at 100 per cent and is already using demountables—there is going to be a need for a new high school at Warnervale. At the moment all I am asking is that the Government commits to planning the new high school so that the community can be sure that there will be provision for public education at a high school level in that local growth area. I will continue to fight for all of those things on behalf of the community and all those new residents who will move to the Wyong electorate in the next few years.

PICTON STORM DAMAGE

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (18:20): Those who have been to Picton will know that it is a tightly knit community. It is a community full of local treasures in its people. It is a community where one knows its local leaders on a first-name basis and one cannot walk the streets without falling deep into a conversation with one's friends and neighbours. The damage caused by the Picton storm was incalculable. Untold businesses and homes were destroyed, and many more were damaged beyond repair. Those who have been to Picton always note one thing: the dedication of the residents to their local rugby league team, the Picton Magpies. The Picton Magpies have topped the Group 6 Country Rugby League for four years running—and I look forward to watching them

play this weekend in the grand final against Camden, where we will beat them—and Picton residents are quick to coalesce around their team during the footy season.

It was this special bond that Picton has with the Magpies and Wests Tigers that kickstarted a charity venture quite unlike any other that I have been a part of. Wests Tigers—including fans, players, former players and members of the management—organised an 80-kilometre walk from Concord Oval to Picton to raise funds for those affected by the storm. It is humbling to see a footy team care so much about their area, and to see players—many of whom are household names—take the time to walk from Concord to Picton to help local small businesses and families. A number of past and present players devoted countless hours of their time to ensure that the event was a success.

I would like to single out our chief executive officer, Justin Pascoe, of Wests Tigers, and former player Shaun Spence for their organisation of the event and for their professionalism. Having been in close contact with both of these men, I have seen first-hand how much dedication they have shown to making the event a resounding success. On behalf of the people of Picton and Wollondilly, I thank them both for putting our area first and working to help the families that were affected and the businesses that were destroyed by the floods. I would also love to take the time to thank all the players who came along to support the walk.

I thank Mark O'Neill and John Skandalis, who carried buckets to raise donations throughout the walk. Of course, I also thank former Wests player and commentator on *The Footy Show*, Beau Ryan. Beau followed the team throughout the day and did an amazing job advertising the walk. I remember Beau walking around and chatting to local residents in the pub, and I know that his friendliness and supportiveness was greatly appreciated by all the locals. We had a bit of a chuckle about who could run the 100 metres fastest. I decided not to participate in that activity, so therefore it is a one-all draw.

I also thank Ray Hadley from 2GB for promoting the event and walking with me throughout the town speaking to people. The event would not have been as successful had Ray not devoted hours of his broadcasting time supporting and initiating the walk and advertising donations to the relief fund that was set up in conjunction with the Lions Club of Tahmoor. On the night of the walk Ray even came down to Picton and conversed with many of the people there—and there were absolutely thousands. I thank him for making the livelihoods of the small businesses and families of Picton a priority. I also thank *The Footy Show*, which broadcast a feed of the walk to a fantastic and grateful audience. I especially thank Erin Molan, Fatty Vautin and The Big Marn, who not only supported us on the night but also came to Picton the week before to spend some time with the juniors, Picton Magpies. It warms my heart to know that the people of Australia were thinking of Picton during those rough times and donated money to help struggling families.

I thank all those families who supported the event at Campbelltown Stadium, Picton Station and George IV Hotel. Hundreds of local residents braved the cold weather to walk with the Wests Tigers from Picton station to the George IV Hotel, led by Chief Executive Officer Justin Pascoe, Ray Hadley, Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione and me. Members of the Wests Tigers were still collecting money from locals along the route and throughout the night locals donated generously to help their neighbours. In addition to the funds raised before the event, the Wests Tigers collected donations from people across Australia after hearing promotions on *The Footy Show*, and by Ray Hadley on 2GB, as well as by MG on Triple M, who broadcast his program live from the main street of Picton. He came down to spend time with me and to meet the locals.

The funds raised will go towards the reconstruction of Picton and will greatly assist residents to get back on their feet after such a devastating time. I thank the people and I thank the Premier, who has come to Picton on three occasions—once during the storm, once after and again as recently as last week—to meet with residents and to provide support and assistance. I thank everybody who participated in the event.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:26 until Tuesday
20 September 2016 at 12:00.**