



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 22 September 2016

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 22 September 2016

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

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery the friends and family of Ronda Miller, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, who is retiring tomorrow. I welcome in particular her husband, Rob Sutton, and her beautiful daughter, Anna. I also welcome Clerk Emeritus Russell Grove and former Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms Greg Kelly.

[Notices of motions given.]

Announcements

RONDA MARY MILLER, CLERK OF LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The SPEAKER (10:12): As I reported to the House last week, Ms Ronda Mary Miller, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, recently advised me of her intention to retire, with her last day of service being Friday 23 September 2016. I know that she is contemplating that as we speak. Ronda is our eighteenth Clerk and has given 26 years of dedicated service to the Parliament of New South Wales. During her employment with the Legislative Assembly she has held the positions of Serjeant-at-Arms, Clerk-Assistant (Committees) and Clerk-Assistant (Table). She was the first woman to hold all of those positions, which is in itself an achievement. Ronda's greater achievements are the contributions she has made in each of these roles and her leadership of the department.

Ronda's return to Parliament and the Legislative Assembly in 1990 coincided with the hung Parliament. This period was a time of significant parliamentary reform aimed at strengthening the institution and its oversight of the Executive, set against the context of wideranging public sector and administrative law reform. Ronda's contribution to the Legislative Assembly's development at this time should be recognised. As the Legislative Assembly's first Clerk-Assistant (Committees), Ronda supported the development of an expanded committee system and the establishment of statutory committees charged with oversighting independent bodies central to the system of public sector accountability.

I particularly acknowledge the ongoing contribution that Ronda has made in members' ethics and the pecuniary interests regime, particularly her work with the Independent Commission Against Corruption and ethics committees in the years immediately following the commission's establishment and during the development of the first members' Code of Conduct. Ronda's ability to support and advise members in all aspects of their roles and duties as elected representatives is testimony to her commitment to the Legislative Assembly, her legal acumen and the breadth of her knowledge and understanding of Parliament. Always possessing an outward-looking focus, Ronda has stepped up to participate in wider initiatives towards strengthening the institution of Parliament, including the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, parliamentary twinning relationships with the Solomon Islands and Bougainville, and professional development courses sponsored by the Clerks' association ANZACATT.

I am certain that every member of this House will join with me in thanking Ronda for all of the valuable assistance and advice she has provided in her current and former roles. As I commented at Ronda's dinner recently, when I call Ronda she personally answers her phone every time. As I often refer members to her, I imagine that she personally answers her phone to them as well. I know that members value that personal approach and many of them are sad today because of her departure. I have no doubt that Ronda will find new challenges and rewards after leaving the Legislative Assembly. I extend my very best wishes to Ronda for a happy retirement as she enjoys the time spent with her family, in particular her husband, Rob, and daughter, Anna, and her parents and friends. Congratulations Ronda on a wonderful career. I have enjoyed my time with you on many occasions, and I sincerely wish you all the best in the future.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery former officers Pat Broderick and Joe Badetta.

*Motions***RONDA MARY MILLER, CLERK OF LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (10:15): I move:

That the Speaker's remarks with reference to Ms Ronda Mary Miller, on her retirement from the position of Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, be entered in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

I join you, Madam Speaker, in thanking Ronda Miller for her service. All parliamentarians come into the Legislative Assembly with the sole intent of trying to deliver for the communities we represent, and we could not do that without the support of the incredible staff. Having been led by Ronda since 2011, we can be very proud of her leadership not only in this House but also of an incredible team across the Parliament. I remember when you, Madam Speaker, said to me that you had in mind the first woman to be appointed as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, and Ronda Miller was that candidate. We agreed it was an exciting prospect, and, for Ronda, a most deserving one.

Madam Speaker has listed Ronda's many roles—in 1990 as the Clerk-Assistant (Committees), in 1997 as the Clerk-Assistant (Procedure) and in 2003 as the Serjeant-at-Arms. The Opposition might not like to reflect on this, but I remember being in Opposition when being kicked out of this place was a far more ceremonial event, and Ronda did her duties in that regard silently and professionally. I will not say which members were regularly in Ronda's company but there were a few. Ronda also had a role from 1994 to 2011 on the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics, an incredibly important committee. Prior to 1990, Ronda played a further role in the public service as a policy officer in the New South Wales Attorney General's Department. Her career has been in public service.

When the Fifty-fifth Parliament commenced, 46 new members came into Parliament, which presented a great challenge for the Clerk to ensure that those members understood the policies, procedures, practices and customs of this House—I am still trying to get there almost 10 years in. Those early days are bewildering for new members. I remember Ronda being incredibly helpful to me as I tried to adapt to a new world of Parliament. Ronda also has been involved in very important education engagements and has spearheaded the successful Legislative Assembly Public Sector Seminar program. I remember seeing many members of the public sector in the gallery who previously had not engaged with or understood how Parliament operated. It is such an important program and is a testament to Ronda's leadership. I hope that great program continues because many people have told me how helpful they have found it, how much more engaged they are, and how much more they understand their roles as part of the broader public service.

Ronda also has undertaken broad roles internationally. She has a strong passion for strengthening the parliaments in the Solomon Islands and Bougainville in particular, and has played an oversight, mentoring and encouraging role for all those parliaments coming together. I note that Ronda was a very fierce supporter of the work of the Australian Region Commonwealth Parliamentarians Steering Committee. In 2014 she assumed responsibility for the committee's secretariat and worked with colleagues across the world to increase female participation in politics. That is an important part of the legacy Ronda leaves.

Lastly, I note that everyone has individual characteristics that we never talk about publicly. I guess now is the time to talk about them. Julie Bishop is well known for many things, but she is probably best known for her stare. When Julie Bishop stares, look out world. Her stare shows exactly how she is feeling. Ronda does not quite have a Julie Bishop stare, but it is pretty close. As Government members sit here constructively engaging with the Opposition during question time, a Julie Bishop-style stare will occasionally come at us from Ronda. She does it in a very nice way, but it means pretty simply, "Shut up, Premier." As a very good Clerk should do, she reminds the Government that we have a responsibility at all times to reflect well on this place.

Ronda, thank you for the incredible work you have done. Many people may not be aware of your invaluable service to this State in promoting the public sector, good practice and good Parliament. You have encouraged more women to come into politics and have reminded countries that do not have the many luxuries we have of the importance of good public policy and parliamentary procedure. Well done and best wishes on your retirement. On behalf of everyone in New South Wales, I thank you.

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (10:21): On behalf of the Opposition I join the Premier in supporting the remarks of the Speaker. Ronda Miller has served in the finest traditions of parliamentary clerks. She has been most approachable and helpful to all members. Indeed, from a personal perspective leading the party, before I had

served a single day in this House I found the advice of Ronda Miller most helpful and necessary to me. I think there would be very few members who have not benefitted from the sage advice of Ronda Miller. Ronda came to this place with the necessary pedigree to enjoy a successful career serving members of the Legislative Assembly. She has qualifications in the law and has worked in the Attorney General's Department. She has worked on the staff of attorneys general and leaders of the House. Those roles equipped her well to serve the members of this place.

Ronda enjoyed a breadth of experience before assuming the leadership role as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. She served as Clerk-Assistant (Committees), Clerk-Assistant (Procedure) and Serjeant-at-Arms, as the Premier noted. Through her service she gained the necessary experience, qualifications and skills to assume the extremely important role of Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and has discharged her duties in the highest standards of the Westminster system. On behalf of Labor members, I thank Ronda for her contribution as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and particularly for her private advice to all members of this place given in the finest traditions of parliamentary clerks.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (10:23): On behalf of the Deputy Premier and Leader of The Nationals and my Nationals colleagues, I join with the Premier and other members to pay tribute to Ronda Miller for her outstanding support and unwavering dedication to this House and its members. This is the first and oldest Parliament in the nation. History often records the great Premiers, Ministers and members. It notes the great debates and policies—those moments in time that have changed the direction of this State and nation. Those things are only possible because of the officeholders within this place who set the framework and the environment. That is why it is important to pay tribute to outstanding officeholders like the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Ms Ronda Miller.

When I was first elected in 2011 Russell Grove, PSM, led this place as Clerk. Many thought his were big shoes to fill. Ronda did it well. In 2011 I became a Temporary Speaker in this House. Like most members in that position, I sat in the chair and put on a brave face as I pretended to be confident, but I used to always wonder, "What next?" The song that always came to mind was *Help Me, Rhonda*.

Mr Ryan Park: Sing it.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am not going to sing it. I heard the member for Heffron sing a song last night; I am not going to sing today. If Parliament were a game show—and those who watch question time might think it is—Ronda would be the "phone a friend" you would look to for an answer. Members and Ministers sometimes treat this Chamber with disrespect, but Ronda has always treated this place with the dignity it rightly deserves. She represents people who are passionate in the field of politics beyond elected members and those who seek to be its public face. That is a credit to Ronda and all those in this place who allow us to do what we do. I extend our best wishes to Ms Miller for the future. I also offer my congratulations to Helen Minnican on her appointment as Acting Clerk. We wish her all the best as she takes on that important role and tries to control the rabble in this place.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) (10:26): I acknowledge former Clerk Russell Grove, who is in the gallery. It is nice to see him. What is there left to say about Ronda Miller?

The SPEAKER: Say sorry.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Thank you. Previous speakers have rightly lauded the retiring Clerk of the Legislative Assembly for the dedication, patience and knowledge she has shown since her appointment to that lofty and crucial position in 2011, the same year that the Coalition took power. My colleagues and I never thought anyone could fill Russell's shoes, but Ronda has done a remarkable job and taken this Parliament to even greater heights. As Leader of the House I and members from all sides have relied upon Ronda for her guidance and advice on the myriad rules and regulations of this place, which continue to change—probably to ensure that the Clerk stays in a job. The way Parliament operates is very complex and we very much appreciate her knowledge and the knowledge of her staff. Ronda's counsel has always been exemplary and unequivocal.

I have to say that Ronda's love of props is phenomenal; she has a secret passion for props. I have collected all the props I have used and will be delivering them to Ronda's office this afternoon for her to take into retirement as some happy memories. Previous speakers have talked about Ronda's professional life in the Parliament. I discovered that she is a solicitor with qualifications in librarianship, business and technology. I always wondered where she got her death stare, which is able to stop anyone in their path. It must be her librarianship qualification that comes out. During any rough and tumble, Ronda merely needs to cast her gaze in our general direction and there is suddenly complete silence mixed with a certain degree of fear.

Ronda has always dealt with everyone very fairly; it is a shame that she is going. She will be leaving a huge mark not only on this House but also across the Australia and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table [ANZACATT] and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Her work and direction will also leave a mark in a place that I hold very dear—namely, the Bougainville Parliament. I thank Ronda for the magnificent work she has done. It is time to fare-thee-well and on behalf of everyone in this House I wish Ronda the best of health and enjoyment. Of course, we will keep sending copies of updated decisions and the consolidated standing and sessional orders. We will also look forward to giving Ronda a wave as she watches question time on her laptop from home every afternoon. All the very best, and thank you.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (10:30): I join the Leader of the Opposition in thanking the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly for her service. These addresses that occur from time to time are not merely short moments of interruption or indulgence in the day's program, they play an important role in the continuation of the history and traditions of this House; it being part of the 800-year-old Westminster system. It is true to say that without that history and tradition, the glue that binds us all together, from time to time this place would simply be a crass debating society. The Clerk of the Parliament, as the Clerk of the House of Lords and the Clerk of the House of Commons, is an old office. From my research, it goes back to 1360 when the Clerk of the House of Lords was an assistant to the King of the time. I am glad that in these more enlightened days the important resource of the Clerk of the Parliament is not wasted in assisting a monarch but on people far more important—namely, the democratically elected representatives of the people.

The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly was first made permanent in 1860 in an enlightened effort to ensure that the administration of the House was removed from the demands and interferences of day-to-day politics. We must always ensure in this Parliament that politics never interferes with the administration of both Houses—that would be its undoing. We thank Ronda for playing her role in that long tradition. In the past Clerks of the House have achieved certain standards of education and held certain qualifications such as legal, librarianship and the like and, as others have mentioned, Ronda was a librarian. I join with the Leader of the House in saying that it is good to see Russell Grove, Ronda's esteemed predecessor, in the gallery today. Ronda and many of us learnt much from Russell.

From time to time the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, apart from dealing with the business of the House and assisting members with standing orders and the like, is required to give behind-the-scenes assistance. When I was elected as a member of Parliament both Russell and Ronda were very helpful in small things such as the establishment of a well-functioning electorate office, including the selection of staff and being on the phone from time to time when there were difficulties with staff and other matters in the electorate office. Ronda has given all of us assistance in that regard. The member for Maitland, who is the Chair of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, has asked me to thank Ronda. Following the election of the first female Premier of New South Wales, Ronda became the first female Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. On behalf of all the female members of this place I thank Ronda for the assistance she has given them. We wish Ronda all the best in her future endeavours.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (10:34): On behalf of my Greens colleagues in this Parliament, and in the wider community, I thank Ronda for her expertise, professionalism and diligence in her efforts in this place. The role of an approachable Clerk of the Parliament is important not only for Government and Opposition members but also for people like me. I entered this Parliament in 2011. I was the first member of The Greens to enter this place and it can be a daunting place without the resources of the Government and the Opposition. I cherish having someone with skill, expertise, professionalism and approachability, and thank Ronda for the role she has played in assisting me in this place. My election took more than a week to be declared so I missed out on the members of Parliament orientation in this place—I am still learning today. In my time in this place I have appreciated that the role of the Clerk has been filled by someone with such a fair and open mind. Indeed, that has made my job and that of my colleagues much easier.

I not only recognise Ronda today with great pride but also with a focus on the importance of public service. We all recognise the importance of public service and that we should nourish and support those who help to make our democracy so robust. Those in the gallery are the ones who make this place work, and we rely on them. It is important that we acknowledge and support public service in this State. Every public servant, no matter what their job—whether a teacher, nurse, police officer—should be respected. Indeed, we must build a culture in this State in which public service is something that is acknowledged and respected. As members of Parliament we should use public debate to acknowledge how important that is to all of us. Finally, I thank Ronda for her efforts and on behalf of The Greens I wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (10:36): I join with other members of the House in paying tribute to Ronda Miller. I express my appreciation for her contribution to the New South Wales Parliament, especially to me and fellow Independent members of this House. In 2011 Ronda made history by becoming the first female

Clerk of the Parliament in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. She had been a Clerk for a number of years. In 2011 we also had our first female Speaker, the Hon. Shelley Hancock. The following year I was elected to this place in a by-election, and Ronda and the Table Clerks helped me to learn about the opportunities available to me in representing my community. The Clerks play a particularly important role for Independent members as we do not have the same structures as the other political parties—that can be a good or a bad thing depending on who one talks to.

Under Ronda's leadership I have found the Clerks to be immensely helpful and ready to advise—often on very short notice and about complex matters—and to help to find solutions to queries. My colleague Tammie Nardone and I thank Ronda for her quick and efficient support in drafting amendments to statute law or in explaining procedural matters to us. This House, which can at times be a combative environment, relies on the Clerks to ensure that all members know their rights and responsibilities, regardless of their political positions, so that it can run effectively. This is a vital role for our democracy. On behalf of the electorate of Sydney and the former member for Sydney, Lord Mayor Clover Moore, I thank Ronda for her service and wish Ronda and her family a happy retirement.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (10:38): It is a great honour to say a few words about Ronda Miller as she departs this place. It has been reflected on that this is a sad occasion, but I know that Ronda is looking forward to it so I am pleased for her as she enters the next stage of her life. It is wonderful to be here at a time such as this, in a Chamber that is so often adversarial, and see Government members, Opposition members and crossbench members coming together to reflect so honestly on the wonderful work that you have done, Ronda. Of course, that sentiment carries through to your staff and also to the former Clerk Russell Grove, who is with us today. I give a call out to the former Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms Greg Kelly, who I understand is here as well. Those people have served this House so well over the years—certainly since I came here in 2007 and first experienced their assistance.

Your sage advice, as was reflected on by the Leader of the Opposition, your wise counsel and particularly the humour you brought to the way in which that unbiased and sometimes courageous advice was delivered have always been greatly appreciated. I thank you for your time served on the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee, assisting the members of the committee. I reflect on the fact that that might have inspired your decision to leave. It is one area where the hardened members of this Chamber have been able to withstand the death stare that has been referred to. I am sure you will not miss those meetings too much.

Ronda, your service to the Parliament has been wonderful. To achieve such a great position—the highest position that can be achieved in the New South Wales Parliament—is a credit to you, particularly as you were the first woman to take on the role, at a time when the Speaker and a former Premier also became the first women to take on those roles. It has been a very significant part of the history of New South Wales. I congratulate you and wish you all the best in your future. Thank you, Ronda Miller.

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (10:41): Ronda Miller, we entered this place in the same year—I think you got here a little earlier than I did.

Mr John Robertson: You look better than him, Ronda.

Mr ANDREW FRASER: I was about to acknowledge that. I think you have aged much better than I have in this place.

Mr John Robertson: There's no debate about that.

Mr ANDREW FRASER: I still have some hair, mate—you do not have any. I congratulate you, Ronda, on your time here, serving your apprenticeship under the boy from Kyogle, Russell Grove, and putting up with a hell of a lot since you have been the Clerk. I have served on many committees where you have been the Clerk; in fact, I spoke to John Turner this morning. He asked to be remembered to you and said something about a beer on the edge of a lake somewhere on a committee trip on a very hot day. I appreciate the advice you have given me, particularly the advice you gave me in relation to Standing Order 61 early in this Government when I was in the chair during a debate at a rather explosive time. I suggest it was not the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee that made you leave, but probably trying to get those new lapel pins, which has been a struggle in itself.

As I am known as the father of the House, I suggest that you are probably the mother of the House on the basis that you gave birth during your service here, and I understand your daughter is here today. You have raised a family at the same time as working in the rigours of this place where we leave very late at night. You are here normally first in the morning—your car always seems to be in the car park. I congratulate you on managing both those roles, as the mother of the House and as a mother at home. Well done. I wish you all the very best in your retirement. I hope you come back and visit us, as Russell Grove does at times. Every best wish for the future.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (10:44): I speak on behalf of all the women in this place when I say what an inspiration you have been to all of us. I well remember entering this place last year, and the help and kindness that you have shown to all of us, as well as the massive amount of work that you have done in supporting women parliamentarians at both the national level and the State level, and ensuring that that legacy continues. I also pass on the regards of the former member for Maitland Mr John Price. When I entered this place you were the only person he mentioned as someone that I should seek out with any confidence because of your fantastic skills, impartiality, fairness and kindness. You have been a fantastic Clerk of this House and we will all miss you. Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the motion moved by the Premier be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Members and guests stood and applauded.

Bills

LAND AND PROPERTY INFORMATION NSW (AUTHORISED TRANSACTION) BILL 2016

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.

Schedule of the amendments referred to in the Legislative Council's message of 21 September 2016

No. 1 No. 1 [c2016-084] as amended

Page 13, clause 21 (6) (a), line 3. Omit "2 years". Insert instead "4 years".

No. 2 No. 2 [c2016-084] as amended

Page 13, clause 21 (6) (b), line 8. Omit "2 years". Insert instead "4 years".

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10:46): I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

I thank all members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly who contributed to this important debate. The Government is pleased to accept the amendments to increase the job guarantees of employees in the legislation from two years to four years. We accept the amendments willingly as we believe it is the majority view of the Parliament. I am very pleased to commend the amendments to this place.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (10:47): I too welcome the amendments. The only thing I want to say for the sake of the whole Parliament is that as we go through these privatisation and outsourcing programs on a case-by-case basis, the employees are left with different terms and conditions as they exit the public sector. Our electricity workers have been granted a five-year coverage, the Land and Property Information workers in this instance are going to be given a four-year coverage, and some other workers—for example, the Pillar Administration workers—have got a two-year coverage.

It is unfortunate that we have a situation where people are ending up with different levels and layers of protections as they exit the public sector. I hope that as a Parliament we can be a bit more consistent in trying to find the correct balance. It should not just come down to the political pressure of the day or the mood of crossbenchers in the other place. We need to have some consistency because our public sector workers deserve it.

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: DIVISIONS AND QUORUMS

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to provide that until 11.40 a.m. no divisions be conducted or quorums be called.

Motion agreed to.

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2016-17

Debate resumed from 23 June 2016.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (10:49): I make a contribution to debate on the budget estimates and what a fantastic budget the 2016-17 budget was. I congratulate Gladys the great, the great Treasurer. I acknowledge the Parliamentary Secretary and member for Castle Hill as well as the member for Oatley. They both agree with the description "Gladys the great". She is the Treasurer who brought down the fantastic budget, not just for the people of Parramatta but people right across the State. Members will see very few people ever criticise that budget. Mr Deputy Speaker, I know that you are a convert to Gladys the great and you were the person in the party room who got up and commended the Treasurer on the budget. It is a fantastic budget. Again I congratulate Gladys the great because New South Wales has never seen a better state budget with record spending on infrastructure.

We are investing in Australia's largest road and rail infrastructure projects. The Sydney Metro, Australia's largest rail project, is now fully funded at a cost of up to \$12.5 billion and WestConnex, Australia's largest road project at around \$16.8 billion receives \$2.9 billion in this budget. Over the next four years the New South Wales Government will invest a massive \$41.5 billion in transport infrastructure, \$5 billion on health infrastructure and \$2.9 billion on education infrastructure projects. This budget contains significant investment in Parramatta schools and gives a substantial boost to the New South Wales Government's maintenance program.

Over \$100 million will be spent in Parramatta to build two new future-focused schools: a new multistorey Parramatta public school for up to 1,000 students on the existing site and a new multistorey high school for Arthur Phillip High School for up to 2,000 students to be built on the existing school site. And when one sees the artist's impressions of those schools one realises they will be fantastic schools—the flagship future public schools of our State. The redevelopment of Parramatta Public School and the Arthur Phillip school will meet the growth in student populations in and around Parramatta. The new learning facilities will incorporate the latest technology to support high-quality teaching. Teaching spaces will be flexible with movable furniture, allowing teachers to easily configure the space to maximise learning for individuals, small groups and whole-class activities. The works will enhance open spaces, creating a welcoming and accessible school with indoor and outdoor teaching and learning opportunities.

There is also funding for a major upgrade to Rosehill Public School which will provide facilities for up to 1,000 students to assist in meeting enrolments in the growing Sydney west central district. From capital works to priority school maintenance, the budget also invests in other schools such as joint funding for James Ruse Agricultural High School for the construction of a new gymnasium; works to improve accessibility at Oatlands Public School; and millions of dollars over two years on priority and planned maintenance across Parramatta schools.

Finally, the investment in the new schools does not stop here. There is \$30 million to turn the State's heritage-listed Old Kings School into a new primary school which will become the O'Connell Street School. This school will cater for 1,000 students from kindergarten to year 6. Parramatta Public School students will make history by being the first students since the school relocated in the 1960s. They will enrol from 2017 as their primary school undergoes the massive redevelopment I have just spoken about—the new, vertical, Parramatta Public School.

The Old Kings School will take its first enrolments in 2018. The good news is that it may even take those enrolments before then if we get it up and running sooner. With the population of Parramatta growing and the feedback I receive from local residents, there is going to be a strong demand for this school. The school will be a unique mix of heritage sandstone buildings and fantastic new modern learning facilities. It will be an exemplar of adaptive reuse, returning the site to its original use as a school. The Old Kings School will help meet future needs and demand from families living around the Parramatta city centre. Parents who work in the Parramatta central business district will be able to enjoy more accessible school hours that will enhance their lifestyle in terms of being able to work, drop children off and get home in an appropriate time frame. Great cities have great schools and these new schools will build on Parramatta's existing reputation for great schools.

I will take a few minutes to talk about some of our wonderful schools in the Parramatta electorate. I commend Parramatta High School and the leadership of principal Dominic Splatt. I also recognise Lesley Ryan from the parents and citizens committee and the whole parents and citizens team there. Parramatta High School is the former school of the famous Australian cricketer Richie Benaud. I congratulate the winners of the High Resolves national program winners: Ashna Arora, Kim Truong, Denis Xiao, Merrynal Suvindrarajah, and Ayam Shrestha, all from year 11. Their short film about domestic violence aired on *The Project* on Channel 10 and they were invited to White Ribbon Day to present at a local breakfast in recognition of their achievement. Students also competed in the Language Perfect World Championship in Parramatta where the team placed first in New South Wales for Indonesian. I congratulate Luis Israel from year 11 who was placed third in the world in Indonesian and Maryone Joseph from year 9 who received an elite award for being in the top 0.2 per cent for Indonesian.

Students came first in the maths competition in New South Wales; third globally in the Education Perfect Competition; and students also attended the Future Proofing Western Sydney Question-Answer Conference. I commend all the year 11 students, including Stephanie Cook, Charlotte Oliver, Jay Raval and Sharukh Sandhi for their great contribution. I also congratulate Nicholas D'Silva, year 9, on his performance at the Legacy Public Speaking Competition; he got through at the regional level. Year 9 students also scored in the top 70 schools for exceptional growth in reading above average gained nationally in the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN] 2015.

I also congratulate Joshua Toisuta, year 9, who participated in the 2016 Australian Open Water Swimming Championships. Joshua qualified for the national championships and competed at the Sunshine Coast in Queensland where he competed in a five kilometre open water swim in a time of one hour 20 minutes, finishing fifteenth overall in the 13-year-old age group. Joshua also competed in the New South Wales All Schools Swimming Championship where he qualified for a 400 metre individual medley and the 200 metre butterfly. I commend the Arthur Phillip High School and I recognise year 10 student Suawbu Jalloh. Suawbu was involved in a Parramatta council project called Real Men, Real Choices.

The project asks young boys participating from a series of local high schools what it is like to be a young man of this generation. Suawbu spoke of the importance of young boys being in touch with their feelings and being able to break down the stereotype of things that men do not like to talk about. A promotional video was launched and he was part of it. He was included in a panel representing the University of New England. The panel spoke to members of the community on Church Street, Parramatta. He is an outstanding spokesperson on this important issue.

I congratulate Tony D'Amore, the principal of Oatlands Public School, his staff and students, the parents and citizens committee, and parents on the exciting and uplifting National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN] results. I recognise Julie Fewes of the parents and citizens committee for the wonderful work it does at the school. The open day on 3 August hosted a multicultural lunch to celebrate the community's diversity. The channel 7 program *Sunrise* recently visited the school and highlighted the great work it is doing, and the results the students and staff are achieving. Next year the school will celebrate 60 years and will host many celebratory events.

I congratulate Macarthur Girls High School and recognise relieving principal Daniel French. He is a true inspiration to the school and does a fantastic job. I acknowledge the parents and citizens committee member Yasmin Bhamjee for providing leadership to that group. Year 12 student Tanmai Kundap was awarded the University of New South Wales Co-op Scholarship. The school successfully held its science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] showcase, with industry leaders coming to speak and judge student projects. I thank teachers Stuart McGuire, Christopher Johnson, and Cherry Smyth for organising this remarkable event. I congratulate Vaishnavi Yellapu, who auditioned and was selected as a member of the New South Wales public schools drama competition. Parramatta has some fantastic schools—if not the best schools in Australia. It is a privilege to speak of them. There is never enough time to speak of the wonderful efforts of these schools. By leave, I move:

Debate adjourned.

Bills

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS (CARE AND PROTECTION) AMENDMENT (PROTECTION FROM SERIOUS OFFENDERS) BILL 2016

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 23 June 2016.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing) (11:03): I speak to the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Protection from Serious Offenders) Bill 2016. I do not think there is anybody in this House who does not consider the protection of children as a high priority. It is a priority for individuals across the community. I thank various staff in government and non-government agencies who are involved with young people when they are not able to live safely at home. There are incredible frontline workers within the Department of Family and Communities Services [FACS] who, day after day, have to make difficult professional decisions about whether a child should be removed from the family. I am sure that decision weighs heavily on each staff member.

I extend my appreciation and the appreciation of this Parliament to frontline family and community services child protection workers for their work. Child protection workers have one of the toughest jobs there is. They know that when they walk into a family situation they are entering the unknown. Many child protection

workers have told me that from the moment they receive a report from the helpline that determines a child is at risk of significant harm they know they have to do what they can to analyse the situation, weigh the evidence at their disposal and determine how to respond. Some officers have told me that when they arrive at the house or unit they do not know who will be in there. They do not know who will respond or how they will respond.

By definition, if it is determined that a child or children are at risk of significant harm, it has to be assumed that the situation may not be safe for the wonderful staff of Family and Community Services. When they enter the home they have to establish a reasonable connection with people who may have been reported to the department as being extremely challenging or problematic, and in some way hurting, abusing, or neglecting the child or children living in that home. It is challenging for them. This has been a longstanding problem for the community, which struggles to address how to approach this issue. Historically it has been a challenge for both sides of politics.

The legislation that provides the framework and direction for the child protection system—the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998—has been amended many times. It was introduced at a time when there was a focus on child protection in New South Wales and how to make children safer. A number of structures arose from the legislation and one of those was the Children's Guardian. Whilst that legislation was introduced by Labor, it was given bipartisan support. At the time there were challenges, which indicated that the Labor Government of the day had not come to grips with how to deal with the sensitive and difficult area of protecting children at risk of harm. There was a level of excitement on both sides of the House when the Children's Guardian was established as a new regulator who would do good work. That is what happened.

The first person appointed as Children's Guardian was Linda Mallett. She had been appointed for almost two years, and the office had received about \$2.5 million in taxpayers' money, but the regulations pursuant to the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act had not been gazetted because the Labor Party chose not to gazette them. Labor's bona fides on this issue are challenged from the word go. My comments on this legislation are made in the context of that lack of bona fides. At the time I said on behalf of the Liberal-Nationals Opposition that to fill the position following the passing of the legislation, but to fail to gazette and empower the person appointed as Children's Guardian was an appalling and hypocritical act, and a waste of taxpayers' money. Most importantly, it failed to take vital steps towards ensuring a regulatory system that would protect our children.

At the time, media articles noted that Linda Mallett was spending time with her staff reflecting on matters and drinking coffee, but was unable to do the work that both sides of this House had agreed that she should do. That was not to her liking at all. Eventually the Office of the Children's Guardian was established and the Children's Guardian was enabled, through the regulatory framework, to get on with the job. I acknowledge the work of the first Children's Guardian, Linda Mallett, who had a great deal of experience in the former Department of Community Services [DOCS]. I acknowledge in particular the work of Kerryn Boland, who took over from Linda Mallett, and her team. They have continued that work for some years. Everyone in that office has done an extraordinary job to ensure that New South Wales has a regulatory framework that is second to none in this country.

It is not that Labor does not have the intent to protect children. I am addressing Labor's bona fides with regard to its ability. Did the Labor Party then, and does the Labor Party now, in presenting this bill, have the ability to move forward on child protection, to make children safer when they are not safe at home? New South Wales previously had a Community and Disability Services Commissioner, Robert Fitzgerald, a very fine man who continues to do amazing work. As shadow Minister at the time I was amazed to hear the Labor Party speak a lot about wanting to protect children—I share that view and I believe Labor genuinely wants to do that—but then remove the person with oversight, the Community Services Commissioner, the person who could advocate on behalf of children at risk, or families where children were at risk.

Labor's answer was to roll the function of the Community and Disability Services Commissioner into the Ombudsman's office. Labor removed the standalone person who could undertake that task, and for some years there was a gap until the Ombudsman built up capacity to carry out that function. I am not questioning the very good oversight capacity of the current Ombudsman: Steve Kinmond and his staff do a fantastic job. I give them full credit for their oversight role. But I remind the House that this area is complex. The way we deal with children who are in need of protection from their families requires deep and thoughtful consideration. While I do not doubt the Labor Party's good intentions, its bona fides have not been strong. In fact, they have been very weak.

Labor did something else that makes the current situation challenging. In the 1990s and for some years prior to that, each community service centre [CSC], which had the capacity for intakes, had wonderful child protection staff and case managers who looked after children in care. But the Labor Government of the day chose to adopt a different process, which displayed what I consider to be a lack of understanding of how to address child protection. It is yet another example of Labor not getting it quite right. This legislation, which the shadow Minister introduced, is not quite right. The Labor Party decided to make the Child Protection Helpline a centralised service, and it is now a pivotal part of our child protection system. When the Labor Party introduced the concept to the

Parliament it argued that centralisation would improve the system. But people on the front line argued—and I argued in this place—that putting everything under the one roof risked dramatically increasing the number of children referred for protection because there was no filtering process. That is exactly what happened.

In the CSCs, the fabulous frontline DOCS workers operated an effective, professional review and filtering process to determine whether a request should lead to a report. For example, imagine a teacher goes into school on Monday morning and notices that a five- or six-year-old girl in her classroom has bruises and scratches on the inside of her legs. The teacher becomes concerned, as one would expect. Prior to the existence of the helpline, the teacher would make a call to the local community service centre and have a chat with somebody she knew—a relationship developed through constant discussion and exchange of information. If there was no prior record the caseworker would probably say that it would be investigated. I am told that quite often the caseworker would say to the teacher, "Ms Jones, you do not have to worry."

We were rung last week by someone at the Brownies who said something similar. We checked and found that that little girl has a wonderful family. She goes bushwalking every week with her mum, dad, brothers and sisters. They climb over rocks, and she gets scratched and bruised. There is no problem. You do not need to make a report." That filtering process worked really well. The Labor Party killed relationships on the ground; it never understands them. Labor never understands community contacts. I am not saying that it was done with ill-intent; it was not. It was done because of a lack of profound understanding and analysis of the problem. Labor established the helpline. Wonderful staff work at the helpline, but the reality is that the number of cases has gone through the roof because the filtering process has not worked. It cannot go back to the way it was.

