



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday, 11 October 2016

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 11 October 2016

The SPEAKER (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock) took the chair at 12:00.

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[Notices of Motions given.]

Private Members' Statements

SYDNEY HILLS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (12:12): It gives me great pleasure to advise the House of the completion of the inaugural year of competition of the Sydney Hills Football Association. The need for a Hills football association has been spoken about for the past 40 years. However, previous attempts to commence such an association had failed. This failure was due largely to the lack of support from Football NSW to establish a new soccer association in the Hills, an area with the fastest growth in population in this country.

I was first aware of the need for a local Hills soccer association in 1990 when my son Ryan commenced playing soccer for Kellyville at the age of five. In those days there was a growing groundswell among the many soccer clubs in the Hills that the area would greatly benefit from its own local soccer competition and it would negate the need to travel almost an hour to grounds as far away as Lidcombe, South Granville and Auburn. That was in 1990. Today that trip on a Saturday morning would take an hour and a half to two hours, making it difficult for the busy families of the Hills to juggle the various sports of their children.

Fast forward to today and what is arguably the best sporting association in this country has just completed its first season. This professional, caring, forward-thinking and compassionate association would not have been established if not for the dedication of a group of determined and passionate soccer-loving Hills residents, backed by the over 8,500 Sydney Hills Football Association members who played in the past season. It is worth mentioning how this association came into being.

On Monday 3 November 2014 representatives from 13 soccer clubs located across the Hills met to discuss the formation of a new Hills football association. My 30-year-old son, Ryan, who believed there was overwhelming support in our community to form a new Hills-based football association, convened the meeting in my office at Rouse Hill. Andrew Jefferies, the then Mayor of The Hills Shire Council, said at the inaugural meeting that he and The Hills Shire Council would agree to explore the establishment of the new association.

Representatives from every Hills-based soccer club attended the meeting and it was their view that a real opportunity existed to offer young people a new football association in the Hills. The new association would foster and enhance talented youth from the very early ages through to senior divisions at the highest level. It would support a strong and coordinated female competition and provide opportunities for a needs-based competition. Across the Hills shire almost 30,000 new homes are in various stages of development. Soccer is the most popular sport played and interest in this sport is expected to increase dramatically in the future.

Remarkably, in the first year of competition the association had 8,500 members, and it is expected the membership will increase to 11,000 next season. These numbers demonstrate the need for the Hills to have its own football association. The dedicated people who attended the inaugural meeting dug in and fought hard to ensure delivery of a Hills football association. I commend former Hills mayor Andrew Jefferies; current president of the Sydney Hills Football Association [SHFA], Craig Gough; Jay Marshall, referee coordinator; Jim Mooreland; Tony and Sue Torvill; Ian McCauley; Sze K Lee; Darren Maroun; Rob Younie; Tony Hughes; Mick Pawelko; Bill Renton; Neil Wares; Peter McLoughlin; Dino Di Giulio; Mimo Scavera; Vi Nutt; Graeme Luck; and Dave Duggan. I also congratulate the partners, children and residents of the Hills who volunteer and work hard to ensure the success of the SHFA.

Throughout the season, my wife, Wendy, and I drop in to the various sporting fields within our electorate to talk to the players and parents. We have watched Kellyville United at Kellyville Park, Rouse Hill Rangers at Annangrove Park, Castle Hill United at Fred Catterson Reserve, the Knights at Balcombe Heights, Norwest Soccer Club at Francesca Reserve, and many others. At each event we soak up the atmosphere of enthusiasm within our community. It is a shame it has taken so long to commence a Hills football association. The overriding body, Football NSW [FNSW], placed every hurdle possible in the way of the community's attempt to form the association. That action diminishes the quality of football in this country and says a mouthful about those at the

highest level of football administration in New South Wales. When they discount the needs of a community they do so at their peril.

The community and its football-playing members fund the very existence of Football NSW. The good, hardworking volunteers of the Hills were not deterred. They arranged insurance for players and online registration software for members, and with the support of The Hills Shire Council upgraded the grounds and lighting. Two new football clubs were formed, Kellyville United FA and Rouse Hill Rangers. On any level, it was a remarkable achievement. This feat was undertaken by hardworking mums and dads who run businesses while volunteering their time to this successful association. They do it to support the Hills community and to grow soccer in our region. They are to be highly commended and congratulated. I have never been so proud to be a representative of this area. Congratulations to everyone involved on the formation of the wonderful Sydney Hills Football Association. Through your hard work and dedication, the successful future of football in the Hills is assured.

TRIBUTE TO ROSS LESLIE SMITH

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (12:17): I pay tribute to the late Ross Leslie Smith of Waterloo, who was a tireless advocate for public housing tenants at Waterloo and the inner city. Ross was a champion of the disadvantaged, particularly the elderly, fearlessly lending his voice to those who did not have their own. Ross Smith was a reliable and loyal friend. Few have had the privilege to meet a person of such high calibre in their lifetime and fewer still have had the honour of calling Ross a friend. Ross Smith left this world on Tuesday 4 October 2016. He leaves behind a legacy of community service and selfless dedication the likes of which our community may never see again. Ross Leslie Smith was born in Auckland, New Zealand, on 31 August 1944 and migrated to Australia at the age of 27. Ross lived in the Redfern-Waterloo area for the last 30 years of his life. He dedicated his time to and was involved with many community organisations. He was the tenants' representative of the Peoples Precinct Waterloo for over 18 years and the treasurer of REDWatch, a community group representing the welfare of residents at Redfern, Eveleigh, Darlington and Waterloo. He was a member of South Sydney Community Aid and the grassroots community publication, the *South Sydney Herald*. Ross was a passionate advocate of social justice. In 2003 he realised the only way in which to achieve that objective was to join the Australian Labor Party [ALP]. He did not take his membership for granted and held many positions in ALP branches, including in my State electorate of Heffron.

Ross Smith believed in the power of the masses. To Ross, there was no authority above the will of the people. He demanded fairness in rules and in their application from the ALP and the Government. He believed in the good fight but respected its outcome whether or not he agreed with it. Ross was an institution at the Factory Community Centre at Raglan Street, Waterloo. There he helped many public housing tenants deal with Government departments, most notably Housing NSW, and assisted his fellow residents in resolving their tenancy issues. If Ross was unhappy with the department's response, he had no problem directing tenants to me or other members of Parliament, mandating the best possible representation of constituents by their elected representatives. When I was elected to this House in 2012, I remember going to Waterloo with Ross for the first time. I was taken aback at the squalor in which public housing tenants resided. Their premises were rundown and dilapidated. For many it would have been easier to turn their back and walk away. For Ross, injustice manifested by doing nothing was anathema.

Together, we identified a plethora of housing maintenance issues in the estate. We used that ammunition to raise the plight of Waterloo public housing tenants before this House and in the media. When the Minister would not listen, *A Current Affair* came to our rescue. The Government, to its credit, then listened to us—I particularly thank the then Minister, Pru Goward, and the current Minister, Brad Hazzard—and invested money for maintenance works, which had the effect of beautifying Waterloo in my electorate. Rubbish was collected, broken fences and gutters were replaced, new gardens and turf were planted, security hazards were removed and many pre-existing maintenance issues were addressed. Because of Ross Smith there is now a community at Waterloo that residents are proud to call home. Ross reminded politicians and bureaucrats alike that their purpose, first and foremost, was to serve the people. Ross understood the potency of a well-articulated argument. Although he was softly spoken he used his voice as a sword, bringing dignity to many people. He was instrumental in creating a community that is not only coming to terms with his passing but is also comforted by the spirit he has left behind. Rest in peace, my friend. Vale Ross Smith.

KENDALL NATIONAL VIOLIN COMPETITION

Ms LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (12:22): One of the musical highlights of the year in the Port Macquarie electorate is the annual Kendall National Violin Competition, which is held in the hall of the Kendall School of Arts. The event this year was held last month and attracted not only a large audience but, as always, incredibly talented performers. After almost two decades young violinists across Australia continue to aspire to compete in this significant competition. The esteem of the Kendall National Violin Competition is such

that it is now known Australia-wide as a musical phenomenon, which had its beginnings in 1990 with a recital by Associate Professor Goetz Richter on violin and his wife, Dr Jeanell Carrigan, on piano. While pianist Jeanell and artistic director Goetz live at Strathfield in Sydney, they are spending more time at their other home at North Haven and have been heavily involved with the competition since its inception.

Lovers of fine classical music have the opportunity to listen to an extraordinary range of performers who are mostly young people with a passion for the classics. With more than 30 entries from around Australia, competitors were reduced to eight semi-finalists who performed for judges at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music before four musicians were selected to attend the finals in Kendall. Staging an event such as the Kendall National Violin Competition could not happen without sponsorship and the support of the Forestry Corporation of New South Wales, with the obvious connection between the two being "timber". These handcrafted violins are the instrument of choice of one performer, Gemma Lee, who played a 1760 Francois Fent violin from the Westheimer Collection at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, where she is studying. Gemma was previously a member of the Sydney Youth Orchestra and has performed with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Gemma gave numerous outstanding performances and won Best Performance of Bach.

Talented 16-year-old Yebin Yoo has been performing since she was eight years old. Yebin is currently studying music at the Australian National Academy of Music. She is regularly invited to participate in chamber and orchestral projects, under the baton of internationally renowned conductors. Yebin is a gifted and talented performer who says that one day she would like to study overseas and perform with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. This year at Kendall, Yebin Yoo won Best Performance of an Australian Work. Being a member of the Australian Youth Orchestra helped Kyla Matsuura-Miller to hone her skills and participate in many State and national programs. Born in Tokyo and raised in Australia, Kyla took up the violin at an early age. She has matured into a wonderful freelance musician who is much sought after to play in bands and chamber music concerts in and around Brisbane. Performing a selection of Bach and Beethoven, Kyla won the Audience Choice Award as well as the sonata prize in memoriam of Richard Pollett.

The overall winner of the Kendall National Violin Competition for 2016 was talented Zoe Freisberg. Zoe began her musical journey studying violin at the age of four. She has a Bachelor of Music degree from the Queensland Conservatorium of Music. Zoe has been an in-demand musician and has toured extensively with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Chamber Orchestra Collective and the Australian Youth Orchestra. The recipient of numerous awards, Zoe was honoured to receive the 2016 Australian Classical Music Competition Travelling Scholarship. At the Kendall National Violin Competition Zoe took home the prize violin, the Peter Lee Prize and the Joan Levy Memorial Award. Congratulations to Zoe and the other three finalists. Events such as this do not just happen. Behind the scenes is a committee of hardworking people, including competitor coordinator Fran Bec and the wonderful Mavis Barnes, who is the secretary of the competition. Again this year their efforts paid off when the "Full house" sign went up. Like so many other people, I am looking forward to next year's event in Kendall.

ROTARY YOUTH VOCATIONAL AWARDS

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (12:26): I bring to the attention of the House the Youth Vocational Awards 2016. These awards are jointly sponsored by the Rotary clubs of Parramatta, Parramatta City and Parramatta Daybreak. They recognise students in local schools who have successfully completed vocational education and training [VET] at school. The wonderful thing about that program is the competency based assessment of students' achievements. I recognise students from several schools who received awards. From Arthur Phillip High School I recognise Hashem Baqeri, Shavan Patel and Keisha Thomas. From Catherine McAuley Westmead I recognise Natisha Abela-Falls, Alyssa Caparas, Emily Diversi, Kristen Phillips, Emily Rotunno and Emma Seaman.

I recognise the following Cumberland High School students for their achievements: Oliver Agbisit and Rim Manafiki. They performed very well, as did the young people from Macarthur Girls High School who received awards: Augustina Aidoo, Shreya Arora and Hazel Malaluan. From Maronite College of the Holy Family I recognise Marina Dahdah and Mathew El Bazouni. The following students from Our Lady of Mercy College also won awards: Roya Ali and Natasha Apap. Last but not least, I recognise the award recipient from Parramatta High School, Adriana Abikhalil. All these students received their awards from the combined Rotary clubs for their achievements and competence in vocational education and training.

I bring to the House's attention the Cumberland High School awardees of the 2016 Minister's and Secretary's Award for Excellence. The presentations were made by the Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli. I would like to recognise two students from Cumberland High School—Leonida Najdovska and Luke Salt—who were awarded for Excellence in Student Achievement. What great students they are. They received the awards right here in Parliament House. The parents, families and friends of those two students are very proud. I also bring to the House's attention the Bishop of Parramatta's Awards for Student Excellence. Those awards are made every

year at Saint Patrick's Cathedral early in September. The function is called Vespers. Many great students and great schools achieved significant results, and I would like to recognise a couple of those from my electorate of Parramatta. I recognise Roanne Gonzales from Catherine McAuley Westmead, and pay tribute to the principal, Ms Laetitia Richmond, for her efforts.

I also recognise George El Bazouni, from the Maronite College of the Holy Family, and Sister Dr Margaret Ghosn, who provides outstanding leadership at that school. I recognise Rebecca Castor, from Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta and Mr Stephen Walsh, who is the principal of that outstanding college. I commend Mr Walsh for his achievements in expanding that college. I recognise Caleb Toevai, Parramatta Marist High, Westmead. Members of this House are familiar with Brother Patrick Howlett, the principal of that school, and his outstanding leadership in education. Of course, you would not expect to attend an award ceremony without seeing a representative of St Patrick's Marist College, Dundas. The awardee was Jewelaz Azar. I commend Jewelaz and the principal, Angela Hay, for her fine work in the leading that great school. I am proud to have some of the best—if not the best—schools of this State in my electorate of Parramatta.

CAMPBELLTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOL 140TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:32): I am pleased to draw the attention of the House to the milestone that is the 140th anniversary of a significant public education institution within my electorate: Campbelltown Public School. Campbelltown Public School's foundation stone was laid in 1875 and it was opened to students on 17 January 1876, six days after the nomination of the school's first principal. At that time, nearly one third of the original funding for the school was raised by the Campbelltown community, allowing the grounds to accommodate 150 pupils. Since then the school's capacity has expanded exponentially, facilitating more than 300 students last year. A defining factor of the greater Campbelltown Public School community is the dedication of students and staff when tracing and documenting the history of the school for current and future students. Vast efforts have gone into collecting and digitalising oral histories and gathering newspaper articles and photographs to form a timeline of the development of the school.

Further, the work of teacher of 17 years Ms Julie Anne Cowan—assisted by her colleagues and the school's executive—has led to the collection of memorabilia being displayed within the school, including garments representing the changing school uniform over the years, former school textbooks and other resources depicting the transformation that the school has undergone. Those archives will continue to provide a long-lasting illustration of how Campbelltown Public School fitted into the township in the 1800s and how the school's development reflected the changes of our vast Campbelltown community. The school celebrated its milestone by undertaking to have all current and future pupils informed of its heritage through keeping all memorabilia on display.

On 19 July I was honoured to unveil the original Campbelltown Public School bell in the presence of students, staff and volunteers involved in its restoration. The work was undertaken by, amongst others, 1950s alumnus Ron Flockhart, who generously gave well-deserved attention to the school bell that overlooked the evolution of the school and its pupils. I can personally attest to the excitement of students wanting to see the restored piece, with teachers advising me that I was required to unveil the bell as soon as possible because students were hanging around trying to glimpse it sneakily. Quite rightly Ron and school staff unveiled the work, which did not disappoint.

Earlier this year the archive project of Campbelltown Public School was recognised by being awarded the Campbelltown Heritage Medallion by Campbelltown City Council. Acknowledged on the basis of its strong local identity, this historic institution was recognised for its ongoing influence on our local community, the empowering and dynamic teaching techniques employed, and the technologies adopted by teaching staff. The school's successes can be attributed to its devoted staff, its parents and citizens association, and many other staff, who affirm and enact the school's objectives:

We will maintain our culture of care, respect and community. We will have successful learners, confident and creative individuals, who are active and informed citizens. We will be an outstanding school held in high regard by the community.

I am both humbled and excited to share in the celebration of this tremendous feat, being the 140th anniversary event to be held in November. I look forward to seeing some familiar faces, learning more about the school's heritage from alumni and hearing of future plans for the longstanding pillar of our City of Campbelltown. It has reached a huge milestone and is a strong representation of public education throughout our region. I know that the educative experiences of our children are in great hands and that Campbelltown Public School will continue to shape clever, tolerant and driven young people, who have a strong sense of community and belonging. I commend all past, current and future staff for their guidance to students and alumni, and assure staff that their work does not go unnoticed. I ask the House to commend the untiring efforts of Campbelltown Public School in documenting

its history and preserving the school's legacy, evidenced in the school motto "Celebrate the Past, Embrace the Future".

BATHURST ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Local Government) (12:36): I refer to some of the Government's fantastic initiatives in my electorate. We have never before seen such significant investment by a government in regional and rural New South Wales. There is record investment in my electorate of Bathurst in all areas. Recent statistics highlight that the population of New South Wales will grow by about 2.71 million in the next 20 years. We know that not everyone will want to locate to metropolitan areas and that many will move to regional towns and cities across this State. It is attractive for families to move to the regions because of education facilities, housing and affordability. The growth opportunities for both business and agriculture impact positively upon employment.

To support population growth it is imperative to increase facilities and infrastructure. These include things such as our electricity networks, roads, water supply, wastewater infrastructure and landfill. Last week I visited the mid-western and central western regions that are becoming more popular for people wanting to relocate. They are attractive in many ways, such as climate and distinct seasons, food and wine culture, agribusiness opportunities, affordability, employment and proximity to major centres. To support this growth investment has been made recently in a number of projects. The first is the Regional Water and Waste Water Backlog Program.

The Government has set aside \$110 million for regional communities. I was very pleased to go to the Oberon sewage treatment plant, which is an ageing facility. It has very little in the way of technology and still uses many manual processes. While I was there I met the deputy mayor, Councillor Kerry Gibbons, Councillor John Morgan, Chris Shumack from the council, Lynn Safranek, and the technical staff from the sewage treatment plant. The Government has invested \$4.95 million as part of the regional water and waste program to ensure the provision of a modern sewage treatment plant that will continue to meet environmental standards and employ modern technology for the treatment process as well as for monitoring and control. The new plant is very important because the current facility is already at full capacity. The new plant will allow for significant population growth in the area, especially in parts to the west of Oberon.

I also visited the landfill structure in that area. The Government has invested just under \$43,000 to address a number of environmental issues that have been impacting upon that important landfill. The project has included construction of a concrete bunker that is being utilised for storage of glass bottles, directional and informative signage, roadworks improvements, installation of surveillance cameras, improvement of the gatehouse, and shaping of the site to control surface water run-off. The project not only supports the potential population growth of the area but also addresses environmental issues that have challenged many rural and regional councils for a long time.

I was pleased to announce that Charbon, which is located in the Kandos-Rylstone area, will also benefit as part of the Regional Water and Waste Water Backlog program. This previously unsewered community will benefit from the possible transfer of its sewage to the Kandos sewage treatment plant. Construction of a new and modern sewage treatment plant, which will result from investment of \$1.3 million, not only will cope with demand associated with population increase but also will bring services to communities that previously relied on their own systems. The project has enormous economic, health and environmental benefits. It makes areas more attractive to increased population. It also brings modern technology to many rural and regional areas that often are not the beneficiaries of larger projects and facilities that support larger population growth areas.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:42): "Government at all levels are elected to represent people's interests", is a comment from Nathan, who is a constituent of the Newtown electorate, that was added to the bottom of a letter he co-signed recently, along with hundreds of other Newtown electorate residents, calling on the Premier to listen to them and stop construction of WestConnex, and establish an urgent independent inquiry, restore our democratically elected councils, reverse the draconian New South Wales anti-protest laws, ban political donations from mining and petroleum companies, ensure genuine community consultation for urban growth and big developments, and end the privatisation agenda for our public services and infrastructure. Hundreds of people signed this letter, but it is not just people in the Newtown electorate who are calling on the Premier and this Liberal-Nationals Government to stop listening to vested interests and start serving the community interest. The numbers are growing.

People are so disgusted by the actions of this Government, they are so disheartened by the Government's agenda and they are so outraged by the Government's policies that they are literally taking to the streets in their

thousands. They are setting up camps in their beloved parks to try to stop the destruction of trees. They are taking to the streets to try to stop the Baird Government's destruction of their neighbourhoods. This is happening not just in the Newtown electorate but beyond. People are gathering outside their local council meeting places where appointed administrators have replaced democratically elected councillors. They are filling community meetings held by local resident action groups to express their concerns about threats to public housing, and they are literally dancing in disgust on the streets. On the weekend, 10,000 people came out to show their support for keeping Sydney open.

We have seen this with WestConnex, we have seen it with the sacking of local councils, we have seen it with the lockouts, and we have seen it with the anti-protest laws. This Government is doing away with due process, good governance, transparency and accountability, and ignoring the will of the people. The Government's slogan of "New South Wales now: the new state of business" makes blatantly clear who it is governing for. Shamefully, it is not for the community. I urge people not to be fooled by its announcement on greyhounds today that it is doing it because it is listening to the people. The Government is doing it for its vested interests and because it is worried about losing power. Given the history of corruption in New South Wales, the Premier would do well to listen to the wise words of Burmese democracy activist and leader Aung San Suu Kyi when she said, "It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it ..."

The Premier and this Government are not listening to the community. They are attempting to chainsaw our trees, bulldoze our homes, shut down our nightlife, sack our councils and sell off public housing. The Greens have consistently stood with communities to oppose disastrous public policy and expose the vested interests that have for too long corrupted our democracy, our planning process and our political system in New South Wales. The people are speaking in large numbers on the streets. They are saying things to this Government, but this Government is not listening.

As the member for Newtown I give my commitment to bring the voices and concerns of the community into this Parliament. That includes the voices of residents who are concerned that this Government is selling off essential public assets, like Michael from Chippendale, who says, "Mr Baird, the privatisation of electricity is a joke. While you reap the rewards the homeless services organisations perish." It also includes those who are concerned about attacks on civil liberties, like Simon from Surry Hills, who writes, "Attacks on civil liberties and lack of social governance are a distressing trait from this government. You are taking us backwards not forwards."

My commitment includes the voices of Gerard and Alice from Lewisham, who point out, "It is so typical of a dictatorial decision makers to make anti-protest laws." It includes Ella from Stanmore, who says, "Freedom to protest, accountability to the public, local government representation and strong public services are the best elements of our democracy, it is not acceptable for government to undermine them." It also includes Donna from Newtown, who says, "They sacked our councils! The Inner West Council amalgamation which saw the removal of our local Marrickville Council elected representative, represents a dismal degradation of resident's rights for democratic processes."

Across the board the Baird Government is failing to listen to communities and that is resulting in strong communities standing up and speaking out. People are gathering in their thousands on the streets to protect their neighbourhoods. The Greens and I will continue to stand with them. We will bring their voices to this place to ensure that they are heard and that the people's interests are served, not the vested interests of the big end of town.

SARGOOD FOUNDATION

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing) (12:47): An amazing community effort has been made in the electorate of Wakehurst. Some years ago the then Department of Community Services was using an old hospital site at Collaroy as a venue to run some day programs for people with disabilities. A number of local community members recognised that the facility could provide more services to people with disabilities. From there the concept evolved to use the facility for the benefit of people with spinal injuries. That brings me to the Sargood Foundation. The Sargood Foundation reflects the very best of what communities can do when they have a clear vision, and a high degree of energy and enthusiasm to achieve an outcome for those who are less able to do it for themselves. The vice-patrons of the organisation are: Rod Macqueen, AM, who many would remember as an outstanding Australian rugby union coach; Wendy Harmer, who is well known in the community and a radio broadcaster and writer; and Alan Jones, who, I think, is the foremost broadcaster in the country.

Each of those people is a vice patron to another incredible Australian—that is, the Hon. David Hurley. They have all joined with the community to ensure that the Sargood Foundation can access community funds. This new facility is due to open in late 2016 off the back of the efforts to raise the funds required to build it. I believe the new facility is intended to be opened in December. Effectively it is a resort that includes 17 self-contained apartments specially built for people living with spinal cord injury. Each of the apartments is

fully accessible with state-of-the-art technology, a courtyard, a kitchenette, parking and living aids to make the resident's stay very comfortable. On-site there will be an adapted gym for people with spinal injuries, a spa, a wheelchair maintenance pit, a sport and recreational activity area, an inaccessible playground and hopefully a ramp leading down to the ocean pool at Collaroy.

The community has banded together to make sure the facility is inclusive and that people with the limitation of spinal cord injury do not have to be restricted in any way by that injury but instead can reach out and enjoy the wonderful surrounds of the Collaroy Beach area. It is an environment where people with spinal injuries will be able to meet, connect, learn and relax together. The issues facing people with spinal injuries have been well and truly identified by Sargood in the material it has put out into the community. I note that Sargood has detailed the support that will be available for people with spinal injuries and their families—and I emphasise their families—to adjust to the issues that face them in everyday community life.

Sargood aims to do so much more to open opportunities for people who have spinal cord injuries. I note that Wendy Harmer said that this facility is needed. She said, "Anyone who has seen the vistas of sea and sky at Collaroy cannot fail to recognise the capacity of such beautiful surroundings to uplift and inspire." Alan Jones said, "It is not a question of whether we can afford it or not; it is the fact that we cannot afford not to afford it." Indeed, I think that is the issue. This facility will make sure that the very best of community is brought to those who are really in need of support by the community. I look forward to the opening of the facility in December this year.

WALLSEND ELECTORATE SERVICES

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:52): When the Premier visited Newcastle several weeks ago his visit triggered an avalanche of announcements, all of which were focused on Newcastle's inner city. These big-ticket items—a cruise terminal in the inner city, a trial program to provide free wi-fi to the inner city, bringing the V8s into the inner city—comprehensively ignored Wallsend and the western suburbs of Newcastle. While the Baird Government has lavished funding on the inner city with a range of high-profile and headline-grabbing projects, there are a number of issues faced by Wallsend and the western suburbs that the Premier seems unable or unwilling to even acknowledge. Given the focus of the Government on the inner city at the expense of Wallsend and the western suburbs, when the Premier talks about innovation in Newcastle his words ring hollow. The Wallsend electorate has the capacity to be a centre of innovation and growth in the Hunter region—in fact, I think it already is the centre of innovation in the Hunter region. The John Hunter Hospital and the Calvary Mater are located in Wallsend. The Hunter Medical Research Institute is located in Wallsend. The University of Newcastle's primary campus, with its research institutes and vibrant student body, are located in Wallsend. After the announcement of \$18 million for free wi-fi in the inner city, I called on the Government to implement a similar program for the John Hunter and the Calvary Mater. I was gratified when, late last week, the Minister for Health announced that a trial program would be expanded to provide free wi-fi to patients at the John Hunter Children's Hospital, which is a good start. This is an excellent start and it is my intention to push for this program to cover all patients at both these major hospitals. In this day and age, wireless internet access is essential for connectivity and productivity. The internet is not a fad or a boondoggle; it is a cornerstone for innovation. It is part of our growth, our worth and our future.

I turn now to talk about schools and innovation. Schools in Wallsend and the Hunter region are facing a \$70 million maintenance backlog. The Education department did not spend the \$281 million allocated in the 2015-16 budget and public school students in Wallsend now have to deal with crumbling infrastructure. These students should not have to put up with classrooms that freeze in winter and swelter in summer—I know this because I have taught in some of them, particularly in the west—and make teaching impossible. Innovation is important not only for the Sydney metropolitan area but also for all areas.

Despite being acknowledged as the number one infrastructure priority for the region by all Hunter mayors, the Glendale interchange has gone unfunded by this Government. Instead, Lake Macquarie City Council, with assistance from the former Federal Labor Government, has shouldered the lion's share of the financial burden. I note that the former mayor of Lake Macquarie, who is now a member in this place, worked very hard to ensure that Glendale received funding and I thank him for that. Indeed, the interchange is crucial to the Hunter's future growth. Despite population growth in the western suburbs, the Baird Government has continually resisted my calls to expand and modernise public transport in this area.

Each time a major storm strikes Newcastle and the Hunter—we have had three major storms since I have been a member of Parliament—Wallsend is threatened with inundation but there has been no movement in funding flood mitigation works in the Wallsend central business district. This uncertainty does not help small business and undermines future growth and investment in the area. These infrastructure works are crucial for innovation and growth in Newcastle. Certainly, the announcements of the last week signal great opportunities for Newcastle, including Wallsend and the west, but a broader investment in the region is necessary to unlock our full potential.

None of this is flashy or glamorous but I ask the Premier to do two things: to fund the Glendale interchange and to fund the management of the Wallsend flood risk.

CAMDEN JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (12:57): Last night I attended the Camden Junior Rugby League Football Club presentation evening. I have had a long association with this wonderful club. When I moved to Camden in 1984 I joined the club and, not to relive too many glory days, this culminated in a wonderful under 17 premiership. Indeed, our then coach named his son, who was born that year, after our then victorious captain. Unfortunately, our captain is no longer with us but Shaun Femson, the coach's son, made his debut with the Canberra Raiders in 2009 and he continues to be a Raiders stalwart.

Last night as I looked around the auditorium it was wonderful to see so many fathers from my era who are now supporting their sons at the club. I will briefly share one more war story from my playing days. As a Camden junior I always strived to play a first grade game but I only ever clocked up one. The coach at the time was Roger Beetson—Artie Beetson's cousin. I was warming up in reserve grade when Roger pulled me aside and said, "Patto, there is nobody else." I thought I had a good game that day but I never got another call-up. I acknowledge all committee members for doing an outstanding job: Greg Copeland, president; Kristy Peters, secretary; Michael Woodland, treasurer; Tracy Roper, registrar; Gavan Bell, senior vice president; Mick Chapman, junior vice president; Michelle Chapman, seventh member; Sue Davies, canteen coordinator; and Vickie Woodland, merchandise coordinator. I congratulate them on their efforts.

Obviously no club can succeed without sponsors and coaches. I acknowledge: 6 Red sponsor HammerNNails Carpentry and coach Nathan Lakeman; 6 White sponsor Camden Rams Old Boys and coach Damien Taylor; 6 Blue sponsor Camden Valley Meats and coach Brendan Pirie; 6 Rams sponsor Plough and Harrow and coach Jess Davies; 7 Red sponsor DCC Civil Contracting and coach Mark Potts; 7 White sponsor Camden Rams Old Boys and coach Matt Foxall; 7 Blue sponsor Express Promotions and coach Glen Hodgson; 8 Red sponsor Smeaton Grange Paint and Panel and coach Danny King; 8 White sponsor TALKK Management and coach Luke Bickhoff; 8 Blue sponsor Novek Conveyancing and coach Nathan Lakeman; 8 Rams sponsor Plough and Harrow and coach Rob Elliott; 9 Red sponsor Camden Rams Old Boys and coach Brendan Lollback; 9 White sponsor Camden Rams Old Boys and coaches Jackson Willis and Andrew Horne; and 9 Blue (MODS) sponsor The Stairman and coach Travis Roberts. I thank all these sponsors and coaches for their wonderful efforts to ensure that the young men of the Camden Rams had a wonderful season.

Last night perpetual awards were given. For the Smart Award, the wonderful nominees were Bailey Ferns, Kyan Marsh, Harry Delaney, Adam Perez, Patrick Fosse, Tom Fisher, Tom Tyquin and Nathan Woodland, with Nathan Woodland the winner. Nominees for the Condon Award were Jacob Eljed, Jacob Ward, Ryan Stephenson and Jacob Abdow, with Jacob Abdow the winner. Nominees for the Pat Fitzpatrick Award were Ben Stevens, Jackson Willis and Rhys Donovan, with Ben Stevens the winner. Nick Mendez and Ryan Carruthers were nominated for the Kev Curtin Award, with Nick Mendez named the winner. Aaron Kelly, Lachlan Younie and Rodney Davies were nominated for the Daniel O'Neill Award, and Rodney Davies was the winner.

Jake Borg, Jacob Abdow, Joel Frendo, Jackson Brown and Hayden Evans were nominated for the Bastien Madrill Award, and Hayden Evens was the winner. Jake Borg and Tom Chanter were nominated for the Sharp Award, with Jake Borg winning. Awarded the Junior Service Award were three young men who have all played with the club for 10 years: Tom Chanter, Carter Robertson and Wyatt Worthington. Nominated for the Shephard Family Award were the Chapman family, the Chanter family, the Peters family, the Fosse family, the Perriman family, the Butcher family and the Woodland family, with the Woodland family winning the award. Nominated for the Club Person of the Year were Mark Perriman, Blake Peters, Leon Borg, Shane Fosse and Kristy Peters, with Kristy Peters taking it out. It is a great club with a fantastic committee. Well done to all involved.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (13:02): The Tamworth electorate is leading the case for renewables in our future. If we are to achieve the renewable targets set by governments not only in New South Wales but also in Australia and other countries, we must involve public-private partnerships with a long-term strategy that encourages drive and commitment. That must also be matched with funding that provides the private sector with the incentive to keep developing the agenda through innovation. The commitment to protecting our planet, while still providing for the needs of our communities, must remain a key focus.

In my electorate of Tamworth, we have the capacity and scope to engage in the production of ethanol and biogas. We have the resources, including landfill gas methane from the Tamworth Regional Council Waste Management Facility. Work is underway to progress the production of a plant at the Tamworth Waste Management Facility to produce electricity and, it is hoped, to supply electricity to the hospital. This is a real

opportunity to produce energy through methane and biogas. I look forward to continuing to work with the council to develop that project. Other projects include growing crops through the Tamworth Regional Council Westdale Wastewater Treatment Plant crop program.

There is an expansive resource extraction industry in my electorate and the need for balance is evident. In my view, we need a long-term plan to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels. While our communities continue to talk about wanting to be cleaner and greener, it is expensive and investors are clamouring for others to take on the investment risk. On many occasions businesses are eager for someone else to take on the investment risk and then they follow on. If we are to achieve the renewables targets set by governments we must engage public-private partnerships and have a long-term strategy that encourages drive and commitment matched with funding to keep the agenda moving forward.

The New South Wales Government is actively supporting the growth of renewable energy; it is part of our vision for a secure, reliable, affordable and clean energy future for New South Wales. It is driving clean infrastructure, regional jobs and investment in the State. There is a long way to go. Our dependency on fossil fuel remains strong but we need to look to our long-term future. The Renewable Energy Action Plan released in 2013 is working to position New South Wales to increase generation from renewable energy sources at least cost to customers. The Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy, the member for Northern Tablelands, who is in the Chamber, is working closely with a number of wind farm operators in his area to establish what can be done in relation to green energy.

On 19 October the compost revolution, an event about bioenergy and compost, will be held at the DPI training rooms in Tamworth. Some of the topics that will be covered include recycling organic waste, anaerobic digesting, biofuel, gas and composting, bio bin technologies, recycling wastes, business planning, on-farm composting techniques and economics, using biochar in stockfeeds, fertilisers and composting. This is the sort of technology we should be looking at and investing in not only in five, 10, 15 or 20 years time but also in the long-term. I commend the organisers of the compost revolution and note that Fiona Simson will be introducing the event. I look forward to a productive outcome from the compost revolution and hope that the Government continues to push hard to reach its renewable target of 20 per cent by 2020.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (13:07): It would be remiss of me not to reply to the eloquent appraisal of the member for Tamworth of the value of renewables in country New South Wales, in particular the Tamworth electorate. I acknowledge his passion, his strong support for and his interest in renewables in his electorate, and also his partnership with Tamworth Regional Council to advance the biomass proposal. The biomass proposal is exciting and something that the Government wants to see more of throughout the State. As the member for Tamworth said quite correctly, developing a renewables sector is vital for this State's economy and for its energy future. Speaking as a country member, the beauty of it is that a large proportion of that investment will be in country New South Wales. Whether it is solar, wind, biomass or some of the other emerging technologies, we have the capacity in this State to be leaders in this country. I thank the member for Tamworth.

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL FESTIVAL

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (13:08): On Sunday 8 September, I attended the fifty-sixth annual festival of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, held every year in my electorate to celebrate the rich culture and strong religious ties of the local Italian-Australian community. Every year the Our Lady of Mount Carmel festival committee puts on a dazzling array of entertainment, Italian food and cuisine, including the always highly anticipated fireworks display. I congratulate festival committee president Paul Marchesano and his team on yet again putting on this festival, and thank committee members, helpers and volunteers for all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes.

It is important that cultural festivals such as this continue strongly in the future. We need these festivals so that the rich culture of our Italian-Australian community gets passed on to their children and grandchildren and, later on, to their great-grandchildren. In this way the culture and traditions of their ancestors are protected and preserved and passed down from generation to generation. One of our great strengths in south-west Sydney is our cultural diversity. Festivals such as this not only preserve our culture and heritage but also provide different ethnic groups with an opportunity to sample different cultures and to gain a better understanding of each group. A wonderful celebration of culture is that since 2001 Our Lady of Mount Carmel has had a Vietnamese chaplain and has provided Vietnamese chaplaincy services—a role currently undertaken by Father Paul Van Chi Chu.

That role is now undertaken by Father Paul Van Chi Chu. Spanish chaplaincy services are provided by Father Thomas Ruiz, and Italian chaplaincy services are provided by Father Vittorio Basso. These services truly embrace multiculturalism, and I applaud the Our Lady of Mount Carmel parish for providing them. It is always a pleasure to visit the parish. For more than 50 years the church has been an institution in the local area, servicing

more than 1,300 Catholic families, providing them with a place in which to practise their faith and to engage in activities, and in which children can get a fantastic education.

The parish and the school have always been great friends to the local community, and I am proud to say that they have been great friends to me. I congratulate the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Primary School on continuing to provide great education for the local children, mainly those from the Mount Pritchard and Bonnyrigg areas. New Principal Warren Loy is doing a fantastic job. I congratulate him and his staff, including Pastor Father Anthony and the leadership team members: Mrs Jodie Giora, the assistant principal; Miss Roseanne Caronna, the religious education coordinator; and coordinators, Mrs Vita Pittavino, Miss Nicole Vella, and Mrs Peta May Broady. Of course, I also congratulate the teachers, the administration staff, and the students.

ST GEORGE COMMUNITY AWARDS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:09): I draw the attention of the House to the upcoming sixth annual St George Community Awards ceremony that is being held in my electorate. Since being elected in 2011, one of the highlights of my year has been hosting the awards ceremony. I am always amazed by the hard work, compassion and service that volunteers and organisations provide in the St George area. The spirit of volunteerism is alive and well, and it is demonstrated in the nomination forms flooding into my electorate office. Nominations acknowledge individuals and groups that are committed to giving something back to their community, lightening the load for someone in need, and leaving their mark as a reminder of the good in the world. Government resources are not infinite and we cannot deliver every service required, even though we wish we could. That is why volunteers are so important and are at the core of our communities: They play a significant role in providing additional financial, emotional and practical support to people in need. As a community, a State and a country, we are richer because of the service of volunteers and the organisations that step in and step up when others are not able to do so.

In preparing for the St George Community Awards ceremony, I was reminded of the words of Edith Wharton that I think summarise the work and motivation of volunteers, "There are two ways of spreading light—to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it." To acknowledge that light, the St George Community Awards ceremony will be held on Thursday 3 November. The categories include: the individual volunteer achievement award; the youth achievement award; the community group achievement award; the business achievement award; the senior volunteer achievement award; the sporting achievement award; and the new category this year, the environment achievement award. The St George Community Awards ceremony is an opportunity for the local community to thank volunteers and organisations that play a vital role in our community and that provide much-needed services. That includes organisations such as Meals on Wheels, the Oatley Flora and Fauna Association, CanRevive, the Rotary and Lions clubs, and the many individuals who selflessly serve others.

I have been fortunate over the past five years to have heard many outstanding guest speakers, including: the Governor of New South Wales; the Police Commissioner, Andrew Scipione, who is a local resident; Premiers Barry O'Farrell and Mike Baird; and former leader of the New South Wales Liberal Party and Chief Executive Officer of Lifeline, John Brogden. Each guest speaker delivered an address that was unique and brave, and that acknowledged the importance of volunteers not only in my community but also in communities across the State and the country. We are all united in our praise for organisations and volunteers who truly change a life for the better. I do not think there are many of us who can claim to do that.

Of course, the stars of the St George Community Awards are the award recipients. Last year the calibre and quality of nominations were outstanding and included people such as Beverly Armstrong, who started the Canteen at the Grounds for Renown United Rugby League. Beverly started the canteen 38 years ago using nothing more than a barbecue and an esky and she is still involved in feeding the hungry on match day. For many years Cathryn Thew has coordinated the Riverwood English as a Second Language [ESL] course. She has taught basic English skills to hundreds of people new to Australia to assist with their integration. Cathryn and the Riverwood ESL also support new migrants in settling into our local community. Mr Mike Butler coordinates the Lugarno Lions Spring Fair, which raises much-needed funding for a number of worthwhile organisations and which is a major event each year on our local calendar.

One of the youngest volunteers is Alex Kobayashi, a year 6 student who is a member of the Australian Air League Squadron, joining in February 2013 as an enthusiastic tenor drummer. Alex has the ability to motivate and encourage others in the Riverwood squadron and he has performed at Anzac Day ceremonies in the local and wider Sydney areas. This year the nominations continue to be of a high standard and demonstrate the depth and capacity of the St George community to care and support for those less fortunate. I look forward to updating the House on the 2016 recipients for the St George Community Awards and will continue to highlight the work and effort that volunteers and organisations make in our local community.

FAIRFIELD CITY PEACE DAY AND HARMONY WALK

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:14): On 28 September 2016 Fairfield sprang to life at the inaugural Fairfield City Peace Day and Harmony Walk, which celebrated Australia's national ethnic and religious diversity and promoted peace and harmony in our society. The Peace Day and Harmony Walk aimed to bring together people from all walks of life who strive for an inclusive society around the principles of fairness, harmony and respect. The Harmony Walk was well attended by members of the community and it was a fun event for the whole family. Much like other large-scale events, the celebrations were alive with food stores, indoor and outdoor activities and a wide variety of entertainment. Catering was provided by the Fairfield High School Parent Cafe. It was great to see a diverse range of community groups in attendance on the day mingling and engaging with local residents. The Peace Day and Harmony Walk has been a project that was three years in the making. It took a lot of blood, sweat, tears and coffee to get the project off the ground and into the community.

I acknowledge everyone who was involved in organising and promoting the event. Dignitaries who attended on the day were: Jihad Dib, MP, the member for Lakemba; Nick Lalich, MP, the member for Cabramatta; Father Joseph Joseph; and the master of ceremonies for the event, Ms Liz Deep-Jones. The driving forces behind the day were Mr Gary Cachia and Mr Ernie Friedlander, OAM, the founder of the Moving Forward Together Association. I also thank and congratulate the outstanding performers: the Woodberry Red Belly Blacks; the Capoeira Angola by Project Bantu; DMC Parkour; the Australian Karen Organisation; the Sydney Kurdish Youth Group; and the Choir of Love and Peacemaker team.

On behalf of the committee, I thank and acknowledge the outstanding contributions of the sponsors who allowed the Harmony Walk to happen and who engaged so well with our local community on the day. They are NSW Health; NSW Justice; the New South Wales Government; Multicultural NSW; Fairfield City Council; the Assyrian Resource Centre; the Lebanese Muslim Association; the Thrive Youth Transition Support, Collaboration, Openness, Respect, Empowerment; the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors; the Parent Cafe at Fairfield High School; Community First Step; the Football Federation of Australia; the Australian Catholic University; and, of course, the National Rugby League.

The walk took place on the grounds of Fairfield Park and continued down Honour Avenue. It was an illustration of things that unite us as Australians. I was delighted to see adults and children walking together in the quest for peace and harmony in our society. The Fairfield Peace and Harmony Walk could not have happened without the drive and determination of the organising committee. I take the opportunity to express a sincere vote of gratitude to Mr Gary Cachia for chairing all the organising committee meetings. Gary worked very hard in bringing all stakeholders together to deliver a successful event. Thanks must also go to the committee members for their care and interest in making the event possible in Fairfield. Finally I pay tribute to and thank Mr Ernie Friedlander, OAM, who is no stranger to this place, for believing in the power of humanity and for extending the hand of friendship to all people. Ernie, thank you for your great efforts in making the inaugural Fairfield Peace Day and Harmony Walk a reality.

SCHOFIELDS RAILWAY STATION CAR PARK

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (13:20): I inform the House of the announcement made recently by the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure of \$2.75 million to provide additional car parking at Schofields railway station. Schofields station, which is on the Richmond line, serves the newly urbanising areas of Schofields and The Ponds. The original station was built when the line was put through in the 1860s. The new station, which was relocated by the former Government, included 230 car parking spaces in anticipation of growth in the region. While the development of the area is far from complete, that car parking capacity is already exhausted.

I have made many representations on behalf of constituents to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure seeking more parking and alerting him to the developing need. It is obvious to all who travel the streets surrounding the station that the car parking provided when the new station was built simply cannot cope. It was with great pleasure that I was able to share in the announcement on 3 August this year that the Minister had decided to make a grant of \$2.75 million to Blacktown City Council to provide 60 extra spaces as part of the work that the council is doing in realigning and widening Railway Terrace adjacent to the railway station. The new spaces will be located in the land between the railway line and the realigned road, which is shifting to the east to integrate with the new level of Schofields Road. Schofields Road is a major project being undertaken in my electorate by Roads and Maritime Services to connect the arterial roads of Windsor Road and Richmond Road with a new underpass below the Richmond railway line.