A lot of the fabulous young caseworkers on the front line, who started work in the past 15 years or so, do not know the previous system. What is the Government doing? We have gone back to the primary problem. We have talked to the community, which said, "Why not trial some different approaches?" Sadly, in Wyong, far too many children are at risk of being caught up in the child protection process. Far too many children do not have positive outcomes. On the Central Coast, which has a very high suicide rate and is a challenging area for the New South Wales community, the Government has brought together one of the finest groups of people and established one centre that adopts a multiagency approach.

Labor never understood. Get the silos of government broken down and get the agencies talking. We have wonderful people in our professional departments of Health, Education and Family and Community Services [FACS], but sadly quite often in all governments across the Western World their agencies do not talk to each other and move beyond their silos. I invite the member for Bankstown, the shadow Minister, and everyone to have the fantastic experience of going to Wyong where, on one floor, there are representatives of Health, Education and FACS. I hear that the number of reports that need a response are decreasing because the approach focuses on the whole of the child, which is what we should have been doing all along.

These things cannot be rushed—everything has to be evidence-based—but it is an example of how we are listening and encouraging cross-agency support rather than providing a quick knee-jerk response, which, sadly, is what this legislation is. The bill reflects a profound lack of understanding of child protection. It reflects an enthusiastic energy by the shadow Minister, which I acknowledge and appreciate, but it does not reflect what will work and it does not reflect what is needed. There is no question that the legislation that was introduced in 1998, as amended, was excellent legislation. I acknowledge that the Labor Party got that right, but at the time it worked with the Coalition and it was bipartisan. It was the operational aspects to which I have referred that failed. Labor did not get it right because it failed to look at the profound primary contributors that make a child protection system work.

I do not say that this legislation is not driven from a desire to be in a good place—I believe that the shadow Minister has that intent—but it is a little naïve, inexperienced and very wrong. It will have precisely the opposite outcomes to what the shadow Minister, and all of us in this House, would like to achieve. I remind the House that the legislation introduced by the shadow Minister is effectively reducing it to simple approaches. It is just too neat and too simple. Kids are not simple, families are not simple and abuse is not simple, therefore they cannot be dealt with in a nice simple little sequence. It does not work that way. The shadow Minister says that she will legislate for the automatic removal at birth of a child from a parent or guardian who previously committed a serious offence against their own child. That just does not get there.

As the shadow Minister indicated—I believe it and I know it to be true—these amendments are in some way connected with what occurred following a South Australian coronial inquiry. There was an urgency and anxiety to try to address the recommendations, but this bill ignores the core principle of the very legislation that Labor and the Coalition introduced into this place in 1998. It ignores the evaluation of the best interests of the child in relation to current and future safety, welfare and wellbeing. According to this new and simplistic approach, if this House were to support the legislation introduced by the shadow Minister, those issues do not matter. We should not worry about it, we should get it all out because it is a lot easier and children are much more simple

than that. She says we do not have to worry about that because we will have only one criteria. It is a crazy situation. Whilst I do not challenge the bona fides of what the shadow Minister is trying to do, it would be appalling and dangerous if at some point we adopted that approach to child protection.

This Government, as evidenced by the front page of the *Daily Telegraph* again today, is doing more than probably any government has done in 30 years. We are trying to introduce evidence-based approaches to child protection. Nothing should happen without properly testing what works across a whole range of children and families. No family is exactly the same as any other family and, thank heavens, no child is exactly the same as any other child. It is not simple. Each circumstance has to be looked at on its merits: What is in the best interests of this child or this family? New South Wales already has a very comprehensive legislative and policy framework to protect little children from parents and others who have committed offences that most of us in this place cannot even dream of because they are so terrible. But the fact that they have committed those offences does not mean that removal should be automatic. We should not do that.

We already have a host of safeguards. We now have a Children's Guardian system that works. Kerryn Boland and her team do a fantastic job in this very difficult area. We have Ombudsman Steve Kinmond and his team, which is the oversight body, which does a fantastic job. Another initiative is the Working With Children Checks that are carried out very thoroughly and have appropriate checks and balances. Sometimes I would like to see a different outcome. Although members in this place may not like the results, at least a system is in place whereby the ban that sometimes follows from a Working With Children Check can be appealed to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT].

We also have the Child Protection Offenders Register, which is a vital part of our entire child protection system. The register holds the names of all people who have been convicted of serious offences against children—not just parents and guardians, but all people. People on the Child Protection Offenders Register are subject to incredibly strict reporting obligations. For serious or repeat offenders those obligations can be in place for life. We have a spectrum of dealing with people who have been convicted of serious offences. When a person is on that register there are very serious consequences, and very serious and positive outcomes to protect children. Those reporting obligations include details such as where the offender lives and where the offender works. They include details such as the names and dates of birth of any children with whom they live or have some contact. Those on the child protection register are not able to do what other individuals in our society can do. Their options are very limited.

Any one of us can change our name by deed poll or through other methods. Those people cannot do that, but must go to the police commissioner to seek special approval. They are always under the watchful eye of our incredible NSW Police Force. The police commissioner is able to assess whether it is appropriate that an individual be allowed the simple right that the rest of us have to change our name for any reason. People on the child protection register cannot do it. The register also covers those who have committed serious sexual offences against children. I note the shadow Minister is in the Chamber. I thank her for being here and for her continued commitment to this area. However, I point out to her while she is listening that nothing in her bill addresses people who have committed serious sexual offences against children. It fails the test again. It is not only overly simplistic but also completely inadequate.

Ms Tanya Mihailuk: I am happy for you to amend it. Let's pass the bill and you can amend it. I will accept those amendments. You propose them and I will accept them.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has the call.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: If you had given any serious thought to the issues or shown any capacity to deal with this legislation in a substantive way, of course the Government would have looked at amendments.

Ms Tanya Mihailuk: Why don't you?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Because this bill is fundamentally flawed. Although I am saying nice things about you, I have to say that this bill is a long way short of something any member should have presented in this House.

Ms Tanya Mihailuk: Tell that to South Australia.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The shadow Minister is probably better off keeping quiet. Sometimes the art of politics is about knowing when to be quiet.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Bankstown will have an opportunity to speak in reply.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I love the shadow Minister's enthusiasm, but this bill does not quite get there. As I said, the Department of Family and Community Services also works with the NSW Police Force to share

information under the child protection legislation. That enables the police to put other people on the register—for example, a person who may have been convicted of manslaughter. Under the 1998 legislation and some allied legislation, the inherent risks to a child whose parent or guardian has in the past committed a serious offence against other children are explicitly acknowledged and addressed. The prior removal or reviewable death of a child or young person is an obvious recognised indicator of risk to another child or young person. I stress that it is an indicator. It is not an absolute; it is an indicator. That is another key difference between the existing legislation and the shadow Minister's enthusiastic but somewhat innocent approach.

This goes to the issue I was addressing earlier about needing to look at all the factors to ensure that the best interests of a child are being considered. We do not look at only one catalyst and say that is it. We need to look at all the factors. The legislation looks at the prior removal or reviewable death of a child or young person as a recognised indicator for another child or young person. FACS can lead evidence in care proceedings of a person's past child protection history, and it often does. I have seen many cases where one of our wonderful FACS workers has been through the drama of removing a child and then doing all of the paperwork that goes with getting a permanent order at the Children's Court. Of course they take into account those indicators of risk and of course the Children's Court takes into account those issues when determining a care application.

I must say at this point that we have one of the finest groups of Children's Court judges anywhere in the country. The President of the Children's Court, Peter Johnstone, has done amazing work ensuring that we have the best possible approach to children when in our courts. Again, it is not simple because there is no simple solution to all of this—unlike the shadow Minister would have us to believe with this bill. At court, a range of reports and factors are taken into account.

A very sad thing that is driving this Government and me nuts is not only that we have so many children in care because of the failed system that the Labor Government gave us but also that one-third of those children are Aboriginal. In 1995, when the Liberal-Nationals left office because the people of New South Wales chose a Labor Government, about 5,000 children were in care in this State. To me that sounds horrific. How could we have 5,000 children in care? How could there have been that many people who did not want to look after their kids? By 2016—after 16 years of a Labor Government that just did not understand and took the sort of simplistic approach that the shadow Minister is taking in this bill—the numbers went through the roof. We are now up to 20,000 children in care.

Ms Melinda Pavey: Shameful.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It is shameful. It is because of Labor's failure to understand that the simple steps it took were not connected and because of the stupidity of the processes it introduced. Labor got rid of the on-the-ground work and introduced a helpline that did not provide local contact. That left us with the legacy we now have to work through. I acknowledge that the workers on the front line are doing an amazing job, but that is the system we and they were given. As I said, roughly one-third of children in care are Aboriginal. Only 2 per cent to 2.5 per cent of people in New South Wales identify as Aboriginal yet 33.3 per cent of children in our care system are Aboriginal. Far too many of them end up in the juvenile justice and correctional systems. Through this bill, the shadow Minister wants to bring us back to the simplistic approach that Labor too often took. Simplicity does not work. We need complex, interconnected solutions. We need to assess the risk indicators, and not just say, "This is what has happened so we must take away the child never to be returned." That does not work.

Where was Labor for many years? It was thinking that it was as simple as what happens at the bottom of the garden. What rubbish. Currently the Department of Family and Community Services [FACS] has very broad powers to take whatever action is necessary to ensure the protection of a child or young person. Both sides of the House agree that we have the powers, such as emergency removal powers. As I said earlier, FACS caseworkers find it very difficult to form professional decisions about these powers because it is such a difficult thing to do. Is it in the best interests of a child to take that child away from his or her family? They have that power but they agonise over exercising it.

The frontline workers who go out and talk to families and children, and see the horrors, understand the agony of making complex decisions in complex circumstances. I can only think that no-one in the Labor Party has talked to frontline workers. No-one has gone out to see just how difficult their job is and to understand the risk indicators that have to be taken into account to get positive outcomes for children. So it introduces this one-size-fits-all bill. It is so simple for those in the Opposition who have not gone out to talk to anybody. As I said at the outset, every child, every family and every set of circumstances is different. One size fits all is not an appropriate approach to child protection.

Back in 1998 when it actually did some work in this area with the then Opposition, Labor understood that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work. An Opposition member who may be finding life a bit tough and who has to justify their efforts in this House may say, "We have a simple idea and it will work." No, it will not

work. Those on the front line know that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work. What disturbs me most is that the shadow Minister is making the effort to get out there and to work hard on behalf of the Opposition, but she is not getting any sensible guidance from the Leader of the Opposition, who is utterly incapable of offering any solutions to complex issues.

Let us not forget that when Labor was last in power this State was going down the gurgler. It now has a bloke who wants to be Premier who is prepared to let his shadow Minister come in the House with a one-size-fits-all solution to probably the most complex problem a human being can have, namely, how to look after one's children when things go wrong. If I sound frustrated it is because I am. Mr Luke Foley said he was going to make all these wonderful changes with his wonderful new approach, yet he lets a member come in here with a simplistic approach to fill in some time. The Government does not accept that.

Ms Tanya Mihailuk: You are using up my hour.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Did members hear that? I am using up the member's hour. I am talking about the care of children and she complains that I am filling up an hour. My benevolence towards the member has just dropped.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I will respond as I should on behalf of children in this State. I am appalled at that remark. The shadow Minister and the Leader of the Opposition have introduced a bill that simply has hit auto: let the car go where it wants to go. The bill contains a removal policy that could have a deleterious effect. I ask the shadow Minister to listen to me because at the moment she is being rather superficial. I want the shadow Minister to address this in her reply. I take the example of a mum in regional New South Wales who is suffering from postnatal depression and does not have any services available to her. Frontline FACS workers are the heroes of children in this State. When I go out and talk to them—happily a lot of them call me Brad—they say, "Brad, we do not have the services available in this part of the State to be able to address the needs of all families." This varies across the State. In some parts of the State the services may be available but they may not be able to respond to mental health issues, postnatal depression and so on.

I can remember Ron Phillips, the then Minister for Health, standing in this precise spot in 1992 talking about mental health. To my recollection, that was the first time that mental health had ever been mentioned in this place. And today the shadow Minister has introduced a bill that has no capacity to deal with a mum suffering from postnatal depression. What happens if that mum lives in a part of New South Wales where there are no available services? According to the shadow Minister—the emissary for Mr Luke Foley and this group of intellectual giants—the solution is to take the child away and never let the mother have another child. Do not look at the interests of that child or the next child, just take the child away. I am sorry, but that is not the way the real world works.

What will happen to a young woman who is pregnant and perhaps has been in this sad situation before—maybe she had depression and her first child was removed? Where will she go? She is told, "Because you have previously had psychiatric or psychological services and your baby was removed, it does not matter that you are well enough to have another child. If you stay in New South Wales, your child will be taken away from you." It would not be difficult for her to pay \$15, hop on a bus and end up in Melbourne or Brisbane. How does it help not to look at the whole person? How does it help not to look at what is in the best interests of that child? The current legislation does that. But this bill kicks it outside the boundaries because the shadow Minister has decided that simplicity is the way to approach the most complex of human problems. The shadow Minister has to be kidding. If Mr Luke Foley, the shadow Minister and the Labor Party get their way, the impact will be even more acute for already vulnerable women and families, particularly those women who are victims of family and domestic violence.

Other parts of this bill show a lack of thought. It is overly simplistic: let's have a cup of coffee and dream up a bill so we can look like we know something about child protection. What a great way to deal with children, the most important asset in this State. But Labor has thrown in a little extra, which shows that it did not even get onto the page of rational thought. No-one in this State, I am sure Labor as well—I acknowledge its good intent in this regard—would support what is an horrific practice. Unfortunately, this practice has been imported into this country by otherwise wonderful people who have come here and helped to make our great society. Australia is a much better place today than it was 40 or 50 years ago.

We have the finest people from all over the world—from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. New South Wales, and Australia, is a melting pot of multiculturalism. It is a fantastic place. On behalf of the New South Wales Liberal and Nationals parties, I welcome them and thank them for bringing their very best traits to this State. But some have brought practices that we oppose, one of which I highlighted on Monday this week, that is,

child brides. Labor has whacked in the bill another practice that should not have been brought here, one that we all absolutely oppose. Included in the amendments is material about—

Ms Tanya Mihailuk: What are you talking about?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Maybe the member does not know that it is in her own bill. Maybe she does not know; it would not surprise me. Included in the amendments is the issue of female genital mutilation. It is interesting that this issue has been included in a bill about child protection. Why would the Government agree to this amendment when we already have a comprehensive set of provisions which have been largely worked out with other States and Territories? Why would we agree to piecemeal legislation that amateur-hour Labor has introduced around female genital mutilation? It makes no sense at all.

I remind the House that in 2014 the New South Wales Government amended the law to triple the penalties for performing or aiding or abetting or procuring a person to perform female genital mutilation. We have done it already. As I said, no member in this House would think such practices are acceptable. Labor supported our amendments previously; about two years ago Labor supported increasing penalties from seven years to 21 years. This bill is lacking in common sense. I also remind the House that the Government made it a crime to take a child out of the State for the purposes of female genital mutilation. That had been a problem because some folks who had strong cultural and historical ties thought that female genital mutilation was an acceptable and necessary practice and they would do anything to enable it.

The Liberal and National parties, with bipartisan support, brought amendments into this place to make it an offence to take a person outside the State to enable such an horrific procedure. That was our collective response to what was a growing concern across New South Wales about an absolutely horrific practice. On behalf of the House, I say again to the entire community that we do not want child brides or forced marriages in New South Wales or in Australia. Nor do we want or would we allow for one moment female genital mutilation to occur. This is twenty-first century Australia and we value every individual in the State. We value our boys and our girls and we value our men and our women, and we will not allow practices that are completely abhorrent to people in this State.

There is a high level of public awareness about this issue. Following the campaign and public discussions we had about the unacceptability of female genital mutilation, I would have thought that even the Labor Party would not toss into a bill extra amendments that purport to take children away, without looking at the interests of the child, because a terrible act has occurred previously. I do not understand how even Labor can be so ignorant of the fact that it supported our position. Now it wants to amend the legislation with a bill that should not have included any provisions about this issue. What does the Law Society of New South Wales say about this bill that the Labor Party and the Leader of the Opposition have authorised to come into this place? The Leader of the Opposition sat down with his brains trust, which has a collective IQ of—what is 100 divided by 20—maybe 100 and introduced this bill. That is not quite past the bell curve on intellect but right in the middle. Why did Labor introduce this bill?

Mr Chris Minns: You are being so juvenile, so inappropriate.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The member for Kogarah might increase the IQ, and so might the member for Bankstown when she is thinking but at this stage her IQ is challengeable. The Law Society of New South Wales has commented that there is "absolutely no evidence to suggest existing legislative and policy frameworks in New South Wales are inadequate". It also said, "nor do they fail to protect the subsequent or other children of parents who have committed serious offences against their own children". The Law Society, which is vested with the task of looking at this bill from a community point of view, said that this bill does not achieve what it wants to achieve. In fact, as I said earlier, it is completely counterproductive.

The Baird-Grant Government is doing more than any other government in history to improve the child protection system. It is building a more responsive child protection system, and it is investing a record \$1.9 billion this financial year to support and reform child protection and out-of-home care. This investment was resoundingly welcomed by groups in the sector who know what they are talking about—groups such as the Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat [AbSec] and the Association of Child Welfare Agencies. The member for Bankstown should have a few more meetings with AbSec and the Association of Child Welfare Agencies. She should go and talk to the non-government agencies and Family and Community Services officers. She should go and talk to the people who know and learn from them and then come in here and give us something substantive so that we can contribute to a debate that is worth having in this Chamber.

Without question, the Opposition's bill fails completely to achieve its primary objective, which purports to be to keep children safe. Indeed, as I have set out in the arguments sequentially, the bill fails to take into account the complex set of factors that goes towards determining whether a child is being kept safe. The bill fails to look

at what the 1998 legislation said should be looked at in the child's best interests, that is, for each individual child all those complex factors that our professional caseworkers, our top-of-the-tree, frontline child protection workers, have to deal with every day.

This bill was introduced previously and the shadow Minister let it drop. Maybe she should have let this one drop as well. We did not say anything when it was dropped because we thought that common sense had prevailed. However, the Labor Party has brought the bill back in and I have now had to lay out comprehensively why the legislation is completely inadequate. The bill unfortunately is a reflection upon a Labor Party that is not fit for government and a Labor Party that has been allowed to come into this place with a completely inadequate bill by a leader who is completely inadequate. The Government will oppose the Children and Young Person (Care and Protection) Amendment (Protection from Serious Offenders) Bill all the way.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Shellharbour I advise her that, in line with the standing orders of the House, this debate will be interrupted in about 2½ half minutes.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (12:00): It is disappointing that the Minister has chosen to filibuster this debate this morning. It is an important debate and one which Labor was looking forward to having. What has happened here this morning to prevent us from having this debate is a disgrace. I note that the Minister has left the Chamber and that is an indication of how much he cares about this issue. Many of us on this side of the House have a lot to say on this issue, particularly when it comes to the welfare of children. Labor's record in that regard is second to none. Everybody on this side of the House puts children at front and centre of every issue in each and every one of our electorates. There is nothing more important to us than the welfare and protection of children.

The manner in which the Minister behaved this morning is a joke, where he states that complex issues need complex answers and that we cannot take a one-size-fits-all approach. In six years the Minister has not put up one reform or one amendment to the Act. He then has the audacity and the hide to criticise Labor's great record in relation to child welfare and child protection. I had a lot to say but I will not go into all the facts; I simply state that we must pay attention to what has occurred in South Australia. The South Australian State Coroner has made 21 recommendations after some people one can only liken to animals killed and hurt our children. There is no higher duty for this State than to protect our children. It is our strong belief that child protection measures must change and that change must happen quickly. In my electorate, as in many other electorates, changes need to be made in this area.

Debate interrupted.

Motions

WATER SECURITY

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:02): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the vital importance of water security to the ongoing prosperity of regional and metropolitan New South Wales.
- (2) Acknowledges the Government's commitment to water security, particularly in regional New South Wales.
- (3) Further notes the ongoing successful partnership with the Federal Government to deliver critical water infrastructure such as Chaffey Dam in the Tamworth electorate.

The health and wellbeing of the people of New South Wales, whether in cities and towns or on the land, is dependent on the efficient and effective management of our State's water resources. Nowhere is the importance of water more strongly understood than in our regional areas. This is a matter of frequent discussion with my constituents and that is why I have moved this motion. This Government understands that water security is an ongoing challenge. That is why we have introduced a number of measures since coming to government to continue to ensure that we are dealing with the problems of the past, the needs of today and the challenges of the future.

Whilst we might be dealing with rising floodwaters across the State at the moment, dam spilling and the like, we must not be short-sighted or complacent because it is during these periods that we must take the time to plan for the next dry period. And it will come. The Government is working to put New South Wales in the best position possible to enable our businesses, communities and farmers to prosper in the face of climatic uncertainty and to ensure reliable water supplies to our cities and towns. An excellent example of this is the Chaffey Dam upgrade in my electorate. The \$30 million project has seen an upgrade of the Chaffey Dam's capacity from 62,000 gigalitres to 100,000 gigalitres, which will help secure the drinking water needs of the city of Tamworth and surrounding communities.

Additionally, it significantly strengthens water security for irrigators, businesses and households across the whole Peel Valley and the Tamworth region. The work involved raising the dam wall by 8 metres and these works have increased the full supply level of the dam by 6.5 metres. Importantly, the major increase in storage capacity greatly enhances the water security for the 50,000 residents of Tamworth and for water users in the Peel Valley. Today the dam is at around 85 per cent of its new capacity, with more rain on the way, and we do not believe it will be long before Chaffey Dam is at its new full capacity. An indication of what it looks like is Endara Island, which sits in the middle of Chaffey Dam where the high-water mark can be seen to be slowly but surely rising.

The Chaffey Dam augmentation and safety upgrade project has also received industry recognition for excellence, winning the regional award at the 2016 Australian Engineering Excellence Awards, Newcastle Division ceremony. Projects such as this are vital to our water supply and water security strategy. As we invest in water infrastructure, we improve the resilience of our communities and support improved agricultural productivity and profitability from which everyone in New South Wales benefits. When it opened in May this year, the Chaffey upgrade showed how all levels of government—State, local and Federal—could work together and deliver important solutions to our water security needs.

The Government is planning for our infrastructure needs right across the State. To ensure that New South Wales can meet these challenges, the New South Wales Government allocated \$366 million in the 2015-16 budget for further investment in shoring up water security in the regional areas of New South Wales. This includes \$157 million for emergency water supply for Broken Hill, as well as investigations into a long-term permanent solution. A total of \$110 million has been allocated to clear Labor's backlog of regional water supply and sewage works in 71 communities across New South Wales. This new program will continue the valuable work delivered under the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program that has delivered more than 500 projects in regional New South Wales. A total of \$115 million has been allocated to 33 projects in various regional local councils under the competitive local government program to ensure a secure water supply to regional towns.

Enhancing regional water security is a key aim of this Government. These feasibility studies will, therefore, assess both infrastructure and non-infrastructure options, including water efficiency, water planning and market measures. A significant investment of nearly \$800,000 has gone into a feasibility study for a new Dungowan dam in the Tamworth electorate, which will further enhance water security and the options available to our electorate. The New South Wales Government believes in building water infrastructure that supports the State's triple bottom line: economic, environmental and social outcomes. That is why the 2014 State Infrastructure Strategy also focuses on the need to maintain and further develop the catchment needs assessment framework and the development of a 20-year capital plan for bulk water in New South Wales.

This government funding is supplemented by commitments from the Federal Government with \$2.35 million received to undertake three feasibility studies in New South Wales, including \$850,000 for a feasibility study into a new augmented Dungowan dam to increase water security in the Peel and Namoi catchments; \$850,000 to undertake engineering, environmental, social and cultural studies, and the construction of an 80 kilometre pipeline from the Macquarie River to Nyngan Weir Pool, Albert Priest Channel, to supply Nyngan and Cobar townships, stock and domestic licences and Cobar mining operations. The Tamworth electorate will receive \$550,000 to investigate the benefits of constructing a new dam on the Mole River and \$100,000 for a Walcha water security study. This motion affects every member of this Parliament. Whether in the city or the country each electorate must make sure that it has a secure water supply for those times when it is not raining and when there is drought. There is a saying: you never miss your water until your well runs dry.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (12:10): I move:

That the motion be amended by adding the following paragraph:

- (4) Notes that Sydney Water is paying \$200 million a year for privatised desalinated water even though the plant has been inoperable since December 2014.

Ms Melinda Pavey: Weren't you geniuses for building it? Thanks for that legacy, Minnsy. You must be so proud of yourself.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The member gives me too much credit. I thank the member for Tamworth for moving the motion. He is a handy footballer, as is his son. It is important for the House to debate water policy issues. This motion is just another recitation of the Government's supposed achievements in the water portfolio. The endless self-congratulatory motions hide serious water policy and management issues in New South Wales. There are questions relating to what can be done to improve water management in New South Wales. I subscribe to the *Northern Daily Leader*.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Do you subscribe?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I do. Even though the dam has been at 100 per cent capacity for a number of months and the bores at Attunga have risen, the *Northern Daily Leader* reported on 21 September 2016:

But the water setbacks came in waves at Moonbi-Kootingal, with a uranium scare in the village's ground-water supplies, leading to a town water switch compounded by an ageing water main coming to "the end of its life".

Water director Bruce Logan stated:

We've had 30 houses at Kootingal without any water, let alone water from Tamworth.

I contend that it is important that the House deal with issues relating to water. There is the potential to receive answers to issues concerning the water portfolio but instead Government members enter the Chamber each day and declare how wonderful the Government is. There are serious questions in relation to water management that have not been answered by the Government or the Minister. A number of months ago the Premier announced in Broken Hill the proposed 270 kilometre Wentworth water pipeline to service the people of Broken Hill at a cost of half a billion dollars. There has never been any discussion, nor has there been an explanation, as to how the pipeline will be built. I subscribe to the online ABC news column. On 20 June 2016 it stated:

While the community would be asked to contribute to the cost of the project, the Government would ensure that any increase in rates was introduced very gradually.

I have no idea what "any increase in rates would be introduced very gradually" means. I suspect that the people of Broken Hill want answers as to what "very gradually" means. It is half a billion dollars and there are only 19,000 people in Broken Hill. What does "very gradually" mean? Does mean that the council will give ratepayers a break on the first and second year but after that they have to pay the full whack? They need answers. The Government is happy to put out a press release at the drop of a hat and hit the headlines but will not give detailed answers to appropriate questions in relation to funding. There is no need for further self-congratulatory motions. The community needs answers to fundamental questions. In 2012 the then Treasurer, and now Premier, decided to privatise the desalination plant. It was a commitment made when those opposite were in Opposition and did not have access to the balance sheets and business statements of the Sydney desalination plant. I suggest that they did not know what they were doing. The plant was sold. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported on 11 May that the Premier stated:

Sydney Water would continue to pay an undisclosed "availability charge" to the new owners of the plant as part of the arrangement.

That availability charge was not released at the time of the privatisation.

Mr John Sidoti: It is a Labor Party white elephant.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Drummoyne. The Government sold it. Privatising the desalination plant was one of the first things done by this Government. I will inform the House how much the Government will pay the desalination plant each year for 50 years, whether water is produced or not. The people of Sydney will pay \$194 million every year for 50 years. That is \$10 billion in net present value. Does it sound like a good deal? The Government will pay \$10 billion for not a drop of water. In December 2014 this was brought into acute focus when there was storm damage to the desalination plant and it closed down.

Mr John Sidoti: It rained the day after you built it.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Then why did the Government privatise it? The plant closed the next day. It has not been repaired. Under the terms of the desalination contract that the Premier negotiated it has been inoperable for 12 months. The repairs begin next month and will take a further 12 months to complete the repairs. The desalination plant will have been out of action for two years. The question is: Is the Government paying the availability charge even though the plant is not available? One would think the contract would be crafted in a way to ensure a holiday from payment during that period. Unfortunately not.

The Government has continued to pay \$200 million a year for the last two years. That is \$100 for every household in this State. It does not work. That is the deal that the Premier made in relation to the desalination plant. What a turkey of a deal. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has said that privatisations under the Premier have undermined community support for that kind of fiscal arrangement. The Premier needs to wear the fact that he stuffed up the deal and the community is paying the debt.

Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (12:16): Last week I stated that the Opposition had more front than Myer and a hide thicker than an elephant. The member opposite did not fail to display those attributes.

Mr John Sidoti: He delivered.

Ms MELINDA PAVEY: He delivered the most unbelievable speech denying the core problem. The member was a senior adviser in the Government that decided to build that white elephant. This Government has recycled the asset to ensure that there will be funding for other infrastructure in this State. I cannot believe how

brazen those opposite are. The Labor Party has the temerity to attack the Government over that white elephant. I am proud of the work being done by this Government with regard to water in regional areas. In January 2015, in my magnificent electorate of Oxley, the Deputy Prime Minister opened the \$56 million Bowra Dam. The State and Federal governments and the Nambucca Shire Council, under the leadership of Rhonda Hoban, were able to put together a package for water security that will allow that region to thrive without fear of drought. They did not think, "Let's build a desalination plant."

They decided to do the right thing responsibly, economically and environmentally for that community. We gave them the impetus, along with the Federal Government. That is the type of thing that we do. The member for Kogarah criticises our plan to drought-proof and provide water security to western New South Wales. Does the member want to deny water to the town of Broken Hill? How dare he, when Labor in government spent so much money on that white elephant of a desalination plant. The member for Kogarah was a senior adviser at the time that the desalination plant was built. The member can shrug his shoulders and say that it slipped by him, but it has not slipped by the people of New South Wales. We will constantly remind them that that is the type of economic decision that Labor makes—a decision that virtually bankrupted the State.

The Government has the situation under control. We are recycling assets. We are doing the right thing by the people of regional New South Wales, which is why we are here discussing Chaffey Dam. The water supply in Chaffey Dam has been renewed. There is water security not only for the town but for farmers in the Tamworth region. That is appropriate. The \$30 million project to increase the dam's capacity from 62 gigalitres to 100 gigalitres will help to secure water for the Tamworth community and surrounding towns.

Mr Edmond Atalla: Imagine what \$200 million would do.

Ms MELINDA PAVEY: I acknowledge that interjection. How much did the desalination plant cost? We would have happily spent more money on other dams and projects.

Mr Chris Minns: We are paying for it five times over under privatisation.

Ms MELINDA PAVEY: I do not believe anything the member for Kogarah says because he lacks economic credibility. He was there when the decision was made to approve that project. [*Time expired.*]

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:21): I welcome the opportunity to speak on this motion. I support the amendment moved by my friend and colleague the member for Kogarah.

Mr Geoff Provest: Do people in the Labor Party have friends?

Mr DAVID MEHAN: I have friends; I have comrades. The debate allows me to talk about the central role that the State plays in the provision of water in New South Wales. We have many challenges on this continent: size, a small population and geography. Without the role that the State plays in planning, delivering and maintaining our water supply we would not be able to build the society we have in New South Wales and in Australia. Planning for water supply is central to the State's role. In this regard the current Government's approach to planning has been less than helpful in areas such as the Central Coast. At the moment there is no published plan for the Central Coast. We talk about the needs of the growing population on the Central Coast, but currently there is no plan for the Central Coast and no plan for the provision of water for future generations. That is a State responsibility.

The State also has a responsibility to deliver water infrastructure. I am reminded that it was the Wran Labor Government that built Mangrove Creek Dam on the Central Coast, and two smaller dams before that, which allowed the community to expand from being a rural community to a large regional and metropolitan community on the outskirts of Sydney. That water supply allowed it to become the thriving community it is today. Labor provided the Mangrove Creek Dam, 193 million litres of water, to ensure the growth of the Central Coast community and to meet its need for water. Without the agency of the State that would not have been possible.

As well as providing the infrastructure, we need to deliver the water. The State has a significant role to play in maintaining dams, treating water and maintaining catchments. This Government's catchment management has been lacking. Good catchment management is central to ensuring water security for the State and the nation. Proposals by the Government to allow clearing of land in and near catchments only threaten further the drinking water supply. The biggest threat to water security in this State is the attitude of Government members to the public sector. At their core, most Government members—perhaps not The Nationals but certainly the Liberals—do not like public servants. Public servants have played a central role in the provision of water security in this State. Government members should hang their heads in shame. I am reminded of what the Government has done to Sydney Water. In an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 22 February this year James Robertson said:

Five of the six top scientists in charge of monitoring the health of Sydney's water have had their positions axed as part of state government cuts experts warn will compromise the safety of drinking water.

Mr Geoff Provest: Did you write that?

Mr DAVID MEHAN: It is from an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. That is what I just said, goose. I am reading from an article. The article went on to talk about staff cuts of 25 per cent at Sydney Water. It quotes Stuart Khan, an associate professor at the University of New South Wales and a water contamination expert, who said:

This is absolutely the worst thing to happen to water management in decades.

The Government is threatening water security. [*Time expired.*]

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (12:25): I speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Tamworth on the important issue of water security. I begin by referring to comments made by previous speakers in the debate. The desalination plant was formulated, constructed and sold by the Labor Government, through a conga line of Premiers. It was as if Premiers were going through a revolving door. The hypocrisy of Labor members in raising the topic of the desalination plant shows that they have blinkers on. They are trying to say that it is everyone else's problem. We on this side of the Parliament are trying to fix the problem. We have been fixing 16 years of Labor mess.

The New South Wales Government is undertaking the key function of planning for the future water security of our State through not only significant investment in a \$1 billion regional water fund but also continuing advocacy on behalf of regional communities. Water security for our growing towns and cities is vital, but we must also provide equitable and sustainable access to water for people who use it for irrigation. Their crops feed the cities. That is why the New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is delivered in a way that truly balances economic, environmental and socio-economic needs and puts local communities front and centre.

Our Government has strongly opposed any further open buybacks in the Murray-Darling Basin—a blunt instrument for water recovery and the achievement of environmental outcomes. We demanded that the Commonwealth bring forward legislation to limit buybacks at 1,500 gigalitres. That legislation was passed by the Senate in September 2015 and has been key to improving community confidence in the ongoing implementation of the basin plan. Further, the New South Wales Government has taken the position, on behalf of our communities, that water savings obtained through infrastructure and options for sustainable diversion limit [SDL] adjustments must be the focus for water recovery by the Commonwealth.

A number of water-saving infrastructure projects are underway in New South Wales. They will assist in bridging the gap in the implementation of the basin plan, under the Commonwealth's \$1.5 billion commitment to water efficiency projects and the SDL adjustment mechanism. This will mean less water is taken from productive users in New South Wales. There is also a significant investment of \$500 million through the Sustaining the Basin program, which is being led by the Department of Primary Industries. Infrastructure investments are the sensible and sustainable way of achieving the triple bottom line outcomes that ensure all social, economic and environmental factors are realistically addressed. Another potential water-saving measure is the northern basin review, which is tasked with assessing the triple bottom line of the balance of water recovery targets in the northern valley of the Murray-Darling Basin.

New South Wales has continued to advocate for recovery targets to be revised downwards to reflect the proper triple line outcome for the community. I am proud to be part of a Government that bases its decisions on common sense, and the future needs and viability of our communities in our regional areas that feed the cities, of which water is a key element. I have heard the hypocrisy and the rubbish from those opposite as if 16 years under Labor never happened. I support the motion moved by the member for Tamworth.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:29): I join my colleague the member for Kogarah and support the amendment. I am astounded by Government members who continuously tell this Chamber how well they are performing in New South Wales. It is amazing that they lack the honesty to tell us what is going well and to tell us about what is not going so well. I will revisit the desalination plant that they think is a big joke. Each member continues to pay an insurance premium each year on their home not knowing whether their house may burn down one day. The decision to build the desalination plant was the right decision at the time. The wrong decision was the contractual arrangements, the dud-deal done by the Baird Government to privatise it. It is \$200 million a year for 50 years. What is in the contract? What happens after 50 years? Who gets it?

It is not the Government and not the people of New South , but the private sector that has already pocketed \$10 billion; it gets ownership. If one day the people of New South Wales need the desalination plant they will have to beg the private sector to buy back the water. We heard the member for Oxley brag about the fact she got \$35 million for her dam. She bragged about the infrastructure she got for \$35 million. Imagine what you would get for \$200 million. Imagine what each member of The Nationals would get for \$200 million a year. Imagine

what infrastructure we would get for \$200 million. Imagine how many teachers we would employ for \$200 million. Imagine how many hospitals we would get for \$200 million. Imagine how many TAFE teachers we would get for \$200 million.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: Point of order: I request that you ask the member for Mount Druitt to address his comments through the Chair.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I ask the member for Mount Druitt to address his comments through the Chair. At the same time, I remind all members of Standing Order 52. Each member is allowed to address this House without interjection. It is like a kindergarten in here at the moment. Members should give due respect to members on both sides when they are speaking.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: This has been a dud deal for New South Wales. I would prefer it when Government members move such motions if they were to tell us the good and the bad. [*Time expired.*]

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (12:34): Mr Assistant Speaker—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I call the member for Castle Hill.

Mr Chris Minns: Point of order: I think we have exhausted the speaking list.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I seek leave to contribute to the debate.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Is leave granted for the member for Castle Hill to contribute to the debate?

Mr Chris Minns: No.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Do you want to divide on this?

Mr Chris Minns: It is not a division, mate. How long have you been here? You are seeking leave.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: There is going to be in a minute. The ayes have it so if you want to divide on it—

Mr Chris Minns: There is no division. You have to seek leave, you dope.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: There will be in a minute.

Ms Melinda Pavey: He did seek leave.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The member for Castle Hill sought leave to contribute to the debate.

Mr Chris Minns: You don't have a division at the conclusion of it. If a single member objects, that's it, it fails.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Unfortunately, under the standing orders, if leave is denied by one voice, leave is not granted. Therefore leave is not granted.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:35): I move:

That the member for Castle Hill be heard.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The motion would require the suspension of standing orders. I call the member for Tamworth in reply.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:35): In reply: I thank members for their contributions to this debate, particularly in relation to water security and the ongoing prosperity for regional and metropolitan New South Wales. I refer to the amendment moved by the member for Kogarah in relation to Sydney Water paying \$200 million for the privatisation, even though the desalinated water plant has been inoperable since December 2014. The Government will not support that amendment. Labor left New South Wales water ratepayers with the burden of the desalination plant, which costs a typical ratepayer an additional \$94 in their water bill even though it does not produce any water. In Labor's last five years in office Sydney, the Blue Mountains and Wollongong water prices increased by more than 50 per cent.

While the average water bill in other capital cities has increased from 10 per cent to 40 per cent over the past five years, residents in Sydney, the Blue Mountains and Wollongong have had their bills fall by more than 4 per cent over the same period. Despite the ongoing cost burden of Labor's desalination plant decision, I am delighted to announce that Sydney and Wollongong residents pay the lowest water prices of any capital city in Australia. Water bills fell by approximately \$100 from 1 July this year. Achieving the lowest water prices in the country is a significant achievement of this Government. It delivers a lower cost of living that is shared between

every ratepayer. It shows that the efforts of the New South Wales Government to improve efficiency in government businesses such as this are paying off.

The availability charge was paid before and after it was privatised. Privatisation wiped out the Labor debt and built schools, hospitals, police stations and frontline services that all members called for and wanted for their electorates. Money has been made available to them because of the way this Government improves efficiency in government businesses. Quite simply, we thank the Government. Members have to thank us for the schools, hospitals, upgraded roads, and increased number in police and nurses in frontline services. This Government fixed up the mess left by the former Labor Government. The \$200 million per year availability charge to which the member for Kogarah referred equates to \$94 per person.

In relation to this motion, the Government is doing the right thing by investing in important water security projects right across rural, regional and metropolitan New South Wales. The motion acknowledges the successful partnership with the Federal Government to deliver critical water infrastructure such as Chaffey Dam in the Tamworth electorate. That is where we started and that is where we will finish. We oppose the amendment.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The original question was that the motion moved by the member for Tamworth be agreed to, upon which the member for Kogarah has moved an amendment. The question now is that the words proposed to be added be so added.

The House divided.

Ayes30
Noes44
Majority..... 14

AYES

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Greenwich, Mr A
Haylen, Ms J
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Park, Mr R
Robertson, Mr J
Washington, Ms K

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Parker, Mr J
Smith, Ms T
Watson, Ms A

Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Harrison, Ms J
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Piper, Mr G
Warren, Mr G (teller)
Zangari, Mr G

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Hancock, Ms S
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Pavey, Ms M
Piccoli, Mr A
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Hazzard, Mr B
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Ms L

Baird, Mr M
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V
George, Mr T
Gulaptis, Mr C
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

PAIRS

Aitchison, Ms J
Finn, Ms J
Foley, Mr L

Ayres, Mr S
Davies, Ms T
Grant, Mr T

PAIRS

Hornery, Ms S
Kamper, Mr S
Smith, Ms K

Henskens, Mr A
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Humphries, Mr K

Amendment negatived.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that the motion as moved by the member for Tamworth be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.**HUNTER ICE EPIDEMIC**

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (12:46): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the drug ice is plaguing Hunter communities.
- (2) Notes that the number of people charged with use or possession of amphetamines rose by 71 per cent in Lake Macquarie in the year to September 2015, double the increase across New South Wales.
- (3) Notes the increase in ice usage is higher in regional New South Wales.
- (4) Calls on the Government to prioritise combatting the ice epidemic.

The rise in the use of crystal methamphetamine, commonly known as ice, is having a devastating effect across New South Wales. Ice is highly addictive and relatively cheap, with much of it produced in Australia. No-one is immune from addiction. It affects people from all walks of life. The use of ice in the Hunter has been on the increase over the past decade and, sadly, in recent years it has accelerated rapidly. Numbers from the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research are alarming. In Lake Macquarie the possession and/or use of amphetamines over a 24-month period has increased by 77.6 per cent. In 2011 there were 46 incidents of possession and/or use of amphetamines. In 2015 the number of incidents more than quadrupled, with more than 200 reported incidents.

If we are ever to effectively tackle this ice epidemic an all-encompassing approach must be adopted. Law enforcement is important, but if we are genuine in our pursuit to stop this rapid spread of ice in our communities our criminal justice system must work hand in hand with our health system and not-for-profit organisations. I recently visited Recovery Point, which is run by the Samaritans. They are doing tremendous work to combat drug addiction in the Hunter. The Recovery Point program assists people in the Hunter who are leaving prison or alcohol and drug rehabilitation centres on their journeys to successfully reintegrating and transitioning back into society. The Samaritans have created a place where these often isolated recovering addicts can feel safe and accepted. The Recovery Point is currently funded by a Ministry of Health drug and alcohol treatment services program. It receives a mere \$300,000 a year.

The program is now in its fourth year. Each year the program sees about 150 people who have exited Corrective Services facilities. On the day I visited there were former ice users who had been clean for some months, as well as people who had recently fallen off the wagon and were clearly affected at the time of my visit, but they truly wanted to change their lives. Taking a hard line, law and order approach does not help these people. A full wraparound approach is needed to deal with the issues—sometimes mental health issues or trauma caused by child sexual assault—and to support users to deal with the underlying issues that create in them the need to use ice. Much of the program's success lies in the approach—namely, to take one step at a time. It bases people with things that are often overlooked yet are essential for recovery, including accommodation, clothing, identification, Internet and opening a bank account. These are simple things for us, but they are very difficult for those recovering from addiction and for those who have recently executed a correctional facility. The Samaritans recognise that it is impossible to address drug addiction without first having access to these essential services.

Recovery Point programs are designed specifically to help those suffering from an ice addiction. Ice Break is a program developed in collaboration with former ice addicts to help raise awareness of the impacts of ice use and the ways to get help. The Ice Smart Group, which is a support program for methamphetamine users, holds meetings twice a week to assist people with recovery from addiction and to offer them a safe space in which to talk openly about their concerns and circumstances. These programs have led to some amazing success stories. The centre recently helped one woman graduate from a drug court with no breaches, which is almost unheard of. The centre is expanding its program to assist people whose family members are struggling with addiction. These

programs give family members and friends, who are often left feeling helpless, proactive ways and techniques to help. However, these family programs do not fit into the current government funding model.

The Community Reinforcement and Family Training Program teaches families and friends effective strategies for helping their loved ones to change. It teaches families and friends how to change the way they are interacting to help the person move towards treatment. The Get Your Loved One Into Treatment Program is for family members of people addicted to ice. It helps them relate to their family members struggling with addiction. The first group to complete this program saw all of the participants' loved ones make contact with the Recovery Point, which is clearly an amazing result. Every day the Samaritans Recovery Program is transforming people's lives and it is organisations like this that the Government must adequately fund and invest in. The National Drug Institute made a submission to the Federal Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement inquiry into crystal methamphetamine held last year. In that submission the National Drug Institute said that there is a need to build stronger connection to support the service provision for those affected by methamphetamine use.

This might include an organisation on workforce development for drug specialists and mainstream health services, and will include building strong referral and shared care pathways. There is a need for culturally safe Aboriginal health services and building capacity amongst these services; a need for establishing and evaluating programs such as online intervention; step-up, step-down withdrawal models—for example, combinations of non-residential and residential withdrawals and psychological and pharmacotherapy trials; trialling, and where indicated, investing in strategies that address the particular strategies of methamphetamine use—for example, protracted withdrawal, treatment retention, sexual risk taking and risk of blood born viruses [BBV] and sexually transmissible infections [STI]; and investing in strategies to enhance access to care across Australia, particularly in rural and remote regions.

There are not enough services like the ones provided by the Samaritans program to address the issues raised in the National Drug Institute's submission. I call on the Government to provide essential additional funding either for programs like these to be provided by the public sector to the mental health system and caseworkers or to non-government organisations such as the Samaritans and others that adopt a non-judgemental and supportive wraparound approach. Such a wraparound approach, not just a law and order approach, is essential if the ice epidemic is to be combated across this State and particularly in the regions such as the Hunter.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:53): I acknowledge the member for Charlestown for bringing this motion to the attention of the House. Methamphetamine, or ice as it is more commonly known, is a scourge on society not only in the Hunter but also on the Central Coast and across the State. The dangerous effects of ice do not discriminate; ice can affect people from all backgrounds in all communities. Accordingly, I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out paragraph (4) with a view to inserting instead:

(4) Notes that the Government and the Labor Opposition will work in unison to combat the ice epidemic.

We took to the election a commitment to invest more on services to treat and support people using methamphetamines. The Government is delivering on this commitment with an \$11 million investment that delivers treatment services for those in the grips of addiction, enhances the ability of communities to respond locally and facilitates early detection. Our commitment has enhanced stimulant treatment services based on the successful St Vincent's treatment model, building sustainable pathways of care and the capacity of non-government organisations to provide a local response and early detection.

Our investment in stimulant treatment services includes \$2 million over four years for treatment services based in Wollongong, with outreach to Shoalhaven focusing on young people aged 16-25; \$1.6 million over four years for Western Sydney based in Mount Druitt, with a focus on delivering treatment services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities; \$1.2 million over four years for the mid North Coast for outreach services into Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour and Kempsey, with a focus on providing services for Aboriginal people—I note the member for Oxley is in the Chamber, this affects her region; \$1.2 million over four years for communities in northern New South Wales, including Lismore, Casino, Tweed, and Grafton, to help Aboriginal communities suffering with ice addiction; additional funding in Newcastle to provide outreach to Tamworth and Taree to improve treatment for pregnant women and Aboriginal people in the region; and \$1.2 million over four years to expand services at St Vincent's Hospital, where this wonderful stimulant treatment model began.

The Stimulant Treatment Program provides clinical support for clients to improve the health and social outcomes of people who use amphetamines, including those with comorbid mental health issues, through provision of psychosocial support services such as counselling and relapse prevention. These services are now operational across New South Wales. We have also invested in the non-government organisation sector. We know they have the nimbleness to meet the needs of the rural and regional communities resulting in new services in western New South Wales, in areas like Dubbo, Wellington and surrounding area; southern New South Wales, in areas like Goulburn and surrounding area; and the Murrumbidgee, in areas like Wagga Wagga—I note that the

member for Wagga Wagga is also in the Chamber—Griffith and surrounding area. But the Government has not stopped with tackling the scourge of ice. I call it methamphetamine rather than ice. I have met with my local area commander on numerous occasions and ice undersells the danger of methamphetamine. Accordingly, I do not want to simplify the term.

We want to tackle drug abuse more broadly in the community, and know that strong communities and supported families are our best defence against this insidious drug. As such, the New South Wales Government has increased funding by \$75 million over four years to tackle this important issue. This is over and above our current investment and it will mean that the Government will invest \$197 million in drug and alcohol services in the 2016-17 financial years. This \$75 million extra investment will focus on providing more support for young people, more support for families and more support to get people into treatment. Some \$24 million of this investment will be focused specifically on helping young people get back on track and giving them the best chance for a positive future. We want to reach young people before they wind up homeless and addicted to an insidious drug such as methamphetamine. Specifically, our package includes \$16 million for additional youth treatment services and, for the first time in New South Wales, youth-specific detox services. These services will be statewide. In addition to the \$16 million there will be another \$8 million into an Early Intervention Innovation Fund.

The fund will be focused on evidence and evaluation because we want to know what works most effectively. This Government wants to see more mothers and fathers off drugs, employed and back to being positive role models for their children. That is why the New South Wales Government's \$75 million extra investment focuses \$24.5 million over four years to help more families. It includes \$15 million to expand substance use in pregnancy services—these services will support the identification of women who are misusing drug and alcohol and will provide appropriate prenatal care and ongoing support—\$8 million to increase residential rehabilitation and ongoing care for women and parents with dependent children, and \$1.5 million to boost support for families and carers.

The Government knows that in order to fully tackle drug abuse we need to provide funds so that the most vulnerable people can access the treatment they need. As part of the New South Wales Government's \$75 million extra investment, \$26.5 million will help more people into treatment. As part of this investment, \$12 million is for community treatment and after care, because we know recovery is a journey and not a single treatment episode. It would be remiss of me if I did not mention the fantastic work that groups on the Central Coast, such as The Glen, are doing and also the work of our Brisbane Water Local Area Command. Recently, we have seen great progress with the arrest of a number of perpetrators and those who produce these insidious drugs on the Central Coast. But we cannot arrest our way out of this problem, as my local area commander, Danny Sullivan, has said. The best way to tackle this insidious problem is to work collectively. I commend the motion moved by the member for Charlestown, together with the amendment.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:01): I thank my colleague and fellow Hunter resident the member for Charlestown for bringing this important motion to the House. The 2015 statistics from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] clearly show the insidious creep of crystal methamphetamine, or ice, into our communities. The rate of ice use has particularly accelerated over the past two years. BOCSAR has reported an increase in police-recorded incidents of possession or use of ice in New South Wales each quarter since June 2010. The latest crime statistics continue to show a large increase—up by 38 per cent—in the use or possession of amphetamines in New South Wales in the 24 months to June 2015. Alarmingly, the statistics also reveal that the number of people charged with the use or possession of ice rose by 71 per cent in the Lake Macquarie local government area in the year to September 2015. This is double the increase seen across New South Wales. Across the Hunter there were 200 more reported incidents of the use or possession of ice in the 12 months to March 2015 compared with the previous year.

When looking at the map produced by BOCSAR, the view is alarming. An increase in the use or possession of amphetamines is distributed over much of the State, with 20 out of 28 regions showing an increase in the offence. Regional New South Wales is particularly affected. Don Weatherburn, the guru of statistics and director of BOCSAR, said the use of ice in the Hunter has increased over the last decade but has accelerated recently. It is very clear that we have a problem in the Hunter, and it is getting worse. The statistics on the ground look very, very ugly. Communities are being torn apart. A mum came to me concerned about her young son who is now in prison because of crimes he committed when he was affected by ice. The mum is appalled by her son's actions. She works and has other children who are completing their schooling and following a responsible path. She now finds herself travelling long distances to visit her son in prison and is trying to work out what sort of future he will have when he leaves prison. She could be anyone.

I have spoken with former ice addicts who have described the difficulty of accessing any support to get off drugs. Access to rehabilitation services in the regions is so difficult that they spoke of people committing

crimes to be imprisoned so that they can access support and get clean. That is what it is like in our communities. Rates of domestic violence are going through the roof. Children and families are being placed at risk due to the insidious, ubiquitous nature of the drug. Families are being torn apart. One of the troubling trends we are seeing in my community is the increasing number of grandparents taking responsibility for the care of their grandchildren. Across the Hunter there are 11 Grandparents as Parents groups. Many of the members from my local group have discussed with me the inability of their children to care for their own kids due to ice addiction within the household.

When grandparents are not willing or are unable to care for their grandchildren, we see more and more children being placed in care and facing a future that is far from bright. There is a significant link between ice addiction and mental health issues, and then there is the enormous impact on frontline workers. On a daily basis, our police, paramedics and healthcare workers are trying to manage people who are under the influence of ice. I thank them wholeheartedly for the service they give. A local police officer said he had never seen anything as bad as what is happening on the streets now with ice. He said it is much worse than when heroin was the drug of choice, because ice is everywhere and accessible to all.

As recently as last week I was appalled to learn that ice was even available for purchase online. Dealers do not have to worry about hanging their shoes over electricity wires or letting off fireworks, apparently they can just set up a website. The ice epidemic is decimating communities in rural and regional New South Wales. I urge the Government to not just build more prisons but to look at the causes of the addiction and the criminal behaviours and to provide support for the programs that are already on the ground and are working. [*Time expired.*]

Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (13:05): I see the scourge of ice infiltrating every corner of our community. All members of this House are concerned about its impact. I refer to the contribution by the Minister for Family and Community Services in this Chamber earlier today in which he highlighted various concerns. He said that in 1996 there were about 5,000 children in out-of-home care in New South Wales and now there are 20,000. We should join together and share our concerns about the increasing breakdown of families and society. We have all heard the most horrific stories about the use of ice in our communities. One particular story has affected many people in the community that I represent. As the member for Port Stephens quite rightly pointed out, this problem also affects our health system, our health workers and our ambulance workers.

Recently, my son, after an accident on a bike, was treated at the local emergency department—in a most professional way, I might add. I saw a young man who had to be separated in a room away from other patients. His mother, who had brought him in, was in tears. It was heartbreaking to see. It was clear that he had a methamphetamine problem. I acknowledge the work of the Minister for Mental Health in mental health and in her former portfolio of Family and Community Services. We are tackling a problem the like of which we have never seen before, and we must tackle it together. This drug is addictive, destructive and incredibly dangerous. The Government is attempting to work through some of these issues and has halved the quantity of ice required to be able to charge offenders with manufacturing or trafficking in large commercial quantities from one kilo down to 500 grams. As well as getting the little guys on the street corner, we must also move up the chain and get those who are manufacturing and importing the drug.

According to the Government's election commitment, we are creating a coordinated effort across government and the non-government sectors to address the three pillars of the National Drug Strategy: supply reduction, demand reduction, and harm reduction. As well as addressing supply and demand reduction and harm minimisation, we are providing effective treatment and rehabilitation for those who use and those who have become addicted to get them off ice and back to leading healthy, drug-free lives. The Mid North Coast Correctional Centre is located in the Oxley electorate. One of the reasons for expanding that facility by 400 beds is the impact that ice and illicit drugs are having on the community.

I spoke to one of the officers who receives the prisoners as they arrive. He said, "Melinda, the toughest ones to see are the tradies, and it happens way too young. These 26- or 27-year-old young fellows with a wife and a couple of kids have got into ice and the addiction has taken over their lives". Too many good young fellows, who were working in a trades job providing for their families—there is a shortage of tradies in our communities—are now sitting in our correctional facilities. We need to be coordinated and working with mental health professionals and Family and Community Services. As the Minister for Community Services said earlier today, getting rid of the silos is the most functional thing we can do to solve the problem at a local level.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:09): I speak today in support of the motion moved by the member for Charlestown which relates to the Hunter epidemic of the drug ice. The motion notes that the Hunter is being plagued by this drug, that the number of people charged with the use of methamphetamines has risen by 71 per cent in Lake Macquarie in the year to September 2015, and that the increase in the usage of ice is higher in regional communities. The amendment paragraph (4) notes that the Government and Labor Opposition will work

in unison to combat the ice epidemic. The Opposition will support the Government in its efforts to end the scourge of ice that is attacking our community.

Ice is ripping apart the lives of individuals, families and communities. The destruction that ice causes communities is unfathomable. The terrible effects of ice on our community are also felt by frontline workers such as nurses, doctors, emergency service workers and especially police. The member for Charlestown said that the Hunter community is suffering, but it is also happening in Western Sydney. When speaking with Peter Lennon, chief superintendent in my local area command, about the impact of ice on Fairfield police, he has told me about the injuries that police officers have sustained whilst apprehending people under the influence of ice. I have had similar conversations with Superintendent Murray of the Cabramatta Local Area Command [LAC]. This is a highly corrosive issue and it is affecting the morale of our communities. It is of great concern that it is cheaper to buy ice than it is to buy a beer in a pub. We must take a coordinated approach to solving this problem.

I am sure that the Government, through its government agencies, is ensuring that adequate preventative programs are put in place. But adequate programs must also be put in place once a user is apprehended by law enforcement officers so as to assist them to rehabilitate and return to society where they can make a positive contribution. We have heard the stories and seen the advertising campaigns, but it is time for everyone to get involved. In the early 1990s in Fairfield, under a former Labor Government, a group called the Cabramatta Street Team worked alongside police in order to clean up the area. It was a successful program. It was disappointing when the street team was disbanded because at the time it was working towards dealing with people who were on ice. The team no longer exists. I thank the member for Charlestown for bringing this motion forward. I note the amendment moved by the member for Terrigal, which states that the Government and the Labor Opposition will work in unison. [*Time expired.*]

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (13:13): I am pleased to contribute to the debate on the motion about the insidious drug ice and I thank the member for Charlestown for bringing the motion forward. The effects of ice in our communities are well known and well documented. The question is, What are we doing about it? The Tamworth Ice Action Group has been formed by a range of stakeholders, both government and non-government, to provide services for drug and alcohol issues in our region. We are working towards a plan to get on top of this problem and hopefully to eradicate it. Ultimately, we will work towards the three pillars of education, support and awareness. The Tamworth Ice Action Group was set up in January this year with the assistance and full backing of the Deputy Premier, the Hon. Troy Grant.

In relation to the education component, year 9 students will be educated about the use of both legal and illegal drugs. In April next year, we will be holding an event in Tamworth where agencies, stakeholders and others will provide information, educate, talk to and connect with year 9 students across the Tamworth electorate. The event, which will be held over a number of days, will involve setting up stations where students will join in a discussion and offer their views on the issues and solutions to the problem. Another component is support not only for police but also for families who are afflicted by their loved ones being caught up in drug use and drug dependence. An awareness campaign will also be run. The Tamworth Ice Action Group is opening up the matter for discussion in the media and putting the issue on the front page of our papers. We are not hiding from the fact that this is a problem.

As a result of the Tamworth Ice Action Group's awareness program, people have been contacting us and saying that they are coming out of a dark space because a relative—husband, brother, sister, son, daughter, uncle, auntie, or cousin—is taking ice and they have been too ashamed to talk about it. They say that the ice-addicted relative is ruining their social fabric and family life and they do not know who to turn to or how to access assistance and support. People are asking us what is available in our region and we are able to offer them support through the various relevant agencies. The Tamworth Ice Action Group is also looking at alcohol and other drug services, such as rehabilitation and detox services. We all have to get on the front foot in addressing this issue. I thank the members of the Tamworth Ice Action Group for their continued support. No-one likes to attend meetings just for the sake of it. But when the outcome is as focused and meaningful as the outcome from the Tamworth Ice Action Group, these initiatives are critical to our community.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (13:17): By leave: I thank the House for the opportunity to speak today. I support the motion moved by the member for Charlestown, and the amendment to the motion. The Government is concerned about the increasing incidence of amphetamine use, particularly ice. As the member for Upper Hunter, I can attest to the problems in our area, which are also happening in many other areas around New South Wales. Ice use is increasing in country towns and the suburbs. Ice is an addictive, destructive and dangerous drug. The Government is implementing the commitment it made at the last election to tackle the scourge of ice and has halved the quantity required to charge offenders with manufacturing or trafficking in large commercial quantities from one kilogram to 500 grams.

This bill will provide a significant deterrence and fitting punishment for those seeking to profit from the misery associated with ice use. It means that more ice manufacturers and dealers will face the maximum penalty that the offence carries, which is life behind bars. The Government's ice package election commitments encompassed a coordinated effort across the government and non-government sector to address each of the three pillars of the National Drug Strategy: supply reduction, demand reduction and harm reduction. Law enforcement is reducing supply through precursor controls, and the Government is reducing demand and preventing use by educating people on the dangers of illicit drug use and reducing harm through effective treatment and rehabilitation for those who have become addicted to ice in order to return them to normal, healthy, drug-free lives.

In addition to the tougher penalties for larger commercial manufacture and distribution, there are tighter controls on the sale of the main precursor in the manufacture of ice—pseudoephedrine. This will reduce supply. The NSW Police Force and Crime Stoppers have launched an advertising campaign to encourage people to call Crime Stoppers and provide information—anonously if they wish—if they believe they have seen something suspicious related to drug supply or have information that could assist police. Police work each day to reduce the supply of ice in New South Wales. For example, in mid-July 2016, following extensive investigation, police officers arrested a man and a woman in a car park in Ambarvale. During a subsequent search, police seized two kilograms of ice, thereby removing a large commercial quantity of this dangerous drug from the New South Wales market.

To reduce demand, the Government is launching a campaign to educate people of the dangers of ice use. To reduce harm and encourage rehabilitation, the Government has committed to investing \$7 million in new stimulant treatment services. An additional \$4 million has been pledged to the non-government sector to enhance local drug and alcohol rehabilitation services, especially amongst rural and regional communities. This is welcome in communities throughout the Hunter and across rural and regional New South Wales. Similarly, when drug addiction is the cause of a person's other criminal behaviour, police and courts can steer such people into treatment through initiatives such as the Drug Court via the Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment [MERIT] scheme. I thank members for the opportunity to contribute and I support the amended motion.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:22): By leave: I congratulate the member for Charlestown on moving this motion in the Chamber today. I thank all members for contributing to the debate regarding the issue of ice in their communities, specifically in regional areas. It affects communities throughout this State and Australia. No community is spared from the increased use of ice. The surge in ice use must be tackled throughout regional and metropolitan areas. It is addictive, destructive and dangerous and tears communities and families apart. There are a number of education programs aimed at primary and high school levels to prevent more victims of ice. From 2010 to 2013 ice use doubled from 22 per cent to 50 per cent. It is associated with violence. It increases the fight or flight reaction which makes people respond aggressively to situations where they feel threatened. Our police, ambulance and firefighters are at the forefront of the issues affecting people addicted to ice.

The previous contributor to the debate spoke of the Government's election commitment to tackle the scourge of ice. The definition of "large commercial quantity" has been halved from one kilogram to 500 grams, but it needs to go further. It will act as a significant deterrent and a fitting punishment for those seeking to profit from the misery associated with ice. It means that more ice manufacturers and dealers will face the maximum penalty, which is life behind bars. The ice package election commitments must be employed throughout New South Wales and across the country. There must be leadership on this issue. This is a growing concern. I have heard and read some of the stories from regional and rural towns in our State that are battling the problem of ice. The communities and police are doing great work but we need a national approach to this issue. I thank the member for Charlestown for moving the motion.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:25): By leave: I thank members for granting me leave to contribute to the debate. Crystal methamphetamine, or ice, affects many people across New South Wales, including the Hunter region and south-west Sydney. The drug causes feelings of aggression, anxiety or panic, risk-taking behaviour, feeling powerful or better than others, and hostility and aggression. Violent behaviour is a key harm associated with the use of methamphetamines. A study by the Society for the Study of Addiction found that violent behaviour was 6.2 times more likely to occur when a participant was using methamphetamines relative to when they were not using the drugs.

The same study concluded that heavy use of methamphetamines predicted a 13-fold increase in violence occurring by a user. I reiterate that methamphetamines are illegal to use, possess and manufacture in New South Wales. The Government has been cracking down on drug-related crime. Some of the initiatives in place include a crackdown on drug driving, increasing the number of roadside drug tests to 100,000 per year by 2016-17, targeting dealers through reducing the threshold to charge a person with possession of large commercial quantity

of ice for supply from one kilogram to 500 grams, and increasing the powers of the justice system to confiscate the assets of serious criminals, including drug dealers and traffickers.

Tackling this drug issue is not just about criminal law solutions but also rehabilitation and social policies. The Government has invested in three new stimulant services and has expanded a fourth service and has provided additional funding to non-governmental treatment services. It has provided funding towards community education to teach about the dangers of ice and has allocated \$200 million to overhaul drug and alcohol services in New South Wales, including: 1,000 beds for drug-affected women and mothers; \$16 million for special detox beds for teens; and \$8 million for early intervention research.

I am happy that the member for Charlestown is attempting to combat the use of ice in her community. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the new mayor, Wendy Waller, and her Labor colleagues at Liverpool City Council. As I have previously stated in this place, Councillor Waller and her Liverpool council Labor colleagues voted against a motion to make it clear that Liverpool City Council will never support a program that encourages the use of illicit drugs in our local government area. In voting against the motion, the Liverpool Labor councillors showed that they do not care about the safety and care of their residents. Councillor Waller changed her tune during the recent local government campaign. Labor needed to come out against the proposal when it mattered—on the council floor—not in the media the day before an election when it is politically convenient to change position in order to garner votes.

On Tuesday I tabled the first 500 signatures of a petition against the ice smoking room in Liverpool. I tabled more signatures this morning, and more will be tabled in the remaining sitting weeks. This proposal is not right for the Liverpool community and I am happy that the Government is not offering support for a program forced on Liverpool by a non-government organisation. Richard Branson of Virgin Airlines fame has come out in support of the "yes" campaign for an ice smoking room in Liverpool. That is obviously not appropriate, and I encourage him to come to the area to see what would happen if it were established. I have set up an action group to combat the use of ice in Liverpool by applying local solutions supported by the local community. Once again, I thank the member for Charlestown for her care and compassion for her community.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:29): In reply: I thank the member for Terrigal; the member for Port Stephens, the shadow Minister for the Hunter; the member for Oxley; the member for Fairfield, the shadow Minister for Police; the member for Tamworth; the member for Upper Hunter; and the member for Holsworthy for their contributions to this debate. The Opposition will not oppose the amendment moved by the member for Terrigal. Methamphetamine, or ice, use in the community is significant. We have heard during this debate about the impact its use has on families. We heard about a mother who is terrified of what will happen when her son is released by Corrective Services NSW, and how he will be supported. We have heard about families being torn apart. We also have heard about the effect ice use has on health workers, paramedics and police officers.