I will continue to urge the Minister to find yet more opportunities to expand car parking capacity at Schofields and other stations on the Richmond line as growth in the area's population continues. The Transport Access Program introduced by this Government is funding car parks and interchanges across the network to support greater use of public transport. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been committed so far to that program

and it continues and will continue to help meet the needs of commuters right across the network. In addition to that, the Sydney Metro Northwest is being constructed to serve my electorate and it is on schedule to reach the region and provide railway services from 2019.

There will be 1,000 car parking spaces at Cudgegong Road station, which I hope soon has a new name with a newly identified suburb locality. That will obviously relieve the pressure for people in The Ponds area in particular who at the moment have only Schofields to access. Even better, the Sydney Metro Northwest line can be extended in future because this Government has identified a corridor for that extension through to Marsden Park and is investigating the possibility of taking it even further with the eventual hope that it may connect with the main western line in the region of St Marys. There are also bus routes being rolled out to serve the people of the region. Many additional services and some new routes have been provided by this Government. I will continue to lobby for new routes and services to serve residents in those new suburbs in the best possible way.

All of this development is testimony to the fact that we have a government that made hard decisions early in its term to rein in its finances, to balance its budgets and to make available the funds that are needed to provide services and facilities to people right across this State and particularly in growing areas like the electorate of Riverstone. I congratulate the Cabinet and the whole Government for making these decisions so that we can put people first across New South Wales and do the things that people elect governments to do. I particularly thank and congratulate the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, the Hon. Andrew Constance, who in this instance not only listened but took action to meet the needs of the people of Schofields so that they will be able to park at the station in future and make use of the public transport system.

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

Announcements

MEMBER FOR HOLSWORTHY

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that the member for Holsworthy, Ms Melanie Gibbons, and her partner, Mr Kent Johns, have announced the birth of their child, Audrey Freda Johns, at 12.17 p.m. today at a weight of 4.43 kg, which is 9.76 pounds. Mum and bub are doing very well. I may as well announce that my ninth grandchild was born two weeks ago. Jai Joel Smith—not named after the member for Wollondilly—is grandson number six.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I extend a warm welcome to the New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory Girl Guides in the gallery, guests of the Premier, Minister for Western Sydney, and member for Manly. I acknowledge the students, teachers and parents from Eastwood Primary School, Marist College Eastwood, and North Ryde Primary School, who are participating in the Ryde Electorate School Leadership Program. They are guests of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, and the member for Ryde. I also welcome to the gallery the employees and junior diplomats from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Commemorations

CENTENARY OF FIRST WORLD WAR

The SPEAKER (14:19): The ink was barely dry on the Treaty of Bucharest, which ended the Second Balkan War, when the First World War was declared in 1914. Exhausted by two Balkan wars in the preceding two years, the combatants faced difficult choices. For Serbia, whose nationalist agitators were the immediate catalyst for the new hostilities, there was no ambiguity. But for Romania, Bulgaria and Greece the position was much less clear. Having secured their independence from Ottoman Turkey in the preceding century, the Bulgarian, Greek and Romanian peoples each had their own nationalist ambitions that could be advanced from alliance with the competing powers. Each was ruled by royal families of German, Danish or British birth and they had conflicting loyalties between their relatives and those they ruled. The national boundaries of the Balkans were to be totally remade by the events of the First World War, and for each of them the outcome depended upon which choice they made.

Greece exemplified this dilemma with events coming to a head in October 1916—100 years ago. On one side, a king of Danish and Russian parents who was married to a queen of English and German parents, insisted on a policy of neutrality as the safest way of protecting substantial gains for Greece in the Balkan War. On the other side, Prime Minister Venizelos, who was keen to join the Allies following offers of territorial gains in Anatolia from a defeated Ottoman Turkey, was determined to force a change to the policy of neutrality in Greece.

In defiance of his country's official stance, he permitted the Allied forces at Gallipoli to use the Greek island of Lemnos as their base. He was forced from office by the king.

This month, 100 years ago, Venizelos established a separate provisional government in the city of Salonika. This feud between supporters of the King and the supporters of Venizelos is referred to in Greek history as the National Schism. In the short term, Venizelos triumphed, with the King forced to abdicate and Greece declaring war on the Central Powers. In 1920, however, King Constantine was restored to the throne. The plight of these small nations, bullied between competing blocs of great powers, provided impetus for a new approach to the resolution of conflict as part of the post-war settlement with the establishment of the League of Nations.

Ministerial Statement

REGIONAL FLOODING

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) (14:22): Inland New South Wales has been subjected to widespread major flooding in recent weeks. While Forbes, as the most seriously affected major town, has been a focal point during the recent event, there has been major flooding across a broad area. A natural disaster declaration is now in place for 21 local government areas across inland New South Wales: Bathurst, Bland, Blayney, Cabonne, Coonamble, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional, Cowra, Dubbo Regional, Forbes, Gilgandra, Hilltops, Lachlan, Mid-Western Regional, Narromine, Orange, Parkes, Temora, Walgett, Warren, Warrumbungle, and Yass Valley. The Central West in particular has been struck by an unprecedented flood event, with slow-rising floodwaters that have affected a much broader area—some 800 square kilometres—for a much longer period than past flood events.

This has been both a blessing and a curse. As the waters have been slow to rise, communities in their path have had more time to prepare a response. However, as slow as the waters have been to rise, they have been slower than usual to recede. Evacuation orders have remained in place for longer than they otherwise would. Isolated communities like Bedgerebong, which has been completely cut off by floodwaters, may remain inaccessible for weeks. Primary producers are forced simply to watch and wait before being able to clear their paddocks of spoiled crops.

I have been to Forbes on three occasions during the current event. And I acknowledge the member for Fairfield, the shadow spokesperson, who also travelled to Forbes last week. I thank him for attending and supporting the local crews on the ground. On Thursday I also visited Condobolin to meet with the New South Wales State Emergency Service, police, council and other services, and to see the needs facing the region first hand. On each of these occasions I have been struck by the determination and resilience of the locals I have met. Despite the challenges facing the region—some of them face potential isolation of up to six months—it is a testament to the country spirit to see the community pulling together.

On the ground our emergency services, volunteers, councils, state agencies and the army were all working together extremely well. I commend the Minister for Emergency Services and thank him for his support in the deployment of resources into the flooded areas. On behalf of the Government I would like to formally express our sincere gratitude for the efforts of our emergency service volunteers, many of whom have travelled from across the State to the Central West to offer their services. They have put their lives, jobs and families on hold to help out during these floods. This Government appreciates their efforts.

The damage to infrastructure that is caused by floodwaters is well known, and it will be a long and costly exercise to rectify the damage caused by this event. The losses that will be suffered by farmers will be significant. There have been conservative figures of \$700 million of crop losses just in the Forbes local government area [LGA] as just one example. The disruption and loss to business more broadly will be keenly felt throughout the affected areas. But above all else, it is the human impact of natural disasters which affects us all.

Sadly, these floods claimed the life of Robert Linnane. The Rural Fire Service captain was reported missing on Saturday 1 October. A wide-scale search, involving police and more than 100 local volunteers continued over the following days until the tragic discovery of Mr Linnane's body on Wednesday 5 October. Robert was actively involved in the Burcher community, not only through the Rural Fire Service but also as president of the cricket club and the golf club. When he was reported missing, his community rallied like never before. Combined, they put in an outstanding effort to support those services in the search effort. At one stage, there were 20 civilian boats out on the water engaged in the search, along with more than 100 volunteers—an extraordinary effort for a small community. Robert was clearly loved by his community, and his family. Our deepest sympathies go to his family and friends, particularly his partner and his three daughters.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (14:29): Today, I speak on behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition in solidarity with the community of Forbes, in light of the catastrophic weather which has devastated the region. The flooding has come about as a result of continuous significant rainfall in the area since July, with

the water since flowing through to Condobolin. It is estimated that it will be several weeks before the water dissipates from the area. There have been thousands of calls to the New South Wales State Emergency Service, with more than 100 homes affected by flood waters. As mentioned by the Deputy Premier, the area has since been declared a natural disaster zone with the State and Federal governments set to provide disaster recovery funding.

Last week I visited the Forbes community to thank the volunteers, emergency service workers and local residents for their unwavering bravery and resilience in the face of adversity. There have been more than 400 volunteers active in Forbes, alongside the New South Wales State Emergency Service, NSW Rural Fire Service, the NSW Police Force, Fire and Rescue NSW and the Australian Defence Force. In the thick of it, aerial assistance was rendered via helicopter with medical supplies, groceries, sandbags and transportation provided for the remote communities which remained isolated.

Now that the worst of it is over, it is time to look ahead. Speaking to the Forbes community, I discovered that this is exactly where they are looking. The community is to be commended for and congratulated on their tremendous resilience and ability to get stuck in, and get things done. Residents are readying themselves for the upcoming clean-up, and preparing for what is to come. Their dedication, their willingness to help each other and the never-faltering spring in their step is truly admirable, and I respect their commitment not only to their friends and family, but to the whole community—including some people they have never met before. They have gone out and assisted people, as it is the true Aussie spirit to help our mates.

On a personal note, I also need to thank and acknowledge Acting Commissioner Mr Greg Newton and Ms Louise Pallier from State Emergency Service headquarters for their assistance to facilitate my visit to the region alongside the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. David Elliott. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms Joanne Humphries for her tremendous assistance during my visit to the area.

I reiterate my heartfelt thanks and admiration for volunteers, emergency service workers and the residents of Forbes. On behalf of the all members of this House, I am sure, I wish them all the very best. Many farmers lost their crops and livestock as a result of flooding. Residential homes have been decimated and, as mentioned by the Deputy Premier, communities have been displaced. However, the overall impact of the disaster is yet to be fully understood. We will not know the true extent of the damage confronting the Forbes community for quite some time. While noting those losses, on behalf of this House I extend sincere condolences to the Linnane family in the loss of the Mr Robert Linnane, who was a Rural Fire Service captain. Robert is survived by his partner, his three children and his grandchildren.

A message that is abundantly clear to the community is that it is still very dangerous around floodwaters. We ask communities and residents not to let down their guard. We ask the community to follow any warnings and observe any road closures that are in place, which of course are there to protect the community and individuals as well as all families from unnecessary harm. We ask people not to enter closed areas or floodwaters, full stop. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Forbes community and its surrounds.

Governor

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of the following message from the Administrator regarding the administration of the Government of the State:

M J BEAZLEY
Administrator

Government House
Sydney, 26 September 2016

The Honourable Justice Margaret Joan Beazley, AO, Administrator of the State of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that, consequent on the Governor and the Lieutenant-Governor being absent from New South Wales, she has assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Governor regarding the administration of the Government of the State:

DAVID HURLEY
Governor

Government House
Sydney, 1 October 2016

General David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that he has re-assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of the following message from the Administrator regarding the administration of the Government of the State:

M J BEAZLEY
Administrator

Government House
Sydney, 8 October 2016

The Honourable Justice Margaret Joan Beazley, AO, Administrator of the State of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that, consequent on the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), being absent from the State, she has assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Governor regarding the administration of the Government of the State:

DAVID HURLEY
Governor

Government House
Sydney, 9 October 2016

General David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that he has re-assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

Bills

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

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2016

LAND AND PROPERTY INFORMATION NSW (AUTHORISED TRANSACTION) BILL 2016

Assent

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

Joint Sitting

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY

The SPEAKER: I report a message from His Excellency the Governor convening a joint sitting of the members of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly on Wednesday 12 October 2016 at 12.30 p.m. for the purpose of the election of a person to fill the seat in the Legislative Council vacated by Ms Sophie Cotsis.

DAVID HURLEY
Governor

Government House
Sydney, 5 October 2016

I, General The Honourable DAVID HURLEY, AC, DSC (Ret'd), in pursuance of the power and authority vested in me as Governor of the State of New South Wales, do hereby convene a joint sitting of the Members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly for the purpose of the election of a person to fill the seat in the Legislative Council vacated by Ms Sophie Cotsis, and I do hereby announce and declare that such Members shall assemble for such purpose on Wednesday the twelfth day of October 2016 at 12.30 p.m. in the building known as the Legislative Council Chamber situated in Macquarie Street in the City of Sydney; and the Members of the Legislative Council and the Members of the Legislative Assembly are hereby required to give their attendance at the said time and place accordingly.

In order that the Members of both Houses of Parliament may be duly informed of the convening of the joint sitting, I have this day addressed a like message to the President of the Legislative Council.

I direct that the joint sitting with the Legislative Council for the election of a member of the Legislative Council be set down as an order of the day for 12.30 p.m. on Wednesday 12 October 2016, as appointed in His Excellency's message.

Members

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF CANTERBURY

Issue and Return of Writ

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that in accordance with section 70 of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 I issued writs on 23 September 2016 for the election of a member to serve in the place of Linda Jean Burney, resigned. Particulars of the writs are:

Nomination date
Polling day
Return of Writs

Thursday 27 October 2016
Saturday 12 November 2016
Friday 25 November 2016

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF ORANGE**Issue and Return of Writ**

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that in accordance with section 70 of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 I issued writs on 23 September 2016 for the election of a member to serve in the place of Andrew Robert Gee, resigned. Particulars of the writs are:

Nomination date	Thursday 27 October 2016
Polling day	Saturday 12 November 2016
Return of Writs	Friday 25 November 2016

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF WOLLONGONG**Issue and Return of Writ**

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that in accordance with section 70 of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 I issued writs on 23 September 2016 for the election of a member to serve in the place of Noreen Hay, resigned. Particulars of the writs are:

Nomination date	Thursday 27 October 2016
Polling day	Saturday 12 November 2016
Return of Writs	Friday 25 November 2016

*Appointments***ACTING CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND ACTING DEPUTY CLERK**

The SPEAKER: I advise the House of the appointment on 26 September 2016 of Helen Minnican as Acting Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, and of Leslie Eric Gönye as Acting Deputy Clerk.

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

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:36): I direct my question to the Premier. Twenty days ago in this place he said, "The people of New South Wales will make a judgement. Do they want someone to be Premier who stands for nothing ...?" Is it not the case that today he is the Premier who stands for nothing?

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Bankstown wishes to leave the House early, it will happen. Members started badly and, if interjections continue, members will leave early, including Government members.

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:36): I love getting those types of lectures from the Leader of the Opposition.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: In relation to the greyhound racing industry, all of us were united on the issue of stamping out animal cruelty, which is the principle the Government has stood by. It is wrong for Opposition members to say anything other than that. Today the Government announced a different path, but I will have more to say about that shortly.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Leader of the Opposition is happy to say privately, "This is what I think", and then, to grab a political opportunity, state publicly the opposite.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: When the Leader of the Opposition was a member of the upper House, he said, "I'm against of the lease of the port. I don't want leasing of the port", but when he became the Leader of the Opposition in the lower House he said, "Hello! I love it. I want to back in the lease of the port."

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Keira to order for the first time. Opposition members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Leader of the Opposition knows that, as does the member for Maroubra—and here he comes: another man of principle.

Mr Michael Daley: Today is not the day to be acting tough, mate.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have not given the call to the member for Maroubra.

Mr Michael Daley: I am sorry. We are having a friendly conversation.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra should show respect for the conventions of the House. What is the member's point of order?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Will the member for Maroubra be standing with the Leader of the Opposition as Labor's leadership team? He said he would be standing as such in 2015, but said nothing about 2019.

Mr Michael Daley: It is not the day to be pretending to be a tough guy.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will cease arguing and state his point of order.

Mr Michael Daley: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The question did not relate to the Leader of the Opposition. However, if the Premier wants to make the issue about the Leader of the Opposition, he should do so by way of substantive motion. Let us have a debate and we will get stuck into each other now.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. The Premier remains relevant.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We have a track record over the past 5½ years—

Ms Tanya Mihailuk: You certainly do have a track record.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: —that this Government is very, very proud of. Members on the other side of the House remember the privilege of coming to power, because we saw the mess left behind by the Labor Government. We saw that the New South Wales economy was last in the country. This Government has taken the State back to number one in the country—whether it be in jobs, economic growth, retail sales, or business confidence, we are one, one, one, one under this Government.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I hope the member for Maroubra actually has a point of order this time.

Mr Michael Daley: I do. It is Standing Order 129, relevance. The pep talk will not work today, mate. The Premier has too much egg on his face.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. This is so practised, so expected.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It took the member for Maroubra only three weeks to work out that one. I say this to the Leader of the Opposition and other members of the Opposition: This Government was prepared to go to the last election and say that it strongly believed that leasing 49 per cent of the poles and wires provided an opportunity not only to put downward pressure on prices but—

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn Opposition members to cease shouting. Government members will also come to order.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order: Yes, you did. That is when you stood for something, mate, but not anymore.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition should have quoted a standing order and should not get up to the microphone simply to argue.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Leader of the Opposition should now be backing the leasing of the poles and wires. One day he comes into this place and says we should stand for something and should be doing it; well, he should back it in. On the back of that decision, the Government will spend \$20 billion on infrastructure for the people of New South Wales, and it is very proud to be doing that. Those on the other side of the House, when they were in government, did not have the guts to do that, but we do.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I will not listen to this point of order until the House comes to order.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The question was not about electricity; in fact, it was about what the Premier stands for. If the Premier stands for anything, he should answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier remains relevant. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.

GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY BAN

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (14:42): My question is addressed to the Premier. How will the Government ensure that the greyhound racing industry in New South Wales is the cleanest in the country in terms of animal welfare?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Londonderry to order for the first time. The Clerk will stop the clock until the House comes to order. The Premier will be heard in silence.

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:42): Madam Speaker—

The SPEAKER: I will give the Premier the full five minutes for his answer, but I am first asking members to come to order. I have already asked them to come to order several times, but they obviously have been given directions on the behaviour to exhibit, and they are exhibiting that behaviour. They will be out of this Chamber if they continue with their childish behaviour. The students in the public gallery should note that this is not the way to behave in a classroom. The Premier has the call.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I acknowledge the Girl Guides in the public gallery and thank them for coming to the Parliament. I am sorry they have to watch this behaviour.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! Was the member for Prospect going to interject during that comment about the Girl Guides?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: In July this the Government announced decisive action in relation to the evidence of systemic animal cruelty in the greyhound industry. As we considered the report and the weight of the findings within it, our strong sense was that the right thing to do was to close down the industry at that time.

Mr Chris Minns: And the polling.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have just warned the member for Kogarah about his behaviour, and now I call him to order for the first time.

Ms Prue Car: And Ray Hadley.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: That is what I decided, Cabinet decided, and the Government decided to do. We thought that as the community of New South Wales saw the evidence and what was in the report they would draw the same conclusion.

Ms Yasmin Catley: What changed?

The SPEAKER: If the member for Port Stephens listened to the Premier's answer then she would find out. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: As I said today that is not the case.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: You're hopeful.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The feedback that we have received from our community, which was considerable, directly said that members of the community were horrified by the animal cruelty, but their strong sense was that we should give the industry one last chance. That is what we will do. Those opposite can say whatever they like, but as I said this morning and I am saying again in this place today, I got it wrong, the Cabinet got it wrong, the Government got it wrong.

Ms Jodie Harrison: Why didn't you listen to them before?

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Ultimately, anyone who thinks that they do not make a mistake must ask themselves whether they are being honest with themselves. Has anyone here not made a mistake? We made a mistake in relation to this ban, and it is something that we will address because it must be addressed. What we heard about the industry was that there was resistance to change. Dr Keniry, in his transition task force, has considered this issue. He believes that there is now a strong sentiment within the industry for change. I can say that my personal conviction and this Government's conviction is that we cannot see animal cruelty in this industry continuing. We

must ensure that it does not continue, and we on this side are firmly united on this, as are members of the community.

Ms Yasmin Catley: What about shutting down puppy farms?

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Swansea that this is not about puppy farms, nor is it a debate.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We must address animal cruelty, and we will. We chose one path, but there is another option that we have now chosen. Today we have announced that the greyhound industry will be given a last chance, providing it meets the toughest animal welfare and regulation requirements in the country. I note that that would not be the case under a government led by the Leader of the Opposition.

Dr Hugh McDermott: We should email you the policy.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We have heard regularly from a range of groups that if we do this we must do it properly, and that is exactly what we will do. We have established a special panel, which will be led by former Labor Premier Morris Iemma, who might be familiar to those opposite. We are determined to ensure that we work together with industry animal welfare groups to guarantee that governance, enforcement and penalties are in place to ensure that we do not return to where we were. Ultimately, that systemic animal cruelty has to stop. This reversal does not mean that we will return to the status quo; it means that we will ensure that it does not happen under this new approach. That is not an easy thing to do because it is difficult for a government to say that it got it wrong.

However, I am saying that that is what happened. We are determined to fix it, which is why we are going about it this way. Ultimately, if those opposite want to condemn us for listening to the community, they should go ahead and do that. We have listened to the community and we have responded. I can assure the House that every member of my Government is determined to do what is right for the people of New South Wales. We are proud of what we have done for the people of New South Wales, whether it be transport, roads, the economy, jobs or services. We will always do the right thing for the people of New South Wales.

GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY BAN

Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (14:48): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. What has been the view of regional communities on greyhound racing and how is the Government responding?

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) (14:49): I thank the member for Oxley for her question and, like all of my Nationals team, her advocacy on behalf of her community on all the issues that impact on it and on addressing all the needs of the regional communities of New South Wales were neglected by those opposite for 16 years that are now being addressed by this Government.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: There is no doubt that the decision on greyhounds has divided opinion across the State, and that is true in regional communities.

The SPEAKER: Opposition members will come to order and cease their interjections.

Mr TROY GRANT: Regional communities, like most across New South Wales and Australia, find abhorrent the level of animal cruelty that was disclosed in the greyhound racing community in New South Wales. After an extensive investigation on the back of two upper House inquiries that showed other collective failings of the industry—overwhelming animal cruelty, failures of governments and ultimately no confidence on the part of the Special Commission of Inquiry that the industry had a future—legislation was introduced. As we all know, the legislation was passed because a majority in both houses of this Parliament had no confidence that the industry could continue. However, our regional communities strongly believe in a fair go.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: They found abhorrent the behaviour and practices of the greyhound industry articulated in that report.

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

Mr TROY GRANT: They did not agree and have spoken loudly and clearly, saying that the industry could be afforded one more chance. We listened to Justice McHugh, who had no confidence that the greyhound industry was able to reform, even if all steps recommended by the special commission of inquiry were implemented. However, part of the response was to appoint Dr John Keniry to lead a transition task force. As the Leader of The Nationals, I was keen to hear the feedback from the industry as he consulted with hundreds of

people across regional communities. Over time, it became clear to him—and he made it clear to us—that he believed there was confidence that under a contracted model put up by the Greyhound Racing Industry Alliance the greyhound industry had the capacity and the will to reform and to address the systemic issues and collective failings within the industry. Collectively, members of The Nationals have done exactly what they have done for 98 years—that is, they have listened to their community and delivered for it.