This is a significant issue. The use of this drug has increased, and as a result the crime rate has increased by 71 per cent in the Lake Macquarie area over the past 12 months. That is a massive increase. While it is good to hear about the action the Government has taken, it is simply not doing enough. We have heard that ice can now be purchased online. The Gosford Local Area Command, which is in the member for Terrigal's electorate, has reported an increase of 121 per cent in the possession or use of amphetamines over the past 21 months. What is being done now is clearly not enough.

The Samaritans, who care for addicts' families, are not receiving the funds they need to provide that assistance. Members opposite talk about supporting families, but the Government's failure to provide assistance to efforts such as the Community Reinforcement and Family Training program and the Getting a Loved One into Treatment program represents a lost opportunity. People from across our community are using methamphetamines, and as a result many lives are being affected and destroyed. We must harness the ability of families to support their loved ones who are recovering from ice addiction. Much more should be done, and the Opposition is happy to work with the Government to address this issue. However, given the figures that have been provided and the disturbing reports about the availability of ice online, we must do more. I look forward to hearing more from the Government about how it will work with the Opposition on this issue.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): The member for Charlestown has moved a motion, to which the member for Terrigal has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): The question now is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

LONE PINE MEMORIAL PARK, TUNCURRY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:35): By concurrence: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Supports the maintenance and upkeep of war memorials that recognise the service and sacrifice of Australians in all theatres of conflict.
- (2) Acknowledges that nothing is more important than remembering and thanking those who served in the Australian armed forces.
- (3) Notes that Lone Pine is one of the most significant military events in Australian history, which is why the memorial park in Tuncurry is dedicated to the memory of those who laid down their lives in that conflict.
- (4) Deplores the actions of vandals who have made several recent attacks on the Lone Pine Memorial Park.
- (5) Condemns the lack of respect shown for the memory of those who served their country in the armed services.
- (6) Calls on the Government to fund the sum of \$10,000 for the installation of security lights at Lone Pine Memorial Park, which will act as a deterrent to future acts of vandalism.

I gave notice of this motion on 22 March this year. The good news is that since then the Government has seen fit to provide a \$10,000 grant to assist the Forster Tuncurry RSL Sub-branch in installing security lights at the Lone Pine Memorial Park. I met with Ministers on 18 March and stated:

It is disgraceful that certain people have no respect whatsoever for the memory of those who served their country in our armed services ...

Lone Pine is one of the most significant military events ...

Many hours of work have been undertaken by volunteers at the memorial park, and together with the MidCoast Council they have established this wonderful park overlooking Wallis Lake. The commemoration of the Centenary of Anzac last year at the park attracted the largest crowd in the history of the Forster-Tuncurry area. The park has a Lone Pine tree that was brought as a seedling from Gallipoli many years ago. To have ratbag hooligans and others desecrate that site was very disturbing not only for the families of those who served but also for the wider community.

It was proposed—and I think it was a great idea—that security lighting be installed which did not disturb the neighbours but which would illuminate the area. We know that criminals, hooligans and others bent on destruction hate the light. In addition to providing security, the lights draw attention to this important memorial. I presented in this place a petition that was circulated by volunteers, who also lobbied me and the MidCoast Council. One of the great things about this Parliament is that members can raise issues and the Government and our Ministers listen.

I am pleased to say that the \$10,000 they were asking for was granted by the Government. Lone Pine Memorial Park, which overlooks the wonderful Wallis Lake, is part of a much bigger park that is used all day, every day—every weekend, during the school holidays and many other times. It has children's playgrounds and sandpits. It is right on the banks of the lake, there are jetties and wharves, and it is a great fishing spot. This is a very important place—that is why it was selected. When they first made the decision to get the go-ahead to build the Lone Pine Memorial Park it was because of its ideal location.

Since those lights have gone in not one bit of graffiti or damage has been done to mark it again. This goes to show that when members of the community see that there is a problem they can approach their local member and their local council and work together to get something done. It also shows that lighting always deters criminals from their activities. I was very pleased that we were able to help. I am also very pleased to be able to help the Foster Tuncurry RSL Sub-branch because they are tireless workers in their community. They work tirelessly to assist those who have served in our various armed services through many different conflicts to this day. I commend this motion to the House.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (13:41): It is with a great deal of pride that I support the motion moved by my colleague the member for Myall Lakes and The Nationals Whip. I am pleased to hear that since this motion was lodged by the member for Myall Lakes he has been successful in securing that funding and those security lights have been installed. It is unfortunate, as the member for Myall Lakes said, that we have to take such steps to prevent vandalism of such a significant memorial in the community. Nevertheless, it is appropriate that the funding was provided. I am pleased to hear that since the lighting has been in place there has been no repeat of the deplorable actions that saw Lone Pine Memorial Park defaced.

The Lone Pine Memorial Park in Tuncurry, like many memorials in communities and electorates throughout the State, is a very important part of our community. It is a symbolic place. It is part of our heritage and our history. It is a place where we gather as communities in growing numbers each year to pay tribute to the

brave men and women who have valiantly served our nation in the past and paid the ultimate sacrifice and to recognise those who still serve our country in conflicts and peacekeeping missions throughout the world. I take this opportunity to draw a parallel between the work being done at Tuncurry in preserving that war memorial with the work being done by a number of RSL sub-branches in the Northern Tablelands electorate.

Recently I was in Inverell for the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan. The RSL sub-branch organised a magnificent service and a march down the main streets of Inverell. I congratulate Pat McMahon, president of the Inverell RSL sub-branch, and Graeme Clinch, who is the secretary. Those two gentlemen form the nucleus of a vibrant and active sub-branch. They have been successful in attracting more than \$30,000 in State Government funding to do exactly what has been done in Tuncurry. They have installed some lighting and a surveillance camera to protect the cenotaph near the war memorial Olympic pool, which has had a lot of upgrades. All of the gold lettering has been regilded and new paving has been put in around the central cenotaph. The RSL sub-branch has used its own money to install new honour boards near that cenotaph at the front entrance of the pool complex.

Glen Innes RSL Sub-branch—under the leadership of Gordon Taylor and secretary Gail Turnbull—is another vibrant and active sub-branch. It was a great pleasure to have the Minister for Veterans Affairs, David Elliott, in Glen Innes a number of months ago to see the work that the sub-branch has been doing to enhance the memorial park. I was pleased to announce recently more than \$3,000 from the State Government to further enhance the war memorial soldiers' gates, which provide a beautiful entranceway to Anzac Park in Glen Innes.

It would be remiss of me not to mention Max Tavener, the president of the Armidale sub-branch, and the work that that sub-branch has done to enhance the Central Park war memorial in Armidale which attracts approximately 5,000 people, young and old, each Anzac Day to pay tribute to our service men and women. They have incorporated a new Vietnam War honour roll section around the central fountain area of that memorial. They have also been successful in picking up a little over \$3,000 from the State Government for that.

The great work that the Tuncurry RSL sub-branch is doing with the support of the member for Myall Lakes and the State Government is repeated in many parts of rural and regional New South Wales. There are many sub-branches. I have only mentioned three from my electorate in this debate but all members would have similar stories. Regardless of their political stripes it is appropriate that governments invest taxpayer money into better preserving and maintaining war memorials. They are an important part of our community's history and heritage. That is seen every year on Anzac Day when more and more people turn out to pay tribute to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Again I thank the member for Myall Lakes for bringing this motion to the House. I commend him for the work that he has done in securing this money from the Government to better preserve a very important memorial in the Tuncurry community—one of the many good works the local member has done. Again I pass on my thanks and pay tribute to the local RSL sub-branch and all of the sub-branches throughout the electorate of Northern Tablelands and more broadly throughout the State. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (13:47): By concurrence: I speak on the motion about the Lone Pine Memorial Park at Tuncurry and I thank the member for Myall Lakes for moving it. We should all be proud of the men and women of the armed services who gave their lives for us, regardless of the field of battle or which war it was—the First World War, the Second World War, the Vietnam War or any other war. These people helped us to have the democracy, the way of life and the freedoms that we have now. None of us would want to go and live in any of the countries that are under Communism or dictatorships because we know it would be a hard way of life. We are used to the freedoms that we have here.

I support the motion of the member for Myall Lakes because I know what it is like to have a memorial that is damaged every year. At Cabra-Vale Memorial Park the Vietnamese-Australian servicemen's war memorial commemorates the Vietnam War. Each year as the service to remember Lone Pine was approaching, someone would come along the night before and throw paint over the memorial. We do not know who it was—we have our suspicions but could never prove it. There would be a lot of panic the next morning to get the memorial ready for the service at 10.00 a.m. Paint remover was used to get it as clean as possible. Not only that but someone would also damage the guns—they would bend the barrel of the gun or break it off—and the memorial would then be ruined for the celebration that day.

The Vietnamese community came to see me when I was a mayor as well as a State member. They asked for funding to fix the problem once and for all. As was done at the Lone Pine Memorial Park at Tuncurry, we lit the memorial up. As the member for Myall Lakes indicated, the ratbags do not go under the light because they are not sure if someone is watching and if their nasty deeds are being filmed on cameras. Lighting the memorial has stopped the problem, otherwise it was going to cost the Government a lot of money to look after it.

Through the Community Building Partnership program, we allocated \$32,000 to lifting the monument of the two soldiers sitting side by side. It was originally placed close to the water so it resembled a reflection pool, which depicted scenes from the Vietnam war when soldiers were resting by the water. The statue was sitting on sandbags and we lifted it up about a metre and a half into the air, which then made the two soldiers visible from the streets around Railway Parade. By doing that the monument looked bigger. It looked a little out of place because it was perched on 10 sandbags above the water, but the purpose of doing that was to keep the monument safe for future celebrations and memorials. It has now been five or six years since the statue was damaged. It has been looked after and is held in reverence situated next to the Cabra-Vale RSL club.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:51): In reply: I thank the member for Northern Tablelands and the member for Cabramatta for their contributions. We all abhor the meaningless acts and criminal conduct that is perpetrated by ratbags and idiots. It is good news that the Government has provided funding not only for our three electorates but also for other electorates across New South Wales to improve and protect the memorials in our State. I commend the motion to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: Welcome to the last question time for Ronda Miller. I ask members to be very good for Ronda. I wish the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations, and member for Willoughby, a happy birthday. I welcome all guests to the gallery this afternoon. We have some very special guests. In particular, I welcome the newly elected Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, the Hon. Kezia Purick, MLA, and her partner in crime, Lisa Victor. It is lovely to see you. Congratulations, Kezia. Your appointment is well deserved.

I welcome student leaders and their parents from West Ryde Public School and Truscott Street Public School, attending as part of the Ryde electorate school leadership program, guests of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, and member for Ryde. I welcome Janice Mapledoram and Eva Marks, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport, Roads, Industry, Resources and Energy, and member for Drummoyne. I welcome Robert Martin, a student from The Illawarra Grammar School on work experience, guest of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, and member for Kiama. I also welcome Elizabeth Veasey, Jock Sowter, Yvette Quinn and Brad McDean, guests of The Nationals Whip and member for Myall Lakes.

I welcome members of the Gymea Community Aid men's group, guests of the member for Miranda. I also welcome Benjamin Oh, Kingsley Li and Bonnie Li from the Asian Australian Rainbow Alliance, and Chris Pycroft and Lauren Foy from the Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, guests of the member for Balmain. I welcome members of the Northbridge Probus Club who came in for high tea today. I hope you enjoyed that. I acknowledge and welcome James Gallagher from the Office of the Clerk of the New Zealand House of Representatives. I say a big welcome back to Richard Amery, former member for Mount Druitt. Come back, Richard. We need your decorum and wit. I also welcome back Paul Crittenden, former member for Wyong. It is nice to see you both. Welcome to question time, everybody. I hope everyone enjoys the afternoon.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I inform the House that the Minister for Education will answer questions in the absence of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing. The Minister for Planning will answer questions in the absence of the Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning.

*Bills***FINES AMENDMENT (ELECTRONIC PENALTY NOTICES) BILL 2016****SECURITY INDUSTRY AMENDMENT (PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS) BILL 2016****RURAL FIRES AMENDMENT (FIRE TRAILS) BILL 2016****SCRAP METAL INDUSTRY BILL 2016****ADOPTION AMENDMENT (INSTITUTE OF OPEN ADOPTION STUDIES) BILL 2016****Assent**

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of messages from the Lieutenant-Governor notifying His Excellency's assent to the abovementioned bills.

*Question Time***GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY BAN**

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:22): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Will the Minister confirm his promise to media identities that he will ensure the State's greyhound racing infrastructure is used for the racing of greyhounds? As such, will he overturn the current Premier's ban on greyhound racing?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:23): What a stupid question from a stupid individual. Let me be crystal clear: I have had no discussion with Alan Jones or anybody else about greyhounds.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Bankstown not to start interjecting early.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The Leader of the Opposition has come in here after what he has been up to. He still has his Opposition Whip sitting there, despite having referred him and while members opposite are wondering how long he will be in his job. How long? Sixteen minutes?

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: The Minister may not like the question, but I suggest that he direct his comments through the Chair instead of across the Chamber.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. I ask the Minister to direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am a proud member of a team under Premier Mike Baird. Why are we delivering record levels of services, infrastructure and focus? Because we are a team dedicated to making sure that the people of this State get what they deserve. If members of the Opposition want to focus on themselves they can go right ahead. The bottom line is we made a team decision about greyhounds on which we are backing the Premier and we are going to keep working hard for the people of New South Wales.

JOBS GROWTH

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (14:25): My question is addressed to the Premier. How is this Government delivering projects across this great State that make a real difference in people's lives?

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:25): I did not know this great question was coming from the member for Kiama, who is doing a great job in his electorate. There is no doubt that he is the best member for Kiama this world has ever seen. It is a bittersweet day. I acknowledge upfront it is the Treasurer's birthday, the Clerk has done an incredible job for the people of New South Wales but unfortunately is retiring and the former member for Mount Druitt has reminded us what we miss. We kind of want him back but then we kind of do not want him back, but he should feel free to interject. We liked his interjections, so he should keep them coming. The former member for Mount Druitt is here because he is excited. He knows that this Government is delivering jobs across the State—he is charged, he is amped and he wanted to come here to hear all about it. He forgot all the good news that was going on in the State and that is why he is here. We know that across New South Wales jobs are dropping out of the sky.

[Interjection]

Let me tell you where the jobs are. That is such a good interjection. Where are the jobs? We know that across this great State not only are we leading the nation but we have streaked ahead of the nation. Under this Treasurer for 15 months we have had the lowest unemployment rate. It is great news for the people of New South Wales. Regional New South Wales is also going great guns with jobs everywhere. In the past 12 months, two-thirds of the increase in jobs in this State have gone to regional New South Wales. Close to two-thirds of

regional jobs across the country are in regional New South Wales, which is great news. Indeed, more than 44,000 jobs have been added in the year to August. It is great news for the people of New South Wales and great news for the regions. We know the member for Terrigal is doing a great job in trying to add more jobs, and we have seen 14,000 new jobs on the Central Coast in the past 12 months. We know members representing electorates on the Central Coast are cheering.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Wyong to order for the first time. The member for Charlestown will cease interjecting.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We know the old member for Newcastle loves the Hunter revitalisation. Indeed, she said that securing light rail for the city was fantastic. That is what a good member for Newcastle does: they back things in. Crackers cannot get enough of our \$460 million investment. The current member for Newcastle absolutely loves it.

Ms Jodie Harrison: Point of order: The Premier should refer to the member by his correct title.

The SPEAKER: The Premier first called him Crackers and then he called him the member for Newcastle. That is why I did not pull the Premier up on it. The point of order is noted.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is a term of endearment. The \$1.5 billion worth of road projects across the Hunter are delivering more jobs. As we heard from the Minister, we are investing \$448 million in Hunter health services. Under this Minister we are continuing to invest in the John Hunter, Maitland, Muswellbrook and Singleton hospital redevelopments. I also note we have created 7,500 jobs in the Tweed. It is great to have the member for Tweed overseeing that. In the Central West we have created 7,200 jobs. That is great news. I note that the Leader of the Opposition has begun his re-entry into regional New South Wales by taking shadow Cabinet back to Wollongong. We remember the last time. They told no-one they were there.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The member for Maroubra was on camera being asked what he was doing there.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The member for Maroubra said, "I'm not doing anything here. In fact, I'm not here."
[Extension of time]

My suggestion is that maybe they should keep all of their tours secret; they seem to go a bit better that way. We all remember reading in the *Illawarra Mercury*, "Talk is cheap, Foley. Every previous Labor Government talks the talk but when push comes to shove nothing ever comes our way." Labor promises many things but delivers absolutely nothing. Labor delivered nothing in jobs, nothing in investment, nothing in growth and nothing in infrastructure.

The SPEAKER: The member for Shellharbour will cease interjecting.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is a very different story under this Government. Even the member for Keira would—

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being relevant to the question he was asked. The member will resume his seat.

Mr Ryan Park: If they want to debate what we have delivered in the Illawarra they can bring it on.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We can bring that debate on: It will take 10 seconds. Labor delivered nothing. How many inches of the Foxground and Berry bypass did the Labor Government lay? Absolutely none. The current member has delivered \$580 million.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Members opposite voted against the Albion Park Rail bypass. This Government is delivering it. Members opposite ignored Wollongong Hospital. We are upgrading it. They did nothing for Shellharbour Hospital. We are upgrading it too.

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

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We continue to look after the people of New South Wales. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Premier has concluded his answer.

GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY BAN

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:32): My question is directed to the Premier. Given the Premier's comment in this place on 23 August in respect of his ban on greyhound racing that, "This has been a very difficult decision but the Government stands behind it 100 per cent", will he now confirm that he stands behind it sort of maybe somewhat less than 100 per cent?

Mr Brad Hazzard: Do you stand behind Foley 100 per cent?

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:33): We know the answer to that. I am trying to work out the member for Maroubra's question. It is not always easy. I think the answer is no, we are 100 per cent behind it.

REGIONAL TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (14:34): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. How is the Government improving transport services and boosting infrastructure in regional New South Wales?

The SPEAKER: Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:34): I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his very sensible question. This Government is delivering not only in metropolitan New South Wales but also in the regions. It would not matter if it were the Pacific, Princes, Newell, Oxley or Mitchell highway, there is major investment happening for all of our regional highways. We are also keen to invest in freight. When we prosecuted the case for the poles and wires transaction we made clear that we wanted to unleash the potential productivity in our farmlands and mining communities by freeing up freight pinch points while also investing heavily in freight rail and ports.

The good member knows that we are also investing in regional railway stations. It is pleasing that later this year we will begin upgrade works at Wagga Wagga station. There will be new seating on the platforms, a designated kiss-and-ride zone, a taxi rank and upgrades to station and car park lighting. Construction is also due to commence later this year at a number of other regional stations, including Albury, Coffs Harbour, Orange and Tamworth. This is about making sure that transport services are accessible in the regions. We are about delivering services while ensuring that we have the appropriate infrastructure to support them.

As everyone knows, since coming to office this Government has delivered an additional 16,000 weekly transport services. This morning I was pleased to confirm that we will now provide better services to commuters from the South Coast and Illawarra into the city and also from the Blue Mountains. On the Blue Mountains line the 3.18 p.m. weekday service from Central to Lithgow will operate as an eight-car train, doubling the number of seats available for customers. That means there will be up to 2,000 additional seats for customers every week. On the South Coast line four express services stopping at Austinmer station will be permanently introduced into the timetable following a recent trial. The advocacy of the member for Heathcote and the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra has been extensive on this. It is good to get an outcome for them. They have done well in representing their constituents in the region.

Of course, Labor could have done this but it did not. Since coming to office we have delivered an additional 180 weekly services into the Illawarra. We are also tackling overcrowding on South Coast trains. As a result of the changes to the Illawarra line some stations between Sydenham and Allawah will be removed from some T4 services. We will, however, add three additional all-stations trains between Bondi Junction and Hurstville in the PM peak. Increased numbers of people are now travelling on the shoulders of the peak rather than in the peak period. It is pleasing to be able to introduce more services between the hours of 3.00 p.m. and 4.00 p.m., which is a measure designed to ensure that we meet the needs of commuters and provide them with more comfortable train journeys.

It does not matter if it is health, roads or water infrastructure—we are delivering for the bush. The Minister for Health has been delivering health infrastructure in a vast array of regional communities. Not only big regional centres but also smaller regional communities have benefitted from the health infrastructure programs she has delivered. No-one could argue against the fact that our focus and attention on regional health is delivering fantastic outcomes. For 10 years Labor promised to build a facility in my electorate of Bega. Under the leadership of Jillian Skinner it has been built and it is now transforming health services in my community. That is the experience across regional New South Wales. We will continue to deliver for the regions. Indeed, it is important

that we continue our focus on upgrading roads, particularly regional highways where for many years families have lost loved ones and community members in tragic circumstances. The Government is not only driving the road toll down but also delivering better outcomes for freight. We are the party of the regions and for the regions, and we will continue our focus.

GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY BAN

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:39): My question is directed to the Treasurer. Given that Dr Keniry's task force has identified that there are 19,000, not 6,000, greyhounds in this State, will the Government reverse the greyhound racing ban in order to save the New South Wales budget millions of dollars?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (14:40): The Government has said that it is looking forward to a further report from Dr Keniry and we will deal with those issues. But when we make decisions it is not only about finances. We make decisions based on what is in the best interests of the people of this State. I wish the shadow Treasurer would ask me a question about Treasury matters. In the shadow Treasurer we have someone who is incapable of dealing with the serious issues that affect the State Budget and the New South Wales economy.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Just before question time I was pleased to receive the latest regional jobs figures. Those figures show that 60 per cent of the nation's jobs are created here in New South Wales.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. This is completely irrelevant. The question was about greyhounds, not jobs.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Treasurer is being relevant because she is also talking about the budget.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If the shadow Treasurer were capable of doing his job, he would actually ask me a question about budget matters and the state of the economy.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira and the member for Bankstown will cease shouting.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Those opposite do not like to hear about regional jobs, but this gives me a great opportunity. The member for Keira, and shadow Treasurer, is a regional member so he should care about regional jobs. He should be pleased to know that in the Illawarra, the Central West and the Tweed we had amazing jobs growth but, unfortunately, they are not the issues the shadow Treasurer cares about.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. If the Treasurer is keen to speak about jobs, she could talk about the number of jobs that have been lost in the greyhound industry.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Treasurer remains relevant. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Guess what the shadow Treasurer was talking about on radio on the day the regional job figures came out? Daylight saving. That is the big issue affecting him.

The SPEAKER: Order! I again remind the member for Keira that he is on three calls to order. The member will calm down. I have given several warnings, next time the member for Keira interjects he will be removed from the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I know that a lot of people take an interest in that issue, but one would have thought that the shadow Treasurer would ask me about jobs, infrastructure spending, the regions and the surpluses—or how to deliver them—but he is not interested in any of that. In fact, earlier this week I introduced some very important legislation regarding a transaction but the shadow Treasurer did not take carriage of it. No, the member for Cessnock took carriage of it.

[Interruption]

I am not sure where he is. When I asked the member for Cessnock—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister does not need the help of Government members.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I do not know where he is, but his two-hour contribution to that debate earlier this week must have taken it out of him. When I asked the member for Cessnock why he was leading and not the shadow Treasurer, he said it was because he was across the detail—a sad indictment on the shadow Treasurer. Under the leadership of Premier Baird, the strong team on this side of the House is leading the best economy this State has ever seen—more jobs growth, more money for infrastructure and surpluses as far as the

eye can see. I only wish the shadow Treasurer would have the guts to ask me a question about the State Budget or the New South Wales economy.

REGIONAL JOBS AND DEFENCE INDUSTRY

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (14:44): My question is addressed to the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy. How is the New South Wales Government supporting regional jobs and economies through the defence industry, and are there any related matters?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) (14:44): I thank the member for his question and for his strong support for boosting the economy and employment in the southern regions of New South Wales. New South Wales plays an important role in supporting the nation's defence industry, particularly businesses located in regional New South Wales. In fact, New South Wales houses more defence bases and a larger defence industry than any other State. For us the defence industry is a major priority and is incredibly important for New South Wales.

Recently I attended the HunterNet Defence Conference, which is the largest of its type in the Commonwealth, to meet with business operators that feed into the defence supply chain, fulfilling subcontracts for the major players. Earlier this month I attended Land Forces 2016, which is the nation's premier land defence exhibition. Among all the established international names there, one of the most impressive exhibitors was from the Hunter. Bohemia Interactive Solutions showcased its new high technology simulator, which replicates the experience of a soldier driving an Australian Defence Force vehicle over difficult terrain.

The New South Wales Government first supported Bohemia in 2014, which is a fine example of the benefits of investing in defence. Some of the world's leading defence companies are already in the Hunter, including Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon and BAE Systems. The Illawarra also makes a huge contribution to extending and enhancing the Australian Defence Force's technological edge. The Defence Materials Technology Centre [DMTC] is located at Wollongong University's very impressive iAccelerate Centre, and the member for Kiama and I have visited the centre a number of times. DMTC plays a critical role in ensuring that our defence personnel have the safest and best-performing submarines, frigates and Bushmasters in today's complex war fighting environment.

As a traditional steel manufacturing hub, the Illawarra has a track record in converting technical know-how into defence capability, which protects our defence force service personnel. For example, the region developed and manufactured the armoured steel for the Collins-class submarines, our Adelaide-class frigates, our Hobart-class Air Warfare Destroyers and, of course, the Australian Army Bushmasters. While defence capability tends to cluster around major cities like Newcastle and Wollongong, that by no means tells the whole story. For example, in Albury we have Milspec Manufacturing, which is a subsystems manufacturer for defence primes specialising in subsystems, vehicle kits, alternators, portable power and cable systems. Unitronix, at Cooranbong, in the member for Lake Macquarie's electorate, is a supplier of modules and systems for real-time and embedded computing systems for defence, aerospace and communications.

Madam Speaker will be well aware of Weatherhaven, based at Nowra, which engineers, manufactures and installs custom shelter systems for commercial, military and medical applications. Steber International, which is based in Taree in the member for Myall Lakes' electorate, manufactures boats and is a leader in composite technologies for a variety of maritime and defence uses. Birdon Marine, in Port Macquarie, is a specialist in shipbuilding, design and repair and has offices in the United States. Codarra Advanced Systems, which is based in Queanbeyan in the Monaro electorate, is a systems engineering and project management company that provides customised solutions to the defence sector. UAV Technologies, which is based in Wagga Wagga, provides unmanned aerial vehicle technologies and solutions to this emerging defence sector. These are just a small number of the many small and medium businesses that make up the defence industry in New South Wales.

Defence primes continue to show faith in our State's regional capabilities wherever they may be across this great State. For example, Thales last year awarded a \$100 million contract to the Lithgow Small Arms Factory in the electorate of the member for Bathurst. This contract for 30,000 Lithgow-designed new F90 rifles—which is the new generation of the standard issue rifle—secured work for 130 people at the factory for up to six years. Lockheed Martin recently launched a \$35 million combat helicopter maintenance facility at the Albatross Aviation Technology Park in Nowra—another great example. This joint venture between Lockheed Martin and Sikorsky will bring 120 jobs to the Shoalhaven, which is incredibly good news for rural and regional New South Wales. *[Extension of time]*

The defence industry is one of the most important sectors for New South Wales and a top priority for this Government. It contributes \$5.5 billion to the economy and employs approximately 30,000 people. This Government knows how important the defence industry is to the protection of our nation and to the jobs and

economy of New South Wales. This is particularly the case for regional areas and that is why the Government will continue to support and to promote defence businesses and industries across the State. That is why it was such a pleasure to come to question time. I love question time.

The Premier was saying to me the other day that apart from watching *The Batchelor* at home with his family, and surfing, question time is the next best thing he does during the week. The member for Monaro wants two question times a day, he loves it so much. Those of us on this side adore it. But it saddens me that there is one person here who does not want to be here, and did not want to be here today. We are all turning up, having a great time and one person decided he wanted to be somewhere else. I had a number of people from the other side contact us to point out that the Opposition Leader's Twitter feed said:

I will be stuck in Question Time. If you have a choice, go to brilliant #GardenPalace display @statelibrarynsw. It sure beats #nswpol QT.

He does not want to be here. He leaves early. We will give him leave. He can borrow a book on leadership or something at the library, but he can leave.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: There are two points of order; first, the Minister should be addressing his comments through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: The point of order is upheld.

Mr Paul Lynch: Secondly, for five minutes the Minister was within the standing orders. For the first time in six years he gave a relevant answer.

The SPEAKER: He was, and there is a point of order about that. The Minister's time has expired.

HOSPITAL PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (14:22): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Does the Minister agree with the Leader of the Government in the upper House, the Hon. Duncan Gay, who just told Parliament that the community was pleased with the privatisation of the Port Macquarie Hospital?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (14:52): I can assure the member for Swansea that hospital was built ahead of time and is a major hospital that was not previously to be built there. I have said that it was a primitive contract and it was not one that we followed when we got together our proposals. We have studied it, learned from the mistakes and avoided them. We have visited Western Australia and looked at Joondalup and other hospital projects involving the non-government sector. That is where we are heading. The announcement regarding the five hospitals, which will be fast-tracked, where we are seeking expressions of interest from the non-government sector, including well-known hospital operators in New South Wales and Australia as well as not-for-profits such as the Mater, has been very well received.

OUT-OF-HOME CARE

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (14:53): My question is addressed to the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing. How is the New South Wales Government overhauling the out-of-home care system to provide better outcomes for vulnerable young people?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing) (14:54): I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for his question. The member for Coffs Harbour has a real commitment to ensuring that young people in the Coffs Harbour area are well looked after. I know he has made some public comments about one of the residential centres there regarding what he sees as inadequacies, and certainly I agree that there is a lot of work to do in that regard. The simple fact is that the Labor Government failed to address this very substantive issue. When members opposite came to government in 1995 there were approximately 5,000 to 5,500 children in our care system. Over the 16 years they were in government they failed to reform the system and to recognise there were intrinsic issues that needed to be addressed. As a result, the number of children in care increased to close to 20,000.

There are approximately 20,000 children in out-of-home care at the moment across New South Wales. Of those children, approximately 670 are in residential care facilities. If the outcomes were acceptable then perhaps the community would accept that the system was working. In fact, I think the system leaves a lot to be desired. We have children who are over-represented. For example, of that 20,000 approximately one-third are Aboriginal children. That is a completely unacceptable position when we consider that approximately 2 per cent to 2½ per cent of the population identify as Aboriginal. In addition, we have a fundamental failure in the outcomes for those children. It is always hard in this area to distinguish whether later failings are a result of the traumatised family background that caused those children to be removed in the first place or the care system.

What we know is that we are getting very poor outcomes and have been for decades, and it is getting worse. We have seen a lot of change in our family demographics. In the past 20-odd years many children have been removed from families that have drug, alcohol and domestic violence issues. These children come from very traumatised backgrounds. In our first four years in government we turned around the economy of this State. It would have been very difficult without having had the benefit of Mike Baird as Treasurer and former Premier O'Farrell. The work continues to be done to get our economy strong. As Premier Baird keeps reminding us, our job, having got the economy going and given it the strength it needs, is now to make sure we help the vulnerable.

Children in out-of-home care come from very bad circumstances—very dangerous in many circumstances—and they need that care. The taxpayers of New South Wales are spending \$1 billion looking after children in out-of-home care. The Government has allocated approximately \$370 million over the next four years to address the expected demand, which I am hoping will not be great. We have another \$190 million to reform the system. A few months ago we went to a group called Verso and said, "Will you work with us?" It has done some work in Victoria—and I acknowledge the Victorian Minister and the Labor Minister in Queensland who have both been trying to address some of these issues and who have used Verso. Verso has come back with some recommendations.

Those recommendations are now part of what we are discussing with the non-government organisations, our partners, in trying to make sure that we provide a safe environment for our children. A lot of that work is discovering what are the opportunities for change. Last Friday I attended a recommissioning forum, the fifth in a series of these forums, where as a government we are talking to our non-government partners, those partners who can provide the services for our children, and working out what is the way forward, and how can we best make our system more resilient for these children so they become resilient, capable individuals and not have to suffer from the background from which they have been removed.

Dr Geoff Lee: It's exciting.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I am always excited about this topic because we can make a difference in children's lives. Verso has suggested that we should be looking towards a more therapeutic model. That makes a lot of sense. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: The member for Bankstown can have that kind of debate later. There is no need to interject. It is inappropriate.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The Verso report has been out for discussion now with our non-governmental partners, and as late as last Friday—

Ms Tanya Mihailuk: It is not publicly released.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: For Heaven's sake, can you keep quiet and just listen to something and make some effort?

Ms Tanya Mihailuk: It is not publicly released.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Boys and girls in the gallery, you know how at school you get into trouble for making a bit of noise? The member opposite is still here; she is very lucky, is she not? She is still here making all that noise. I just want her to behave like these wonderful students up here in the gallery, who are doing a great job of listening very carefully. The Verso report emphasises the importance of getting outcomes through our contracts. That is something that this Government has highlighted. The contracts for renewal with our partners, the non-governmental partners, were due on 1 July. We talked to our partners and said that collectively all of us should make a big difference. The focus is going to be on outcomes. How can we get contracts with outcomes that are achievable that make a difference for children in care?

In addition, we have 670 children in residential care. We should be aiming to get as many of those children, if not all of them, out of residential care. In New York one particular facility that had 370 children in care established a program that took 10 years or so, but they have now got to the point where they have no children in residential care. In other words, the children who cannot live with their families are now living with families safely with what is called multi-systemic support. Our Government is very serious about making a difference for our children, and we guarantee that we will work very hard with our non-governmental partners to give these children the best possible opportunities in life, provided the member for Bankstown keeps quiet.

HUNTER INFRASTRUCTURE AND INVESTMENT FUND

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:01): My question is directed to the Minister for Planning. Given that the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund Advisory Board has been dissolved, will the Minister

advise what will happen to the \$50 million that was left over in residual funds and whether a new Hunter-based body will be established to replace it?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) (15:01): I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his support for the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund. That fund has been able to give terrific support to leverage more than \$1.3 billion worth of infrastructure projects throughout Newcastle and the Greater Hunter. Already we have seen almost \$400 million allocated from that fund to great projects such as the Newcastle airport terminal, wine region roads upgrades, New England Highway upgrade, John Hunter Hospital, Cessnock Hospital and Glendale interchange. We have a series of projects that have benefited, projects that have been vaunted for many years and that have finally got off the ground because the infrastructure dollars have been available due to the wisdom of the Baird-Grant Government. We have been able to provide this funding to support infrastructure delivery to build a better and stronger Hunter region and Newcastle.

I am pleased to report to the people of Lake Macquarie through the member and to this House that the remaining funds that have been promised through the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund will be allocated. A total of \$450 million of infrastructure money will be allocated. The member and his constituents should look forward to good news in relation to the allocation of those funds very shortly. I can say that in terms of future governments' arrangements in relation to the infrastructure funding in the Hunter region, the Hunter Development Corporation stands ready to assist in those decisions in the future.

NEWCASTLE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:04): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning. How will the New South Wales Government's revitalisation of Newcastle benefit the people of the Hunter?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) (15:0): I thank the member for Upper Hunter for the question and for his great advocacy on behalf of his constituents in that great region of New South Wales. I am pleased to answer this question both in my capacity as Minister for Planning—and also today as Acting Assistant Minister for Planning! The Hunter is an amazing region. It has an amazingly diverse economy. It is the largest regional economy in the country. Right at the epicentre of the region is the great historic port city of Newcastle. It is a city and a region with a great future; an exciting future.

We have just heard about the allocation of \$450 million through the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund, but hundreds of millions more have been spent and are being spent through the great work of the Baird-Grant Government. Newcastle is a city with a great future and we are keen to support it. I refer to projects such as the NeW Space building at the University of Newcastle—a great example of collaboration underpinned by \$25 million from the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund. It is a \$90 million facility that is bringing thousands of students in law and business into the heart of the city centre of Newcastle. It is no wonder that the university is now rated as one of the 250 top research universities in the world. It is a great example of collaboration. It is a city that for many years was languishing and it is a city that is now being rebuilt and revitalised.

The SPEAKER: Order! There are too many audible conversations in the Chamber.

Mr ROB STOKES: I had the opportunity to meet Emma, an optometrist who has a business in Hunter Street, Newcastle. She is a young woman who started her career as a trainee in the old OPSM store in Hunter Street. It closed, she bought a franchise at Charlestown and now, as a sign of her enthusiasm and commitment to Newcastle, she has reopened an OPSM store in Hunter Street, Newcastle. It is a story of a great relationship, of great collaboration. On the subject of Newcastle and of relationships—and I have thought hard about this—I know I can rely in this place on parliamentary privilege and I would like to make an admission. When I was newly appointed as Minister for Planning I visited Newcastle. I received an email after my visit from the member for Newcastle.

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: The current or the former one?

Mr ROB STOKES: The new one, and he was hurt that I had not told him I was coming—and I am sorry. I just thought that was what you did because when I was in opposition I remember Labor members would come to my seat all the time but they would never tell me. The member for Blacktown would come to Currawong all the time and I was never invited to join him. The member for Blacktown and I have rebuilt that relationship, but it has taken time and hard work. I am equally committed to the member for Newcastle, and we are getting on with the hard work of rebuilding that relationship. Just the other day, we went out for coffee and, being the generous man he is, he paid. I know it means that maybe we can work up to dinner, but I know I will have to pay. However, I am pleased to report that we went for a walk along the beach together and, like our commitment to Newcastle,

with hard work—I know long-distance relationships are hard—and working hand in hand we can build a better future for Newcastle and for the Greater Hunter.

Announcements

CHIEF OF STAFF LEE DIXON

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: By leave: Over the past 12 years many members in this House have had the benefit of the assistance of my now chief of staff, previously parliamentary liaison officer. She is an open and supportive person. This is her last day in question time before she has her first baby, which is due in just over one month. On behalf of all of us in the House, I wish Lee and Dean good luck. I look forward to hearing about the new addition. Well done, Lee and Dean.

RONDA MARY MILLER, CLERK OF LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: By leave: As the clock ticks down, this is the Clerk's last question time. I intend doing something as a parting gift that she will hate. As members move out of the Chamber I ask that they stand and clap hands, which is disorderly in the House. Thank you very much, Ronda Miller.

Members of the House stood and applauded.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery today Diana and Greg Parson from Port Vincent, South Australia, guests of the member for Terrigal.

Committees

STAYSAFE (JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY)

Reports

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (15:13): As Chair: I table a report of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety—StaySafe—dated September 2016, entitled "Driverless Vehicles and Road Safety in New South Wales". I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Chair and Deputy Chair

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 21 September 2016 the Hon. Scott Farlow, MLC, was elected Deputy Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety.

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**.

Safe Schools Coalition

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

Light Rail Station, Surry Hills

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

Route 389 Bus Service

Petition requesting more reliable 389 bus services, 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**.

Inner-City Social Housing

Petition requesting the retention and proper maintenance of inner-city public housing stock, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Pet Shops

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

*Committees***LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE****Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 25/56**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:15): As Chair: I thank members for the opportunity to speak to the Legislation Review Committee's twenty-fifth digest for the fifty-sixth Parliament. I will briefly discuss the committee's comments in respect of the five bills introduced into Parliament in the past sitting week. The committee also commented on one regulation. In the Fair Trading Amendment (Commercial Agents) Bill 2016 the committee commented that the bill restricts some people from carrying out commercial agent activity and discusses whether this would constitute an unjust penalty. The committee also noted strict liability, reversal of onus of proof, compensation, privacy and the delegation of legislative powers aspects of the bill.

The second bill the committee commented on is the Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. This bill amends a number of pieces of health legislation. The committee noted aspects of the bill, including the extension of involuntary detention, privacy, and commencement by proclamation. The Land and Property Information NSW (Authorised Transaction) Bill 2016 provides for the transfer to the private sector of the titling and registry services currently provided by the Registrar-General. This bill led the committee to discuss issues including employment rights, powers of entry, rights against self-incrimination, the exclusion of liability, payment of compensation and whether aspects of the bill insufficiently subject the exercise of legislative power to parliamentary scrutiny.

The Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Bill 2016 provides the framework for the oversight of the NSW Police Force and NSW Crime Commission. The bill saw the committee comment on issues including retrospectivity, procedural fairness during examinations, privacy, the abrogation of privileges, rights against self-incrimination, rights to silence, and the right to legal representation. The committee also commented on disproportionate punishment and appropriately defined concepts, as well as the consideration of spent convictions and criminal charges of prospective staff, limitations placed on appeals and commencement by proclamation provisions.

The Wyong Area (Protection) Bill 2016 seeks to protect certain land in Wyong from mining and mining-related activities. This bill led the committee to comment on retrospectivity, as the bill seeks to cancel planning approvals granted prior to the commencement of the Act if passed, and may run counter to the rule of law. The Children (Criminal Proceedings) Regulation 2016 led the committee to comment on rights of minors in the criminal justice system. The committee noted its preference that matters that may impact on the rights of children being prosecuted in the criminal justice system be dealt with via an Act of Parliament rather than by regulation. That concludes my remarks on this digest. I thank the committee members for their input. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:18): On behalf of the Labor Opposition, I thank the House for the opportunity to speak on the Legislation Review Committee Digest No. 25/56. As the Chair has reported, the committee considered five bills. I will not go over that ground again. I will add comments to the discussion in relation to the Land and Property Information NSW (Authorised Transaction) Bill 2016. One item we discussed at the meeting, which is worthy of note, was whether the proceedings of the committee should be open to public view, perhaps broadcast via webcam. At its meeting on 13 September the committee resolved the following:

... that the Secretariat seek the advice of the Clerk and report back to the Committee on the feasibility of webcasting the deliberative meetings of the Legislation Review Committee, given the Committee's important oversight role.

The committee then considered a memorandum from the Clerk, dated 14 September, on the matter. The Clerk's view was:

The Standing Orders on committee procedure are predicated on confidentiality at all stages apart from hearings and site visits. Standing Order 300 provides that the Chair shall prepare the draft report for consideration by the committee and may circulate it on a confidential basis to committee members only. As such, as long as the report is under consideration by the committee and prior to its formal adoption, its contents cannot be disclosed outside of the committee.

In her advice to the committee the Clerk concluded:

I am not persuaded that opening up the proceedings of a committee meeting to members of the wider public serves any valid purpose and in fact would be counterproductive as it would constrain the committee's ability to work effectively, and for members to freely participate. This also reflects current practice in the Legislative Council.

The committee adopted the advice. Importantly, the committee then considered the Land and Property Information NSW (Authorised Transaction) Bill 2016. The draft digest that had been tabled by the Chair contained this comment about the bill:

... follows a comprehensive scoping study into Land and Property Information, with expected benefits including faster processing times, the introduction of new services for customers, better business-to-business experiences and greater investment in technology and innovation.

On that basis, I called for the scoping study to be tabled. The committee had already discussed the confidentiality of committee proceedings. Given that the Chair's draft report referred to the scoping study, I thought it appropriate for the scoping study to be made available on a confidential basis to all members of the committee. It was not to be. I moved that the study be provided to committee members. That motion was not accepted. Government members voted against releasing to all committee members the now secret scoping study so that members could see some of the information the Government relied on when deciding to privatise Land and Property Information. It is all well and good not to allow the public to see committee proceedings, but the committee must be granted access to all the information that the Government relies on to draft the bills it brings before the House. That should be the way in which the committee operates in future. I commend the report to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:22): The role of the Legislation Review Committee is well set out in section 8A of the Legislation Review Act 1987, and section 9 outlines the committee's function with respect to regulations. Section 9 says:

The functions of the Committee ... do not include an examination of, inquiry into or report on a matter of Government policy ...

The member for The Entrance says that the committee should look at the scoping study and inquiry behind the legislation. That is not the role of the Legislation Review Committee. The role of the Legislation Review Committee is to consider whether a bill "trespasses unduly on personal rights and liberties" or "makes rights, liberties or obligations unduly dependent upon non-reviewable decisions". The committee's role is not to review the policy or decisions behind a bill. It is wrong of the member for The Entrance to try to make political capital from this. The committee is meant to be bipartisan. It is wrong of the member to mislead not only the House but also the community.

Report noted.

Matter of Public Importance

NATIONAL POLICE REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:24): On behalf of the Opposition, I ask the House to note as a matter of public importance National Police Remembrance Day, which takes place next week, with commemoration services to be held throughout Australia. On Thursday 29 September a special memorial service will be held in The Domain, Sydney, to honour the New South Wales police officers who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to our community. The Domain is home to the Wall of Remembrance, which was officially unveiled in 1999 by the then Premier of New South Wales, the Hon. Bob Carr, MP. It contains the names of all the New South Wales police officers who lost their lives while performing their police duties. Victoria also established a police memorial in 2002 in the Kings Domain gardens, which stands as a constant reminder to the community of the service provided by the men and women who were killed in the line of duty. A national police memorial was subsequently built in 2006 in Canberra. It contains the names of all Australian police officers who have been killed on duty or have died as a result of their duties since the advent of policing in Australia.

National Police Remembrance Day is observed on the feast day for St Michael the Archangel, patron saint of police. On that day we remember fallen officers who served not only in Australia but also in New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Solomon Islands. The day also serves as a time to remember police officers

who have lost their lives through illness or other circumstances. National Police Remembrance Day stands as a reminder to the community of the importance of our Police Force and the dangers that hardworking and dedicated police officers face on a daily basis. Our frontline police officers are the barrier that stands between our community and danger. They put their own lives on the line every day. Their actions and sacrifices shall not be overlooked, nor will they go unappreciated.

Being a police officer is not just a job. Every police officer deserves to be acknowledged, commended and appreciated for their unwavering commitment and personal sacrifice. We must understand and acknowledge the sacrifices that police officers make. There is no guarantee that when a police officer leaves home for work they will make it back home to their friends and family. Each day, when a police officer puts on their uniform and heads to work they are putting their lives on the line to protect our communities. Sometimes the ultimate price is paid by our men and women in blue.

On National Police Remembrance Day we honour their sacrifices, we honour their service and we honour their memories. National Police Remembrance Day provides the community with the opportunity to join with the friends and family of fallen officers to share in their loss of a loved one and their pride in what they stood for. We are given the opportunity to reflect upon their sacrifices and express our gratitude for their service. On behalf of all members in this Parliament, I extend our heartfelt condolences to the friends and families of fallen police officers. In this Chamber today we unite to say thank you for the sacrifices that have been made and for their unwavering commitment to protect our community. We are all the better for the wonderful contribution that our fine police officers, men and women, make to protect us every day.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (15:29): Each year, 29 September holds special significance for police throughout Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Solomon Islands. It is a day for police to pause and honour officers whose lives have been lost while performing their duty as a police officer. This important day is also a time to remember police officers who have lost their lives through illness or other circumstances. National Police Remembrance Day is observed on the feast day for Saint Michael the Archangel, patron saint of police. National Police Remembrance Day was first held on 29 September 1989, as a result of a joint decision at the 1988 Australasia and South West Pacific Region Commissioner's Conference.

The Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Troy Grant, will be attending the NSW Police Wall of Remembrance in The Domain next week. As a former officer, the Deputy Premier knows only too well the significance of this event. It is a time for members of these police forces to stop and remember colleagues who have lost their lives in the line of duty. Sadly, we lost two of our officers during the past year. On 5 March 2016 Sergeant Geoffrey Richardson lost his life tragically while on duty in Maitland. That is a stark reminder of the dangers our brave police officers, men and women, face every day as they go about their duties to protect the community.

On 2 October 2015 the tragic murder of Curtis Cheng at the New South Wales police headquarters in Parramatta further enforced the importance of recognising the professionalism, bravery and enduring self-sacrifice of police in our State. Both Sergeant Geoffrey Richardson and Curtis Cheng were highly respected and devoted workers with the NSW Police Force. Both their losses will be felt deeply by their family, friends and colleagues. Having a national day of remembrance for police helps us to acknowledge the dangers of the policing profession, the important sacrifices that police officers make, and the challenges that lie ahead. At the same time, National Police Remembrance Day is very important occasion for recognising and commemorating the shared values of policing including integrity, trust and respect.

Wollondilly has two local area commands, one in Bowral and one in Camden. The men and women at those commands do a fantastic job day in, day out. I have the pleasure of speaking to them regularly about policing matters and ways that we can help our community. They are always helping our community. I acknowledge the wall-to-wall ride that passed through my electorate when we saw service policemen and policewomen on motorbikes driving to the National Police Wall Memorial in Canberra. I saw firsthand the community support for our police and it was absolutely amazing. I thank them for their support; they are our State treasures.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:32): I contribute to discussion on National Police Remembrance Day, which takes place on 29 September, and I speak with a heavy heart. Tragically, a Port Stephens police officer lost his life whilst on duty earlier this year. Sergeant Geoffrey Richardson lost his life on 5 March 2016 while on his way to assist his fellow officers in a high-speed pursuit. Tragically, Sergeant Richardson left behind his wife, Senior Constable Margaret Richardson, his son Patrick, who was only seven, and Aiden, just five months old. No-one who attended Sergeant Richardson's funeral will forget the courage displayed by Senior Constable Margaret Richardson, or Margie, as she spoke of the loss of her friend, lover, colleague and the father of her children. No-one will forget the image of young Aiden wearing his father's police hat, following his father's coffin as it progressed through Newcastle's Christ Church Cathedral.

No-one will forget young Aiden—a little boy who will never know his father—being held tightly by Margie. Nor will the people who attended the funeral forget the more than 1,000 mourners and police officers, many of whom had been colleagues of Sergeant Richardson, who lined the street to farewell this highly respected police officer. I had never seen such a funeral—and, truth be told, I never want to again. On National Police Remembrance Day we must remind ourselves that the comfort and security we feel in our homes, in our businesses and on the streets does not come without a cost, and it is a cost felt most deeply by the family and loved ones of police officers who lose their lives or who are injured in the line of duty. It is a pain now being borne by Margie, Patrick and Aiden, the extended Richardson family, friends and colleagues. Sergeant Richardson's commitment to serving his community was evident in the days and weeks following the funeral, as I was contacted by many residents who recalled being comforted or reassured by him in their time of need.

Sergeant Richardson was a highly respected officer; the whole community in Port Stephens and beyond mourns his loss. Sergeant Richardson will not be forgotten. His colleagues continue to pay tribute to him. On 21 October the Port Stephens Local Area Command will host a rugby competition in memory of Sergeant Richardson to raise funds in support of NSW Police Legacy. I encourage local residents to attend the event—dubbed "Richo's Rugby Day"—between 9.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. to celebrate the life and commitment of a wonderful police officer, husband, father, son and friend. The very real impact of the sacrifice made by our police will be felt by Margie and her family every day, no more so than on Aiden's first birthday—the day before National Police Remembrance Day. Vale Sergeant Geoffrey Richardson.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:35): By leave: I contribute to the matter of public importance, being National Police Remembrance Day. As a former serving police officer, I know that the police service and its members are pleased that we now have a police remembrance day. I am privileged to have received an invitation to attend the Manning-Great Lakes Local Area Command Service commemoration service next week in Taree, which I will attend. Throughout the history of the police service, from the early 1800s to now, many police have sacrificed their lives to protect the community. Even though governments have improved safety for police, provided safety equipment and up-to-date technology, it is still not enough. When we remember police on this particular day we should think about the services they provide to our communities. When there is trouble they run to it, not away from it. They put themselves in harm's way for the community. They leave home of a morning and kiss their partner goodbye not knowing whether they will make it home again. They do that for their communities. National Police Remembrance Day is a special day to remember them.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (15:35): By leave: I am sure that each member of this House offers their appreciation to the member for Myall Lakes for his service to the NSW Police Force. The member for Myall Lakes is not the only member of this House who has served in the NSW Police Force. I was delighted, as most members were, to see the Hon. Richard Amery as a guest of the House this afternoon. He had an exceptionally courageous career in the Police Force. They are joined by the Deputy Premier and the Hon. Michael Gallacher in the Legislative Council. Having worked here on and off for more than 25 years, I remember so many former members of this place who either came directly from the Police Force or had served with the police before their career in this place.

National Police Remembrance Day is a very special time in my family because I married into the Police Force. I married the daughter of Police Superintendent Fred Brame, who joined the Police Force as a young man. He served for well over 30 years and has a number of operations under his belt, including Taskforce Air, which led to the arrest of Ivan Milat. He retired as the local area commander, then known as the Patrol Commander of Mount Druitt. My wife, Nicole, spent around 10 years in the police Public Affairs Branch and was very involved in many National Police Remembrance Day services. I make that disclosure to acknowledge that police are not just public servants in uniforms. There is nothing I appreciate more than the service they give us.

The police service was established in New South Wales in 1850 on the back of work done previously by the Royal Marines, who were charged with keeping our community safe. If members want to brush up on their history, I recommend they visit the Police and Justice Museum down the road where they will learn that some of the first custodians of law and order in this State were in fact convicts who had been given a ticket of leave. I join the member for Myall Lakes in thanking the member for Fairfield and others who have spoken in discussion on this matter of public importance. Police are the unsung heroes of our community. Unfortunately, as our society changes radically so too will their work. Police no longer just work point duty or issue subpoenas, as we have seen all too tragically in recent months. I commend the House for acknowledging National Police Remembrance Day.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:40): In reply: I acknowledge the member for Wollondilly, the member for Port Stephens, the member for Myall Lakes and Minister Elliott for their heartfelt contributions to this discussion. There is no doubt that when motions such as this come before the House members express deep

sentiments, particularly those who have served on the front line. I acknowledge the member for Myall Lakes as a former police officer. Since coming to this place in 2011, he has spoken many times about the value of the police. As the member said, the police do not run away from trouble but towards it. I acknowledge his sentiments and congratulate him. The member for Port Stephens paid touching tribute to Sergeant Geoffrey Richardson. She spoke about his sons, Patrick and Aiden, whom he tragically left behind and she told us of the strong and courageous words of his beloved wife, Margaret. The member said how highly respected Sergeant Geoffrey Richardson was and still is. Richo's Rugby Day, which will be held in Port Stephens on 21 October to raise money for NSW Police Legacy and in honour of Sergeant Richardson, will be a good day indeed.

The member for Wollondilly spoke about the commencement of National Police Remembrance Day and said that the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Justice and Police, Troy Grant, will be attending next week's memorial. I will also be attending, as will the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. These types of events receive bipartisan support from members because we know that the police put their lives on the line for us every single day. It is as simple as that. I pay special tribute to the Fairfield Local Area Command. Every year it honours those who have fallen, especially David Carty who was tragically murdered in Fairfield. Just off the Horsley Drive is David Carty Reserve, which is a fitting tribute to him. We will never forget David or the other men and women who have put their lives on the line to protect our community.

Community Recognition Statements

TRIBUTE TO DAVINA COAD

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:44): It is with great sadness that I put on record the passing of Davina Coad, who was well known to many inner-city residents. Her bright pink, well-accessorised outfits from op shops and her warm generosity to anyone in need made Davina unique. Davina overcame many challenges and was an active and enthusiastic constituent of the Bligh and then Sydney electorates for many years. She spent a lot of time homeless and in precarious housing. Her community and social networks were on the street. Davina's faith and the support she received from the Salvos Street Level were important parts of her life.

Davina was never backward in coming forward, whether sitting on milk crates with senior church officials, putting her views forward at public meetings or marching with Lord Mayor Clover Moore and me at mardi gras. Davina never let anyone stop her from being herself. She did not let the responses of some to her transgender identity or her eccentric views get in the way of living life to the full. She was a proud transgender woman. Many will miss her. May she rest in peace.

TRICIA D'APICE, PREMIER'S TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (15:45): I convey my congratulations to Baulkham Hills teacher Tricia d'Apice, who received the Premier's IOOF Centre for Educational and Medical Research Itinerant Support Teacher (Vision) Scholarship at a ceremony with Premier Mike Baird last month. There are few things more important to my constituents than that their children receive the highest-quality education. The Premier's scholarship gives talented teachers a chance to learn cutting-edge teaching techniques, attend world-class education centres and build professional networks by funding study tours. Tricia's scholarship will fund a study tour that compares the speed of braille readers with their sighted peers, which will take her around Australia and New Zealand. I believe Tricia, her colleagues and, most importantly, Tricia's students will benefit greatly. I wish her every success during the tour.

SOUTH NEWCASTLE LIONS RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (15:46): Last weekend the mighty South Newcastle Lions broke a 27-year premiership drought with their grand final victory against the Macquarie Scorpions. On Sunday afternoon at the illustrious Hunter Stadium the team thumped their opposition, with a 21-12 result. The captain-coach Todd Hurrell was sent to the sin bin for a swinging arm with 14 minutes remaining, but luckily a penalty goal four minutes from full-time sealed the victory. This is a great result for South Newcastle, which is the only foundation Newcastle Rugby League club still in existence after playing in the inaugural competition in 1910. I congratulate the South Newcastle players and their supporters.

PICTON PHYSIE CLUB

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (15:47): The Wollondilly electorate really does have the best sports men and women. Last week I spoke about the Picton Magpies and this week I commend Picton Physie Club for week two of its team competition. With five teams representing Picton Physie Club, the girls' performance and determination earned a fantastic result. Their teamwork, timing and attention to detail was excellent. I congratulate Kayshah on first place in the five to six year group; Keira on amazing discipline and adorable personality in the

five to six year group; Chloe on first place in the seven to eight year group; Maddie on performing better than her best in the seven to eight year group; and Miss Ashleigh on her wonderful work with the girls in preparation for this competition. Of course, we cannot forget the mums, dads and grandparents who work tirelessly behind the scenes to transport the kids to training and competition each week. Family support is a huge part of the club's success. They are a credit to their children. I also acknowledge the Picton Physie Club Seniors, who competed in a tough section. They do a fantastic job. I look forward to hearing more about the club's endeavours.

GIFT OF TIME VOLUNTEERS RECOGNITION CEREMONY

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (15:48): The Gift of Time Volunteers Recognition Ceremony, organised by Liverpool City Council, was held on 27 August to recognise the efforts of volunteers in the Liverpool area. Approximately 70 groups were listed to be recognised for the volunteering efforts of their members. Those who were acknowledged covered an incredibly diverse range of interests and activities, including the 2168 Community Group, the Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre, the Liverpool Neighbourhood Connection, the Liverpool Seniors Network, the Hub Community Health Centre Volunteers Group, the Young Adults Disabled Association, the Lurnea Neighbourhood Centre, the Miller Combined Division of St Johns Ambulance, and many more. The contribution of such groups is in many ways the glue that holds communities together. Their role is literally invaluable. I was delighted to be present at the ceremony.

FORSTER TUNCURRY DOLPHINS RUGBY CLUB

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:49): Today I inform the House that the mighty Forster Tuncurry Dolphins Rugby Club has won its fourth successive lower mid North Coast premiership. Not only did they win the top gong but they did so navigating the entire season unbeaten. They beat the Wallamba Bulls 34-14 on their way to lifting the trophy. Northern zone winners Port Macquarie Vikings may have won three on the trot, but the Dolphins remain the kings of the coast with their four. Congratulations to the players, club coach Ron McCarthy, and team coaches David Birch, Mark Hudson and Mark Coble on their outstanding season.

PORT STEPHENS LOCAL AREA COMMAND

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:49): It is not often that a community is able to vent its frustrations to the commander and management team of one's local police area command but, to their credit, this is becoming a common occurrence for the Port Stephens Local Area Command. In recent months the management team of the Port Stephens Local Area Command has come face to face with community members at Tea Gardens, the Tilligerry Peninsula and, most recently, Medowie. I am very grateful that our police are willing to sit with our community and listen. Indeed, not only have they listened to resident's concerns but also they have responded by taking steps to address them. Following the community meeting at Medowie, police conducted traffic enforcement in and around Medowie in response to concerns raised by Medowie residents about the rise in antisocial behaviour. I thank Port Stephens Local Area Commander Chris Craner and his management team for engaging so well with our community and working hard to protect them. With police and community working together, our community can only be stronger.

TWEED ELECTORATE RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:50): I acknowledge the efforts of our three fabulous local rural fire services, the Bilambil Rural Fire Brigade, Cudgen Rural Fire Service and the Tweed Coast Rural Fire Service, following Get Ready Weekend 2016. On September 10 and September 11 local Rural Fire Service volunteers opened their doors to the community to help them learn how to be prepared for bushfires and to know how to act by taking simple steps to ensure their safety and that of their loved ones. During that time I visited a number of the stations in my electorate, and I was very pleased to see the Minister for Emergency Services visit the Cudgen Rural Fire Service. It was wonderful to see the community taking the opportunity to go along and speak with brigade members about bushfire safety, take a look at the latest equipment and see the kids check out the fire tankers. I thank all the volunteers who gave their time to assist with this initiative and who will continue to protect our community from the threat of bushfires in the coming summer season.

CARRIE'S PLACE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (15:51): Maitland's women's refuge Carrie's Place has had a successful month for donations. Following the successful "Big Gig—A Variety Night for Carrie's Place", local businesses have chipped in and offered generous financial support to assist the refuge. It is with much pleasure that I inform the House that the local Amcal Pharmacy at Rutherford has offered support of \$5,000 worth of Amcal gift vouchers to Carrie's Place. Clients will be able to exchange the vouchers for products at the store. I congratulate the pharmacy's owner, Guy McKendry, and his team on supporting this worthwhile cause, which will assist the refuge in continuing its important work. I also congratulate Joe Gollan and Bronwyn Bell on their amazing organisation of the successful "Big Gig". However, it must be remembered that Carrie's Place, like all

women's refugees across this State, needs more support. I urge all businesses to come on board and support women and children who are escaping domestic violence.

TRIBUTE TO COUNCILLOR PETER PANKHURST

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (15:52): Today I honour Peter Pankhurst from Bingara who has concluded an impressive 33-year career as an elected councillor. Mr Pankhurst was elected to the former Bingara Shire Council in 1983, serving as the deputy mayor and mayor. In 2004 he was elected to the Gwydir Shire Council, following amalgamation of Bingarra and Yallaroi shire councils, and served his last term there before retiring ahead of the recent elections. During his lengthy career, Mr Pankhurst served as a council delegate on 28 committees while also dedicating thousands of voluntary hours outside council to community groups such as Tourandi Aged Care Hostel, Bingara Pony Club, Lions Club, Landcare, Bingara P and A Society, and Bingara Central School Parents and Citizens Association, as well as serving on many boards. Some of his notable achievements while a councillor include the acquisition by council of the Roxy Theatre, the purchase of the Warialda Medical Centre, and the construction of the Bingara Medical Centre. Well done, Peter Pankhurst.

TRIBUTE TO WARREN FOX

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (15:53): Today I acknowledge the passing of Warren Fox, a well-known Granville identity and life member of the Australian Labor Party, who passed away on 26 August 2016. I knew Warren for many years. We did not always agree, but he supported me throughout my preselection and election campaigns. Each morning he would join me at Granville station at 5.30, even in winter. If you wanted to know what was going on in Granville or about Granville's heritage, Warren was the person to ask. He seemed to have known everyone and everything. He was just as knowledgeable and opinionated about horseracing—his other biggest passion. His death was unexpected and came as a shock to many. He seemed very fit. At the last Federal election he spent all day at the Granville Public School booth and at his last Australian Labor Party meeting he was moving motions about local issues. Warren was well known to talkback radio listeners, as he was always keen to put a rare Labor perspective in the arguments. Alan Jones paid tribute to him on the day of his funeral. Rest in peace, Warren. We will miss you.

ALBURY ELECTORATE VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (15:54): At the Thurgoona and District Lions Club Local Heroes, Volunteers and Youth Awards, Sylvia Mackenzie was the recipient of the Community Volunteer Award and the Chris August Award for her dedication and devotion to local projects. Sylvia is involved with the Thurgoona Ladies Lions, St James Anglican Church, the Thurgoona Progress Association, the Woolshed Thurgoona Landcare Group, Pink Ladies and the Thurgoona Community Centre. Congratulations, Sylvia, your work is truly appreciated. Congratulations also to Sheldon Smith, who won the Youth Volunteer Award for his work with youth and people with a disability, for his scouting work and for facing difficulties with public speaking. Well done, Sheldon.

Congratulations to Holly Johnson, a year 9 student at Billabong High School, Culcairn, who won the student category in the Murray Region Volunteer of the Year Awards. Holly volunteers with Amnesty International, UPA Jindera Gardens Hostel nursing home and Kiltarn House Hostel in Culcairn. Congratulations also to Lindsay Cutler who won the Senior Volunteer of the Year Award for his work running the Life Education NSW van and for his service with the Lavington Lions Club. Volunteer Team of the Year went to the Thurgoona and District Lions Club. Good luck in the State awards.

AUSTRALIAN CHIN LIEN CHINESE ASSOCIATION

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (15:55): On Saturday 17 September I attended the inauguration of the Australian Chin Lien Chinese Association's twelfth executive committee. The Chin Lien Association is one of the largest and most active community organisations in Cabramatta and Fairfield. It administers the Kuan Yin Goddess of Mercy Temple at Canley Vale. The function was a chance to congratulate outgoing president Michael Wai Kau Chan, who has vigorously fought over the years for more funding to benefit the thousands of people who attend the Kuan Yin Temple. His dedication to his organisation and the community is unsurpassed. I congratulate him on all his achievements. I also congratulate the new committee, which is led by incoming president John Long and former presidents Heng Phong Duong and Michael Chan, and includes liaison officer Lysang Loc, secretary John Luong, and vice presidents Kiet Luong, Phillip Lam, A Cau Ly, Van Minh Hoang, Canh Xuong Chung and Paul Duong. I wish the committee all the best in the future.

GIVE ME 5 FOR KIDS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:57): It is with great pride that I congratulate 2G0 on its continued success story in fundraising for our sick kids on the Central Coast with "Give Me 5 For Kids". It had humble

beginnings, when popular morning show host Sarah King tried to pay a parking fee with 5¢ coins and the attendant would not take them. Little did the attendant know that she was a force to be reckoned with. Sarah King went on radio to issue a challenge—that we all collect 5¢ coins for the local children's ward at Gosford Hospital. This wonderful story has continued for 22 years and it is still growing. A staggering \$2.3 million has been raised in that time. This year our local hospital received \$139,665 for specialised equipment for the children's ward, and \$17,450 for Camp Breakaway for respite for sick children and children with disabilities. The Southern Cross Austero [SCA] radio network "Give Me 5 For Kids" is now Australia wide and has raised more than \$2,194,682.96. I thank the SCA radio network on behalf of the New South Wales Government and the people on the Central Coast. Sarah King, keep up the great work.

JESSICA CHIONNA, WORLDSKILLS AUSTRALIA FINALIST

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:58): Today I congratulate Jessica Chionna, a sheet metal fabrication apprentice and finalist at WorldSkills Australia, the country's biggest trade competition. Jessica works at IAC Acoustics, Smithfield, a fantastic local business that is a leading Australian manufacturer of high-performance silencers, acoustics, exhaust systems and thermal insulation blankets for the marine, mining and transport industries. Jessica is forging ahead in what is traditionally a male-dominated industry. Her ambition is to one day own her own manufacturing workshop. I congratulate Jessica on her achievements and I wish her the best of luck at the finals. I thank IAC Acoustics, Smithfield, for supporting our local community with jobs and world-class products.