It is one of the great privileges to stand in this place and to represent a country community, because those communities hold us to account and have a higher level of access and connectivity to their local members than some others do. We respect the people who give us the privilege to serve in this place. In honouring that, we today support the change and acknowledge that we got it wrong in believing that closure was the only option. We acknowledge the sentiment across the regional communities of New South Wales that once the industry demonstrated willingness to reform and to work towards becoming a new greyhound industry, they wanted it to have a second chance. The panel that has been established has given The Nationals party room every confidence that it will give the Government and the community the assurance and confidence that the New South Wales greyhound racing industry will be properly regulated, monitored, structured and held to the highest standards in Australia, if not the world. My message is clear, as the Premier alluded to earlier: Unlike those opposite, who did not listen to regional New South Wales for 16 years—

[*Interruption*]

If you had listened, why did you not build the hospitals they needed? If you had listened to regional communities at any stage in the past decade, why did you not do the road upgrades that they screamed for? If you had listened to them at any time in the past 16 years, why did they not— [*Extension of time*]

If you had listened to the people of regional New South Wales, you would not have left this State's economy in the toilet.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: When Opposition members cease shouting, I will hear the member's point of order.

Mr Guy Zangari: The Deputy Premier knows better than anyone else that he should direct his comments through the Chair. Standing Order 129 deals with relevance, and what he is saying now is not relevant—

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. The Deputy Premier is being completely relevant.

Mr TROY GRANT: Listening to regional communities is the most relevant thing for the New South Wales Nationals, something that those opposite have denied them for 16 years—listening and delivering. Unlike those opposite, when we get it wrong, we have the humility to say that we got it wrong and we fix it. Those opposite do not have that capacity. It will be a sad and sorry day for this State and regional New South Wales if those opposite ever return to the government benches. We will keep listening and deny them that opportunity on behalf of regional communities, who deserve better than them. We are better on our worst day than Labor is on its best day.

The SPEAKER: All members who have been called to order for a first or second time are now deemed to be on three calls to order. I warn those members who are on one or two calls to order—such as the member for Maitland and those screaming alongside and behind her—that they are now on three calls to order. Members who continue to scream and shout will be removed from the Chamber.

GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY BAN

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:56): My question is directed to the Premier. On 23 August the Premier said in relation to the outlawing of greyhound racing:

No matter how difficult it is, this is a right and principled decision ...

Why has the Premier today taken a decision he considers to be both wrong and unprincipled?

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:56): I do not say that and I will not say that. Just because the Leader of the Opposition says that, it does not make it true. In fact, it is the exact opposite. One has to understand the context.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We on this side of the House have explained in a very clear way that everyone in this Government is absolutely against the animal cruelty that was revealed in the special commission of inquiry. There are two paths to take to deal with that.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: There was one path, which we took. However, we understood on the back of the feedback from the community that there was a desire for us to take the other path, which was to give the industry a chance to reform and to address the issues. The principles around animal cruelty are completely unchanged. Every person in this House, I hope, will back that in. When the legislation is introduced, I hope we have a Leader of the Opposition who decides to do what is right rather than to see it as another political opportunity. That will be a challenge for him when he comes in here.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I can hear the chortles and the cheering on the other side. The Opposition thinks it is just going to roll into government, but I have news for members opposite: On this side of the House, every one of us will fight very hard for every vote across the State. I will tell them why—

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: Standing Order 129. Where is the Liberal candidate in Wollongong?

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. If the member does that again, he will be removed from the Chamber. I remind him that he is already on three calls to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Hello, Gordon, where is your Bradbery? What does that mean for the Leader of the Opposition?

[*Interruption*]

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Bankstown and the member for Londonderry to remove themselves from the Chamber for a period of one hour.

[*The member for Bankstown and the member for Londonderry left the Chamber at 14:58 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.*]

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Those opposite have got rid of the hardworking Noreen Hay. Everyone loved Noreen Hay, except for the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Strathfield—I have to add that.

[*Interruption*]

And the member for Shellharbour. How could I forget the member for Shellharbour? Okay—not everyone loved Noreen Hay! We know there were backroom deals being done by the Leader of the Opposition to try to get the member for Wollongong out, and he finally succeeded.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! Does the member for Swansea have a point of order, or is she simply prancing and dancing?

Ms Yasmin Catley: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Madam Speaker, you would have to agree—

The SPEAKER: Not necessarily.

Ms Yasmin Catley: The question was about greyhounds, but that is not what the Premier is talking—

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Members opposite think they will simply roll into power. I can assure them that Government members are up for that fight. What does the Opposition stand for? Has anyone heard the Opposition announce a transport policy? Members opposite are completely against transport in this State.

[*Interruption*]

The SPEAKER: Do not yell at me! I will call the member for Swansea when I am ready.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Get up to the microphone; move it!

Ms Yasmin Catley: Madam Speaker, not very long ago you warned me for not calling out "point of order".

The SPEAKER: What is the member's point of order?

Ms Yasmin Catley: Perhaps we should discuss how loudly I should call—

The SPEAKER: What is the member's point of order?

Ms Yasmin Catley: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: I just ruled on that point of order. There is no point of order.

Ms Yasmin Catley: The Premier is not being relevant to the question.

The SPEAKER: Under Sessional Order 249A, the member for Swansea will remove herself from the Chamber for one hour for continually arguing with the Chair. Members will not argue with the Chair. I made the decision. The member might think that behaviour is dramatic and very convincing, but it is not. She will be out of the Chamber for three hours or a day shortly.

[The member for Swansea left the Chamber at 15:00 accompanied by the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms.]

Mr MIKE BAIRD: This Government is delivering a \$20 billion metro for this great city, it is duplicating the Pacific Highway and upgrading the Princes Highway after a great deal of talk but nothing else from members opposite, it has the budget under control, and it is in a position to build more infrastructure and to deliver more services for the people of New South Wales. The Leader of the Opposition has been in his job for almost two years, but what policies or vision has he offered the people of this State? He stands for nothing.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Macquarie Fields and the member for Prospect will leave the Chamber for one hour.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: This Government will continue to deliver for the people of New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the member deaf? The member for Macquarie Fields and the member for Prospect have been interjecting throughout question time. They cannot hear me because they are continually interjecting. Both of them scream, yell and behave aggressively. It is very impressive—not!

[The member for Macquarie Fields and the member for Prospect left the Chamber at 15:01 accompanied by the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms.]

STATE FINANCES

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:01): I address my question to the Treasurer. What is the Government's record on managing the State's finances, and are there any alternatives?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (15:01): I thank the member for Seven Hills for asking that question because I know he appreciates that having a strong economy and a strong budget means that his constituents have more job opportunities, services and infrastructure. I am pleased to say that last week I was able to confirm for the great people of this State that for the first time a New South Wales government has wiped out net debt in the general government sector.

The SPEAKER: Order! I again warn Opposition members about their behaviour. There will not be many of them left in the Chamber soon. Of course, they can walk out again if they wish.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am pleased to say that the general government sector of New South Wales is in a cash positive position. For the benefit of the member for Keira, that means we do not owe any money in the general government sector—not a single dollar.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: One member opposite said there were no loans. I will explain it to the member later.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We were able to make this historic announcement when we tabled the State sector accounts, which indicated not only that net general government sector debt had been completely wiped out but also that our final budget surplus was \$4.7 billion in 2015-16, mainly due to readjustment valuations. The budget is firmly in the black. Of course, these figures are the result of five years of hard work by this Government. Let us not forget that when the Coalition came to office the New South Wales economy was a basket case. Of course, after five years of hard work by every member on this side of the Chamber we have turned that around. I know that members opposite do not like to be reminded about what they left behind for this Government. However, while we are spending record amounts on infrastructure—

The SPEAKER: Order! Again, there is too much noise in the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: —and the State is in a cash positive position. In 2011-12 the Labor Government left behind a debt of more than \$14 billion.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Cessnock that he can find out later from the Treasurer. He will cease interjecting.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It concerns me that the shadow Minister for Finance does not understand what I am talking about. General government sector net debt is below zero; this State is cash positive. In contrast, members opposite left us more than \$14 billion in debt. Does he get it now? That is a straight comparison. What were members opposite doing when the Labor Government was racking up that debt? The member for Keira was the Deputy Director General of Transport NSW and he was cancelling projects. While he was Minister for Finance, the member for Maroubra was hiring middle managers. That was the Labor Government's approach to resolving the challenges facing this State. We are still trying to work out what the Leader of the Opposition was doing at that time.

I am pleased to say that this Government has wiped out that debt. The Labor Government also left behind a then undisclosed budget black hole of more than \$5 billion. In comparison, this Government has surpluses over the forward estimates of at least \$8 billion. In addition, members opposite left behind a \$30 billion infrastructure backlog. School, hospital, road and rail infrastructure was undelivered and there had been underinvestment for years. This Government has turned that around. Not only has it addressed that backlog but it is also investing more than \$73 billion in infrastructure over the next four years. As the NSW Business Chamber said last week, this Government is the shining light for other governments across the country. We are pleased to hear that comment.

[Extension of time]

We certainly know that the member for Kiera is not a shining light. I recently heard him complain on radio that the State Budget has doubled in the past decade. Guess what? Economic growth is a good thing; spending more on schools, roads and rail is a good thing. It pains me to reveal to the House what the member says outside this place. However, it is a reminder of what happens when members opposite are in charge, and when they are required to manage the budget process and the New South Wales economy. While last week's announcement about the balance sheet and the budget was historic, this Government knows that those record figures do not mean anything unless we improve the quality of life of every person in this State. We must build infrastructure and provide the quality services that people rely upon day in and day out. Because of this Government's strong economic management over the past 5½ years, it is in a position to deliver the things that matter most to the community. Members opposite will never understand that. Let us hope that it is a long time before they are required to manage the State's budget again.

GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY BAN

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (15:02): I direct my question to the Premier. When the Premier announced his greyhound racing ban on Facebook, he stated, "As a humane and responsible government, we are left with no acceptable course of action except to close down this industry." Why has he now taken a course of action that he considers inhumane, irresponsible and unacceptable?

The SPEAKER: I remind the Leader of the Opposition that this is not a debate across the Chamber. The Premier has the call.

Mr Luke Foley: A big meal of humble pie last night, was it?

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition is being equally difficult. Members will come to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:09): For a start, it is all wrong in the sense that our concern, as I have outlined so that the Leader of the Opposition gets it, was a horror at what we saw in the industry—a massive horror. That barbaric animal cruelty cannot continue. As part of that we had a response and announced a response. As I have told the Leader of the Opposition, there was another option. The community has said, "Yes, we are horrified by what we saw, but what we would like you to do—why haven't you?—is give the industry one more chance to address those concerns." So we have done that. There is a context in which that has been asked—

The SPEAKER: This is the final warning for the member for Port Stephens, who is already on three calls to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: —by the industry, by the community, to give a fair go to the industry and to give them that opportunity, and we have done that. If members opposite want to criticise us for listening, go ahead. But I can tell them we have not changed our principles on standing against the animal cruelty we saw. We have not changed that at all—the exact opposite. If those opposite want to continue to use the issue, they can go ahead. We are going to stand up for what we believe in, which is standing against that animal cruelty and all those

barbaric practices. The Government and the industry are obviously looking at the option of listening to its recommendations, implementing them and responding. That is what we are doing.

The Leader of the Opposition thinks that he can just roll into government. Well, I wish him all the best with that, because ultimately he is going to have to tell the people of New South Wales at some point what he is going to do with the health system and the education system. Decisions we made early in government, which those opposite all opposed—all those budget decisions—have enabled us to put more than 10,000 nurses into our hospitals and teachers into our schools. Those opposite opposed those decisions. On top of that, it is this Government that signed up to the Gonski arrangement, which gives opportunities across regional New South Wales—

The SPEAKER: The member for Cessnock will cease arguing across the Chamber. I direct the member for Cessnock to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of two hours.

[The member for Cessnock left the Chamber at 15:11 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. We all support Gonski, but we would like to know about greyhounds. The Premier was asked a question specifically related to greyhounds.

The SPEAKER: The whole answer has been generally relevant to the question the Premier was asked.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is a good example of what we are proud of and what we stand for, because ultimately we believe that every student in New South Wales—it does not matter what school they attend or their postcode—deserves the same education and the same funding. That is what this Government is delivering on a basis of need. That is what the Gonski funding does. The Leader of the Opposition thinks that he can roll into power. I wish him good luck with that. We have not heard one economic statement from him in two years. We have no idea if he has ever read a budget paper in his life. Ultimately what we stand on is what we have delivered for the people of this great State over almost six years.

The SPEAKER: I direct the member for Port Stephens to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of two hours.

[The member for Port Stephens left the Chamber at 15.12 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We are very proud. Have a look at the record. Have a look at what we have done in terms of our frontline services. Have a look at what we have done with the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS]. Have a look at what we have done with infrastructure. If members go from one end of the State to the other, they can see more cranes in New South Wales than there have been in the history of this State.

Ms Jodi McKay: Unfortunately I seem to be the only one left.

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

Ms Jodi McKay: Yes. My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: I have just ruled on that.

Ms Jodi McKay: It is the same as what I mentioned last time. Can we get back to greyhounds?

The SPEAKER: The Premier remains generally relevant. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.***

ENERGY SUPPLY SECURITY

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (15:13): My question is addressed to the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy. How is the Government ensuring that we have a reliable and affordable supply of energy to drive down the cost of living, and are there any related matters?

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) (15:13): I thank the member for Northern Tablelands and the Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy for his question and his keen interest in ensuring an affordable cost of living for New South Wales consumers. But how incredible! Today I am totally pleased, flabbergasted and in fact elated that New South Wales for the first time in a long time is in the black. I congratulate the Premier, the Treasurer and all those on this side for the hard work that they have done, because we are first on all indicators and in the black. New South Wales has never been going so strong.

As I have toured parts of New South Wales and other regional and remote cities like Melbourne I have come to a new understanding—I think there are three cranes over the city of Adelaide; there are probably more

cranes over Dubbo at the moment—that we are part of a global city and we are going incredibly well. To compare and contrast that, as the Hon. Brad Hazzard reminds us, we remember those dark days when being in the black in New South Wales was so unthinkable under the previous Government that we would not even want to go near it. Members opposite certainly did not want to go near it. They were running away from it as fast as possible. But I digress.

As a bit of a segue into that, we are all well aware that just under two weeks ago, unfortunately in South Australia there was a situation that we all thought was unthinkable—just like being in the black under those opposite was unthinkable. We planned for it the situation in South Australia and we prayed that it would never happen. Thanks to a series of raging storms, the entire population of South Australia was plunged into darkness, which is known as a system black. This, I can inform the House, has been a wake-up call for the entire nation as energy security is a national priority and New South Wales is leading the way. Without that energy security, life as we know it today would be severely compromised.

Last week I was pleased to represent New South Wales at a meeting in Melbourne with my Federal and State colleagues. We agreed to an independent review into the South Australian incident. That review will be led by Australia's Chief Scientist. Integrating greater levels of renewable energy into the grid is more complex than for a standard coal- or gas-fired generator. The variable nature of renewables output means improved but also more costly technology and systems are required to maintain stability within the grid. In Melbourne we all agreed on the benefits, of course, of renewable technology. However, we agreed that we must ensure that the transition to greater renewable energy does not compromise our secure and affordable power supply. We must acknowledge the reality that we will need to rely on coal and gas as part of our energy needs well into the foreseeable future. This Government understands that energy must be available and affordable to all, including the most vulnerable within our community.

The SPEAKER: The member for Rockdale will cease interjecting.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Unlike the Labor Government, delivering double-digit power price increases year in, year out, our focus is on putting downward pressure on energy prices. Following the successful deregulation of retail electricity prices in 2014, I am pleased to inform the House that we have committed to implementing the same reform for gas from 1 July 2017. Recently the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] confirmed that increased competition was having a positive impact on the marketplace—something that we have been telling this House for some time and something that those opposite fail to understand. The removal of retail electricity price regulation has lowered barriers to entry and expanded the New South Wales market for energy retailers. Further, IPART found that there had been a substantial increase in market-led product and service innovation, which of course benefits all consumers.

Gas is a vital component of our energy mix and supplies some 1.3 million households, 35,000 small businesses and 500 large industrial customers across this great State. Again, recent reports from the Australian Energy Market Commission and IPART confirm increasing numbers of competitive offers in many regional areas. In Queanbeyan, for example, the number of active retailers has tripled since the beginning of 2016, which has facilitated a fourfold increase in available residential offers. The 260,000 households that remain on the regulated tariff are going to be encouraged to take advantage of the retail offers available. [*Extension of time*]

Arrangements will be put in place to assist households with a transition to deregulated retail gas prices, ensuring more choice for regional customers. It is the Government's expectation that retailers continue to improve the level of competition in regional areas. This will continue as our Government drives and delivers reform. It is interesting that Opposition members opposed deregulation and opening up a competitive market. They have opposed every part of every reform that we have undertaken. There is not one member opposite who has not benefited from the reforms we have undertaken. They voted against them, they fought against them and they publicly attacked them, but the number of members opposite who have changed and switched, thanks to a competitive marketplace—and we can go through those seat by seat—

Dr Geoff Lee: Name them.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: We will down the track. Members opposite are now saving hundreds of dollars on their household bills, while in this place they fought against the reforms.

Dr Geoff Lee: They want the benefits.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: They got the benefits. Spot on, member for Parramatta. We had to take them groaning and screaming through the legislation, and they still voted against it. This Government will continue to stand up for the vulnerable and for workers. As the member for Hawkesbury keeps saying, this party is for the workers. We will keep fighting to ensure that, unlike those opposite, we keep downward pressure on the cost of living for the residents of New South Wales.

GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY BAN

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (15:19): My question is directed to the Premier. On 21 September the Premier said in this place in respect of the greyhound ban, "We are going to stand for what we believe is right on that issue and on every issue." Have the people of New South Wales not learnt today that the only thing he really believes in is his own political survival?

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:20): No, they have not. They have found out, yet again, that this Government listens and stands up for what it believes in. That is what we do on a regular basis. I can see the Opposition's advisers chuckling away. They are having a great day. I say this: Members on this side of the House are determined to do the right thing by the people of New South Wales in everything they do. As I have said today, we have not got everything right. We are addressing and fixing that situation. Every person in this House and in this Government understands the privilege it is to be a member of Parliament. We understand the privilege it is to be in government. I can say that there is not one second of any day that a member on this side of the House is not doing everything possible to look after their community and to make a great contribution to this State.

Every member in this House should understand that we are here because our communities have given us that opportunity. At the last election the State gave us an opportunity to govern. That is not a privilege that I take lightly. It is an incredible opportunity and I take it with deep humility, understanding that it is an opportunity to deliver policies and outcomes that improve the lives of people. We are determined to do that every day of the week. We will continue to do that. We are proud of what this Government has done, but there is a lot more to do. If members of the Opposition think they are going to roll into government, they are wrong. We will fight for every vote because we want New South Wales to keep leading the nation, economically and in jobs. We want New South Wales to lead the nation in infrastructure. We want to deliver the metro, for which the Opposition gave us a \$500 million bill but nothing else. We are delivering it. We are delivering the roads, the schools, the hospitals, and the services this State deserves, and we are proud of it.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (15:22): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning. How are the highest housing completion figures in 16 years contributing to housing affordability?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) (15:22): Hello everyone, colleagues on this side of the House, and comrades on the other side. Thank you very much to those with the fortitude to—

Mr Paul Lynch: We are not your comrades.

Mr ROB STOKES: I will respond to the interjection from the member for Liverpool. I have no doubt that if we were in the nascent Soviet Union some 100 years ago the member for Liverpool would have had me taken off to the Gulag, would have had me purged at a show trial. But, fortunately, today we are a free and freedom-loving people in the State of New South Wales. I am here to talk about the great opportunities that this Government and this State are providing to people to get into the housing market. I thank the member for Riverstone for his question—

Mr David Mehan: How much have house prices gone up?

Mr ROB STOKES: I will get to the interjection of the member for The Entrance. The member for Riverstone is determined to ensure that there is as much supply of housing as possible in his electorate to meet the needs of the growing community. The member for Riverstone and I recently announced new plans for 7,000 new homes around the new Cudgegong Road station. As part of that development, 2,300 homes have been rezoned around Riverstone East and there are new employment plans for Box Hill, which is in the electorate of the member for Castle Hill. He is also a passionate advocate for sustainable and inclusive growth that makes life better for people. This growth will create new homes and new parklands. In Riverstone East alone we have 34 hectares of additional parks. Through careful planning and matching planning with infrastructure, we have been able to bring forward the delivery of approximately 2,000 new homes in Schofield East, which is much earlier than was originally anticipated. This is the result of matching infrastructure delivery with housing supply.

A member opposite interjected and asked what we are doing about housing affordability. The simple answer is: We cannot address a lack of housing supply without supplying more houses. It is really a simple case of supply and demand. While there is a range of useful interventions that can be made and considered in a range of different contexts, such as shared equities, subsidised rental schemes and taxation levers, a responsible government must ensure that it supplies infrastructure so that rezonings can become a reality so it is feasible for development and that land can be released so that homes will be constructed. That is why in the past 12 months we have seen 2,300 new homes constructed in Riverstone. The important statistic is that while we have levels of

housing approvals that have not been seen since the last Liberal Government in 1995—we now have housing approvals at 73,000 per annum—currently there are 65,000 homes under construction. Delivery of completed new homes is now more than 30,000 per annum, which is a level that has not been seen in this city for more than 15 years.

I have already mentioned housing affordability, which is a problem of legacy. The challenge we have is that since 1995—for a decade and more—we have seen housing approvals and housing construction fall to all-time lows, which has opened up a gap that is conservatively estimated to be an unmet supply of between 70,000 and 100,000 new homes. That is why this Government is getting on with the job of ensuring that we have the infrastructure so that we can match housing delivery and connect homes and jobs. [*Extension of time*]

Members on this side of the House recognise that housing is ultimately a question about making lives better for people. We must ensure that we provide new homes in well-designed communities with good connections to jobs, education opportunities, recreation and all the sorts of things that we want our children and our communities to take for granted. We appreciate that this city is getting bigger and that the population of this State is increasing. We appreciate that we face an unprecedented challenge. Over the next 20 years or so we will require an additional 725,000 new homes just to meet the demand of new residents coming into this city and this State, with 100,000 new residents in New South Wales every year. To address this we need to provide more homes and the infrastructure to ensure that home sites turn into housing construction and housing completions.

That is why I—along with everyone on this side of the House—am proud to be part of a government that is responsible for the biggest infrastructure boom this State has ever seen. We have \$73.3 billion worth of capital infrastructure in the pipeline over the next four years. The importance of this infrastructure in places like Riverstone—in Alex Avenue and Hambledon Road—has been recognised with the Housing Acceleration Fund and the \$20 billion Sydney Metro project. All these projects are facilitating the construction of new homes. With the construction of new homes we can address housing affordability and make people's lives better.

GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY BAN

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (15:30): My question is directed to the Premier.

Mr Brad Hazzard: You don't learn, do you?