TRIBUTE TO ESME WALDRON

Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (15:58): Today I acknowledge the contribution to the Beechwood community of Esme Waldron. For the past 23 years Esme has been the local postmaster and has run the general store in this wonderful little village. Esme said it has been the longest time she has spent in one job and her greatest pleasure has been meeting people and being part of the community. She is greatly loved and has been a very important part of that community. As in any small village or country town, somebody who cares about the community will always bring people together and share information. Indeed, it contributes to the fabric of country society. In 1994 Esme and her late husband, Eric, moved to the store's current location. This followed the post office, the general store and Eric's wholesale wine business being combined. For 12 years they also ran the local smash repair business. Esme intends to travel to Cuba for a long-awaited holiday, but she will remain in Beechwood and has a huge stockpile of books to read.

ERIN CLEAVER, PARALYMPIAN

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (15:59): I am proud to inform the House that Charlestown's Paralympic runner Erin Cleaver from Whitebridge High School has won bronze in the women's 4 x 100 metres relay for T35-38 athletes. Erin was born with cerebral palsy right-sided hemiplegia, which affects the movement in her right arm and leg. This was Erin's first medal and first time competing at the Paralympics. Erin said, "When I got the baton I knew everyone was behind me and I just took it home". Less than three years ago Erin had never competed seriously on an athletics track. At only 16 years old, Erin was a natural. Her development was so rapid that Erin competed in the IPC Athletics World Championships in Doha, Qatar, last October, placing fourth in the long jump and sixth in the 100 metres. Erin has continued to improve and is making an impact in the athletics world across Australia and the globe. I congratulate Erin on her magnificent achievement. I am sure she will continue to have a long and successful career in athletics.

REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:00): My electorate of Davidson contains a large number of Australians of Armenian background. I also chair the New South Wales Armenia-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group. In both those capacities, I congratulate the Republic of Armenia. In 2016 we mark 25 years of the modern Republic of Armenia becoming independent during the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. I particularly note that the Republic of Armenia, despite constituting only one-tenth of historical Armenia, is a vibrant place. I understand that yesterday fantastic celebrations were held in Yerevan marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of independence. Arin Markarian from the Armenian National Committee of Australia has told me that the people there enjoyed themselves. I note also that in 1991 a referendum was held in Nagorno-Karabakh resulting in its declaration of independence, with 2016 marking 25 years of independence. I congratulate both of them on this significant milestone and wish them well.

CENTRAL COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT AWARDS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:02): The Central Coast Academy of Sport [CCAS] Awards Night was held last night at which athletes and coaches received awards for their efforts and success over the past 12 months. The CCAS offers a number of high-performance sporting programs, including Australian Football

League [AFL], athletics, cycling, basketball, golf, netball, rugby sevens, surfing and swimming, as well as Future Stars, which is an individual scholarship program providing development and support to athletes in a range of sports. The event took place at Mingara Recreation Club. More than 400 people attended the event and over 150 athletes were recognised with graduation certificates, Central Coast Council excellence awards and prizes throughout the evening. The major award winners were: Male Athlete of the Year, Jason Roach, AFL; Female Athlete of the Year, Emily Roome, swimming; Chairman's Award, Jazmyn Rodwell, netball; and the Ray Sandell Dedication to Sporting Excellence, Wayne Cassidy, manager, basketball.

BRITTANY ROBERTSON, JUNIOR ATHLETICS CHAMPION

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:03): I congratulate Brittany Robertson of Kareela on her four New South Wales Government State representative awards, which I presented to her at St Patrick's College on 1 September 2016. Brittany placed second in the under-15s 3,000-metre walking race in the 2016 NSW Junior and Youth State Championships and placed first out of the New South Wales competitors for the 2016 Australian Junior Championships in Western Australia. Amazingly, Brittany also received first place in the 2016 NSW Little Athletics State Championships and third in the 2016 Federation Championships. Recently, Brittany won the 3,000 metres Sutherland open. Brittany also won the Australian championships in the handicap division at a distance of 5,000 metres.

Throughout this journey there has been no greater supporter of Brittany than her father, Douglas Robertson. Our families provide the bedrock from which we grow, and Douglas' dedication to Brittany's training and competitions as well as his encouragement and sacrifice have been essential to fostering Brittany's successes. I congratulate Brittany on her remarkable achievements and look forward to following her journey as she strives to achieve her dream of qualifying for the Olympics in the future.

SWANSEA LEGACY CLUB

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:04): I was pleased to again support the Swansea Legacy Club during Legacy Week this year. Each year at the end of August volunteers across the country operate stalls selling Legacy merchandise to raise awareness and funds for the families of Australian veterans. It was a pleasure to assist legatee Lindsay Allen and the Legacy volunteers in Swansea. In particular, I acknowledge Marie Pyne, Audrey Hall, Marie McCarthy, Mary Johnson and Noelene Scotman for their efforts during Legacy Week. In addition, I thank Robyn Leggatt, principal of Swansea High School, for enabling students to assist the Swansea Legacy Club in its fundraising efforts. The students who volunteered their own time to help out and raise money were Jake Brown, Tom Furner, Adrian Gardiner, Stacey Peterson-Mansfield, William Morrison and Ashley Waters. Together, these dedicated volunteers raised almost \$2,000 for Legacy Week. Well done to you all and thank you for your efforts.

RICHMOND PLAYERS

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (16:05): I congratulate the Richmond Players on putting together a stellar production to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Richmond School of Arts featuring Alfred Hitchcock's thriller *The 39 Steps*, which I attended with my daughters, Charlotte and Amelia. Richmond Players is a community theatre organisation that was founded in 1954. It performed its first play in the historic Richmond School of Arts building and is now enjoying its sixty-third year of continuous operation. The show was directed by Nathan Zamprogno, produced by Kylie Lowe, performed by Martin Crew, Emma Taite, Ben Curran and Joel Baltaks, and ably assisted by a large team of dedicated volunteers.

This kind of vibrant community organisation exemplifies the richness of life in the electorate of Hawkesbury. I give thanks also to the Richmond Players president, Mr Sean Duff, and local icons such as Miss Dorothy Phipps, AM, who serves tea at every performance and has run a school-age juniors group for decades. Dorothy, who is 80 this year, is a National Living Treasure and a stalwart of the local Christian Women's Association. I also congratulate Richmond Literary Institute president Margaret Thorne on organising a fantastic dinner to mark the opening of the Richmond School of Arts 150 years ago. Sadly, I was unable to attend the commemoration but I look forward to sharing its next big milestone.

AUSTRALIANS FOR NATIVE TITLE AND RECONCILIATION INNER WEST

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (16:06): I speak about Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation [ANTAR] Inner West, which has been working for 18 years in our community to raise awareness of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to work towards building a more just society for the benefit of everyone. ANTAR Inner West walks side by side with Aboriginal communities and is inspired and guided by the leadership and thinking of elders and activists. In my multicultural community I have seen its work in raising awareness of Aboriginal heritage and culture. I have seen women in saris taking part in smoking ceremonies. This

is what I love about my community. As well as increasing the understanding of our first peoples, ANTAR regularly hosts events, including the recent film *Message from Mungo*. The movie was introduced by Dave Johnston, a passionate advocate for conserving Australia's Aboriginal heritage. This is what ANTAR Inner West does so well: It brings people together with a common purpose. As renowned Aboriginal educator and activist Lilla Watson said:

If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time ... but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.

This is the journey of ANTAR Inner West.

MITTAGONG POLICE CITIZENS YOUTH CLUB

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (16:07): I am pleased to announce the development of the new Mittagong Police Citizens Youth Club [PCYC]. PCYCs play an extremely important role in our community. They allow police and community volunteers to engage with local youths who are at risk and provide them with guidance and important advice as they make their way through adolescence. As with other local PCYCs, the Mittagong PCYC focuses on sporting activities and provides its services to the entire community of the Southern Highlands and Wollondilly. I acknowledge the PCYC working group whose members dedicate so much of their time to making the PCYC a possibility. In particular, I acknowledge Inspector Anthony McLean; the local area command; Wingecarribee Shire Council, including past mayor Larry Whipper; the past PCYC chief executive officer, Chris Gardiner; and the chief executive officer, Darren Black, for their commitment to making Mittagong PCYC a success. I was pleased to be able to provide the club with a grant. I look forward to working with them in the future.

PENRITH VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (16:08): I congratulate the new 2016-17 Penrith Valley Chamber of Commerce board, which was elected at the annual general meeting on Tuesday night. A big well done to Kerrie Reeder, general manager; Gina Field, president; Wayne Willmington, vice president; Dianne Wright, treasurer; and Joh Dickens, secretary. I also congratulate board members Amanda Wyllie, Belinda Hill, Cathy Glanville, Mitchell Angel, and Gordon Henwood. The Penrith Valley Chamber of Commerce is a highly respected institution in our region that proudly services the thousands of small businesses across Penrith and St Marys. I wish the new team the best of luck and, as the member for Londonderry, I look forward to working with them over the next 12 months.

MYALL LAKES ATHLETES

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:09): I inform the House of the feats of two Myall Lakes athletes, James Turner and Reid Brown. First, what an absolutely monumental effort by Diamond Beach's James Turner at the recent Paralympics. Not only did he win gold but also he did it in a world-record run. Now basing himself in Wollongong, the local lad has done himself and the Manning Great Lakes area and his country proud. Secondly, Reid Brown from Wingham High School is a golfer and has been named as one of six members of the all schools Australian honours team. Winning gold in the New South Wales stroke play championship also catapulted Reid into fourth place in Australia for high school golf. Golf has been 17-year-old Reid's passion for as long as he can remember. If all goes to plan, it will be his occupation when he leaves school. At the moment, he spends time on the course every day of the week.

TRIBUTE TO MARCELLE MANSOUR

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:10): I congratulate Ms Marcelle Mansour on her outstanding exhibition that was held yesterday at Parliament House. It was an instrument of peace through some ideas of light. Ms Mansour is a world-renowned artist whose work was displayed in Parliament House in 1988, as well as displayed in Paris and in New York. I had the great pleasure of attending the event, along with the Hon. Victor Dominello, and seeing her ideas for art. It was quite fitting that it was International Peace Day yesterday and, as an ambassador of peace, Ms Mansour was able to present her work. One of the things that I especially loved was seeing a piece of bread with a light going through it. It symbolised the importance of bread. The importance of bread came from the Christian faith; we know that when people break bread it brings everybody together. Having a light shining through that was a symbol for bringing people together to make sure that if we spent more time talking to one another and understanding one another, the world would be a much better place. Her main theme was not only peace, but also peace through justice.

NORTHERN TABLELANDS RURAL FIRE SERVICE CADET TEAM

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (16:11): I congratulate the Northern Tablelands Rural Fire Service cadet team that has come back from the recent New South Wales Rural Fire Service State

championships with two trophies. The team consisted of Shae Raw from Delungra, with Josh Wallbridge, Annaliese Gillett, Kaitlyn Wallbridge and Mikaela Prichard, who are all from Glen Innes. The team won the rural remote response event and the missing person event. In the rural response event the scenario demanded that the young crew respond to a fire on a remote rural property. The cadets had to overcome some obstacles to reach the car, which was alight, with an injured person lying beside it. The crew attacked the car fire while providing first aid to the patient. In the second event, the missing person scenario, they heard a 000 call received from a farmer saying that his old machinery shed had been hit by lightning and one of his children was missing. The crew had to work together to locate the missing child, while at the same time providing fire protection. The cadets did an absolutely brilliant job and are wonderful representatives of the Rural Fire Service. Congratulations to them and good luck in next year's competition.

TRIBUTE TO WAL GLYNN

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (16:12): I pay tribute to my good friend, former council colleague on Campbelltown City Council, proud former serviceman in the Australian Army and long-term Labor Party stalwart, Wal Glynn. Wal was first elected to council in 2008 and was subsequently re-elected for a second term in 2012. During his time on council, Wal has been a tireless advocate on behalf of Campbelltown and its residents. He was always championing the causes that were dear to him, particularly those related to Campbelltown's youth and veterans communities. During his time on council he was wonderfully supported by his wife of more than 60 years, Nel. Wal is a dear friend, a solid supporter and a respected colleague. I wish Wal all the very best for the future and congratulate him on his outstanding civic service. In particular, I trust the future holds many more opportunities for both Wal and Nel to travel and a bit more time for Wal to barrack for his beloved Collingwood Magpies.

ST IVES MEDIEVAL FAIRE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:13): This weekend St Ives showground will provide visitors with a rare insight into medieval Europe. For the third year, my electorate's St Ives showground will revive medieval Europe, complete with jousting, birds of prey, a medieval village, markets, a medieval tavern and a costume competition. The two-day festival offers a glimpse into an amazing period, largely lost in today's modern world, and provides something for everyone, from the avid fan to the curious onlooker like me. One of the biggest attractions is the jousting competition, complete with the thunder of hooves and the crunch of metal armour. There will be an opportunity for visitors to try on a suit of armour or to dress as a tyrannical king, a warrior or a merchant. Medieval markets provide an opportunity to take home a lasting reminder of a visit to days past. I acknowledge the support of Ku-ring-gai Council in the staging of the St Ives Medieval Faire and wish the organisers well for a most successful weekend. I look forward to experiencing it myself.

LEICHHARDT SAINTS FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:14): By concurrence: I draw to the attention of the House the fantastic work of the Leichhardt Saints Football Club and its contribution to the community of the inner west. It was an honour to be at King George Oval for the end of season presentation day on September 16 and to recognise the achievements of teams, members, players, committee and volunteers. The club's motto is "Compete fiercely, win modestly, lose graciously", which seems to me to be a great code to live and train by, as well as to grow up with. The club has provided the space for the juniors to hone their skills as athletes, for fully fledged players to compete at the top level, and for families and friends to gather and connect. I thank committee members Liza Schaeper, Wendy Frazer, Andrew Williams, Scott Wilson, Howard Charles, Frieda Maher, Claire Lloyd, Ian Cranwell, Laurel Lawrence, Tony Reed, Tom Alexakis, Ben Kizny Gordon, Matthew Bowen, Ross-Lee Panuccio, Robert Owen-Young and Adrian Rice, as well as the countless volunteers who are the backbone of this wonderful community organisation. Congratulations on all their efforts.

NEW SOUTH WALES ACADEMY OF GYMNASTICS

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (16:15): By concurrence: I acknowledge the coaches and athletes from the New South Wales Academy of Gymnastics for their tremendous efforts in the New South Wales State Club Championships. The academy won first overall club for women's gymnastics at the inaugural championships. I make special mention of the six girls going on to compete at the Australian national championships: Maddison Daley, Sage Anderson, Jaymi Aronowitz, Jessica Rutherford, Olivia Wills and Lily Sharpe. It was also a massive event for 10-year-old Melanie Persinidis, who became the first girl in New South Wales this year to score a perfect 10 on the vault. The team at the New South Wales Academy of Gymnastics have spent the past three years preparing for this competition to achieve these tremendous results. However, in true Australian style, two of the young coaches, Olivia Tripi and Hannah Yarwood, who had retired from competition jumped back into their leotards just a few weeks out from the event and helped support their team to win fourth overall in their level.

Congratulations again to the amazing athletes and the incredible coaches at the New South Wales Academy of Gymnastics, and good luck to the girls heading to the national championships later this year.

LORD MAYOR CLOVER MOORE RE-ELECTION

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:16): By concurrence: I commend Clover Moore on her re-election for a record fourth term as Lord Mayor of Sydney. Along with Clover, Professor Kerryn Phelps, Philip Thalys, Jess Scully, Jess Miller and Robert Kok were elected as part of the governing Independent team. I look forward to working with the Lord Mayor and councillors to continue to deliver results for our global city.

WOLLONDILLY ADVERTISER DESIGN AN AD COMPETITION

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (16:16): By concurrence: This is one that Charles Casuscelli would love to hear. The Design an Ad competition hosted by the *Wollondilly Advertiser* allows students to submit artworks on local businesses, which is adjudicated by a panel of judges to decide the winning entries. This competition inspires local students, providing them with a means to express their creativity and allowing them to grapple with the intricacies of advertising. The competition also encourages residents to engage with local businesses, which contribute massively to the character of the Wollondilly electorate. I acknowledge the efforts of the major winners: Caitlyn Herringe, aged nine, for her design for Hall's Conveyancing, and Rachel Canning, aged 18, for her IMB Bank ad. I also acknowledge the efforts of Tahlita Smith, who came second in the primary school competition, and Holly Graham, who placed third. I also acknowledge Imogen, Issabella, Cathy and Chloe for placing second and Hayley Venter for placing third.

CHARLESTOWN BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:17): By concurrence: We all know that being a parent can be challenging and complex. That is why my electorate of Charlestown is lucky to have the Benevolent Society, which helps families raise happy, healthy and safe children. The Benevolent Society provides parenting programs, playgroups, counselling, child care, parenting groups, home visiting, and prenatal and postnatal health services. It also provides intensive support to families where children have experienced abuse and neglect. The Benevolent Society offers specialised support to families with a child or young person affected by mental illness and supports young people who care for a family member with a disability or mental illness. It takes a special person to work in such a delicate field. I commend the Benevolent Society and its staff and volunteers for their commitment to helping people, families and communities achieve positive change, and I wholeheartedly thank the Charlestown office for its kindness and patience and for all it does to assist families in my community.

CAMP QUALITY

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:18): By concurrence: I congratulate and thank Chloe Gonano from Chipping Norton, who raised almost \$3,000 to support children who are living with cancer, and their families. This is the third time that Chloe has hosted a Camp Quality Dine at Mine event. The most recent event saw 90 people turn up on the night to play games, participate in raffles and have dinner, raising funds for the very worthwhile charity, Camp Quality. Camp Quality has specially devised programs that build optimism and resilience for children who are living with cancer and their families. These programs give families an essential break from the stresses of cancer, throughout each stage of their cancer journey—at hospital, at home, at school and away from it all. Once again, thank you to Chloe for her monumental effort in raising these funds for children, and their families, during what must be a very stressful and emotional time in their lives.

MULTICULTURAL EID FESTIVAL AND FAIR

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:19): By concurrence: It goes without saying that I often speak about the beauty, diversity and benefits of the multicultural society we live in. On 10 July I had the pleasure of attending the Multicultural Eid Festival and Fair [MEFF]. It is a prime example of the multicultural society we live in. This year, together with parliamentary colleagues Luke Foley, Julia Finn and Tanya Davies, I joined 25,000 people to celebrate the joyous occasion of Eid Al-Fitr. The weather was great, the atmosphere buzzing and, of course, the food delicious. MEFF is a celebration of who we are as a community: one of diversity, zest for life and respect. This understanding was displayed beautifully through the various performances, stalls, rides and, most importantly, people in attendance. I thank especially the organisers of MEFF, Mr Ali Alsalamy and his team, for an amazing event. I acknowledge the Ahmad family, who 33 years ago saw a need to bring the community together and highlight the best of multicultural Australia. In times when people may question the value of diversity, it is events such as this that remind us of the beauty of what we have as Australians.

TAREE PROSTATE CANCER FAMILY FUN DAY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:20): By concurrence: I note the presence in the gallery of Charles Casuscelli. This contribution is for him. On Sunday 4 September the third annual Prostate

Cancer Family Fun Day in Taree drew close to 1,000 people. It is estimated that around 120,000 Australian men are living with prostate cancer and it is predicted that the number will increase to 267,000 by 2017. Being a pet project of mine, I was delighted at the turnout of people who came to partake in the day's activities. The Myall Lakes event has raised \$22,000 across the past three events and will assist local prostate cancer support groups and the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia for support, research and awareness. I thank the Lakesters, Taree Lions Club, Manning Valley Concert Band, Wingham Pipe Band, Prime Possum, Police Citizens Youth Club Gymaroos, Rodney O'Regan, MC, Anthony Zanos, emergency services—police, ambulance, fire, rescue, Rural Fire Service and voluntary rescue squad—Wingham Country Women's Association, Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association, and men's shed and woodwork groups.

LAKE MACQUARIE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:21): By concurrence: I recently attended the Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards and was impressed by the diversity of business owners—many of whom are small business owners—and the contribution they make to our community. I particularly acknowledge Sue Felsinger, who received the Entrepreneur of the Year award. Sue, a computer science teacher for 20 years, moved back to the Hunter region from Perth a few years ago. In 2013 she set up her first Kip McGrath Education Centre in Belmont, starting with seven students. It is the only thing open in Belmont these days. Since then, she has set up centres in Toronto and Adamstown and now has 180 students and 15 staff. Sue employs retired teachers and graduate teachers to ensure that she has a diverse workforce, and is providing local opportunities for young people in our area to get their foot in the door. I offer my hearty congratulations to Sue; her efforts over the past few years have certainly paid off. I look forward to watching her business grow in the future.

NORTHERN TABLELANDS WOMEN AFL PLAYERS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (16:22): By concurrence: I congratulate two outstanding and promising young female Australian Football League [AFL] players in the Northern Tablelands electorate, Moree Suns Jess Maher and Eleanore Ford of Inverell. Both girls will travel to the Central Coast later this month to play in the AFL Youth Girls State Cup. Both of them were named in the northern New South Wales pathways division A team. If they keep performing to the best of their ability, it will set them on a pathway to the new national women's league. Eleanore moved from Newcastle to Inverell with her family 12 months ago and has been playing AFL for quite some time. Jess has been playing AFL for only eight months, and has shown great promise. I wish Jess and Elle all the best at the State championship and note that both of them have a goal to play in the recently launched national women's league, which will start next year. I congratulate them on their selection and success so far.

TRIBUTE TO JAKALENE WILLIAMS

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:23): By concurrence: I commend the work of Jakalene Williams, a Leichhardt resident and a very active member of our local Indigenous community. Jakalene has family connections in the community of Brewarrina in north-west New South Wales. Jakalene saw the needs of that community and acted. Over the past few months, Jakalene has been tirelessly collecting donated supplies such as toys, shoes, clothes, bed linen, tinned food and other basics to make life just a little bit easier for that community. I am delighted to say that a fundraising effort by my office has led to several thousand dollars being raised from incredibly generous local residents to fund the trip to Brewarrina. Communities such as Brewarrina struggle with high unemployment, and expensive goods and basic necessities are often luxuries. People are really struggling. On Saturday I will be sending the truck inland packed full of supplies. Jakalene told me, "We love to help people who need help as it's important to reassure people that basic humanity still prevails in the form of caring." I congratulate Jakalene on this effort and on her commitment to helping others in the community. I thank Leslie, her partner, and Heather and Lorry at the Glebe Op-Shop, Kegworth Primary School, and Clothesline charity store for their donations.

NORTH CRONULLA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (16:24): By concurrence: Today I acknowledge North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club, which recently held its ninety-first annual general meeting. Founded in 1925, North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club is one of four surf clubs on Bate Bay, Cronulla, with members from across the Sutherland shire. In 90 years, the committed club members have rescued more than 12,200 swimmers and proudly recorded "no lives lost" within the patrolled beach area. North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club is a community organisation run by volunteers who are dedicated to protecting swimmers and surfers. I congratulate the new executive staff for the 2016-17 season, president Geoff Budd, club captain Jamie Primmer, deputy president Craig McKinnery, finance director Ben Smollett, administration director Brian Ferguson and junior activities group nippers director Donna Hargreaves. I congratulate Stephen Warren, who received a 50-year badge honouring his service to surf lifesaving. It is the tireless work of our lifesaving volunteers that not only makes our shire the best place to live

and raise a family, but also embodies the Australian spirit of giving back. I thank the lifesavers for their incredible contribution to our community.

CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE MEN'S SHEDS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:25): By concurrence: Men's sheds are places that give often older and retired men in our community the opportunity to continue to be productive, contribute to their community, connect with friends, and maintain an active body and mind. They provide a safe and busy environment where men can find many of these things in an atmosphere of old-fashioned mateship. Importantly, there is no pressure. Men can just come and have a yarn and a cuppa if that is all they are looking for. In my electorate of Charlestown we are lucky to have three men's sheds: Redhead, Windale and Cardiff. The latter I share with the members for Wallsend and for Lake Macquarie. They all do amazing work. I recently had the pleasure of visiting the Redhead Men's Shed, where I inspected the works underway for the installation of a ramp that was funded through last year's Community Building Partnership program. Impressively, the men are working together, utilising their variety of trades and skills to design, construct and install the ramp themselves. The ramp will give all members and visitors access to the shed. I commend and thank all the men's sheds in my electorate for the work they do in our community.

TRIBUTE TO RON MASSEY

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Sport) (16:26): By concurrence: Tonight I pay tribute to Australian Rugby League legend Ron Massey who passed away on Monday at the age of 86. Ron Massey will always be remembered for his partnership with the great Jack Gibson and their premierships with Eastern Suburbs in 1974 and 1975 and then with Parramatta from 1981 to 1983. He later moved to Cronulla with Gibson and became chief executive of the Sharks from 1990 to 1991. Even in his later years his influence was profound. He was in the coaches box alongside Wayne Bennett when the Dragons broke their premierships drought in 2010. The current Blues captain, Paul Gallen, credits his meeting Massey in 2007 with helping him turn his career around. Ron was also a founding member of the Men of League Foundation, which was set up to provide assistance to people at all levels of the game. He has been honoured with life membership of New South Wales Rugby League and the second tier Ron Massey Cup competition will carry his name in perpetuity. I offer my condolences to Ron's family, friends and the entire rugby league community. Rest in peace, champion.

TRIBUTE TO COLIN MANTON

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (16:27): By concurrence: In September, Mr Colin Manton of the Galston Rural Fire Brigade will be recognised for dedicating 40 years of his life to the Rural Fire Service as a member of the Galston Brigade. Mr Manton joined in 1975 and has had a colourful career. He has held a variety of roles, from president to community engagement officer to Rural Fire Service Association representative, and several field officer positions. In addition, Mr Manton was a member of the Hornsby Fire Control Centre from 1999 to 2002, where he held the role of group captain within the Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai district. Mr Manton's lifetime of dedication makes him a worthy recipient of the Long Service Medal 3rd Clasp—though I doubt his service will stop here. Today I thank Mr Manton for all that he has done for our community and congratulate him on his award.

ROBOGALS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:28): By concurrence: For the past two years, I have been privileged to be invited to Swansea Public School to hang out with Robogals. Robogals Newcastle is a student-run organisation that aims to increase female participation in science, technology, engineering and maths [STEM] through fun and educational initiatives aimed at girls in primary and secondary schools. I acknowledge Pei Ling Chensee, who teaches at Swansea Public School. This is the second year that Swansea Public School has run Robogals for its stage three students. Pei Ling tells me that it has made an enormous difference to the 25 girls in each cohort. I acknowledge the university students who volunteer their time to run Robogals Newcastle in the Hunter and Central Coast region. Robogals was established in Melbourne in 2008 and has grown to become an international organisation working to improve the gender imbalance in STEM fields. The executive committee consisting of Matt Johnston, Rachael Archinal, Mitchell McLeod, Emmalee Ford, Jack Stewart, Samantha Young, Brendan Austin, May Hane and Chris Caelli should be very proud of the work they do in tackling gender inequality.

This is the second year that Swansea Public School has run Robogals for its stage three students. There are about 25 girls in each cohort, and Pei Ling tells me it has made an enormous difference to those girls. I acknowledge the university students who volunteer their time to run Robogals Newcastle in the Hunter and Central Coast region. Robogals, which was established in Melbourne in 2008, has grown to become an international organisation working to improve the gender imbalance in science, technology, engineering and

maths. The executive committee, including Matt Johnston, Rachael Archinal, Mitchell McLeod, Emmalee Ford, Jack Stewart, Samantha Young, Brendan Austin, May Hane and Chris Caelli, should be very proud of the work they do in tackling gender inequality.

WORLD TOURISM DAY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:29): By concurrence: I note that 27 September marks United Nations World Tourism Day. I commend the Northern Beaches Council, Ku-ring-gai Council and Willoughby Council for their increasing focus on tourism activities in the northern region, which overlaps with my electorate of Davidson. I also acknowledge that the Institute of Australian Tour Guides is giving free tours in Sydney this Sunday, 25 September, for the sixth year running. This will give Sydneysiders the opportunity to feel like tourists in their own city. Many locals walk through the city on a regular basis, but how much do they really know about the places they walk past? Starting at 10 o'clock this Sunday, tours will run approximately every 15 minutes from the Museum of Sydney, finishing at Customs House, Circular Quay. The tours will take in many sites of historic significance, including Bridge Street and Macquarie Street. The United Nations theme this year is accessible tourism. The 11 o'clock tour will cater specially for sight-impaired visitors. The tours run for 45 minutes, and the last one is at three o'clock.

Visitors

VISITORS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I recognise in the gallery the former member for Strathfield, Charles Casuscelli. Welcome, Charles. It is always great to see you back here.

Petitions

SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Discussion

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (16:31): We are here today, in the very best tradition of grassroots democracy, to debate a vital issue that strikes at the very heart of our community—that parents, not the State, are the ultimate authority for their children. Such is the level of community concern that in just four weeks more than 17,000 members of the Chinese Australian community have signed a petition calling for the Safe Schools program to be abolished. I am proud to say that I represent the interests of thousands of signatories, and the majority of parents and mainstream Australians who share their views. No child in any school at any time should be bullied for any reason whatsoever. No-one wants their child to be a victim of bullying or to engage in bullying. Despite what the bullies behind Safe Schools would have us believe, the reality is that there would not be one person in this place today, on either side of politics, who would disagree with that sentiment.

But the debate today is not about bullying; it is about the content of the Safe Schools program and the manner in which it is being imposed. The fundamental issue is that the so-called Safe Schools program is not an anti-bullying program at all. Safe Schools is a Trojan horse for far Left extremists that is shamelessly exploiting the issue of bullying—a very real issue faced by many children. It imposes the pseudoscience of gender fluidity on vulnerable minors—a theory so extreme that it inhabits only the fringes of academia. At its best, this program is a profoundly misguided attempt to socially engineer a generation of vulnerable young children, force-feeding them a world view where gender does not exist. At its worst, it is nothing more than a recruitment drive for the radical Left, preying on impressionable children in a calculated attempt to undermine the very notion of parental authority.

The authors of this program openly boast about their radical Marxist roots and have on numerous occasions publicly stated that Safe Schools has nothing to do with bullying. I am indebted to Professor Patrick Parkinson for his scholarly analysis of the genesis and delivery of Safe Schools. His research reinforces the view held by parents that they ought to be very fearful of the pseudoscience philosophy and radical gender theory behind the program. He correctly identifies the dishonesty behind the research that underpins the necessity to deliver this ideology. Professor Parkinson correctly identifies the reputational damage being done to La Trobe University by its continuing support for the intellectual bankruptcy that masquerades as academic research, and which is nothing more than the promotion of a Marxist agenda that has at its core the idea that the State is the best educator of the child and that parents and families must be marginalised.

Apart from its content, the second fundamental problem with this program is the manner in which it is being imposed. The Education Act 1990, in section 4 (b), provides that "the education of a child is primarily the responsibility of the child's parents". Throughout the history of education in this State, that principle has been at the foundation of the culture of schools.

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

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Safe Schools is a vehicle by which the rights of parents are usurped to introduce children to concepts that are often age inappropriate and anathema to the preparation in life that their parents seek for them. This not only ignores the rights of parents but also is fundamentally disrespectful to Australia's multicultural and religious diversity. This is the new social order. The message we are sending today is that parents will not be bullied in this manner. They will speak out, because the State is seeking to hijack our children. It is clear that the supporters of Safe Schools are seriously out of touch with mainstream Australians.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! This is a petition representing the community. I ask that members show each other respect during the debate. I ask that there be no interjections from the public gallery. Each speaker will be heard in silence. All members who have been interjecting are on three calls to order. If there are any more interjections, members will be removed from the House.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:37): I speak in this discussion as someone who has spent his entire career, prior to entering politics, working in schools—especially in secondary schools, where the issues we are discussing are particularly relevant. I would like to think my particular philosophy and approach—of recognising cultural and religious differences, working with families and really working to put the needs of kids at the centre of what we do—give me a helpful perspective in this debate. This is obviously an issue about which there are very strong views, from a variety of angles. We need only look at today's media and at the gallery to see that. All points of view deserve to be heard, but as a State we need to agree on a pragmatic way forward because we are talking about the wellbeing of young people, some of whom are at the most complex stage of their lives.

Complexity is where I want to start. Schools are complex organisations. Imagine working in an environment where there are more than 1,000 adolescents. Add to that teaching staff, support staff, at least 1,000 parents, and the parents and citizens association. Additional layers include the departments of education, State and Federal, and all sorts of politicians, academics and media commentators. All schools have incredible diversity—socioeconomic, religious affiliation or none, and cultures. It is an important job of principals, guiding their teachers and with the direction provided by policy and curriculums, to manage the complexity; to balance the needs of all those groups; and to always keep at front of mind what is best for the students. Most do a pretty good job and manage many situations concerning student wellbeing, whether it is about bullying in general, discrimination, racism or any other thing that might exclude or hurt students.

Schools deal with this every single day. Let us not forget that the original purpose of Safe Schools—and the reason the Federal Government funded it as national program—was to ensure that schools became safer and more supportive by reducing homophobic bullying and discrimination just as schools reduce and address bullying and discrimination of any sort. In this discussion that is heavily contested. On the one hand, we need to distinguish between helpful content that addresses bullying of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex kids and, on the other hand, what is perceived to be radical queer theory that is ideological in content and not appropriate for a school-based anti-bullying program. We want all schools to be inclusive places where all kids can focus on their learning and grow as well-rounded individuals.

We pursue that goal in the knowledge that, for some kids and some families, school is the safest and most stable place in their life—for all sorts of reasons. And when I talk about safety I am not just talking about physical safety; I am talking about emotional and psychological wellbeing. We all want schools to be places where all kids thrive. Last year a remarkable young woman, Georgia Valis, a former student of Burwood Girls High School and a proud Christian who is now studying at the University of Sydney, wrote a touching opinion piece in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. She talked about the process of coming out as a young gay woman; of coming out into a school environment. Pleasingly, that school environment, when put to the test, proved to be truly inclusive and affirming. I quote her as she described very well what, in her opinion, is at stake:

Being a gay person and attending school is not a philosophical issue—but forcing gay students to a life of invisibility and lies is We forget that discrimination of LGBTI students, denying them role models and visibility, is the first push towards poor health and death; from suicide, drugs or alcohol, or social death as they pull away from the mainstream altogether.

Similarly Murray Gatt, a student completing year 12 in New South Wales this year, remarked when writing in an open letter about his experience as a young gay man that throughout his schooling he had been taught about the importance of inclusion, of not bullying anyone for any reason. Those words of wisdom apply to all parts of society: All discrimination is unacceptable. My view is that to ban schools from accessing approved resources now residing in the Safe Schools hub is to deny teachers and principals the very help they may well need as they assess what their school communities and individual kids need.

The Safe Schools program was reviewed earlier this year and several changes were made. I support the conduct of a review by a respected education academic and imagine there may be further opportunities for a deeper review as time goes on. In education this is standard practice. Schools are complex places and growing up

is, and always has been, a complex process of coming to terms with life being more grey than simply black and white. We train our teachers to be respectful and supportive professionals, able to deal not only with the academic needs of their students but also with their wellbeing. But I do not think completely banning such access will be helpful to anyone—certainly not students and certainly not teachers and principals doing their best to create a supportive and inclusive environment for all students, especially those most at risk from the harmful effects of discrimination and bullying. Banning something completely might offer a simple response, but working through the issues is the better response.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (16:43): Adolescence is a challenging time. Trying to find your place in the world and who you are is something that is never easy. For those adolescents who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex [LGBTI] that challenge is far harder. All the research shows that LGBTI people are at a far greater risk of self-harm and suicide than their peers. So it is absolutely appropriate that we expect our schools to cultivate an atmosphere of tolerance, respect and care for those people who may be different. However, the so-called Safe Schools program goes much further than that. It is a pervasive and radical ideological agenda devised by a group of Melbourne teachers without input from psychiatrists or paediatricians.

The Safe Schools material covers some extremely sensitive topics around gender, sexuality and identity, which is why the material must be used judiciously. I am alarmed that despite more than 100 schools in New South Wales having signed up on the Safe Schools website to access the materials, there are still no guidelines for teachers or principals about how those materials should be used. Currently, teachers and principals determine how the material is used at the local level. As a result, there will be a diversity of opinion on what is and is not appropriate. It is true that the Federal Government has provided guidelines and I know that the New South Wales Department of Education has contacted every school to ensure that they are operating in line with the Federal guidelines, but I would have thought, given that education is provided by the New South Wales Government, we too should be setting parameters about how this material is to be used.

The onus rightly should be on the New South Wales Department of Education to ensure that schools using the material act responsibly. Putting this aside, it is my firm view that parents or carers should be empowered to determine whether their own children are exposed to material such as this. That is why I support the idea of asking parents to opt in to the program rather than the current situation where all students take part unless their parents choose to opt out. Given the sensitivity of the Safe Schools debate, it makes sense that parents should be more engaged. There should be no place for discrimination or bullying anywhere, let alone in our school system. That said, it is entirely appropriate to ensure that parents are part of the decision-making process when it comes to exposing their own children to such sensitive material. That is not the role of the State.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members are discussing a petition from the community. I asked for silence, which is expected by Opposition members. But whenever Government members speak there are interjections. I ask that members respect one another and listen to the contributions in silence.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:46): Every student has the right to feel safe at school, irrespective of their race, religious beliefs, gender identity or sexuality. As the shadow Minister for Education, the member for Lakemba, has noted, other than their family homes, school is the place where our young people should feel safest. For many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex [LGBTI] students, school is not a safe place. A recent La Trobe University study showed that 61 per cent of teenagers reported experiencing verbal abuse because of homophobia and 18 per cent reported physical abuse, and 80 per cent of that abuse was experienced at school. The organisation beyondblue notes that LGBTI Australians are significantly more likely to have suicidal thoughts, attempt suicide, or indeed take their own life. We have a moral imperative to consider why. We must contemplate how our culture puts young LGBTIQ people at risk.

We must acknowledge the impacts of these types of debates on the wellbeing of those young people. I understand and respect that many parents who may have signed this petition only have their kids' wellbeing at heart. But I say this to you, with respect and with humility: It may not be your kids who are at risk. There is no danger in your kids' learning to accept others' differences. Safe Schools is about stopping the bullying and intimidation of our LGBTI people. It gives LGBTI students a framework to better understand their place in the world. It encourages young people to have self-confidence and self-respect. The debate around the Safe Schools program has unfortunately become supercharged and politicised. There has been misinformation and inaccuracy. The program does not encourage people to be same-sex attracted; it simply supports those who are. The program does not encourage people to change gender; and it absolutely does not teach young people sexual techniques. To assert this is nothing more than a beat-up to scare parents and teachers into banning the program.

It is also wrong to say that parents have no say in what their kids are taught. Parents may refuse permission for their children to participate. Even though opponents of the program have the choice for their kids not to participate, they would prefer if no-one else's kids benefited from it either. This exposes the underlying reality of this debate: There are some who would prefer young LGBTI people to stay silent and invisible. We have

already learned the hard way that silence equals death. I say to the member for Epping, who has led this debate and contributed to misinformation and politicisation of the Safe Schools program, that there is no such thing as a gay agenda. There is only equality. There is no such thing as political correctness. It is about respect for difference.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (16:49): By leave: I support the petition tabled by the member for Epping calling for an end to the Safe Schools program. In our democracy individuals have the right to express their views on controversial topics such as this one without fear or favour in a sensible and respectable debate. I support the principle that parents are primarily responsible for their children's education. I will always stand up for the rights of parents in my electorate of Parramatta to decide what their children are taught when comes to sensitive topics and issues such as those addressed in the Safe Schools program.

The Safe Schools program is federally funded and therefore is an issue primarily for the Federal Government. It is important that we note that distinction. In February 2016 we welcomed the Federal Government independent review of the appropriateness and efficacy of the resources generated by the Safe Schools Coalition Australia. Shortcomings in the program were, for example, the age appropriateness of the program resources and the need for participating schools to consult with parents before implementing the program. I commend the Federal Government for taking steps to amend the program.

We all agree that it is important to stand up to bullying and discrimination wherever it occurs and to do everything we can to stop bullying in our schools, homes, workplaces and communities. But when it comes to the Safe Schools program, my office has received many visits, calls, letters and emails from constituents, local groups and other organisations asking for an end to the program. Many of the topics taught in the program are squarely within the domain of issues that belong to parents to educate their children about. Where appropriate, one-on-one counselling should be made available to students who are experiencing difficulties in their formative school years. This is available in schools and should continue to be made available to individual students who need support.

There have been reports that some schools have taught this supposed opt-in program without first asking parents if they wanted to have their children taught the content of the program. The program needs to come to an end if it cannot operate as a truly opt-in program. Members of the community who have contacted me feel that their rights as parents are being subverted by this program. Despite the rigorous amendments put in place by the Federal Government review, there are reports that some schools and teachers are not following the rules of the program. If the strict rules of the program set down by the Federal Government following an independent review cannot be followed, I believe we have no choice but to end the program.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:52): By leave: I stand here today for tolerance and acceptance and pride. I stand here today on behalf of young people like Murray in year 12 in my electorate and the many other lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning [LGBTIQ] students and teachers, their families and friends. I say from the outset that I support the Safe Schools anti-bullying program and I am absolutely unwavering in my support in this place for the LGBTIQ community. I support the campaign for marriage equality. I am alarmed by heightened rates of homelessness among LGBTIQ people. I add my voice to calls for renewed focus on LGBTIQ health issues. I was also very proud to stand at this dispatch box and apologise to the gay and lesbian people who were attacked and arrested by police at the 1978 mardi gras.

According to beyondblue, between 24 per cent and 36 per cent of the LGBTIQ community experience significant mental health issues, while the rate among their heterosexual peers is just 7 per cent. Lesbians, gay men and people who are bisexual are also twice as likely to have a high or very high level of psychological distress. The contrast between the mental health of LGBTIQ people and heterosexual people is greatest amongst young people. The average age of a first suicide attempt for a gay, lesbian or bisexual person is 16 years. This is why the Safe Schools program is so important.

Young people in the queer community are dying because of social pressures they experience and the mental health problems that those pressures produce. It is absolutely critical that this Parliament set aside the bigotry, ignorance and hateful motives of conservative politicians like Cory Bernardi, George Christensen and their allies in this place. We need to engage with this issue on the facts. At a recent forum in the Blue Mountains the Safe Schools Coalition invited parents and teachers to discuss the anti-bullying program and to address some of the community concern that has been whipped up by malign elements of the Liberal Party and The Nationals. One parent who attended said:

I am glad that I went because I got the chance to find out what the program is all about. I had been concerned because of the negative publicity but then I learned that much of what is being said in the media is ill-informed and sensationalised.

As parents, we all want our kids to grow up with the necessary skills to keep them safe in the world. We want them to learn about road safety, stranger danger, the effects of drugs and alcohol, and eating and living well. In this age there are new threats like cyberbullying and our young people need new skills. Mr Deputy-Speaker, I seek an extension of time. [*Extension of time not granted.*]

The Safe Schools program must be allowed to continue.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I appreciate that there are strongly held views on both sides of the discussion, but I ask that each member be heard in silence. That includes those in the gallery. I ask that everyone be afforded the opportunity to express their sentiments.

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (16:56): By leave: First, I relay the apologies of Minister Piccoli, who asked me to apologise on his behalf for not being here this evening. He is on a plane to Adelaide to discuss Gonski funding with other education Ministers as we speak. Otherwise he would be addressing this Chamber about some of the misconceptions about the Safe Schools program. As an openly gay man in this House, I have some experience of going to a public school back in the 1970s and early 1980s, and living in fear for my life, for my reputation and for acceptance within my family if it was ever found out that I was gay. Students and schools now have the option to access this program and learn how to best address the situations that I found myself in all those years ago.

I believe if you are going to present a petition to this House it should at least be factual. This one is not. Frankly, if this petition were placed in front of me I would find it difficult not to sign it as well because of some of the assertions that it makes, which are clearly untrue. Safe Schools is not mandatory in any public school in New South Wales. It is not imposed on any school. Parents are able to opt out and decline their child's participation in any lesson if that includes Safe Schools resources. Fewer than 1 per cent of public schools in New South Wales are signed up to the program. None of the public schools in my electorate has signed up to it, but Catholic and independent schools have.

Members of this House who have received these petitions and who are expressing such great concern about what is in the resources available on the Safe Schools website should go to the website and have a look. They should spend hours trawling through it. I have challenged anyone who has rung my office with problems with this program to do just that. After they have done that, people should then come back and tell us what they have a problem with. What is on the Safe Schools website and what is authorised to be accessed by public schools in New South Wales is entirely appropriate. It has been reviewed by the Federal Government. It has been reviewed by the Department of Education in New South Wales. That is why I support Safe Schools.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:59): By leave: I join the member for Coogee as the other openly gay member of this Chamber. I begin by making two important points. First, I assure the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex students who are concerned that this petition is being discussed in this place that there is strong support for the LGBTI community across all political parties in the New South Wales Parliament—the Liberal Party, The Nationals, the Labor Party, The Greens and the Independents. We are all committed to working together to protect them. Secondly, I assure the members from the multicultural backgrounds who are in the gallery today, and who have expressed their concern by signing this petition, that just as they do not want young people in their communities to be bullied, taken advantage of or treated poorly, I do not want young people in my community to be bullied or treated poorly. Indeed, that is why the Safe Schools program should continue to be available in New South Wales schools.

Some involved in this debate have politicised the program—a program that simply aims to reduce discrimination towards young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex or same-sex attracted. Schools play a vital role in social and personal development, and the impact of discrimination, unfair treatment, abuse or bullying on children and young people at school can have long-lasting impacts. LGBTI students are particularly vulnerable. The 2013 National LGBTI Health Alliance briefing paper reported that LGBTI people have the highest rates of suicide and self-harm of any population in Australia, which is why we are concerned to protect this program. Programs are needed to promote inclusion and acceptance, and to prevent violence, bullying and abuse.

The Safe Schools program provides teachers with materials founded on evidence-based research and developed to suit various age groups in line with the Australian curriculum. This program is voluntary and each school can select materials that best suit the needs of its students. It operates in government and non-government schools, including faith-based schools. I believe everyone would support a program aimed at preventing violence, abuse, bullying and harm, but I am concerned that attacks on this program have been based on scare campaigns and misleading information—and we have obviously heard some of that in this debate. This is at odds with the feedback that I have received from parents, students, teachers and clergy who are grateful for this program. I am confident that the LGBTI community, our friends, allies, advocates and representatives in this place will continue to work with this Parliament and this Government to ensure that we do not get distracted by the politics of extreme, but we work hard to ensure that resources like Safe Schools are available to vulnerable students.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:02): By leave: Today I speak on behalf of The Greens in support of the Safe Schools program. I begin my contribution by saying to those seated in the gallery or those who may

be watching the parliamentary livestreaming that they have nothing to fear from this program. This program was funded by the former Abbott Government—hardly the most left-wing organisation in this country. An independent review was then conducted, after calls from conservative members of Parliament, and the Government adopted its recommendations. The program was reviewed by the Department of Education and this Liberal-Nationals Government has been made it available to public schools in this State. Indeed, to call it some kind of Marxist conspiracy is exactly the type of hyperbolic, outrageous discussion we are trying to address.

Schools decide in a completely voluntary manner whether they will take the program. If parents do not wish to be part of the program, they can simply opt out. It is important to recognise that this vital program is about inclusion and support. It helps to prevent discrimination and isolation. It creates a safe space for students no matter what their sexuality is, no matter what their gender identity is, and no matter what type of family they come from. It is an evidence-based program that has been created by educators. The materials and resources have been approved by the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training. It is implemented in New South Wales by the respected organisation, Family Planning NSW, and is supported by key lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex [LGBTI] groups, including the AIDS Council of New South Wales—ACON—whose co-conveners are present in the gallery today.

Attacks on the Safe Schools program by referring to it as a Marxist fantasy and by the use of other exaggerated language are purely misleading about what the program involves. It is no wonder that people signed the petition, which makes claims that are completely false and would not be supported by almost every member of this House. What is important to remember are the voices of young people like Caitlin, who is 18 and is in year 12, and Sarah, who is 14 and in year 9. Caitlin said:

The attacks on Safe Schools are nothing less than appalling. As an LGBTI+ high school student I have experienced homophobia throughout my schooling. The Safe Schools program represented a way forward. It is a program that allows students to feel comfortable with themselves and provides students and staff with resources that are so important.

Sarah said:

I need safe schools so that I can feel comfortable being myself ... I need safe schools so that everyone is able to learn in a shame free environment. We cannot cancel the ... program because without it bigotry and hatred will continue to flourish. Safe schools is important to me and many of my friends because everyone deserves to be accepted and everyone deserves to be educated.

Present in the gallery today are groups from the Asian Australian Alliance, in particular, and from the Asian Australian Rainbow Alliance, so this petition does not speak for any particular ethnic group. What we know is that there is broad support from all sections of our community for Safe Schools. That is why The Greens will continue to celebrate diversity and pride—for the benefit of us all.

Private Members' Statements

WORLD WAR II SEXUAL SLAVERY

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (17:06): Today I will speak on an issue that is important to my Korean Australian community. I do so acknowledging that the sexual slavery by Japanese military personnel during World War II is diplomatically and politically contentious. However, following my recent visit to Korea, I feel Parliament is an appropriate place in which to speak of what happened then and what happened recently in my local area with the unveiling of a peace monument to recognise the struggles of Korean women and girls during World War II. My motivation to speak on this issue is not political. I do not wish to offend any individual, any organisation or any government. But I am a woman who represents many Korean Australian women and men. I have made a commitment to my community to always speak openly and in their interests in this Parliament.

Like many, I have struggled with whether a peace monument in Australia is appropriate. I did not support the involvement of the Strathfield Council in the erection of a monument, but I do support this community-led initiative. I reached this conclusion after my recent trip to South Korea, where I visited the monument in Seoul—the War and Women's Human Rights Museum—and spoke to a number of women connected to the movement. I believe Australia, particularly with my local area's significant Korean Australian community, is the right place in which to erect a peace monument—and what a beautiful monument it is. It is a statue that shows a young woman who is sitting beside an empty and uncomfortable chair. She is gentle, humble and vulnerable. Her face shows no emotion. She is alone. She is carved in bronze. If it is cold, she might wear a coloured scarf.

To me, she represents the human rights struggle of women around the world. I thank the Korean women—and of course women and girls everywhere—who continue to raise awareness and seek justice for women and girls whose rights are ignored and abused. During my visits to the museum in Seoul, like thousands of people, I posted a message on the wall written in yellow paper and in the shape of a butterfly. The butterfly represents a desire to see women and girls live free from discrimination, repression and violence. In Korea, it represents a desire for women to spread their wings freely. To me, the statue in Australia does not represent a perpetuation of long-held division. I see it as a symbol of peace, social harmony and the right of all women to live

safely and free from exploitation as well as violence. It is estimated that approximately 200,000 girls and women were forced into sexual slavery during World War II. I acknowledge that even the number of women who were involved is contested: It could be 20,000 or it could be 400,000.

What we know, however, is that it happened—women and girls were taken from their homes and forced into houses of prostitution for the supposed comfort of soldiers. During my visit to South Korea I visited the main monument in Seoul. I spoke to a young university student who was keeping watch and I asked her why she was there. She told me that she and others were concerned the Seoul statue would be removed. Of course the location outside the Japanese embassy is also a source of great conflict and there have been recent discussions about removing the statue. I make no judgment on the statue's location nor on the complexities of the issues that have arisen since discussions between Japan and Korea on the issue in December last year. I do, however, acknowledge the women of South Korea who maintain a vigil by the monument night and day.

The Australian statue was unveiled in August at the Korean Society of Sydney in my electorate, in the presence of the 89-year-old Won-Ok Gil from South Korea, who, at the age of 13, was raped hundreds of times by Japanese soldiers. I am told it is the ninth monument erected outside Korea. I acknowledge the Peace Monument Establishing Committee in Sydney: co-chairs Vivian Pak and Byung Jo Kang; vice chair Yeon Jung Lee; general secretary Young Ran Jung; committee members Andy Hwang, Yun Cho Moon, Maria Kim, Su Hyun Paik, Olivia Choi, Joseph Lim, Yeona Yeom, Byung Ryul Lee, Seung Hee Lee, Sin A Jun, Jeong Gon Kim, Eun Young Yoo, Tae Won Kim, Hae Dong Park, ata Hye Rin An, Keith Kwo; and, of course, the many members who supported the establishment committee in its work, including Sue Macdonald, Brian Shin and Anna Song. This is an important issue that should be acknowledged within this House. I acknowledge that it is an emotional issue, but as a woman and the member for Strathfield I feel it is important this issue is brought to the New South Wales Parliament. I commend their work to the House.

TRIBUTE TO JACK WILTON

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (17:11): Seldom has any electorate been so privileged and lucky as to have a constituent like Jack Wilton. Picton's Jack Wilton has dedicated years of his life to the people of Wollondilly in a plethora of community organisations and charities, and has been on the front line fighting for the welfare and wellbeing of Wollondilly since 1963. On 26 January 2016 during the Australia Day awards Jack Wilton became Wollondilly's citizen of the year for his dedication to these community services and organisations. One such community service that Mr Wilton has devoted himself to is to ensure that he teaches future generations the importance of the Anzac spirit, and how much the Anzac spirit has given to Australian culture and the Wollondilly community. Indeed, the Anzac legend has been the cornerstone of Australian identity for more than 100 years. It is an integral piece of our shared history and identity as Australians, and it is up to people like Jack to ensure that these national memories are never forgotten—rather, that they are enshrined in our history and solemnly celebrated.

Jack's dedication to the community also led him to devote his time to our emergency services, where he served as a State Emergency Service [SES] controller as well as a fire control officer for Wollondilly Shire Council for 20 years. He volunteered also for the Rural Fire Service and the St John's Ambulance. In his capacity as a member of the State Emergency Service, Jack Wilton was awarded the national SES medal as well as the Public Service Medal for his distinguished contributions to the people of Wollondilly. Jack also devoted his time and efforts to charity and health. In addition to his devotion to our frontline services, Jack played a role in assisting the Australian Red Cross and also served on the board of the Queen Victoria hospital.

Though Jack has been dedicating his efforts to help his community and Australia for more than 50 years, he has not slowed down at all. Jack now assists the Seniors Advisory Group and is a Seniors Week committee member. In his capacity in these roles, Jack brought his love for our community and the Anzac spirit together to organise an annual seniors trivia. In 2015, after a Picton High School and Senior Scholars debate, which I was fortunate to attend, Jack organised a trivia whereby participants were able to test their knowledge on the Gallipoli campaign. This event was to mark the centenary of Anzac. The Wollondilly Australia Day celebration was attended by the Australia Day ambassador and world-renowned soprano Amelia Farrugia, who sang our national anthem with a youth choir.

After Amelia's Australia Day address, she performed an aria from the opera *La Bohème*. The Wollondilly Australia Day celebration was a resounding success and a testament to the tightly woven fabric of the Wollondilly community and the esteem in which the community holds the award recipients. A humble Jack said, "I knew most of the volunteers by name and I try to get out and know the people working as volunteers." Jack helps and encourages people to continue volunteering, especially younger volunteers. Jack has fought for half a century to preserve our national heritage. He has ensured that our community has remembered the sacrifices of the Anzacs and safeguarded the memories of those service men and women who have dedicated their lives to our armed forces since then.

Jack served his community to fight natural disasters and to ensure that the injured and the ill were looked after properly. He also dedicated his life to the Red Cross so that those further afield may have a safety net. He is a great man who has taken on the causes of people and organisations. He even helped to get a fence erected around the Picton tennis court. He will tackle any issue—in fact, I think he would be a good member for Wollondilly. Few people dedicate their lives to the service and betterment of others. However, Jack is truly one of those people. I wish Jack Wilton all the best and acknowledge that our community seldom sees dedicated volunteers like Jack. I am proud to call him a friend, a mate, and I know that he is a true inspiration to us all.

GLOUCESTER GREAT LAKES RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:16): I recently had the pleasure and privilege of attending the NSW Rural Fire Service medals presentation for the Gloucester Great Lakes region held in Tuncurry. The Gloucester Great Lakes area is extensive and diverse. The Pacific Ocean forms the eastern boundary, and from the mountains to the sea it covers some of the best country in all of Australia. The area is still growing rapidly and it is blessed with natural attractions, including clean and uncrowded beaches, and extensive areas of fresh and estuarine waterways. There are several villages within the area, with people living along the bushland interface. Thankfully, the 2015-16 fire season was reasonably quiet for the Rural Fire Service, with no major fires reported. A total of 776 incidents were recorded during that time and so far there have been 44 hazard reduction burns undertaken, with this number still to be undertaken—weather permitting.

At the medals presentation the master of ceremonies was Jim Blackmore, the region manager. More than 300 years of voluntary service were recognised at the awards. Robert Colgan Gore was recognised for 15 years of service. Robert joined the Lake Macquarie Rural Fire Service in January 2001. He has attended many section 44 fires, which are large and dangerous fires, and has assisted in many areas of the State. Robert joined Stroud brigade in 2006 and was a member until joining Booral in 2015, where he remains a member today. Col McCarthy was recognised for 25 years of service. He received the National Medal 1st Clasp. Col joined the Tuncurry Headquarters Brigade in 1991. He has attended many section 44 fires over the years. He is a life member of the Tuncurry brigade, having received that honour in 2004.

Bruce Gilbert was recognised with a Long Service Medal for 11 years of service. Trevor Wilson received his Long Service Medal for 12 years of service as a member of the Booral brigade. Loretta Heap received her Long Service Medal for 16 years of service as a member of the Great Lakes Catering Brigade. Jason Donkin received his Long Service Medal for 19 years of service as a member of the Stroud brigade. Steve Charmichael received his Long Service Medal 1st Clasp for 22 years of service as a member of the Pindimar Tea Gardens brigade. David Edwards received the Long Service Medal 1st Clasp for 22 years service as a member of the Gloucester Brigade. David Millsted received his Long Service Medal 1st Clasp for 22 years of service and is a current staff member in Gloucester Great Lakes.

Dennis Wamsley received his Long Service Medal 1st Clasp for 23 years service as a member of the Gloucester brigade. John Yeark received his Long Service Medal 1st Clasp for 26 years service as a member of Wards River brigade. Sandra Clark received her Long Service Medal 1st Clasp for 21 years of service. She is a member of the Pindimar Tea Gardens brigade. Ralph Clark received his Long Service Medal 1st Clasp for 21 years of service. He is also a member of the Pindimar Tea Gardens brigade. Peter Economos received his Long Service Medal 1st Clasp for 31 years of service. He is a life member of the Pindimar Tea Gardens brigade. Jim Blackmore is the manager at Gloucester Great Lakes. He received his Long Service Medal 2nd Clasp for 32 years of service.

It is a great opportunity. Of course, these people do not volunteer and do not become involved only to receive recognition and that sort of thing; they join because they know there is a need in our community. Our communities could not survive without them. Our State could not survive without the Rural Fire Service and the 74,000 volunteers in that organisation—the largest volunteer organisation in Australia—who do a fantastic job. Even though they do not expect recognition, it is good to have these sorts of ceremonies to recognise what they do. I commend all those members of the Rural Fire Service.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE DAY

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (17:20): Yesterday, 21 September 2016, was United Nation's International Peace Day. The theme for this year was "Sustainable Development Goals: Building Blocks for Peace." The United Nations notes:

Sustainability addresses the fundamental needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Among these needs and challenges are social inequality, racism and, of course, xenophobia. I was reminded on International Peace Day that part of our job as parliamentarians is to address these challenges and to make sure that we provide a roadmap to a better future for generations to come. Last week in the Parliament I contributed to

debate on a bill introduced by the New South Wales Opposition to strengthen anti-racism and vilification laws in this State. During that speech I talked about how it feels to be on the receiving end of vilification or racism and how corrosive it is to community harmony over time. At the same time, I encouraged people to put things into perspective. Even though there has been much divisive and unhelpful talk about "us" and "them", Australia is a modern, inclusive and diverse nation and that sort of tension is not really evident here. Australia is a great success story. Even though there are a few tragic exceptions, Australia is an incredibly harmonious and peaceful country.

I said then, and I say again, I refuse to accept the picture that is being promoted in some quarters—one of fear or of being swamped by people who are different. Approximately half of the people in my electorate of Lakemba were born overseas, but a large proportion were born in Lebanon, China, Bangladesh and other emerging communities. I say to those who are listening to the debate tonight—and I am sure there is a wide audience—that they should visit my electorate of Lakemba as it is a great tourist spot and a great destination. I have heard that Parramatta is pretty good but Lakemba is better.

On Tuesday I had the great honour of speaking at the Rotary 2016 Community Peace Prize awards in Sydney, where the recipient of this year's peace prize was the Together for Humanity Foundation. Many of my colleagues in this Chamber are aware of the Together for Humanity Foundation and have been involved with it in some way or another. The Together for Humanity Foundation, which comprises Indigenous people and people from diverse cultures and religions, promotes a program entitled "Difference Differently". Foundation members visit schools and try to create a sense of understanding that there is nothing wrong with being different. Many people do not accept that people are different and do not take into account what some people might think.

When we strip everything away we all want the same things in life. We want the best possible life for ourselves and for our children; we want to live in a peaceful and safe place; we want to work in a place that is welcoming; we want to have a good life and we want food on our tables. We want the same things, regardless of what we believe in, what colour we are, or where we were born. These are simple human principles. I was proud of the fact that the Together for Humanity Foundation was recognised for the work that it does. However, I must declare an interest. I used to be a board member on the Together for Humanity Foundation but once I left it really improved.

Dr Geoff Lee: I heard that too.

Mr JIHAD DIB: I know—I thought it was a rumour but it is true! It actually did quite well. My friend the member for Parramatta and I laugh about lots of these things, but I often see him at events where people are talking about interfaith and intercultural understanding. Recently we were both in Parramatta—I spend some time in Parramatta because it seems it is where the action is when it is not in Lakemba—and I thought it was a really good thing. Tolerance of each other is not the endgame. To me, tolerance feels like putting up with each other as if through gritted teeth, where the focus is on the things that divide us. What is the goal? The goal is to make sure that there is a genuine sense of inclusion and pride in each other's differences and the contribution that we make. But it takes a journey—as individuals, as groups and as a country—for us to get to the point where we need to be.

For me, the journey towards a peaceful society goes something like this. The first step is tolerance, where we are being polite. Basic respect is a start. Then there is a sense of understanding. After understanding comes a sense of acceptance. But the real key point is when there is genuine inclusion: Where we do not just understand the difference but we appreciate it, we embrace it and we feel proud of it. In my electorate we take these goals really seriously. We know that a lot of work must go into making these things a reality. They do not happen by accident. People in electorates like mine look to us as members of Parliament to take action to address our present challenges so that we can make life better for everyone in this great nation.

WAGGA WAGGA ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (17:25): I inform the House of some more good news for the electorate of Wagga Wagga. It seems that almost every day there are announcements regarding an increase in jobs, as Wagga Wagga enjoys one of the lowest unemployment rates in New South Wales at the moment and has lots of opportunities. This is all because of funding that has been made available by our Government to regional and rural New South Wales. I announce that the Government, through the Crown lands management fund, has allocated more than \$629,000 to the electorate of Wagga Wagga in this budget. Many community groups are ecstatic about this.

I have made a number of announcements so far throughout the electorate, and now I focus on the area of Tumut. The Adelong Golf Club in the Snowy Valleys Council has received funding to the tune of \$22,583. That will allow new construction of the entryway and gateways to improve access to that much-loved facility. Adelong is a picturesque town—the gateway to the Snowy Mountains—and a tourist attraction not only because of the great scenery and the environment but also because it has the Adelong Falls Reserve. I have spoken in the past

about the Adelong Falls Reserve, which is where goldmining occurred in the nineteenth century. Restoration has occurred under the watchful eye of the Tumut Shire Council, now Snowy Valleys Council, and Louise Halsey, who has been very successful in applying for funding over the years. A total of \$19,000 will be expended to restore and survey the brick chimney that still exists on this heritage site.

The Adelong goldmines have a lot of ruins that have had signs, walkways and bridges created through this funding in partnership with the Snowy Valleys Council to produce a fantastic tourist destination that attracts thousands of visitors per annum. That equates to the ultimate investment of the tourism dollar back into the region. I joined Louise recently to make the announcement of another \$19,000 on top of what has been almost, if not more than, \$1 million that has been invested into this facility to preserve and interpret our history and attract tourism. A number of funding announcements were made of \$14,956 and \$3,575 for the Goobarragandra reserves, as well as \$125,000 for the reserve on the Batlow Road.

Money will be expended to eradicate St John's Wort. The previous administration allowed the invasive plant to become entrenched, and it is taking a lot of money to get back under control. Those funds will be applied to the eradication of blackberries and used for baiting wild dogs and feral animals that are destroying the native fauna. Another welcome announcement was \$49,610 to be invested in the Tumut racecourse through the trust. This has been a great success. The Tumut Racecourse Trust has joined with the racecourse committee. A dreadful flood in 2012 almost destroyed the place. The club has been rebuilt to the credit of all the volunteers.

The community and sponsors have rebuilt the track and refurbished the grandstands. That is being done through grants. This funding will upgrade the function room, which was merely a dream two years ago. It is a reality now. There is a thriving business in the function room. Situated beside the beautiful Tumut River it is a destination for the Tumut community. Through investment and management by the Tumut Racecourse Trust, it is a wonderful environment under the elm trees on race days. The investment this Government is making is occurring in partnership with the local council and with community groups such as the Tumut Racecourse Trust.

GOULBURN ELECTORATE EVENTS

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Medical Research, Assistant Minister for Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (17:31): Spring has come to Goulburn and I wish to let the House know of some of the fantastic events that have taken place during this time of year. It has been wet and soggy but that has not stopped the blossoms and the bulbs. I begin by congratulating the Uniting Church, Crookwell, which recently celebrated its 150th anniversary. Faith is an important part of many constituents' lives. There is no doubt that during its 150 years of ministry the Uniting Church in Crookwell, formerly the Methodist church, has been an instrumental part of the lives and members of that parish and the greater Crookwell community.

Since first opening its doors in 1864, the Crookwell Uniting Church has to locals become the church in the marketplace. What a truism. This church brings the community together and is in the main street. We must never forget the contribution that Methodism has made to nation building. Their particular adherence to the ethics of humility and hard work certainly contributed to economic development in the last half of the nineteenth century. With the advent of Methodist Cornish tin miners, the mining industry boomed and reformists such as Henry Bourne Higgins were determined that the new nation of Australia would not repeat the ills that the industrial revolution in England had visited on the working class. It was a great pleasure to join the parishioners on Sunday 18 September to mark this important community milestone. Thanks must go to Gill Aynsley for organising the occasion.