The SPEAKER: I ask the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing to come to order.

Ms Jodi McKay: Throw him out.

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Strathfield that the Minister has not interjected 20 times. The member for Maroubra is still here, and he has interjected 20 times. He should consider himself lucky.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: Given that the member for Clarence and the member for Cootamundra are the only members of this Government to lose their jobs over the Premier's greyhound ban, now that he has adopted their policy why does he not do the decent thing and reappoint both of them to their parliamentary secretary positions?

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:31): The remit of the Leader of the Opposition has expanded to appointments on the Government's side. That seems to be what he wants to do.

The SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I say to the Opposition—and this is the last time I will say it in relation to this issue—that we have all made mistakes. Opposition members know that because they made a decision at some point to make the Leader of the Opposition their leader. They all understand that and they all talk about it. They say, "We should not have done that. What are we going to do?" Do not worry, they are working on it. Look at the member for Summer Hill and the member for Kogarah; they are very friendly. They have Opal cards to get back and forth to the electorates so that they can get the numbers together, because they know that they have made a mistake. People do make mistakes, but my strong hope for our sake—for the sake of everyone on this side of the Chamber—is that the Leader of the Opposition stays in his job for a very long time.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Has the Premier finished his answer? He has. The member will resume her seat. The time for questions has expired.

*Documents***REGISTER OF DISCLOSURE BY MEMBERS**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with clause 21 of the Constitution (Disclosure by Members) Regulation 1983, I table the Register of Disclosures by Members of the Legislative Assembly as at 30 June 2016. I order that the document be printed.

AUDITOR-GENERAL**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the Auditor-General's Financial Audit Report, Volume Four 2016, received out of session on 6 October 2016 and authorised to be printed.

STATE FINANCES 2015-2016**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the report on State Finances 2015-2016, received out of session on 6 October 2016 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (PAC)****Report: Management of NSW Public Housing Maintenance Contracts**

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH: I table the report of the Public Accounts Committee dated September 2016, entitled "Management of NSW Public Housing Maintenance Contracts", report No. 3/56.

I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 26/56**

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled "Legislation Review Digest No. 26/56", dated 11 October 2016. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: I also table the minutes of the committee meeting regarding Legislation Review Digest No. 25/56.

COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**Chair and Deputy Chair**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 23 September 2016, Geoffrey Keith Provost was elected Deputy Chair of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

STAYSAFE (JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY)**Membership**

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That:

- (1) Christopher Gulaptis be appointed to serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety in place of Adam John Marshall, discharged.
- (2) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES**Membership**

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That Christopher Gulaptis be appointed to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services in place of Adam John Marshall, discharged.

Motion agreed to.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS**Membership**

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That Christopher Gulaptis be appointed to the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics in place of Adam John Marshall, discharged.

Motion agreed to.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

Corrective Centres Public Education Services

Petition requesting the Government to reverse its decision to reduce education roles in Corrective Services NSW and to maintain quality adult education and vocational training in correction centres, received from **Mr Guy Zangari**.

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

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

Ice Smoking Room Proposal

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly rejects any plans for an ice smoking room to be built or operated in the south or south-west region of Sydney, received from **Ms Melanie Gibbons**.

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**.

Wild Horse Cull

Petition opposing the culling of horses and requesting that they be left in situ as outlined in the Kosciuszko National Park Draft Wild Horse Management Plan 2016, received from **Ms Katrina Hodgkinson**.

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

Centennial Park Entry Gate Relocation

Petition requesting the relocation of the Centennial Park main entry gate to face onto Loch Avenue or Dickens Drive, and that a children's or wheelchair crossing not be built on the horse track, received from **Mr Ron Hoenig**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The CLERK: I announce that the following Minister has lodged a response to a petition signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Adrian Piccoli—Safe Schools Coalition—lodged 23 August 2016 (Mr Damien Tudehope).

*Business of the House***BUSINESS LAPSED**

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3) General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) Nos 924 to 925, 927 to 933, 935, 937 and 940 to 957 have lapsed.

*Motions Accorded Priority***STATE ECONOMY****Consideration**

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (15:36): This motion deserves to be accorded priority because building a strong economy and creating a strong balance sheet should be the number one priority for every person in this Chamber. It is certainly the priority of those on the Government benches. New South Wales leads the nation in economic growth. We have come from last, under Labor, to first under the Coalition Government. This Government is delivering record surpluses—a \$3.7 billion surplus this year alone—whilst lowering tax and maintaining the State's triple-A credit rating. At the same time, the Government has delivered a record amount of infrastructure that has improved the lives of citizens across New South Wales. The Government has provided new roads such as the NorthConnex motorway, which will transform the lives of people in communities like mine. This Government has built new hospitals. I know that the member for Wagga Wagga, like many other members in this place, is excited about new hospitals. New schools and other facilities have been delivered across the State by this Coalition Government.

This has all been happening while the Government has been wiping out net sector debt and delivering a cash-positive position for the 2015-16 financial year. There is a reason to be happy. This has not happened by accident; it happened because the Coalition Government has worked damn hard and taken some tough decisions. It has cut public sector wages, controlled expenses and recycled assets. Those were not popular decisions but they were right in order to deliver a dividend to this State in the form of new hospitals, new roads, new schools and new infrastructure. Government members have a different view to the view held by Opposition members about debt. Anyone wanting to understand Labor's position on debt should go to the Sky News website where Sam Dastyari—Shanghai Sam—explains it. An article states, "Dastyari blames debt saga on NSW Labor habit". When asked why a Chinese businessman paid his bill, the article reports that Senator Dastyari said:

... it was an old habit from his days with the NSW Labor Party in which if you overspend on a campaign you raise that money from donors ...

This Government has a very different attitude from that to debt. This Government works hard to deliver surpluses in this State, drive down debt, and deliver infrastructure right across the State, which is very different from the Labor Opposition.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind a significant number of members that they are on three calls to order. If they are called to order again, they will be removed from the Chamber.

GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY BAN**Consideration**

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (15:40): The motion of which I have given notice should be accorded priority because today there is only one issue in New South Wales politics. For weeks and weeks, there has been only one issue in New South Wales politics—the Premier's greyhound racing ban. Where is the man of principle today? What happened to him? Look at the Premier now. He is vanishing from the Chamber like a puff of smoke. What a busted flush this Premier is! Mike Baird used to be somebody. What happened to him? Mike Baird lectured us piously that he, above all of us, knows what is right; that he, like no other leader, is a principled man and a virtuous man; and that he alone is a moral man. He lectured us that he was special. He was somebody who was throwing the moneychangers out of the temple, only today to join them. This is the moral man—someone who has the hide to lecture me about principle for three months.

I am proud that I and the party I lead have stood up for principle. The principle for which we have stood up over a period of 125 years is for working-class people to be given a fair go. We rejoice in the capitulation of the Premier today. We celebrate it and we celebrate the fact that last night the Premier had to eat a large serve of humble pie and again today, an even larger serve. Let us examine the hypocrisy of the Premier. On 3 August the Premier stated:

The Leader of the Opposition wants the slaughter of thousands of healthy dogs to continue.

Yet today the Premier adopted a policy for which I have been advocating—not a policy of slaughtering healthy dogs, but of stamping out animal cruelty and of keeping the sporting industry going as a way of life for thousands of our fellow citizens. The Premier has never been to a greyhound track. He looked down on those who are involved in the greyhound racing industry. His decision reeked of elitism. There was a whiff of class prejudice about this issue from the start. Everybody in this House and everybody in New South Wales who follows politics today knows this about our Premier: He is not what he once was. He is a busted flush. Now that he has backflipped, he should do the same in relation to a few other issues such as the privatisation of hospitals, forced council mergers, the destruction of urban heritage, the cleansing of a working-class community in Millers Point. He might want to start there. [*Time expired*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Despite the number of members who have left the House or who have been asked to leave, I remind members who remain that a number of members are still on three calls to order. Some of those were very vocal during the speech made by the Leader of the Opposition. The question is that the motion as moved by the member for Hornsby be accorded priority.

The House divided.

Ayes49
Noes24
Majority.....25

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Elliott, Mr D
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Kean, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Pavey, Ms M
Piccoli, Mr A
Rowell, Mr J
Smith, Ms T
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Ms L

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Evans, Mr L
Hazzard, Mr B
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Marshall, Mr A
Parker, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V
Goward, Ms P
Henskens, Mr A
Johnsen, Mr M
Leong, Ms J
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Skinner, Ms J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McKay, Ms J
Park, Mr R
Warren, Mr G (teller)

Atalla, Mr E
Dib, Mr J
Foley, Mr L
Haylen, Ms J
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
Mehan, Mr D
Piper, Mr G
Watson, Ms A

Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Hornery, Ms S
Lynch, Mr P
Minns, Mr C
Robertson, Mr J
Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Baird, Mr M
Grant, Mr T

Hoenig, Mr R
Smith, Ms K

Question agreed to.

STATE ECONOMY**Priority**

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (15:52): I move:

That this House notes that:

- (1) The New South Wales Government under the Liberals and Nationals has wiped out the State's net debt and delivered a cash positive result in 2015-16.
- (2) Notes that this is the first time on record that New South Wales is in a cash positive position.
- (3) Acknowledges that this is the result of hard work, strong fiscal discipline and careful economic management by the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals.
- (4) Recognises that at the same time the Government is investing record amounts on infrastructure and services whilst securing the State's triple-A credit rating.

What is there not to be happy about? This is a good day for New South Wales. We are back in the black, and there is good news as far as the eye can see. This Government has wiped out the State's net debt and delivered a cash-positive result in 2015-16. The total State sector accounts showed a final surplus of \$4.7 billion in 2015-16, an improvement of \$1.3 billion since the June 2016 budget forecast. General government sector net debt fell from \$5.5 billion at 30 June 2015 to negative \$57 million at 30 June 2016. This means that New South Wales was in a cash-positive position for the first time on record, and the budget is firmly back in the black. New South Wales is leading the nation on economic and fiscal management. Our fiscal discipline and asset recycling strategy have allowed us to invest record amounts on infrastructure whilst securing our triple-A credit rating.

My electorate of Hornsby, like other electorates represented in this Chamber, has been a major beneficiary of this Government's fiscal discipline. This Government has allocated the funds for building the new Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital, a project that was neglected for years by the Labor Government—in fact, there were possums running around in the operating theatres because of the fiscal neglect of those opposite when they were in government. This Government is building the NorthConnex motorway, a game changer for everyone in the north of Sydney. It will remove 40,000 cars and 5,000 trucks a day from Pennant Hills Road. It will return the suburbs to the communities. These are just a few of many examples of the dividend realised by delivering a strong budget position and a strong economy. That is exactly what this Government is doing.

This unprecedented infrastructure program is also supporting our booming jobs market and a solid housing construction industry, and helping to boost consumer confidence and business investment. The improved surplus compared to the June 2016 budget forecast was due largely to one-off items and tough decisions that were made by the New South Wales Government, which include the efficiency measures we have implemented since 2011 and the wages policy of limiting public sector wage increases to 2.5 per cent which means we will have saved \$2.5 billion since 2011. The efficiency dividend is keeping a tight rein on back-office expenses, saving \$8.32 billion since 2011 and allowing record expenditure on front-line services like health and education. The asset recycling program means that we can fund record amounts of infrastructure without racking up debt. We have controlled expenses growth by keeping expenditure below long-term revenue growth. At the same time we have maintained the State's triple-A credit rating to keep down the costs of borrowing and boost confidence in the New South Wales economy.

Let the record show that we have delivered record surpluses. We have lowered taxes and cut net debt. We have delivered zero net government debt at the same time as building record infrastructure to improve the lives of the residents of New South Wales from Albury to the Tweed. These projects are happening right across the State. Our ability to fund these projects did not happen by accident but because of the hard work and tough decisions of this Government. This Government listens to communities and responds to the concerns of communities by delivering what it says it will deliver. Communities like mine in Hornsby and communities right across New South Wales have benefited from this Government delivering a strong budget and so growing a strong economy. We have been able to deliver record infrastructure and improve services so as to improve the lives of every resident of this State. I am proud to be part of the team that has delivered this result, and I am confident that the taxpayers and residents of New South Wales will recognise the results of that hard work.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (15:57): The member for Hornsby made a comment about what the Labor Government left when those opposite came to power. As the former Minister for Finance will attest, we left a triple-A credit rating. It was nice for the new Liberal-Nationals Government to open the door to a triple-A credit rating, so I make that point straight away. I now go to the heart of the issue of net debt. Government members want everyone to pat them on the back for selling nearly every public asset they can get their hands on. All the revenue the State used to get from those public assets has now gone. Those opposite have sold all those assets and paid off some debt. They have sold the house and paid the credit card and now they want Opposition members to give them a pat on the back. That is interesting because when I look at the estimated financial statements and the

Auditor-General's report to find out where net debt is heading I find that net debt to June 2020 is predicted to be around \$23 billion.

What the Government wants credit for now is for coming in and selling income-generating assets for a one-off sugar hit to pay down debt so it can stand up at a given point and say, "We've got no debt," although the net trajectory is going up. I do not understand why that is something it wants to raise. We know today has been a terrible day for the Government, but we also expect it on a day like today not to serve up silly red herrings like this to try to make everyone in this place think that this Government is fiscally responsible.

What was revealed yesterday is very interesting: The Government says it has kept a cap on expenses, but it has not kept a cap on consultants' expenses. Consultants' expenses are now through the roof. This Government is spending hundreds of millions of dollars a year contracting out decision-making to the private sector. That is not a Government that is fiscally responsible. There is a whole lot of government department employees. But we are not using government department employees. We are duplicating and spending hundreds of millions of dollars extra of taxpayers' money. That is fantastic; that is very fiscally responsible—there is no doubt about it.

The next thing is about first home buyers. How are we making sure that the benefits that we have been able to achieve and the money that we have received through the booming property market—this Government would have us believe that it is controlling that, but anyway—are going back to first home buyers? Is it going back to first-time buyers? No, it is absolutely not. First home buyers requiring loans are at record low levels, because this Government has gone out of its way to make first home ownership a distant dream. For the first time there will be a generation—you can loosely call it those under 30—that will struggle to afford a home. That has never happened.

If the Government is going to say, "We've never done this and never done that," it should go out to south-western Sydney, where the member for Campbelltown comes from, and it should talk to some people in Campbelltown about the struggles they face to get into the housing market. It should then tell them that the Government is using the record windfalls from a booming housing market and the rivers of gold of stamp duty to make it easier for mums and dads and young people in south-western Sydney, Western Sydney, the Illawarra, the Central Coast and the Hunter to afford a home. On another day, give us another issue.

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (16:02): Today we recognise that general government sector net debt in New South Wales has been paid off, moving from a toxic \$5.5 billion at 30 June 2015 to a negative \$57 million at 30 June 2016. It is no secret that in the past some State governments in New South Wales have spared little thought for what happens outside the Newcastle, Sydney, Wollongong triangle, as we have just heard. It has been a joke for as long as I can remember—and, like all good jokes, there is a kernel of truth inside. Today we have a State Government that has strongly signalled its commitment to bring modern facilities and infrastructure to regional New South Wales. I draw attention to two aspects of this economic achievement as they impact on regional New South Wales.

First, asset recycling is an important theme of this Government. I am sure most members could identify government buildings and facilities in their electorates that are no longer used or underused. In Albury we are seeing asset recycling in action. Our former motor vehicle registry, which was styled like a *Star Wars* outpost on a far-flung planet, has been traded in for brand-new premises in the centre of the city as part of the process of improving delivery of government services through Service NSW centres. Other somewhat derelict government sites are being tidied up and sold off, and new infrastructure is being developed, particularly roads and regional hospitals, or multipurpose services [MPSs] as they are known. This kind of infrastructure supports economic development while simultaneously demonstrating to country people and businesses that they have a future where they live.

Second, there has been action to review how State agencies are staffed and run to save on waste and provide services where and when the people of New South Wales want them. No member enjoys having these reviews in their electorate, as they can result in staff redundancies. But I have been surprised at what can be uncovered through the process such as revealing, over the course of a year, the extensive periods on certain days when railway ticket office staff sold no train tickets. Customers are changing behaviour, so we are seeing reductions in some railway office staff positions while benefiting from increased staffing of the express passenger train [XPT]. It is vital that the State Government actively manages the resources of the State, particularly as new technologies are reforming almost everything about the way our businesses and residents work and play.

Indeed, I note the Treasurer yesterday announced proposed changes to 227 boards, committees and other entities as part of eliminating duplication. This alone could save \$40 million a year. "Zero State debt" is a beautiful tagline, but it is not the real story. There is no particular magic in the word "zero". No, the important story here is that of a Government that has taken the New South Wales economy from the very bottom to the very top. It is a story of sound—indeed clever—economic management replacing economic failure, neglect and the inward focus

brought about by political operatives rather than policymakers. The change began when our Premier was the Treasurer, and it has continued through to today's remarkable Treasurer. I congratulate and thank them.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:06): I would have thought that those opposite might have eaten a little humble pie today, but clearly not. It is groundhog day: a Government promoting itself and giving itself a good pat on the back, but in this case at the cost of hardworking taxpayers around New South Wales. The Government wants to take credit for the very thing that local families and every worker in this State are working hard to provide, because they are the ones who provide the revenue for this economy. Newsflash to those opposite: We know that they seek praise and seek to take credit for something that they have not provided. Those opposite know they should not be taking credit for this. The Treasurer should thank the people of New South Wales.

Most of all, the TransGrid stamp duties are what essentially paid this debt. Through the Government's excessive privatisation agenda, rivers of gold are flowing into one area of the State budget. We are seeing the results, but we are also seeing the results in State revenue. It is very easy for the Government to look past a few other issues such as, in the 2016-17 budget, \$32 billion worth of borrowings with net interest of \$2.2 billion per annum. My friend the member for Cessnock clearly outlined to me earlier that, as we on this side are very aware, there is one bucket of money that has been collected from the sale of these assets but another bucket of money that simply has not been calculated. It is not making sense: The Government is clearly trying to mislead the people of New South Wales.

To cut a long story short, we have a greedy government that is out of touch with the needs and aspirations of every man, woman and child in this State. It has cut our health services to the bone with a scalpel; it has taken to our vocational education institutions with a sledgehammer. It has come through towns and collected the money and simply is not in a position to give it back. How could the Government possibly wave a flag of pride for this result in any town in this State when all the while waiting times in hospitals are increasing, aspiring young people are trying to enter the housing market, which has never been this hard, and student leaders are trying to get into TAFE courses that no longer exist because the Government has carved them to pieces? An editorial heading in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 5 October asks, "Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian boasts NSW is debt free, but for how long?". It is a very good question. I will close on this, because liabilities grew by \$16.6 billion to \$195 billion in 2015-16 and remain unaddressed:

The budget papers also show the broader measure of "total government sector" net debt—which includes the liabilities of State-owned businesses such as utilities ...

This is not a good outcome for the people of New South Wales.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (16:09): In reply: It is appropriate that I bring this debate back to reality. The fantasyland argument mounted by the shadow Treasurer and his sidekick is nothing but a work of fiction. They would have us believe that the great Labor Party—the party of the people—has never proposed selling public assets. I recall that the Labor Government prorogued Parliament in the dead of night so that it could flog off the State's electricity generation assets. It did that in a deceptive, underhanded way, but members opposite did not say a word. The shadow Treasurer decried the fact that, as he put it, this Government sold the State's electricity assets for a short-term sugar hit. Who was first to undertake such a sale? It was a Labor government.

Bob Carr and Morris Iemma understood economics and they proposed selling assets because they realised that doing so was in the best interests of the State. This new breed of Jeremy Corbynites, led by the shadow Treasurer, wants to socialise everything; they want to regain government control of everything in this State. This Government will not fall for that. It will do everything it can to continue to grow the economy and to put this State in a strong financial position. Only by doing that can it deliver the infrastructure and services that this State missed out on for 16 years under members opposite, who put politics before good policy. New South Wales missed out on schools, hospitals, roads, and other infrastructure because of their negligence and inaction.

They have talked a good game here today. They talked about their fight for the poor people involved in vocational education and training. However, they have forgotten that this Government implemented Julia Gillard's Smart and Skilled reforms. They also talked about first home owners, but they have not come up with one policy that would make life easier for the people about whom they are supposedly concerned. They are all talk and no action, which is typical of the Labor Party. Members opposite do not have a policy solution for first home owners nor for those involved in vocational education. They simply complain. Unlike this Government, they do not have a positive agenda. This Government has a positive plan to build the State's balance sheet, the economy, and the State. It has a plan to deliver better services and infrastructure for every resident of this great State. Members on this side of the Chamber are committed to making New South Wales number one again, and that is exactly what we are doing.

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

The House divided.

Ayes48
 Noes31
 Majority.....17

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
 Barilaro, Mr J
 Brookes, Mr G
 Coure, Mr M
 Elliott, Mr D
 Greenwich, Mr A
 Henskens, Mr A
 Johnsen, Mr M
 Maguire, Mr D
 O'Dea, Mr J
 Perrottet, Mr D
 Piper, Mr G
 Rowell, Mr J
 Speakman, Mr M
 Toole, Mr P
 Ward, Mr G

Aplin, Mr G
 Berejiklian, Ms G
 Conolly, Mr K
 Crouch, Mr A
 Evans, Mr L
 Gulaptis, Mr C
 Hodgkinson, Ms K
 Kean, Mr M
 Marshall, Mr A
 Patterson, Mr C (teller)
 Petinos, Ms E
 Provest, Mr G
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Stokes, Mr R
 Tudehope, Mr D
 Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S
 Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
 Constance, Mr A
 Dominello, Mr V
 Goward, Ms P
 Hazzard, Mr B
 Humphries, Mr K
 Lee, Dr G
 Notley-Smith, Mr B
 Pavey, Ms M
 Piccoli, Mr A
 Roberts, Mr A
 Skinner, Ms J
 Taylor, Mr M
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Ms L

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Catley, Ms Y
 Daley, Mr M
 Finn, Ms J
 Harrison, Ms J
 Kamper, Mr S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Mehan, Mr D
 Park, Mr R
 Smith, Ms T
 Zangari, Mr G

Atalla, Mr E
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Dib, Mr J
 Foley, Mr L
 Haylen, Ms J
 Lalich, Mr N (teller)
 McDermott, Dr H
 Mihailuk, Ms T
 Parker, Mr J
 Warren, Mr G (teller)

Car, Ms P
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Doyle, Ms T
 Harris, Mr D
 Hornery, Ms S
 Leong, Ms J
 McKay, Ms J
 Minns, Mr C
 Robertson, Mr J
 Watson, Ms A

PAIRS

Baird, Mr M
 Grant, Mr T

Hoenig, Mr R
 Smith, Ms K

Motion agreed to.*Bills***SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING NSW FUND BILL 2016****Second Reading****Debate resumed from 21 September 2016.**

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing) (16:20): I support the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund Bill 2016. I note that the member for Keira will be speaking as the shadow spokesperson and will follow me. I thank him for his courtesy in that regard. This bill is particularly important for the New South Wales community. It is a reflection of this Government's commitment to try to support the most vulnerable in our community. The Government, under the leadership of Premier Mike Baird, is seeking to initiate new ways to provide services and infrastructure to the most vulnerable. Many of the most vulnerable are those who cannot afford to have a roof over their head.