Each August, Crookwell hosts the annual Mary Gilmore weekend. She had different political views from me. It provides families an opportunity to enjoy the cultural wealth of our beautiful area and this year was no exception. I love sitting by the fire at the Chattaway Cafe enjoying the performances of young Crookwell musicians. The Mary Gilmore weekend has a special place in the hearts of the people of my electorate who continue to honour Dame Mary Gilmore. Dame Mary was born at Roslyn, near Crookwell. I thank the Dame Mary Gilmore Society, and in particular Elaine Delaney and Trevene Mattox, for their work in organising the weekend and its activities each year.

Few would know that Goulburn is home to Australia's only James Bond. George Lazenby was born in Goulburn in 1939 and played the role of James Bond in the 1969 movie *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*. George's contribution to the film industry has inspired an annual SPYfest, which has resulted in Goulburn being dubbed the epicentre of espionage. George Lazenby, bless him, has travelled to Goulburn for the last two festivals.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Does he drink martinis?

Ms PRU GOWARD: He most certainly does. On many occasions he has been reminded by former classmates and neighbours of childhood incidents. It was very levelling, I am sure. I thank George Lazenby and

the wonderful organisers of this year's SPYfest for once again running a successful event, adding to the cultural landscape of our community, and bringing tourists to Goulburn. Businesses in the main street decorated their frontispieces with various pieces of spy memorabilia. It was a wonderful weekend. In fact, there is never a weekend in Goulburn when there is nothing to do.

RUTHERFORD AIR QUALITY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:34): In 2014, an ambulance was called to attend a Spotlight store at Rutherford because three employees had been overcome by fumes from the so-called "Rutherford stink". At that time, I was the Labor candidate for the seat of Maitland. The Rutherford stink has been reported for about 20 years. My constituents have reported to me and former members for Maitland extremely negative health impacts and concerns about the foul smell. They have suffered sore throats, bloody noses and itchy eyes, and been unable to sleep with the windows open. They described a smell so vile and thick that it seemed to settle in their bedrooms.

A former member for Maitland and Minister for the Environment in this Government—that is, before she was sacked by the Premier in 2014—promised during the 2011 election campaign that a Coalition Government would eradicate the stink. Indeed, it promised to spend \$400,000 to address the issue. However, I have been told that, on taking office, members opposite went cap in hand to a number of local businesses requesting contributions to fund the Government's promise. I understand that they later backed down from this disgraceful proposition and the Government funded the study. I have had representations from many members of the community, ex-employees, workers and those who have requested assistance and reported the issue to the Environment Protection Authority [EPA]. Members of Rutherford Air Quality Liaison Committee and the community reference group on this matter have told me they also requested that health studies be undertaken because of community complaints, fears and experiences. However, the Government failed to act.

The complaints continued when I was elected to this place. I raised the issue with the EPA, but its initial response was "we all have to live with bad smells". I then sent out surveys to about 8,000 residents living in areas from which I had received complaints about the stench. Concerned residents also asked me to survey individuals about any health issues they believed were linked to the stink. Of the 8,000 surveys I sent out, about 100 were returned. I give praise, and have given praise, to the Minister for the Environment, his staff, the EPA, and Hunter Water, who have taken my comments seriously and have continued to work with me on this issue.

On an unrelated matter, Hunter Water undertook an investigation earlier this year into the alleged disposal of perfluorooctanesulfonic acid and perfluorooctanoic acid at the TrueGrain facility, also known as Australian Waste Oil Refineries. When I was advised of this by Hunter Water, I spoke to the EPA and asked what action it was taking to address this issue. I was informed that it was at a stage in investigations at which compliance and enforcement actions would be taken shortly. I make it clear to the House that I have never publicly named and shamed any organisation or company or blamed them for the Rutherford stink. As a former small business operator, I understand the damage that can be done by unsubstantiated public shaming. I have worked with the Government proactively and cooperatively to improve the health, social amenity, and comfort of workers, residents and businesses in my community. I might add, I did that at the request of workers, residents and businesses. My investigations and advocacy were on behalf of my community.

Earlier this year when the traditional increase in complaints about the stink did not happen, I was advised by a number of community members and businesspeople that they had not detected it for some time. I asked the EPA to provide me with information about the complaints it had received over the past 12 months, and it indicated a significant decrease. My community has been concerned about this issue for 20 years, and it has experienced first-hand this Government's arrogant treatment. After the Government cut the rail line and announced that our long-promised hospital would be delivered at a time to be advised, our community deserves a win. I am pleased to share this good news with the House and to give credit where it is due. This month I wrote to the residents I had written to last year to advise them that the number of complaints about the odour had reduced dramatically. I give due credit to the Environment Protection Authority and to Hunter Water. Most importantly, I thank residents for their persistence and resilience in this matter.

When I became aware of the closure of the TrueGrain plant and the impact on employees, I spoke to the Australian Workers' Union about those employees. As a Labor member of Parliament, I am always concerned about the payment of wages, superannuation and other liabilities owed to workers affected by company closures. There is no excuse for not paying employee entitlements. New South Wales will be watching to ensure that the Government takes steps to make this company meet its liabilities to employees. I offer my support to all workers in their claim to receive those entitlements.

SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (17:40): I speak in support of the Safe Schools program, which supports schools and teachers by building their capacity to deliver the mandatory personal development, health and physical education curriculum. It provides guidance on how to deal with homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools, to create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for all students. By seeking professional development, school principals and teachers are able to increase their understanding of and gain skills to deal with homophobic and transphobic bullying and respond to the different needs of students, their families and colleagues and the wider school community.

As part of the personal development, health and physical education curriculum that is mandatory in all New South Wales schools, students learn about gender, sexuality, diversity, antidiscrimination and how to challenge homophobia. The Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW develops the syllabus that is used in all government and non-government schools. In years 7 and 8 students are taught to explain the impact of stigma, discrimination, exclusion and bullying on individuals and groups. They are taught to reflect on different viewpoints and to use empathy to develop alternative ways to respond to situations. Students are provided with the opportunity to explore how understanding, attitudes and values are formed and influence people's behaviour. In particular, students learn about the social influences that affect their own identity, and the importance of challenging stereotypes and assumptions about diversity of sex, sexuality and gender.

The content and lessons are delivered within a framework of broader school support and a whole-of-school approach to equality, valuing diversity and respectful relationships. Teachers encourage students to discuss issues with their parents and to reflect on their individual cultural and/or religious beliefs and how they impact on their own values. It has been claimed that the Safe Schools program promotes a particular ideology, does not allow sufficient parental consent, relies entirely on the judgement of school principals and teachers, and diminishes the seriousness of other forms of bullying such as racism. These claims are completely incorrect and lacking in factual evidence. The Safe Schools program follows the New South Wales Department of Education *Controversial Issues in Schools Policy Implementation Procedures*. This document provides direction for principals in managing controversial issues in schools. Under this policy, the Department of Education acknowledges in its implementation procedures:

Schools are required to acknowledge the great range of views held by parents about what is suitable for study at school, and schools should ensure that these views are taken into account in designing suitable learning programs. Some matters will be considered controversial by some parents, and this policy is designed to assist schools in making professional and considered judgments on such matters.

... it is important for schools to protect and foster practices which have implications for the rights of teachers and students and parents.

The implementation procedures further state:

It is ... essential to maintain communication between the school and the parents in relation to the school's educational program and the principles on which it is based. The school has a responsibility to inform parents, prior to the occasion, of the specific details of the program, so that the parents have time to exercise their rights of withdrawing their child from a particular session or sessions on certain controversial issues. In this regard, a parent's wish must be respected. The third national study on the sexual health and wellbeing of same-sex attracted and gender questioning young people found that the majority of homophobic abuse took place while young people were at school and, as a result, 29 per cent of students could not concentrate at school, 21 per cent of students missed classes or days at school, 20 per cent of students reported a drop in their marks, 9 per cent of students did not use the toilets and 8 per cent of students had dropped out altogether—put me in the 8 per cent. The Safe Schools professional development programs are inclusive and respectful of different faiths, values and family structures, and this is acknowledged at the beginning of the workshops. I will close with a quote from the Federal Minister for Education and Training, the Hon. Simon Birmingham. He said:

Every student has a right to feel safe at school. Tolerance should be taught in our schools and homophobia should be no more accepted than racism.

COOKS RIVER TREE REMOVAL

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:45): The Cooks River community is in shock. It is shocked by the news that more than 1,000 trees have been tagged along the north bank of the Cooks River from Port Botany to Newington, apparently slated for removal by oil companies. This is a disaster for the people of the inner west and a failure of government to plan properly for the future of the river. Volunteers noticed metal tags earlier this year and watched with alarm as they spread to more than 1,000 trees, including mature Morton Bay figs, casuarinas and eucalypts. The trees were planted in the 1970s when the river was considered nothing more than the quickest way to dispose of industrial waste and stormwater.

Since that time, three pipelines have been laid beneath the north bank of the river, transporting refined oil and airline fuel under extremely high pressure to and from the airport. Most residents would not know the pipelines are there; neither would the hundreds of visitors who cycle or walk along the river each and every day

and nor would the countless volunteers who have spent years revegetating the river's banks and nursing the river back to health. More than 150 years ago this now magnificent river was treated as nothing more than a stormwater drain—a dump for raw sewage, heavy metals, industrial waste and sillage. As early as the 1860s, the *Sydney Morning Herald* was reporting on the pollution in the river. One report read:

Above the small dam the river was literally covered with scum for some distance, and had a most filthy appearance ...

Already has much injury been done by the destruction of the fish, and by the pollution of the river to such an extent as to render it unfit for bathing purposes.

Regular chemical spills and illegal dumping brought the river close to death until, finally, polluting the river was restricted by the Clean Waters Act 1970. Luckily, for as long as people have been polluting the Cooks River, activists have been fighting to clean it up. In the 1920s the Cooks River Improvement League fought to improve the health of the river. More recently, organisations such as the Mudcrabs and the Cooks River Valley Association have taken up the torch. They have planted trees, picked weeds, cleared garbage from the mangroves and toiled to bring the river back to life. They have generally been supported by all three levels of government.

Over the years, millions of dollars have been invested in rain gardens, naturalisation projects and revegetating the river's banks. We have not always succeeded in working together as best we could or should. When the president of the Mudcrabs showed me the tagged trees along the river, he pointed out that the Inner West Council had planted some new saplings right on the path of the pipelines where trees are to be removed. If these tagged trees teach us anything it is that we must work together and take a more coordinated approach.

As a first step, we need transparency about these pipelines. How deep are they, what state are they in, what risks do they pose for the river and what risk, if any, is there to the community? Secondly, an independent arborist must be engaged by the Government to determine accurately how many trees may need to be removed. The community is rightly concerned that arborists engaged and paid for by the oil companies amount to letting the fox into the henhouse. The community does not want a single tree removed but, in the instance that some trees may go, we must keep those facing the chop to the absolute minimum and we must have absolute transparency around that process. We must have a rock-solid guarantee that for every tree we lose, at least four are planted in return. That is the policy of the council, and it should be the case here.

Most importantly, we must do everything in our power to make sure this does not happen again. That includes doing a full assessment of the pipelines and planning properly for their future. And it means creating a community forum to plan properly for the river. Like the Sydney Airport Community Forum, the Cooks River forum would bring together the three levels of government and stakeholders, including Sydney Water, community groups and residents, to plot the path to bring the river back to health. It would effectively replace the Cooks River Alliance, a coalition of local councils along the river, which has been decimated by this Government's reckless council amalgamations.

The Baird Government promised that no services would be lost, but we have seen councils along the river pull funding from the alliance and the resignation of the alliance manager in recent months. The Cook's River is in peril. And, unsurprisingly, we have had nothing but secrecy and silence from this Government. It is clear that our natural and urban heritage means absolutely nothing to this Premier. Unless the Premier acts now, this is just another example of him putting private interests ahead of community interests.

TRIBUTE TO GEORGINA "AUNTY COOP" PARSONS

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (17:50): On behalf of the Eurobodalla community, I pay tribute to one of its most loved members, the late Aunty Coop, who passed away on 12 August 2016. She was a Walbanga Yuin Elder. Georgina Parsons, also known as Aunty Coop, was someone who was incredibly loved right across the community that I serve. She was always seen as a lovely, gentle soul who spoke her mind. When I met her in my capacity as the member for Bega she was keen to talk about young people. She had an incredible understanding of her cultural history in the shire and was always very keen to ensure that people understood and respected one another.

Georgina Parsons spent most of her life in Moruya. Her family was spread throughout the far South Coast. She campaigned for Indigenous causes such as fishing rights or the genealogy of the Walbanga people. She was also recognised as Eurobodalla Senior Citizen of the Year. There is no doubt she was someone who knew how to get things done. I will never forget when I first met Aunty Coop. It was at Arts Central, which was the home of the Arts Council of Eurobodalla and where she worked with the local community. She saw the arts as so important to be able to express, show love and care and be someone who knew that respect was part of the way in which we could have a strong community. Aunty Coop was well known across the community as she was always there at welcome to country. With the news of her passing there was an outpouring of grief right across the community. She was an absolutely incredible lady.

Georgina Parson had many loved ones. She was great grandmother to Lochlan, Kaydan, Tyler, Taramay, Tamarnie, Kai, Janara, Page, Eric, Peter, Willow, Elias and Brayleigh; grandmother to Christopher, Eric, Leanne, Maureen, Kerry, Mark, Annemarie, Ashley, Troy, Paul, Kobi, Liam, Alinta, Jarrod, Kaylum, Braydon, Taryn, Harley, Sole, Dylan and Joeleen; mother to Wendy, Robert and his spouse, Ruth, Leanne and her spouse, Jason, Rodney and his spouse, Trish, Norman and his spouse, Joanne, Daphne, Jeanie and her spouse, Andrew, and Dean. She was a sister too. She was someone who had an enormous love of family and community. She was an incredible person to so many people. I know that Georgina is sadly missed by her family, of whom she was so proud.

It is also important to note, in acknowledging her contribution to our community, that she not only was part of our community but also was our community. I know that students from the Batemans Bay campus of the University of Wollongong and everyone from Arts Central, to the council and the community were taken aback when she passed away suddenly. I regarded her as a friend and I knew I could rely on her to talk about matters affecting the Aboriginal community in the Eurobodalla shire. She will be sadly missed. May she rest in peace.

BUSHCARE'S MAJOR DAY OUT

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:55): Bushcare's Major Day Out is a national day designed to encourage us all to take part in the restoration and maintenance of our remaining bushland around Australia. In 2016 the main date was Sunday 11 September, which was part of Landcare Week. However, the day for Bushcare's Major Day Out is flexible so individual sites can choose different dates. Bushcare's Major Day Out is a day designed specifically to give us the opportunity to find out what is being done and what can be done in our neighbourhoods. It is a fun day when everyone, young and old, can work alongside and learn from experts and experienced volunteers. Depending on the location, a range of activities is held on the day, including walks, planting, weed removal and photography workshops, as well as native plant identification and well-celebrated morning teas.

Landcare is a community-based approach to managing and protecting our natural resources, creating more productive and sustainable farms, conserving our environment, and building more cohesive and resilient communities. This iconic Australian institution, represented by the distinctive symbol of the caring hands, has transformed the landscape, enabling farmers, landowners and conservationists to work together at a local level on local issues. The replication of Landcare in more than 20 countries demonstrates how a voluntary, grassroots movement can have a global impact. Landcare NSW was established in 2007 as a representative body for all members, regions, networks, groups and individuals. It promotes and advocates for ecologically sustainable development in New South Wales in partnership with governments, philanthropists and the community.

Last Saturday morning I joined volunteers of the Mataram Ridge Park Landcare group to plant native grasses and remove invasive weeds such as whiskey grass. The group usually meets from 8.00 a.m. on the second Saturday of the month at Mataram Ridge Park. The park is located on Mountain View Drive, Woongarra, in the centre of the Mataram Ridge housing development. This park has a special place in the hearts of my family because in 1998 we purchased our first home in this estate on Mataram Road. That was before we had children. My wife and I enjoyed many long walks in the park with our golden retriever, Krystal. In fact, during the three years we lived there we watched the development of the many houses from the hillcrest that is Mataram Ridge Park. It was a quiet place of contemplation.

I was pleased to hear that a local Landcare group was formed to look after this park, which is a well-used designated dog exercise area. This little hidden gem has the most wonderful views west towards the Watagan Mountains and highlights the incredibly beautiful area in which my electorate resides. The amenities include grassed areas, park furniture, playground equipment, pathways and shelters, but its most important feature is the bushland. Mataram Ridge Park is home to some of our most recognisable Australian plant families and on the day we were able to check out flowers from the fabaceae, myrtaceae, proteaceae and epacridaceae families. A number of orchids could also be seen across the hill. A free morning tea was supplied for all the helpers. I thank Nikki Bennetts, who was the organiser for the day, and her team of local volunteers for their hard work. I enjoyed meeting all of them. Thanks also go to Central Coast Council staff for their support of these projects.

I was, however, concerned to learn that the Hilltop Park is zoned for housing. I committed to work with the community to have the area rezoned and left as a beautiful park in the centre of a sea of housing developments. In areas where many houses with small backyards or no backyards are being built, such as is happening in parts of my electorate, parks become even more important. It is incumbent on us to ensure that areas are protected not only for their beauty and the natural environment they represent but also for the recreational and health purposes of people living in new estates. For Bushcare's Major Day Out next year I recommend all members put on their boots and gloves to pull a few weeds and plant a few trees and grasses. They should make sure that their local parks are looked after as well.

BLUE MOUNTAINS TRAIN SERVICE

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (18:00): I note that the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure has obviously been busier in recent weeks than usual. Last night he announced additional rail transport capacity for the Blue Mountains line, among other changes throughout the network. An additional 2,000 seats will apparently be added to the Blue Mountains line through the conversion of some weekday afternoon trains to eight-car services. I have been calling upon the Minister to add extra capacity for many months. While I am sure that Blue Mountains commuters will be very grateful for the additional capacity, Minister Constance should know that there is a great deal more to do to bring the Blue Mountains line up to speed with the world-class, long-distance commuter service that my community deserves.

The biggest area of need is capacity on weekends, in particular on services that are popular with day trippers and tourists travelling home to the city after a weekend in the mountains. It is very common for passengers to stand for the distance between the tourism hotspots of Blackheath or Katoomba and the lower mountains and Penrith. That is a distance of more than 40 kilometres. Passengers can find themselves on their feet for more than an hour and fifteen minutes. Not only does this reflect poorly upon our public transport system for international and interstate visitors but also it drives local residents insane. Those people rely on the Blue Mountains trains to get to and from the shops, to visit their friends and family, and to travel to work and home. The solution to the problem is very simple: Add more carriages to the existing scheduled services. Run six- or eight-car trains instead of four. I suspect the reason the transport Minister is trumpeting additional capacity on weekdays but remains silent about chronic weekend overcrowding is that to add extra capacity on Sunday would mean paying additional staff penalty rates.

To give a bit of context, because of our mountainous topography, our station platforms in the Blue Mountains are often curved. A train guard cannot see to the end of the train when they are closing the doors on six- and eight-car trains. This means—only on the Blue Mountains line—that an extra staff member needs to ride along on a six- or eight-car train to assist the train guard when closing doors at platforms where the curve of the platform is too large. We used to have six- and eight-car trains on the Blue Mountains line but those services were cut to save a buck. So there you have it. Next time people are standing for up to two hours on a Blue Mountains line train they should remember that it is not because there are not enough train carriages in marshalling yards and it is not because the Government did not anticipate the passenger numbers. It is because the transport Minister does not want to shell out for the added cost of staffing our trains on weekends. It is because those opposite are a bunch of cheapskates.

Indeed, the mean and stingy nature of this Government is laid bare by the government tender documents I have held off for the New Intercity Fleet project. The New Intercity Fleet is to replace our ageing V-set trains on the Blue Mountains, Newcastle and Illawarra lines. As has been confirmed by Transport NSW today in a written statement to the *Blue Mountains Gazette*, they are being designed to run without a guard at all from 2019 onwards. Given that there are already safety issues with longer trains on our platforms in the mountains, I wonder how the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure expects passengers to get on and off our trains safely without any guard on board at all. Not only do the cheapskates in the Baird Government refuse to staff our trains adequately on weekends; they are busily making plans to lay off train guards altogether from 2019.

This is a disgraceful move by a disgraceful Government. There is not a public service employee, apart from their own spin doctors and ministerial advisers, that members of the Government would not sack if they could find a way to do so. The new inter-city fleet is shaping up to be a complete disaster. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure is openly canvassing his Liberal Party colleagues about opportunities for him to jump ship and move to the Federal Parliament—and so he should. On a margin of just 8 per cent in his electorate, Minister Constance should indeed be thinking about his future career intentions—terms such as "future career intentions" form the Orwellian language that the Government is using for train guards who are about to be laid off—because we are coming after the Minister. He is a bad Minister, this is a bad Government and it is delivering bad outcomes for passengers on our trains.

PENDLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (18:05): I wish to talk about a fantastic educational institution in the Seven Hills electorate—truly a beacon of educational quality in my local area. I refer, of course, to Pendle Hill High School. The school certainly has a rich, diverse and storied history. Many believe the school is named after a hill—Pendle Hill—in the heart of the English Lancashire cotton country. George Bond—an American who was the founder of the Bonds manufacturing company—is known to have started a cotton spinning mill in the Pendle Hill area in 1923. This was Australia's first attempt at the spinning and weaving of cotton. Using cotton from Queensland, Mr Bond is understood to have requested that the area be named Pendle Hill.

Pendle Hill High School opened in 1965 on the land that had been used for farming. Local history authorities indicate that the original school enrolment comprised mainly children from the local farming community. The school now serves the educational needs of a socially and ethnically diverse community. Modern Pendle Hill is a medium-density suburb in almost the geographic centre of Sydney's metropolitan area—much like all the suburbs that comprise the Seven Hills electorate. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the following staff members and student leaders that work so hard to ensure the school continues to perform in the way that it does. Principal Mrs Sims and deputy principals Mrs Brown and Mr Youssef do an outstanding job in leading the school. They are supported by the head teachers: Mr Lavercombe, Mr Hasselman, Mr Vale, Mr Clarke, Mrs Goyal and Mr Hope. I must also mention the student leaders who make a great commitment to improving the educational and social experiences of their fellow students. I particularly acknowledge the work of school captains Mansoor Naqshbandi and Mary Tuiqali, as well as vice captains Yuhan Li and Tyrone Pynor.

I grew up in Eucalyptus Street, Toongabbie, just up from Bulli Road, not far from the school. I have fond memories of playing in the cricket nets and on the school grounds at Pendle Hill High School. That is the way we entertained ourselves in those days. It was prior to computers, PlayStation and Xbox. We played with friends in the local grounds. As a local, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to spend my weekends on those grounds, forming happy memories. I cherish many of those memories. Deputy Principal Mr Youssef is a former science teacher. It was only fitting that upon a recent visit to the school Mr Youssef showed me the science laboratories and the science preparation rooms.

I am extremely excited at the prospect of the school benefiting from the New South Wales Government's funding commitment to upgrade science labs. Science, technology, engineering and mathematics education is absolutely vital in this day and age, and this Government understands that. The significance of this funding cannot be emphasised enough. I also visited the agricultural plot at the back of the school. It forms a large proportion of the school grounds. The plot is a place that the students of the school take great pride in looking after. It is a place where the students grow vegetables. Those vegetables looked fantastic on the day that I was there.

Dr Geoff Lee: Did you take some home?

Mr MARK TAYLOR: I did take some home. This very significant part of the school is serviced by many items and much equipment. Currently, there are no farm animals on the plot, but I am sure the students are very keen to have some soon. The plot is looking good and it is in great condition, especially with spring coming on. I acknowledge the great work of Mr Willmott, who is the school's longstanding farm assistant and who is well known throughout the community. He works hard to help the students maintain and enjoy the plot. It was an absolute pleasure to meet him. He is a great bloke and is of such great assistance to the wider community of Pendle Hill.

ST JOHNS PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (18:09): It was both a pleasure and a privilege to attend the 125th anniversary of St Johns Park Public School, my old alma mater. I attended St Johns Park Public School from 1952 until 1957, and I can honestly say that those years were some of the best and most memorable of my childhood. The school was established in 1891 and Mr Thomas Dibden was the first teacher. It has grown from a single classroom to now accommodating almost 1,000 students. The school continues its commitment to providing quality education and its great learning environment has not changed.

Public education has been responsible for securing our prosperity and for enlightening future generations. When they are older, the current students at St Johns Park Public will be leaders in my local area and in Australia. Indeed, we entrust our future to them. One day they will be doctors, teachers, police officers, and service men and women. St Johns Park Public has provided its students with a solid foundation and, whatever their dreams, they will be able to achieve anything. This school has delivered for 125 years and it will continue to produce well-educated and upstanding members of my local community in Cabramatta.

I fondly remember my time at that school. I remember my first principal at the school, Mr Johnson; my second principal, Mr Bendich; and my teachers Mr McKenzie, Mr Goodacre and Mr Boccanfuso. I remember our sports day at the park at St Johns Park and cricket matches in the middle of the playground using a six-stitcher ball—and never hitting any kids! I remember Mr McKenzie, our soccer coach, as a kind and caring teacher. I remember the day that six of us went to the park for a swim in the creek instead of going to class. We were caught and received three cuts of the cane—that does not happen today. Children from all walks of life, different backgrounds, religions and beliefs, as well as children with disabilities have all found a home at our school.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge a few people whose incredible efforts have helped to make this celebration possible. Mr Romeo Menegazzi has been a great supporter, both as a past student and in his capacity as a historian; he has documented the history of the area. Ms Vicki Movizzio wrote the book *A Journey in time*:

a history of St Johns Park and its people; and Mr John Wood did a remarkable job in creating the compilation of the images on display at the celebration. I also acknowledge Ms Del Donohoe for her commitment since the centenary celebrations and for her tireless efforts in collecting many of the images on display that night. I also thank the 125-year committee, under the leadership of Donna McCammond, for its efforts in organising the celebrations. They have all done an extraordinary job.

Last but certainly not least, I thank the current principal, Ms Diane Donatiello, for her tireless support of the school and for making this celebration a great success. It would be remiss of me not to mention Mr Tom McBride, the recently retired principal of St Johns Park Public School, whose stewardship has helped to take the school from strength to strength but always with the welfare of the students and the staff coming first. The school motto is: Always our best. St Johns Park Public School has always been one of our best. In fact, I expect that tradition to continue for the next 125 years and beyond.

GALSTON RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (18:13): Tonight I am delighted to congratulate the volunteers of the Galston Rural Fire Brigade on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the brigade. Following the devastating Black Saturday fires that swept through the Hills district in 1939, the local residents of Galston came together with Hornsby Shire Council to establish the Hornsby Shire Volunteer Bushfire Brigade. On 23 April 1941 the first captain, president, six lieutenants and other office bearers were elected to run the brigade. Whilst other groups had formed in the western part of the State, this was one of the first volunteer brigades to be formed in the Sydney area and coastal districts.

The brigade boundaries adopted at the time went from Castle Hill in the south through to Calabash Bay in the north and from Galston Gorge in the east to Forest Glen in the west. By today's standards it was a massive area, let alone what it must have been like 75 years ago. Far from the high-velocity pumps and high-visibility uniforms, the brigade's original gear consisted of only 15 water drums of 30 gallons capacity each, 20 leather beaters, three knapsack pumps, 300 feet of hose, three hydrants, 25 stirrup pumps, two shovels, three axes, eight rakes, six waterbags and a number of volunteered motor trucks on stand-by to cart the drums. Despite the humble provisions, there was an immediate demand for the brigade's services.

Though the brigade's inception might suggest that its operations were localised, the Galston fire brigade responded to emergencies from across the region. Although similar services began to increase, the early 1950s saw the brigade become more localised in Galston, where it has continued its critical role for our community. At a public meeting in February 1952 it was proposed that Galston form its own brigade and that Arcadia-Birrallee do the same because the combined group had become too large. In 1963 the local council agreed to erect a shed to house the brigade's truck and its bare essentials. To this day, that is where the Galston Rural Fire Station still stands—ready to take on whatever Australia throws at it.

The Galston Rural Fire Brigade is the heart and soul of the Galston community. It has served the Galston area with distinction. But our community are not the only beneficiaries of the dedicated men and women in the brigade. Indeed, they have made themselves available to help across the country whenever the need has arisen. In 2005 the brigade was deployed to Kings Lake in Victoria. Closer to home, the brigade stood guard over the Baulkham Hills and Blue Mountains during the 2001 Black Christmas Fire. In 2013 the brigade provided a 24-hour strike team in the 2013 Blue Mountains fire for 17 consecutive days and assisted in the 2014 fire at Galston High School. This year is the Galston Rural Fire Brigade's diamond jubilee. I take this opportunity to commend some of the members among its ranks. I commend Jake Willett, Stephen Stockman, Gregory Langdon, and David Creak for their 10 years of service. I also thank Anthony Burley and Anthony Henniker for their service. Furthermore, I congratulate Bradley Farckens on his 20 years of service.

In special commendations for their substantial length of service, I commend Anthony Cotton for 30 years of service and Colin Manton for his 40 years of service. The men and women of the Galston Rural Fire Brigade represent the very best of our community. But if the Galston Rural Fire Brigade is the heart and soul of Galston, then Ken Turnidge is the heart and soul of the Galston brigade. Ken is a life member of the brigade who has dedicated 60 years of his life to protecting, caring for and serving our community. We would struggle to find a better member of the service or a better bloke than Ken.

I was honoured to be present when he was recognised by the presentation to him of his Long Service Medal 4th Clasp. But I cannot tell Ken's story without acknowledging the contribution of his beautiful wife, Carol, who without doubt is one of the most beautiful and wonderful people one will ever meet. Nothing is ever too much trouble for Carol; she always has time for a kind word, and she has supported Ken in the service for more than 60 years, and even longer throughout their marriage. Ken and Carol are remarkable people who have made an enormous contribution to our district. I can safely say that we are a better place because of them.

Finally, I thank the organiser of the seventy-fifth anniversary celebrations: Jo Stevenson, Robin Mansfield, Kara Dubois and Amanda Truelove. It was truly a remarkable night and one of the best community events I have attended. I also thank the brigade captain, the outstanding Rob Symons, and the equally impressive president, Katrina Dunlop. Congratulations must also go to Brad Farckens and Adam Peanna for their induction as life members into the Galston Rural Fire Brigade, which is appropriate recognition for their outstanding service to our community. While much has changed over 75 years, one thing that has not changed is the Galston brigade's commitment and dedication to our community. Having met the recent new recruits when I did my basic training course, I know that the next 75 years of Galston brigade's story are going to be just as bright.

HUNTER WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITY

RONDA MARY MILLER, CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:18): I draw the attention of the House to the expansion of a waste management facility in the heart of my electorate. I am advised that the resource recovery facility at Hearne Street, Mortdale, recently submitted a development application to increase the operating capacity of the existing facility. According to a recent edition of the local paper, the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*, under the plans this privately owned facility will increase waste collection from 30,000 tonnes to a whopping 300,000 tonnes per annum and will replace the existing facility in Hearne Street, Mortdale.

Under the proposed plans, this will include the demolition of existing buildings, site establishment works, the construction of a shed and office, installation of two weighbridges and associated infrastructure. According to the environmental impact statement this facility will add 430 additional truck movements a day in Hearne Street along with Boundary Road and neighbouring streets, which is more than 430 truck movements a day, or one a minute. Local roads, including Hearne Street, Roberts Avenue and Boundary Road, are already at capacity. Adding 430 additional truck movements each day will significantly increase traffic noise, pose challenges for all local road users and increase pressure on the single-lane bridge at Mortdale, along with associated schools and childcare facilities. I have presented a petition calling on the Government to prevent the expansion of this waste depot at Mortdale as any increase to the amount of waste being delivered and removed from the site by truck will increase pressure on local roads.

I am a realist and appreciate that waste products must be transported, broken down and removed, but careful consideration must be given to selecting appropriate sites. The middle of Mortdale is not a good site. Over the past five weeks my office has received 1,000 petitions with more than 1,700 signatures. Any members of my community who are opposed to this expansion should visit my website markcoure.com.au, download the petition, sign it, and return it to my office so I can lobby on their behalf to stop or even downsize this development application. I have written to the Minister for Planning on behalf of my community and I have voiced their objection.

Finally, I wish Ronda Miller, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, all the best for the future. I worked with Ronda most recently on the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privileges and Ethics. On behalf of that committee and of all members, I wish her the best for the future. She has done an outstanding job in her role over the past five years. For newer members like the member for Parramatta and me and the latest crop of arrivals, she has always been there to advise us. I wish Ronda, her husband and her daughter all the best for the future and I hope that they enjoy their travels in the years to come.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (18:22): It is my great honour to pay tribute tonight to Ronda Miller, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, who is about to retire. On behalf of the Government, I thank her for all her work. Like the member for Oatley, I am eternally grateful for all her wise words and counsel. Ronda was always patient with me when I did not understand the parliamentary procedures and rules. I am the first to say that I need to develop my understanding of parliamentary procedure. Ronda has been a fantastic advocate for women and for the rights of women. As the first woman Clerk of the Legislative Assembly—in fact, of any Parliament in Australia—she is a trailblazer who has described herself as an old-fashioned feminist. Well done, Ronda.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): Before I adjourn the House, and as one of the newer Temporary Speakers, I take this opportunity to thank Ronda Miller for her counsel and advice, which have been of great assistance to me. I even sought her advice earlier today. I wish Ronda and her family all the best in the future. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with Ronda. I am sure she will enjoy her retirement.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:24 until
Tuesday 11 October 2016 at 12:00.**