I note the work that was done prior to the last election that involved the NSW Council of Social Service [NCOSS] and Tracy Howe with input from Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, which understood the Government's commitment to ensuring there is more housing for the vulnerable—the people who need social housing and affordable housing. She worked and put up proposals on behalf of NCOSS to the Government, and the Government, under Premier Baird, acknowledged the very substantive input of NCOSS. We come from different places but, in effect, we have the same vision, which is to try to support people who need a roof over their head and to provide additional services that are critical to vulnerable people who cannot afford housing and often are not in a position to enter into any type of commercial arrangement, either purchasing or leasing.

The majority of people who were in social housing 20 to 25 years ago were low-income workers, but that has changed in the past 20 to 25 years. Many more people now have great challenges in their lives—it may be drug or alcohol dependency, domestic violence, mental illness or a combination of all or any of those factors. What we do know is that many people are more vulnerable now than they were 20 to 25 years ago when they enter social housing. The great challenge for any government is to provide more social housing.

When the former Labor Government had some fiscal problems—and I think they were being addressed in question time today—it did what governments do from time to time: it decided it had to sell down some of its assets. It decided to sell off public housing—now called social housing—to maintain the revenue flow. I will not pass comment on that except to say that that made it more difficult for this Government to provide more social and affordable housing. With the background of the work that was done by NCOSS, Tracy Howe and others in the lead-up to the election, we were very committed and remain very committed to providing additional social and affordable housing.

In 2009 all the States and Territories in the Commonwealth realised that they had to do more in terms of how we manage housing. For that reason all the States and Territories and the Commonwealth agreed that roughly 35 per cent of all social housing would be transferred to the community housing sector. In the past week we made some announcements on that. That is an important component, but this particular fund also feeds into the objectives that the Government set out in January this year in its policy document titled "Future Directions". Those of us in Government wanted more social housing, more pathways for avoiding or transitioning out of social housing and a better social housing experience for our tenants. Those objectives cannot be achieved unless we have innovative ways of delivering more housing.

The Government has committed to delivering \$1.1 billion in core funding to this fund to enable the interest that is attracted by those funds to go into supporting the construction of new homes. At present the Government is aiming to deliver approximately 3,000 homes off the income that is expected from the fund. That is a big ask and a big challenge, but unless the Government sets its ambitions and targets high, it may not achieve all that it—and the Opposition—wants to achieve, and that is to try to get thousands of new homes for the most vulnerable in our community. Under the model being delivered through this legislation the Government will pay for a package of services for up to 25 years, including access to accommodation, asset management and tenancy management services.

The model will also include the delivery of coordinated support services that will be tailored to each individual tenant's needs, which, as I said earlier, can often be complex. Performance and data monitoring will also be key to the package of services delivered. The program drives the formation of new commercial partnerships between community housing providers, the not-for-profit sector and the private sector to deliver effective services that build on the strength of each sector. Key features of the Social and Affordable Housing Fund [SAHF] include a minimum target of 70 per cent social housing with the remainder to be affordable housing; and tailored support coordination for household members to assist them to achieve greater independence.

As I said earlier, the SAHF was developed under a memorandum of understanding between Infrastructure Partnerships Australia—and I acknowledge the work done by Brendan Lyon—and the NSW Council of Social Service. I have acknowledged Tracy Howe's incredible contribution. The Government and these two organisations consulted with other private and not-for-profit sector stakeholders to develop this model. Market response to the Social and Affordable Housing Fund has been incredible. We have had 24 expressions of interest involving more than 80 entities from not-for-profits and the private sector as well as from partnerships between the two sectors. Nine submissions were shortlisted and are now being evaluated by a team of experts. Although I am the Minister, I do not get involved in the tendering process for obvious reasons of probity.

The contracts for successful proposals are expected to be awarded following the conclusion of that evaluation process. It has been a remarkable effort by many to look at new ways of delivering social housing and better outcomes for the most vulnerable. The Government is hoping that this model can deliver up to 3,000 homes, but practical issues may arise along the way that may reduce that number. I hope there will be practical issues that will produce even more. At the same time the Government has also launched its Future Directions policy, which aims for approximately 23,000 new or renewed homes in the social housing sector by relying on the model that

goes out to the private sector and asks what can be done with this particular taxpayer asset—that is, the land and the old housing.

What can be done in this particular area? Can we get more social housing as well as private housing? One of the first models was in Riverwood. I acknowledge that the work was started by the Labor Government under former Premier Morris Iemma. He and I have had chats about those issues and there were practical issues that did not quite reach the heights we wanted to reach. We have learned from the Labor Government under Premier Iemma and how he dealt with those issues. It was a good outcome for the community of Riverwood. Kentucky Drive is the location if anyone is interested in going for a drive to have a look. We believe we will provide thousands of new homes over the next few years for those people who really need them. All members in this place want to see that positive outcome. We will also be working with community housing providers to provide the wraparound services that are important to vulnerable tenants.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (16:30): I lead on behalf of the Opposition in debate on the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund Bill 2016. I acknowledge my colleague the member for Bankstown, and shadow Minister for Social Housing, for the work she has done in preparing for the debate on this bill and for the work she continues to do across the State advocating for people in social and public housing. I say from the outset that the Opposition will not oppose the bill, which introduces a program for funding to deliver new social and affordable houses. The aim of this fund is to reduce the waiting list for social housing by providing capital for community housing providers to build, own and maintain properties.

In the electorate of Keira and the broader Illawarra region, which I represent in this place as the shadow Minister, social housing is a real challenge. It is no doubt a challenge across the State, but we are well served in the Illawarra by organisations such as the Illawarra Housing Trust. The chair of that trust is my good friend and a former member of this place, Mr David Campbell. That trust is held in great esteem. The member for Bankstown and shadow Minister for Social Housing has found working with many of them to be extremely rewarding in relation to the services they provide to the broader community.

Currently social housing faces a funding gap between the rental stream that is received from tenants plus the subsidies provided by taxpayers and the revenue that is required to sustain a commercially viable project. The Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund is designed to address that gap to ensure that the waiting list, which is growing daily, is reduced. It aims to do this by providing the capital for community housing providers to build, own, and maintain the properties. The department will not own any of the stock built under this fund. Only phase one of the program is currently underway, which was launched in January this year with calls for expressions of interest. The Government has only now introduced a bill to provide for the establishment of the fund. Following the closure of the expressions of interest phase, nine consortia were shortlisted and issued with a request for proposal. Following the evaluation of those proposals, the Government intends to award successful consortia 25 year service agreement contracts. It is expected that those agreements will be awarded soon and we hope it is as early as this month.

This fund aims to provide a long-term revenue stream to plug the gap and encourage private and non-government organisations to team up to develop housing projects. I am also delighted that the Leader of the Opposition made the issue of social housing a key plank of his budget reply speech. He understands as well as anyone that this is a major issue from not only a social perspective but also an economic and budgetary perspective. Social housing impacts on the budget and we want to ensure that as a community we can provide housing to those who are unable to enter the private market on their own. This fund will be set up with \$1.1 billion in seed capital from the Government and will provide investment to the sector. The investment arm of the Government, TCorp, will invest the \$1.1 billion and the returns will go to social and affordable housing projects in the form of a stable 25 year income stream. This equates to approximately \$44 million per year for 25 years. As discussed earlier, the aim is to deliver approximately 3,000 additional social and affordable homes. No doubt the member for Bankstown will take note of the rollout of those additional homes.

Clause 5 of the bill sets out the purpose of the fund, which includes setting aside funds to create new social and affordable housing stock and the delivery of associated services and social outcomes for tenants. Clause 13 deals with delegation. The Minister may delegate the exercise of any function of the Minister under this Act to the Secretary of the Treasury or any person employed in the Treasury; or any person employed in a public service agency prescribed by the regulations. Importantly, there will be a review of the Act, as outlined in clause 16. The Minister is to review this Act to determine whether the policy objectives of the Act remain valid and whether the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing those objectives. The review is to be undertaken as soon as possible after the period of five years from the commencement, and a report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months of the end of that period.

The Minister talked about the engagement of the NSW Council of Social Services [NCOSS] and Infrastructure Partnerships Australia. I acknowledge the work of those stakeholders. The member for Bankstown

outlined in my discussions with her that Wendy Hayhurst, from the Federation of Housing Associations, has also looked at this legislation and has provided some input. In particular, we believe that stakeholders are pleased to see that the bill does not set any restrictions on the amount of funding that can be deposited or withdrawn, which leaves the door open for future expansion of the project beyond phase one. At some point in time we all face challenges. The challenge of this Government is not only the construction of new social and affordable housing but also the maintenance of that stock.

We will be facing real challenges in ensuring that the current regime of maintenance of public housing stock is delivered more efficiently and more effectively. All members in this Chamber can tell some harrowing and horrific stories about the lack of maintenance in the public housing sector across this State. Given the state of the budget as a result of a booming property market, the Government has a responsibility to ensure that some of that money goes back to providing housing to the most vulnerable. I know the member for Bankstown feels strongly about this issue because her electorate has a high proportion of public housing. She has been an incredibly strong advocate for people who often do not get a strong and fair voice in this place. The Opposition will not oppose the bill. We will look carefully at the rollout and implementation, but we will not stand in the way of investment that provides housing to those in our community who need it most.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (16:38): I speak in support of the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund Bill 2016. The purpose of the bill is to amend legislation to bring into effect key aspects for the future direction of the social housing strategy of this Government, which is aimed at delivering an improved and expanded social housing sector. It also delivers on a 2009 Council of Australian Governments agreement to transfer up to 35 per cent of social housing to the community sector. Few electorates in New South Wales would have a greater amount of social housing than Parramatta; I think—it is in the top 10 electorates. Parramatta faces the difficulties, opportunities and challenges that social housing provides. The issues include providing enough social housing, making sure that it is suitable for the people that use it, and making sure that it is in an appropriate state of repair.

This is an important piece of legislation that allows for expansion in the number of community housing providers and for the transfer of houses to the community sector through long-term leases over 25 years. I have talked about this to a couple of representatives of community housing providers. They were very excited about the opportunities that they will get from the certainty of long-term 25 year leases, which will allow them to plan for the future and have long-term income streams. This will help them with their financing.

This legislation will help community housing providers and their tenants, because community housing providers are also very good at providing wraparound services for their clients. Some of the people in social housing need more than just a place to live. Many have behavioural issues, dependency issues, psychological issues and financial issues—a whole range of issues—and many housing providers offer wraparound services for individuals who may need counselling, training, help finding a job or help solving difficult, complex problems. Tenants will also benefit because community housing providers will have more money to maintain and improve the dwellings.

I take this opportunity to speak about a wonderful project in my electorate of Parramatta at Telopea. Telopea is a fantastic suburb that is three or four kilometres from the Parramatta central business district [CBD]. It has a concentration of social housing. There are some 640 dwellings in the suburb and the New South Wales Government is probably the biggest landholder in that area. It was wonderful that before 2011, when he was a member of the Opposition, Brad Hazzard came out to look at Telopea. He saw it as a great opportunity to look at ways of revitalising Telopea.

Telopea is a suburb where 99.9 per cent of the residents are wonderful people who want to live decent lives and make a great community. As everyone knows, there are some people who do not want to obey social rules. They tend to smash up the suburb and give it a bad name. The Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing, Brad Hazzard, has brought the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund Bill 2016 to this House and through this legislation something will be done about revitalising Telopea. In fact, the Government has a great plan to redevelop the whole suburb. The plan will result in the replacement of social housing, which has reached the end of its economic life cycle, with brand new social housing. It will deliver an increased amount of social housing, an increased amount of affordable housing and private housing.

This master plan looks at delivering a cohesive community with an integrated program that will benefit everybody in the area. We will have more people in social housing, which will result in some challenges in its delivery but we have already drafted the plan. I commend Anne Skewes and everybody from NSW Land and Housing on their dedication. That body has had an office on site for close to six months, taking people's ideas, which has resulted in an ambitious draft master plan.

The suburb will be serviced by the new light rail. The plan will result in a village-type atmosphere with a new, expanded shopping centre and a village piazza. I am sure, Mr Deputy Speaker, that you would want to move into the new Telopea village. The light rail will go into the Parramatta CBD, with regular services every 10 minutes during peak hour. The Government will deliver an extra 3,500 to 4,500 homes over the next 20 years in a 70-30 split, with 70 per cent private housing and 30 per cent of housing being social and affordable. This will replace the aged, outdated social housing which makes one shudder to look at. Those houses are 50 or 60 years old and they have not been well maintained. If I had to spend all day and all night sitting in one of those houses looking at the walls I would be depressed but this plan will deliver brand new housing stock for people who deserve it. People deserve to live in decent houses, and this will change the suburb.

This Government understands that, as part of this larger master plan—we are finalising the master plan at the moment—we need to do more than provide social housing. So this Government will provide new and improved streets providing better access. Many people in Western Sydney will use the light rail but just about everybody needs a car to get around, especially those who are working. It is a sad reality that many people in the eastern suburbs of the city do not understand that in the western suburbs we need cars. But there is more: The Government is going to deliver new parks, plazas, cafes and shops. People need the opportunity to enjoy outdoor recreation so the Government is going to spend a lot of money on parks and on creating a vibrant community that people will be proud to live in. As a part of that there will be an upgrade of Sturt and Acacia parks and the retention of mature trees.

Over the past six months we have held community forums to seek comments from the public. The most frequent comment about the area was about the beauty of its mature trees. Those trees will be integrated into the plan. The library will be replaced with a bigger library and the community centre and its spaces will be replaced. This development is welcomed by the community. I have held a couple of open forums involving the NSW Land and Housing Corporation, inviting the community to give their impressions on what we are going to do. We want to hear from people in the community so that we can get it right. We have only one chance. This is a project that I have been championing for the last five years and we are nearly at the point where we have the master plan right. It is very controversial to launch such a large project but it is a wonderful opportunity to improve the social housing through a public-private partnership, teaming up a private home construction company with a community housing provider. In fact, it is an opportunity to deliver better social housing in an integrated, cohesive community.

It would be great, in another three years—or some time in the future—to come back to this Chamber and report about where we have gone with respect to this project. The Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund Bill is especially important because it provides an opportunity not only for the Telopea master plan project to proceed but for a lot of housing around the State to be transferred to community housing providers. It will give community housing providers the chance to expand their scope of works and will provide them with reliable income streams over the next 25 years so that they can reinvest that money in servicing the people who need and deserve social housing. I commend Minister Hazzard, his staff and the whole department on bringing forward this important legislation.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (16:48): During my contribution to debate on the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund Bill 2016, I speak in my capacity as the shadow Minister for Family and Community Services, and shadow Minister for Social Housing. As indicated by the shadow Treasurer, the Opposition will not oppose this bill. I take this opportunity to thank the shadow Treasurer for leading on behalf of the New South Wales Opposition, for his considered words and for his very firm commitment to dealing with the challenge faced by the State: housing un-affordability. The bill is a simple administrative measure that will provide for establishment of the Social and Affordable Housing Fund [SAHF] as a ring-fenced entity in the Special Deposits Account under the control and management of the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing. In the words of Paul Keating, "God help us!"

My main concern relates to the Minister having full control of the fund. I will leave that issue to one side for the present. Perhaps time will tell whether I am wrong. The Opposition will support any initiative that promotes the growth of social and affordable housing stock. The situation faced by the people of the State when it comes to the affordability of housing in our major cities has reached crisis point. The scale of the challenge faced by New South Wales is immense. Presently in the city of Sydney the median price for a home hovers around \$1 million, which clearly puts property acquisition out of reach for so many young people and families. We know that because first home buyers now make up a mere 13.2 per cent of the total market for lending to purchasers of property. The proportion of 25- to 34-year-olds who own their own home has fallen dramatically from 62 per cent to 42 per cent in the past few years.

All of those factors push up prices along the housing continuum, drive up the social housing waiting list to more than 60,000 households, which affects approximately 120,000 people, and stretch out the waiting list to decades in many places. When it comes to the adequate provision of social and affordable housing, much more

work remains to be done. I place on record my concerns about the current make-up of the SAHF. The Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund Bill 2016 is intended to provide for the establishment of the Social and Affordable Housing Fund. Despite originally pledging the SAHF in March 2015 before the most recent State election, the Government only now has introduced the bill to establish the fund. The fund will aim to deliver 3,000 new social and affordable housing properties to reduce the waiting list for social housing by closing the revenue gap between rental tenancy income and the costs of sustaining commercially viable affordable housing projects.

An amount of \$1.1 billion will be invested by the NSW Treasury Corporation, which is referred to as TCorp and which is the investment arm of the New South Wales Government. Returns from the fund will be used to fund approved projects. At present, only phase one of the project is underway. Expressions of interest were taken between January and March this year. Requests for proposals were made to organisations and consortiums in May and they closed in August. Services agreements are expected to be completed and awarded this year for a period of 25 years. I note no information is forthcoming from the Treasurer or the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing about any plans for, or commitments to, future phases. Phase one is intended to deliver 3,000 homes. I suspect—and only time will tell—that, given the structure of the fund, there will be a substantial shortfall between the numbers promised and the numbers delivered. I hope I am wrong. I note that while 3,000 homes are certainly better than nothing, it will barely touch the sides in terms of the quantum of housing needed in this State.

The NSW Federation of Housing Associations believes approximately 100,000 new social and affordable houses are needed over the next 20 years, which is close to 5,000 homes a year, just to prevent the social housing waiting list from blowing out even further. In other words, over 25 years this fund will build less social and affordable housing per year than is already needed this year. Given the SAHF will be established as an investment fund seeking returns in the market, there is every possibility that the returns will not be substantial enough to generate the funding required to deliver 3,000 homes a year in 20 years. I note the Treasurer's commitment in her second reading speech that, should the fund outperform over the long term, additional earnings will go towards further programs that share the aims of the fund.

I ask the Treasurer: Should the fund underperform over the long term, does the Treasurer intend to step in with additional revenue to support the objects of the fund or will the quantum of houses to be built be reduced should the fund generate sub-par returns? I also ask that the Treasurer indicate in her reply the Government's position, as well as whether the Government has received any advice about the level of return it may expect from the fund, and the investment strategy that will be adopted to generate the returns required to fund approved projects. Housing affordability is a major pressure in our metropolitan areas, but it also affects the whole of the State.

The Government must commit the proceeds of SAHF towards projects in rural and regional areas and ensure that our regions receive their fair share of investment in social and affordable housing. I note that issue was raised earlier by the member for Keira. It is the Opposition's understanding that any consortiums that engage with the SAHF must provide a minimum of 500 dwellings, with at least 200 of those built in rural and regional areas. I ask that the Treasurer confirm that during her reply. The New South Wales SAHF cannot be just a Sydney-focused fund. It is important that social housing dwellings are built in rural and regional areas of New South Wales.

I turn now to specific provisions of the bill. Clause 5 sets out the purpose of the fund, which is to provide funding to promote any of the objects of the Housing Act 2001 or the Community Housing Providers (Adoption of National Law) Act 2012, including setting aside funds to create new social and affordable housing stock, deliver associated services, and achieve social outcomes for tenants. I ask the Treasurer to indicate why the Government has not drafted this bill to ensure that the purpose of SAHF is also to meet the objects of the Aboriginal Housing Act 1998 stated in section 3 (a): "to ensure that Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders have access to affordable and quality housing". The Aboriginal Housing Act is a key pillar of the legislative framework around housing. It is remiss of the Government to ignore it. If there is a good reason for the Government having done so, I ask the Treasurer to detail that in her reply.

Clause 6 nominates "that the Minister is to control and manage the Fund." The Labor Opposition believes that the Minister must therefore be accountable and should make public the manner in which he intends to manage and administer this fund. Clause 12 obligates the Minister to produce an annual report that details payments from the fund. The bill includes a requirement that an audit of the fund be carried out by the Auditor-General and that that report must be made available within six months of the end of each financial year to which it relates. The Government must commit to ensuring that that report also will detail the number of dwellings constructed, the number of tenants supported, and details of investments and returns generated by the fund. Clause 16 requires the Minister to review the Act to determine whether the policy objectives of the Act remain valid and whether the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing those objectives. The review is to be undertaken every five years.

Further clarification is needed about the future of the stock once the service agreements expire at the end of the 25 years. Given that for-profit corporations have entered into consortiums with community housing providers, what assurances do the people of New South Wales have that the properties, which will have been built with the assistance of public funds, will be held in perpetuity by community housing providers and used to provide social and affordable housing on an ongoing basis? Will there be a requirement for all consortiums to contain a registered tier one community housing provider? I ask the Treasurer to indicate that in her reply. [*Extension of time*]

Furthermore, should a non-government-organisation participant in a consortium choose to withdraw from its respective consortium at some point in the future, will there be an obligation for the properties to remain as social and affordable housing dwellings? This is a very important point and the Treasurer should respond to that during her reply. It is quite possible that even at this stage some community housing providers who indicated an interest earlier in the year may not have remained in their respective consortiums the possibility remains that for-profit companies will be able to flip these properties at a profit after 25 years of appreciating land values. This is an unacceptable scenario.

I will conclude with some further remarks about the scale of the challenge we face. While \$1.1 billion is not small change, it remains a pittance compared to the level of investment required to solve the housing affordability crisis. So far we have seen neither hide nor hair of the Government's commitments to future stages of the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund [SAHF]. While the door is left open for further investment in the fund, this Government's faith rests firmly in a sort of supply-side fundamentalism. Without a clear commitment to addressing the many portfolios which impact housing affordability—that is, Planning, Treasury, Fair Trading, as well as my own portfolio of Social housing—a real solution to the housing crisis in this State is merely a pipe dream.

Housing unaffordability manifests in a number of ways such as in the social dislocation caused by families uprooted by economic pressures and driven to the urban fringes just to afford to survive, in the pressure placed on road and public transport infrastructure by increased journey times, and in lost productivity arising from the lack of low and moderate income essential service workers living in our inner cities. In order to solve these incredibly complex challenges, we need innovative solutions. To that end, I encourage the Government to assess the objects of the SAHF within the full remit of the Housing Act 2001 and the Community Housing Providers (Adoption of National Law) Act 2012, as well as the Aboriginal Housing Act 1998. There is a broad range of potential uses for the fund within those objects, including employment and support and ensuring that registered community housing is developed as a viable and diversified component of the New South Wales social housing sector, as well as supporting the provision of registered community housing for people on a very low, low or moderate income.

In closing, I acknowledge the work of the NSW Federation of Housing Associations and I thank Wendy Hayhurst and John McKenna from the federation for their helpful advice with respect to this bill. I also acknowledge the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing, and Tracy Howe from the NSW Council of Social Service [NCOSS]. I have worked with NCOSS on many campaigns, including seven ways to reduce poverty in this State. NCOSS is attuned to the needs of residents of this State and tries to make a difference by working with the Government and the Opposition to ensure that addressing poverty is always front and centre of government deliberations. It does not surprise me that NCOSS played an integral role in demanding that the Government take seriously social and affordable housing in this State.

The most vulnerable people in this State require the support provided by social and affordable housing, and the SAHF must serve their interests. I will watch with great interest as the tenders are issued in due course and I will follow how the consortiums perform. I look forward to seeing these homes being swiftly built, and I hope to be one of the first people to read the first annual report once it is made available, as this bill requires. The Auditor-General will audit the SAHF and I expect that report to be issued shortly after the tenders are issued. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:03): I speak in debate on the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund Bill 2016. New South Wales has a social and affordable housing crisis. Public housing waiting lists stretch beyond 20 years in the electorate of Prospect alone, with approximately 10,000 people—women, men, children, the elderly and the disabled—on this list. Steeply rising property values have almost destroyed the commercial viability of private rentals to tenants subsidised by the New South Wales Government. Therefore the need for the New South Wales Government to invest in social and affordable housing should not be underestimated. Under this bill, the Government aims to deliver some 3,000 new social and affordable houses to reduce the waiting list for social housing properties by providing capital for community housing providers to build, maintain and own properties.

In the electorate of Prospect alone 3,000 houses would not be enough to meet the needs of those on the waiting list, but it is a start. Five housing providers have been named; however, the Baird Government has not identified where the new social and affordable houses will be constructed. We have heard that a certain number of these new houses will be constructed in regional areas, but as a representative of a community in Western Sydney I say to the Government that those houses are needed in Western Sydney. I have said that the planned 3,000 new homes would not be sufficient to meet the need in my electorate alone, but the rest of Western Sydney and regional areas such as Newcastle, Wollongong and Port Macquarie desperately need more new social and affordable houses. Furthermore, the New South Wales Treasury Corporation will invest \$1.1 billion into social and affordable housing contracts, with a \$44 million per annum return on investment. I am pleased that the Government is investing this money to get a decent return on that investment.

Clause 5 of the bill sets out the purpose of the fund, which includes setting aside funds to create new social and affordable housing stock, deliver associated services and achieve social outcomes for tenants. This is a welcome, although overdue, policy. Furthermore, despite calling for expressions of interest into partaking in the proposed program in January, the Baird Government has only just introduced this legislation to establish the fund itself. The Baird Government has sat on its hands for 10 months, acknowledging the problem but shamefully being slow to act. There should be careful optimism to this bill. As a financial investment, the Treasury Corporation may sell its stake or withdraw funding fairly abruptly should government policy change. Social and affordable housing stakeholders must continue to watch the Government like a hawk, just as the Opposition will, to ensure that any small changes to investments do not unfairly impact on the lives of people who live in the proposed social and affordable housing investments.

Nonetheless, the flexibility can also be used for good. As there are no restrictions on the amount of funding that can be deposited or withdrawn, future expansion beyond phase one is possible, and a promising proposal. I encourage the Government to follow this path. The Baird Government desperately needs this bill to salvage its reputation with those in social housing as well as those involved in the social housing sector. However, the Baird Government should not get away with its track record to date on social housing. Many tenants experience high rates of crime in their neighbourhood, prolonged waits for simple maintenance of their homes and a lack of investment in government services available to them.

The Baird Government also needs to understand the difficulty of the lives of those who rely on governments to provide housing. I will give a few examples of these people. Just last week a 70-year-old homeless Assyrian-Australian, who could barely speak English, presented himself to my electorate office seeking help to find housing. He had been living in his car and was destitute and desperate. He had approached Housing NSW and had been given a form and then told to look for private housing on his own. How can anyone who is vulnerable and barely speaks English succeed in the hunt for private real estate? When the New South Wales Government continues its move towards becoming a social and affordable housing investor, rather than an owner and operator, care must be taken to ensure that people like the man I have just spoken about do not fall through the gaps.

Maintenance of housing is also a major problem that is not being adequately addressed by the Baird Government. Another example involves a man in Pendle Hill who has had an ongoing issue with the bathroom in his home not being adequately waterproofed. Many requests to Housing NSW have been largely ignored, and the gentleman has been left without any idea of whether his bathroom will be fixed despite requests from my office to follow-up his concerns, which have also been mostly ignored.

People should not be subjected to this kind of treatment because they live in social housing. They deserve the dignity of having promised maintenance work done to an acceptable standard with clear communication. Unfortunately, there are still more horror stories about social and affordable housing in my electorate of Prospect, and these stories are endemic across the State. They include Housing NSW residents putting up with antisocial behaviour by housing drug addicts and those convicted of violent crimes next to senior residents; a tenant who has not had any repairs done to his kitchen for 30 years with cupboards falling off his kitchen wall; tenants not being able to use showers or bathrooms for weeks on end as contractors did not correctly complete the job the first time; and residents who have had a least four contractors out to look at the same job before a decision was made to complete the works.

Labor supports the bill but there are other issues that I need to raise. Under clause 13 the Minister will have the power to delegate authority to an employee of Treasury with very little provision or oversight. Under clause 16 the Minister is to be granted the power to "determine whether the policy objectives of the Act remain valid and whether the terms of the Act remain appropriate ...". This provides a significant amount of flexible power to the Minister without much scrutiny. Such decisions will barely be transparent and simply rely on the hope that the Minister does a good job.

As I have said, the New South Wales Opposition will not oppose this bill and welcomes further investments in social and affordable housing in New South Wales. However, the New South Wales Government

must not just throw money at the problem and do nothing to ensure quality of homes and support services to vulnerable people in society. Those in New South Wales who rely on the Government to invest in their future homes deserve dignity and respect. I hope that additional housing will create the vibrant, safe communities which these residents—and residents in the Prospect electorate and throughout New South Wales—deserve. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (17:10): I contribute to debate on the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund Bill 2016 and state at the outset that I support the bill. I acknowledge the Government's efforts to provide adequate and affordable housing in this State. I also acknowledge the efforts of the Government and the Minister in this space as it is one of those areas in which sometimes one cannot take a trick. It is expensive to fix the issue and to satisfy demands right across New South Wales. My observation of Minister Hazzard is that he is taking this matter seriously and I believe his efforts in this space should be acknowledged.

A number of speakers have also raised the issue of maintenance and the quality of public and social housing stock in New South Wales. It is a very real issue. I am sure—unless there is some extraordinary reason—that every member in this Chamber has a list of problems relating to properties in their electorates. Members from electorates such as mine, which have a higher number of social housing properties, would probably know that better than others. In my electorate we have large areas of public housing in Toronto West and problems around Bolton Point, Marmong Point and other areas throughout my electorate.

Today the member for Coogee tabled a report from the Public Accounts Committee, of which he is the chair and of which both Temporary Speaker Evans and I are members. We have had a good look at this report. While there is no clear or easy solution, we have taken heart from our observations in the inquiry held a few months ago that many things are happening in this area and that we are in a significant period of change from which I hope residents and tenants in all electorates will benefit. I hope that members take the opportunity to read that report and take some heart from it.

While I acknowledge that the \$1.1 billion Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund [SAHF] honours the commitment this Government made prior to the last election, I also acknowledge that it has widespread support within my electorate, particularly from those organisations that work hard to put a roof over the heads of many vulnerable families. Delivering this fund addresses at least part of the need and responds to calls over many years for more action in this area from non-government organisations and advocacy groups. I also acknowledge expert opinion that suggests the first stage of the SAHF would provide as many as 3,000 much-needed additional homes for the socially or financially disadvantaged—but, as has been said by other speakers, that barely scratches the surface. However, on that basis I take the opportunity, as others have done, to draw attention to the need in my area of Lake Macquarie and indeed within the region.

I am very much in favour of providing new and upgraded public housing, not just in Lake Macquarie but also throughout the State. For varying reasons, many people would be unable to provide adequate accommodation for themselves or their families without this assistance. Providing this assistance is a reflection of a mature and supportive community and, most importantly, it is an investment in the families and children who live in public housing. The latest data from Family and Community Services shows that the waiting lists for social housing in my electorate are among the longest and worst in the State, matched only by waiting lists in the neighbouring local government areas of Gosford and Wyong.

I acknowledge that there are many other electorates with similar numbers. The current waiting time for a one-bedroom, two-bedroom or three-bedroom home in Lake Macquarie is more than 10 years and has been for a long time. It is only marginally better for those seeking a four-bedroom home. There is a large and growing population in Lake Macquarie, where many people choose to live because it is between the major employment areas of Newcastle and Sydney and because the great Australian dream of buying a home is somewhat cheaper there. That dream, however, is quickly evaporating as home prices soar in suburbs that have traditionally provided more affordable options.

The latest figures from property monitoring services Domain and RP Data show that the median house price in Lake Macquarie is now \$490,000. Double-digit annual growth has been the norm in some suburbs for many years. I acknowledge the member for Charlestown, who will probably speak after me, and her role as the former mayor of Lake Macquarie. She would understand the growth, demand and price pressures that are happening right around the area which, for many reasons, is a desirable area in which to live. Average incomes recorded by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in those same suburbs are well short of what is required to buy a house in that median range.

The great Australian dream is being pushed further and further away from young people and families. More and more people will have to rely on subsidised or social housing or find a way of putting an affordable roof over their heads. The SAHF is even more important because it will allow not-for-profit housing providers to

deliver more housing stock as well as fund programs that will help people to transition from the public housing sector and buy a home of their own. At the moment, social housing providers are somewhat hamstrung in finding cash flows to bridge the gap between the rents they bring in, the administrative costs they shell out and the revenue required to boost new housing stocks. I believe this fund and the annual interest it accrues through sound investment—and I hope sound investment is exactly what we will get—will help them to find the seed capital they need to fund more housing and more programs to get people into their own homes.

The fund is broadly supported by the NSW Council of Social Service and the social housing providers in my electorate, but we would like to see the first phases of the funding program specifically targeted to areas that are the most in need. As I have said, that includes areas such as Lake Macquarie and our neighbours in the Central Coast region, where housing shortages and worsening rates of housing affordability are having severe impacts on young people and vulnerable families. In conclusion, while there are some caveats on the issue, overall this can only be seen as a good move. I acknowledge that the Opposition is supporting this bill but is rightly flagging the need to make sure that a focus is kept on this, that the fund does deliver returns—but we need to roll it over and reinvest in social housing—and that we look for other opportunities as well, because this in itself will not resolve the situation for New South Wales.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:20): The object of the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund Bill 2016 is to establish the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund for the purpose of providing funding for the delivery of social and affordable housing in New South Wales. The intention is that in its first phase the fund established by the bill will deliver up to 3,000 additional social and affordable homes for vulnerable families. As the member for Keira and shadow Treasurer, and the member for Bankstown and shadow Minister for Housing said earlier in this debate, the Opposition will not oppose the bill. However, I will deal with it in the context of the experience of people living in my electorate of Charlestown.

Home ownership affordability and rental affordability is worsening, and there are long waiting lists for social housing and rising levels of homelessness. Having access to housing is a human right, and it is a government responsibility to ensure adequate housing is available for all. Every day, Housing NSW works under intense pressure to deliver services in New South Wales. The staff are under the pump with a backlog of maintenance issues and almost 60,000 families in desperate need of shelter. Over the years, waiting lists for public housing and transfers in the Hunter have only blown out further. It can take more than a decade to find suitable housing, especially if the request is for a specific area or type of home.

Earlier this year I made representations to Housing NSW on behalf of a constituent requesting a transfer. The young woman was concerned for her safety in her home primarily because of the intimidating behaviour of a single male neighbour. The application for transfer was approved on compassionate grounds. However, Housing NSW was unable to say how long she might have to wait until a suitable offer of accommodation would be made. It is wrong that in the meantime the young lady is left feeling fearful in her own home. These waiting times are simply unacceptable.

There is a shortage of affordable property in this State. There simply are not enough properties. The Government must maximise its current resources and use them efficiently. That is certainly what this bill seeks to achieve. The suburb of Windale in my electorate consists largely of social housing. Many properties are three-bedroom homes on quarter-acre blocks that are often occupied by single tenants. These underdeveloped blocks of land need to be utilised. However, at the same time, the fact that these tenants have considered these properties their home, and they have been encouraged to treat them as such for many years, in some cases decades, must be recognised and dealt with compassionately.

Earlier this year my office worked tirelessly to help a constituent with serious neighbour problems. The neighbour would harass people in the street, was trashing the property, and played loud music throughout the day making the situation unbearable. His nuisance behaviour caused his neighbours much stress and anguish. There is clearly a problem when a single person can live in a three-bedroom house on a quarter-acre property while there are families desperately in need of that type of accommodation. This is also an example of how the demographics of those seeking housing have changed. Fewer and fewer families are seeking housing; more often it is single people who are seeking one-bedroom units. Transforming a suburb like Windale from standalone homes to a mix of townhouses, apartments and single dwellings is not an easy process. People have lived in these houses their entire life; they are homes in which they have raised their children and watched them grow. The impact such a move would have on those families cannot be taken lightly or forgotten.

However, I have seen first-hand the transformational effect and boost in community pride that occurs when these isolated, old and rundown blocks are redeveloped. The new blocks of social housing units that have been developed are utilising the available land. They are built in a way that fosters a sense of community. The residents of one complex that I visited regularly got together, and continue to do so, to use the shared facilities, including a barbeque and an outdoor social area. The complex is on two levels, but it also has a lift, so it is fantastic

for tenants who need that sort of accessibility. Too many housing properties in Windale are unoccupied because they need maintenance. A constituent who was fleeing domestic violence was left in limbo for months. She experienced ongoing delays because the house being provided for her needed to be repaired. In the meantime, she was moving between temporary and emergency accommodation, motels and friends' couches. Again, this is simply unacceptable.

Like all of us, social housing tenants deserve healthy and safe housing. However, residents in my electorate are facing rat infestations, flooding, mould and holes in ceilings. When I heard that the budget for planned housing upgrades in my electorate had been cut by more than \$300,000 in the 2016-17 budget I was deeply concerned. Fortunately, my staff and I have a great working relationship with Housing NSW, and its office next door to my electorate office. The staff are hardworking, dedicated and responsive. However, their job is made difficult when they are not provided with the resources they need.

Earlier this year, my office was contacted by a constituent called Lisa. The dwelling Lisa lives in with her six-year-old son, who has a disability, is infested with vermin, insects and black mould. When she moved in last October, she completed a condition report presuming that it would lead to the problems being fixed. Months later, Lisa was still working with Housing NSW to improve her living conditions. Living with the mould led her and her son to experience breathing issues. Doctors' reports were provided as evidence and they implored that something be done as soon as possible. Housing NSW staff worked hard and offered Lisa a new home. However, when she visited the new premises she found that, like her current house, it was covered in mould and the gutters were falling away from the roof. There are simply just not enough social housing properties available, and when one rarely does become vacant, all too often the conditions are just as bad as those the tenant was hoping to escape.

Martin, another social housing tenant, first contacted my office in November 2015. Martin's home was damaged in the tragic April 2015 Hunter storms. After contacting the Housing NSW call centre approximately 10 times trying to get the damage fixed, Martin, not knowing what to do next, contacted my office. I made representations on his behalf directly to Housing NSW. It was agreed that the issue had been drawn out and staff contacted Martin directly to organise the repairs. In January, Martin contacted my office again because his roof still was not fixed. Water was leaking through the roof into the hall light and the smoke detector. After my office contacted Housing NSW again, a tarp was placed over Martin's roof. In May, Martin again contacted my office because his roof still was not fixed. At that point, Martin had contacted Housing NSW more than 20 times and assessors had visited the property more than 10 times.

In the midst of Martin making repeated unfulfilled maintenance requests, the private maintenance contract for Housing NSW changed hands. That undoubtedly caused considerable delays. Martin was contacted by Housing NSW to inform him that contractors would be in touch to undertake minor repairs on his roof as an interim step until his roof is replaced. Martin again made contact in late June because his roof still was not fixed. My staff again contacted Housing NSW on his behalf. They were told that the expected time frame for approval was 1 July, and that once approved it was expected that the work would be completed in 20 days. It was only after months of representations by my office to Housing NSW that Martin's roof was finally repaired. He received more than \$6,000 for 14 months of subsidised rent.

These are only a couple of the stories that I have encountered at my electorate office that highlight how badly underfunded social housing is in this State. It is appalling that some of the most vulnerable people in our community are living in unsafe and unhygienic conditions and that the Baird Government continues to give them little support. Lisa and Martin's stories highlight that underfunding basic maintenance leads only to higher future costs as small problems become significant structural faults. Maintenance backlogs are unacceptable and place huge pressure on tenants. Social housing does more than provide someone with a home, shelter and security. The State's social housing stock is a valuable asset that belongs to the taxpayers. It is in the Government's interests to invest in and to maintain this asset. This bill goes some way towards increasing social housing stock for the least fortunate. However, there is still a long way to go before adequate housing is provided for all. I welcome the 3,000 additional social housing dwellings that are proposed. It is a start, but we still have a very long way to go.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:29): The Sydney electorate has significant social housing communities with estates in Woolloomooloo, Pyrmont, Darlinghurst and Millers Point, although it is diminishing in Millers Point. Before the last election I also represented social housing communities in Surry Hills, Chippendale and Ultimo. Stable low-cost housing is vital to people on very low incomes, especially those with a mental illness, those with a drug and alcohol problem, those suffering from trauma and abuse, and prisoners released back into the community. Providing a stable home to someone who is disadvantaged, frail or vulnerable can help that person get back on their feet; break the cycle of disadvantage; get treatment needed for general health, mental health, and drug and alcohol problems; avoid a life of crime; or simply feel safe and secure.

Social and affordable housing is a vital government service, and I welcome the new opportunities that the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund Bill 2016 will create for new social and affordable homes. The bill

establishes the Social and Affordable Housing Fund, which the Government will finance through returns from \$1.1 billion worth of investments, to use on innovative projects that deliver new social and affordable homes. Funding will go to consortia of community housing providers, financiers, developers, landowners and other non-government organisations providing social and affordable housing to bridge the gap between costs and returns, and to help attract new investment in housing outside of government. Legislating the fund will ensure that in the future this new investment goes to social and affordable housing as opposed to consolidated revenue, with any change requiring an Act of Parliament.

The Social and Affordable Housing Fund is the main growth fund for social housing in this State, with Family and Community Services housing budgets generally focused on management of housing over expanding stock. Even the Communities Plus program, which aims to produce around 6,000 new social housing dwellings by redeveloping the Land and Housing Corporation's existing land, is financed by mixed tenure and increased densities, not new money. I strongly welcome the new investment into this often overlooked government function. The bill provides for appropriation of the fund from future State budgets, and I expect it will need regular top-ups to finance new dwellings on an ongoing basis. While an excellent start, we need more than the 3,000 new dwellings that will come out of the first round of funding, given housing has been neglected by successive governments for so long.

The fund is being financed from revenue from investment by the Treasury Corporation. I suggest the Treasurer consider other sources such as a budget appropriation. For example, an appropriation of \$800 million every 10 years for the delivery of around 2,000 extra dwellings annually could achieve 20,000 new dwellings over a 10-year period. The Treasurer could also review the purposes for which money from the Government's Waratah Bonds is used since it is currently limited to funding infrastructure projects. Much of the success of this fund is outside the framework of the legislation, and will rely on government implementation policies and procedures.

I understand the Government will take a flexible approach and is willing to support newly constructed houses, existing dwellings or redevelopments so long as an increase in social and affordable housing stock is achieved, with a minimum of 500 dwellings for metropolitan projects. I understand that a mix of tenure can be supported, provided at least 70 per cent of additional stock is social housing. Importantly, community housing providers will be expected to focus on tenant management to help tenants achieve their potential, which for some may include being able to earn enough to secure long-term private accommodation.

Security of tenure is one of the biggest concerns for tenants. Funding contracts will end after 25 years, after which properties can be sold or transferred to the private rental market. I understand that this reduces the risk for private investment and that the intention is to encourage consortia to reapply for contracts after they cease. However, many tenants will be concerned about their future as the end of a contract for their home approaches. I ask the Government to establish strong safeguards that ensure tenants are kept informed about their future tenancies and that if they must leave their home they are provided with similar housing within their communities. In closing, I congratulate the Government on investing in new social and affordable housing stock and on encouraging an innovative approach to addressing the long waiting list for social housing. I support the bill.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:33): On behalf of The Greens I speak on the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund Bill 2016. I am pleased to say I have taken on the Housing portfolio for The Greens NSW and acknowledge the tireless work of Jan Barham, my colleague in the other place, for her work in that portfolio area over a number of years. As has already been outlined, this bill establishes the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund [SAHF] to set aside \$1.1 billion of dedicated funding for social and affordable housing in New South Wales. This is a plan by the Government to address the shortage of affordable and social housing. It is said that in its first phase it will deliver up to 3,000 homes. It will be used to manage the properties and the tenancies within them and to provide support services for tenants.

The Greens note that the returns from the fund will be reinvested into the social housing sector, and we welcome the creation of an ongoing income stream for the sector. Any investment of money in the housing crisis in New South Wales has to be welcomed. However, as the NSW Federation of Housing Associations, the Tenants' Union of NSW and Shelter NSW have all noted, this scheme will go only a very small way to addressing the housing crisis in New South Wales. Therefore The Greens will not oppose the bill. However, we highlight the fact that this initiative is not enough to address the housing crises we are facing in New South Wales. We must change our entire approach to address the housing crisis. It is an issue of intergenerational inequality and one that this House, this Parliament and this Government must address.

People in New South Wales earning very low to moderate incomes are increasingly unable to access affordable housing, particularly in Sydney. Demand for affordable housing consistently exceeds supply to a vast degree. This adds to the upward pressure on rents and house prices, and leads to a decline in the number of affordable properties available. This fund alone will not be enough to address the housing crisis. More investment is needed to boost the supply of social and affordable housing. We require a commitment to maintain public

housing that has for many decades provided support to the most vulnerable in our community. According to the Anglicare 2016 Rental Affordability Snapshot there are now 59,000 approved applicants for social housing on the New South Wales housing register. In her second reading speech the Treasurer said that the intention of this housing fund was to plug a gap:

The Social and Affordable Housing Fund will provide a long-term revenue stream to plug this gap and encourage private and non-government organisations [NGOs] to team up to develop housing projects.

Given that this fund will deliver 3,000 new dwellings and the Anglicare 2016 Rental Affordability Snapshot shows that there are now 59,000 people waiting for social housing, it appears that the gap, while it may be plugged slightly, is not being plugged enough. A very large number of people will be left without social and affordable housing, even with the investment of this fund. It does not factor in a recent analysis from the University of Sydney, which projected New South Wales will have to provide 4,900 new affordable homes each year for 20 years just to maintain current wait lists. It does not factor in the increased demand for affordable and social housing in this State.

It is a disgrace that so many people in this State do not have a place to call home. It is a disgrace that this Government is claiming that it is now in the black when people are homeless in the streets of New South Wales and in the streets of Sydney. We see cuts to refuges. I do not measure "in the black" or "in the red" by figures presented by the Treasurer and this Government. I measure whether this Government is doing a good job by whether there are people sleeping homeless on our streets, trying to escape domestic violence, on crisis waiting lists who are not being provided with public, social or affordable housing. That is the problem in this State. The Government should not be patting itself on the back while our most vulnerable are not able to access the basic human right of safe, affordable and secure housing.

It is a disgrace that we have seen consistent approaches by successive governments in New South Wales to sell off public housing. It is a disgrace that we have seen the sell-off of public housing rather than investment in public housing. It is really disappointing that we do not see investment in housing included in the investment in infrastructure. Housing is as essential as education and health care, yet there is no recognition of the importance of investment in public housing or affordable housing in the same way as there is in the necessary infrastructure that should be part of what this Government delivers. Instead we see the sell-off of public housing, public housing under threat in Millers Point, the planned sell-off of the Sirius building and the impending relocation of residents in Waterloo. Residents are living under threat, not knowing what will happen as UrbanGrowth moves in to try to redevelop their area. We do not see the investment in public housing.

We see compounding problem of an ever-growing waiting list for social housing. We see private renters under pressure and we see housing affordability prices impacting on many in our community, especially young people. While we welcome the small steps taken by this Government to increase the availability of social housing properties in New South Wales, we must ask the question about the type of developments that can be paid for by these funds. Importantly, which bodies can apply through the Government tender process to access these funds not only now but also in the future? While the first round tender process required each tender application to include at least one community housing provider as part of the project consortia, we are not aware of any ongoing regulation to ensure that eligibility for the project remains that way. We must ask: What protections are in place to ensure that for-profit developers and for-profit companies do not become the main beneficiaries of this fund?

We know that private companies are interested in getting their hands on this sector. On 14 August this year the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that Serco has an interest in public housing in New South Wales. That is the same Serco that became infamous for managing Australia's offshore detention centres. According to the report, Serco told the Baird Government that community housing providers are too small to be efficient and that the State Government should follow the British model of outsourcing to larger management companies. It is interesting to note that the Minister for Social Housing met with Serco on 8 June this year and decided not to comment on the article that was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* about Serco's interest in public housing in New South Wales. I ask the Treasurer to address those concerns in her response and to reassure the community that this fund will not be accessed by private companies, like Serco, in the future. We must ensure that this fund is set up to serve the interests of the public.

A Select Committee on Social, Public and Affordable Housing was initiated by my colleague Jan Barham, MLC. The inquiry was broad-ranging and consulted with many people in the sector. In 2014 it delivered 41 recommendations that clearly identified the alarming shortage of social and affordable housing across the State. However, the New South Wales Government failed to pick up many of those recommendations. A massive opportunity was lost in relation to inclusion rezoning, and the plans of UrbanGrowth, which still does not have targets for affordable housing for its new developments in the area. We need a housing system that gives priority to helping people access the right to safe, secure and affordable housing. We must remember that is a basic human right.

Without adequate housing, people are excluded from many areas of our society. They are deprived from the basic services and supports that are essential to their wellbeing. We must recognise that every person has the right to access affordable, safe, secure, healthy and community-orientated housing, which is a commitment of The Greens. We must also ensure that it is appropriately designed and located, and constructed in an environmentally responsible way. The reality is that we should not see this Government patting itself on the back until everyone in New South Wales has the ability to be in a safe, secure and affordable home. Only then should it congratulate itself. We do not oppose the bill, but there is a big gap between the 59,000 people on the waiting list and the 3,000 new homes that will be delivered as a result of this fund.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:42): In speaking in debate on the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund Bill 2016, I note that to date governments of both political stripes have failed to create and maintain adequate public and affordable housing stock in this State. In its pursuit of excessive surpluses, the interest of Coalition governments has been to suppress housing stock and to exacerbate the housing affordability crisis in which New South Wales finds itself. It has to be said that the New South Wales Treasury is addicted to stamp duty. This week the Treasurer has been boasting about the cash reserves she has accumulated. Not only has this been done by overtaxing working class people, but also by sustaining cuts to vital services and government programs. We have a skills shortage in New South Wales and the State Government cuts TAFE. In turn, employers complain of a lack of workers for skilled trades. In response, the Federal Coalition Government approves ever more skilled migration to fill the gaps in the skill set of our domestic workforce.

In turn, this puts more pressure on the already scarce housing stock. Increased demand for scarce housing inflates prices, which in turn adds to the value of stamp duty receipts at the Office of State Revenue. In the meantime, the Baird Government barrels ahead—for no other reason than pig-headed ideology—with selling off public housing stock at Millers Point. It now wants to double down on that disgraceful legacy by turfing out the last remaining residents in the Sirius building at The Rocks. After flogging off publicly owned social housing, it tells us that it has the solution—it will pay the private sector to create new housing stock to make up for the shortfall it created when it sold it off. It will pay the private sector to create new housing stock to make up for the absurdity of a housing market that, year after year, outpaces wages growth and which, through its own actions, it has signalled it believes is already too strong.

While the Government relies on ever-increasing house prices to feed ever-growing stamp duty receipts, it wants to put a brake on wages growth. It has already given public servants in this State a wage cut every year for the past five years by limiting wages growth to 2.5 per cent. That is the vision of the Coalition for New South Wales—wages flatlining, housing prices rising exponentially year on year, gutting or selling off public housing, and transferring the responsibility to the private sector and big charity. The housing affordability crisis is forcing first home buyers to becoming first home landlords. The only homes that young people can afford to buy are those they must then rent out to others. This in turn puts upward pressure on rents as investors look to equalise their rental income and investment mortgage costs. The whole housing market for renters and buyers continues to grow unabated and it is working class people on low and middle incomes who are the victims.

Currently around 105,000 people in Australia are homeless and approximately 28,000 of them live in New South Wales. More than half are under the age of 35. Instead of building additional public housing, the Government has chosen to leave it to the developers, yet when it comes to affordable housing and social justice, the market has failed to put people before profits and deliver housing stock that is affordable to renters and first home buyers. In the Blue Mountains, there is almost no public and social housing stock. The stock does not in any way meet the demand. As a result, there are long waiting times for prospective social housing tenants. Family and Community Service figures show waiting times as follows: more than 10 years for one-bedroom properties; more than 10 years for two-bedroom properties; five to 10 years for three-bedroom properties; and five to 10 years for four-bedroom properties.

I acknowledge the work done across my electorate by Wentworth Community Housing. I note it does the best it can with inadequate funding provided by this State Government, but it does its best nonetheless. I commend its current project, which is Heading Home - Ending Homelessness Here! The bread-and-butter efforts of my electorate office are assisting my constituents who are experiencing a housing crisis, as well as people facing homelessness or destitution as a result of ever-increasing housing costs. Lack of affordable housing is one of the major reasons people visit my office in crisis. According to Shelter NSW, New South Wales is currently facing a shortage of 100,000 affordable dwellings for families on low incomes.

It is estimated that to address the social housing shortfall, the New South Wales Government must provide 20,000 affordable new dwellings over the next 10 years. This goes to show that the package on offer from the Baird Government is completely inadequate and unsatisfactory. The expert advice to the Government is: Build 20,000 homes. The response from Mike Baird is: Make do with 3,000. In addition to increasing the availability of public and social housing stock, the Baird Government must increase funding for maintenance and repairs to

ensure that public and social housing tenants enjoy timely repairs and regular maintenance of their property. Information contained in the recently released report from the Public Accounts Committee entitled "Management of NSW Public Housing Maintenance Contracts" highlights the points I have made.

The report clearly says that there is a growing gap between the costs associated with maintaining public housing and the maintenance budget. There is a large backlog of remedial works across this State. Recently one prospective social housing tenant in my electorate was referred to a vacant Housing NSW property. He was appalled when he got there. The windows were boarded up, cupboards were hanging off the walls, carpets and walls were filthy and the grass was knee high. He did not feel that it was a safe or fit place for him and his family. This is not an isolated incident. The Labor Party will support this bill, but only because it would be reckless of us to oppose it on the basis of its absolute inadequacy. It is true that something, however inadequate, is better than nothing. So we accept that this bill should be supported but I believe we need a radical rethink around housing affordability in this State.

This morning, at an event facilitated by the Sydney Alliance, I met with young people, students, workers and housing crisis services. The Sydney Alliance is one example of an organisation that is campaigning for increased supply of social and genuinely affordable housing in New South Wales, as well as legislation to level the playing field for young first home buyers to enter the housing market. Members of the alliance were out talking to parliamentarians. The Sydney Alliance's event showcased the remarkable efforts of a young student to bring housing affordability and homelessness into focus. Aryeh Berkovits is a 10-year-old student of Kesser Torah College in Dover Heights. Over the past few months, Aryeh has been working on a very special school project—the construction of a prototype shelter for homeless people. Aryeh hopes that one day it may be used to assist people in need, but in the meantime he wants to use his shelter to raise awareness of the problems of homelessness and housing affordability in our community.

This is commendable and impressive work, but it begs the question: Why has it fallen to a school student to demonstrate to the Government how unsustainable the current housing situation has become? The gutting of public housing stock in the inner city, and the mistreatment of public housing tenants, is not the answer. Likewise, this legislation is not enough of an answer. It is a start—phase 1—but not enough. The problem is that it is very likely that this represents the extent of the Government's efforts and its interests in this area. Government members will pat themselves on the back because they have found yet another way to transfer taxpayers' money to the private sector. The system the Government proposes is a fund of \$1.1 billion that will pay a dividend that in turn will be used to fund development of new housing stock. The Government has no intention of becoming the owners or operators of any new social housing stock.

What does this mean for these homes at the conclusion of the 25-year service agreement contracts? In terms of the lifecycle of a State Government, and the likely lifespan of this very hopeless State Government, 25 years is a long time—but it is shorter than the standard 30-year mortgage. So we are talking about housing that could very soon—relative to mortgaged homes and the even longer useful life of a dwelling—end up back in private hands. What guarantees are there that the private operators of these new dwellings will not seek to capitalise on their investment in 25 years by flogging them off? I support the bill, but I do not for one minute accept that this legislation represents an adequate solution to the absolute crisis in housing affordability that grips this State. We must do more.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (17:53): Imagine for a moment a young mother. She is up against it in many ways. She is raising a few children in the western suburbs—on Sydney's outskirts. It is hard enough to do that when dealing with the cost of living and day-to-day expenses, but she is living in public housing. The threats of violence from her next-door neighbour are really scaring her to death. They are a threat to her personal safety and the personal safety of her children. She applies to NSW Housing for a transfer, but this young mother is told that it will take at least two years for her to be rehoused. This mother is not a fictitious character. She is a constituent living in my electorate of Londonderry, who has come to me in desperation. Hers is but one of the many examples that we hear of every day as a result of government inaction on social, affordable and public housing. Such examples are not uncommon; they are dangerously widespread.

I hear stories every day from people who have been waiting the better part of their lifetimes to get into social housing. Sydney's rental market is taking its toll, not to mention the unaffordability of buying in the Sydney electorate of Londonderry. Everyday my office is contacted by people who face chronic waiting times to be housed or rehoused. I do not use the word "chronic" lightly. Many are told that they will have to wait for up to 10 years. In fact, the member for Blue Mountains said that it was the bread-and-butter issue for her electorate office. I think there are many members in this place who would say the same thing. Inquiries about public and social housing could occupy almost two staff members in my electorate office. It is a crisis in New South Wales.

I make this brief contribution on the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund Bill, which the Labor Party will support. As we have heard, this bill will see the construction of more social and affordable housing,

albeit an inadequate number. Three thousand new dwellings is a drop in the ocean—it is like throwing a cup of water on a bushfire—but I will never criticise the construction of new dwellings. Indeed, I welcome this legislation because social housing in New South Wales is beyond a crisis point. It is a model that is, quite simply, utterly broken. Social housing in New South Wales is failing communities and tenants and, in the long term it is costing the State as we continue to continue to prop up an inefficient and antiquated model.

I think we all acknowledge that this is a complex policy area, because there is the need to consider the ever-growing housing crisis, sky-rocketing rents in the private market, and the scarce availability of social housing places. New stock is needed urgently, and it is pleasing to see that this is being addressed in this new initiative. As we have heard, this bill will deliver 3,000 new social and affordable houses by providing capital to community housing providers. The Social and Affordable Housing Fund will provide a long-term revenue stream to encourage investment in community and social housing. That is definitely a good thing.

What is most pleasing to me is that this bill will see the construction of new houses—stock is so crucial in putting a dent in this crisis—by providing capital to community housing providers. I am a big fan of community housing providers. Many community housing providers offer services within my electorate of Londonderry, and they do a brilliant job of providing housing and wraparound services. I acknowledge the work of many of them. In fact, in my inaugural address I spoke at length about my experiences in coming to know firsthand about the many complex problems that social housing and public housing tenants face. I came to know about this by knocking on tens of thousands of doors during the campaign, and I have continued to experience it as I have gone about my job as the member for Londonderry. The current system simply fails to deliver outcomes for people. It is a system under which it takes some tenants several months, at the very least, to have basic maintenance carried out, even if the faults pose serious risks to personal safety. I am currently trying to help a constituent who has been told by the doctors at Nepean Hospital that she is not to go back into her home because there is so much mould in her property that it poses a risk to her health. For people who are attempting to get onto the housing list, unfortunately all that can be offered is a lengthy waiting period of up to several years. Imagine living the experience of trying to get housing but learning that it will take years and ears. Not one member of this House would ever be able to imagine being put into that situation. Our entire approach to social housing must change. I certainly believe that handing over management responsibility to community housing providers could be one part of the solution.

The Labor Opposition has a policy of handing over 20,000 existing public housing dwellings to community housing providers, which I believe would be an excellent first step in addressing the deficiencies of the current model. If we are going to be realistic about this, we must acknowledge that the current model is not working and has not worked for decades. Given the ongoing problems associated with social housing as well as the maintenance backlog and waiting times, title transfer is a model we should investigate seriously. The Opposition supports the bill but that support must be understood in the broader context of the social housing crisis in New South Wales that so many of my colleagues have referred to this afternoon. I have said it before but I will say it again: We are failing social housing tenants in New South Wales. We must make serious inroads when it comes to addressing the maintenance backlog and the huge and growing waiting list for social housing. We should be handing over more social housing titles to community housing providers, if we want to be real about dealing with the public housing crisis in this State.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (18:00): As the member for Balmain, I contribute to debate on the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund Bill 2016. As we heard from the member for Sydney, my electorate has incredibly high property values. When my parents first moved to Balmain after emigrating from the United Kingdom in the 1960s, my dad was a fitter who worked on ships in the Balmain shipyards. At that time, it was difficult to say that we lived in Balmain because people did not want to live in that area during the 1960s. But now, instead of being traditionally known as a working-class community, Balmain is a community in which there are incredibly high property values. There is an incredibly dense public housing community around my electorate office in Glebe. With thanks to the Whitlam Government and credit to it for its investment in public and social housing, my electorate has the Glebe estate, which is one of the most important communities in my electorate.

As my colleague The Greens spokesperson on social housing and member for Newtown, Jenny Leong, mentioned, The Greens will not oppose the bill because it is a step in the right direction. But, sadly, this bill represents merely a drop in the ocean when it comes to meeting affordable housing need. However, it has given members an opportunity to discuss issues in their electorates that specifically relate to the bill. In my experience, this issue has been ignored by both major political parties in government. Other members who have participated in this debate have acknowledged that. My experience over the past approximately six years both as a former mayor of the Leichhardt council and later as a member of this Parliament includes witnessing an incredible abdication of responsibility for social and public housing, first by the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth Government, when it comes to commitments over time, has continued to fail. We saw evidence of that in the Auditor-General's 2013 report, which stated that Federal investment continued to decline. The

reaction to that decline by the State Government was to sell houses. The New South Wales Government has met operational cost shortfalls in the Land and Housing Corporation by selling properties.

As identified by the Auditor-General in 2013, that is straight-out cannibalisation. The Government cannibalised housing stock. As the Auditor-General also identified in that 2013 report, after 1996 there was a real flatlining of the number of public housing dwellings as a proportion of total stock, with the exception of a little blip associated with economic stimulus by the Rudd Labor Government. That really highlights the problem. Cannibalising housing stock to support operational shortfalls of the Land and Housing Corporation is a zero sum game and it intensifies the scarcity of property assets for which prospective tenants compete on the waiting lists. At present there are well over 100,000 people on the housing waiting list. Some members during this debate have said that some of their constituents have been on the waiting list for housing for two years. In the Balmain electorate, people can only dream about being on the waiting list for two years before receiving a social housing property.

I know that in the Balmain electorate the big challenge is the transition from social or public housing into affordable housing. A person living in a three-bedroom property in my electorate will pay rent in excess of \$1,000 at market rates. Therefore, the subsidy is incredibly high. How does that family transition out of public housing into a form of affordable housing? Even if that family is paying 20 per cent below the rental market rate, they still have to come up with approximately \$900 a week. It is incredibly difficult to provide transition. However, at least what we are seeing by the introduction of this bill is an attempt to provide for transition. But even if social housing stock is increased by 3,000 homes, that must be considered as a proportion of the 130,000 public housing dwellings in the State. Consideration of that additional 3,000 public housing dwellings against the background of 70,000 approved new dwellings indicates the woefully insufficient and tiny proportion of new dwellings that will be provided by the proposal outlined in this bill.

In one of the wealthiest countries in the world, people have a right to a home. Social housing has turned into a safety net for the poorest and most vulnerable people of the State. Interestingly, in the 1960s my parents, who are part of a working-class family, were offered public housing in Doonside that they declined to accept because it was far from my dad's workplace in Balmain. In those days, working-class families were offered public housing but currently working-class families have no opportunity to obtain public housing, which has turned into a safety net for people with the most complex needs. We need to move away from that. In other places around the world, such as Hong Kong, most of the housing stock is government-owned. In other jurisdictions, such as New York or European Union [EU] countries, government is engaged in the housing sector and actively intervenes in the housing sector to provide to people the right to shelter, accommodation, a home—a place to call their own. In this State we have a developer model where it is left to the private sector, and the private sector has failed to deliver affordable housing in this State. This bill fails to provide the systemic change in the manner in which the Government approaches housing that the State needs.

While this bill is welcome, it does not deal with one of the critical factors: maintenance. When the Labor Government left office in 2011, the cost of the maintenance and repairs backlog in public housing reached \$300 million so, essentially, the State was a slumlord. In my community, people say that their property is 50 years old, but there are social housing properties in my electorate that are 100 years old. Members can imagine the state of disrepair of those properties due to an enormous lack of investment. The Labor Government did what this Government is doing on steroids. The Labor Government determined to sell lots of houses, up to 1,000 a year, and scrimp on maintenance and repairs, thereby blowing out the maintenance and repairs bill to \$300 million. We are witnessing now those policies coming home to roost. I welcome the Minister's commitment of funds to this project, but maintenance is absolutely critical.

Today the Public Accounts Committee tabled a report into maintenance and examined new contracts. In my electorate of Balmain, Broadspectrum is a new contractor. The report demonstrates in absolutely unequivocal terms the complete failure of effective maintenance regimes over the past decade. Let us be honest: The maintenance regimes have not been effective. There have been major challenges. The volume of inquiries by people searching for public housing is enormous and amounts to four per household per year, or 500,000. Part of the reason for that is the high number of call-backs. We know from the most recent data that there have been 50,000 callbacks, which is crazy, and we also know that there has been a real problem with the manner in which former maintenance contracts were formulated. Spotless drove a truck through some of those loopholes.

The reason this legislation is important is that I hope it begins a debate about public housing. I call it public housing because most people do not know what social housing means and the tenants think that public housing means the Housing Commission. It is really important to begin a debate about housing. If we want to be a generous society and if this Government has zero net debt, it is an indictment on the Government that no cash is being invested in some of the most vulnerable people in our community. For the past goodness knows how many months we have been complaining about the treatment of greyhounds, yet we have people who cannot

obtain accommodation. I do not need to reiterate all the stories that each member knows, but to my mind as members of Parliament we must commit to this as a critical social justice goal that we all should share.

We know from all the evidence about homelessness, substance abuse, alcoholism and domestic violence that the way to treat people who are in difficult situations is to provide them with a home. That has been witnessed in my electorate in the Common Ground Support Services project in Camperdown, which is based on the New York model. In an area of mixed properties that include affordable housing, social housing and homeless accommodation, the service says to homeless people, "Here is a key. Here is a place where you can go and live." That transforms homelessness. With wraparound services in a building provided by Mission Australia, people can transition from homelessness to a home and they are able to get their lives back on track.

Mr Temporary Speaker Notley-Smith, I know that you are very concerned about public housing tenants in your community. I looked at statistics recently and noted that in the electorate of Balmain 40 per cent of the inquiries received, excluding petition emails, are related to public housing. These public housing inquiries are from people who come through the electorate office door or ring the office or write to us via email or letter. This situation cannot continue. In truth this legislation represents an innovative approach to social and affordable housing, but the answer is that firstly, the State Government must engage with the Federal Government to get Commonwealth grants back to a sustainable level for the provision of social and affordable housing. We know that the Commonwealth Government has the capacity and the power when it comes to funding arrangements to invest in this sector. This Government should publicly call on the Federal Government to commit to deliver social and affordable housing in this State.

Secondly, this Government needs to invest in public and social housing by building more homes and to make up the maintenance deficit. This Government must build more social and affordable homes and maintain them as a strong proportion of all new dwellings. That means that properties must be built every year as our population increases. Finally, we need to support social housing tenants to make sure that people can transition out of public housing into affordable housing. That pathway is critical, because otherwise people are locked into public housing and there is no rational reason for them to get a job and move into another form of housing because such a move is simply financially unviable.

[*Business interrupted.*]

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 to provide:

- (1) That no motions for the adjournment of the debate on the Building Professionals Amendment (Information) Bill or the Education and Teaching Legislation Amendment Bill be entertained for the remainder of this sitting.
- (2) That for the remainder of this sitting, no divisions be conducted or quorums be called.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING NSW FUND BILL 2016

Second Reading

[*Business resumed.*]

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:11): I make a contribution to debate on the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund Bill 2016. The additional 3,000 new social and affordable housing properties are welcomed, but will go only a small way towards reducing the enormous social housing waiting list, which stands at around 60,000 households for 130,000 properties. The bill establishes the Social and Affordable Housing Fund, which provides seed capital of \$1.1 billion for community housing providers to build, own and maintain properties. There are good reasons to do this. I am familiar with these challenges having worked for Housing NSW in the establishment and implementation of Housing Pathways a few years ago.

Community housing providers have the scale and capacity to deliver holistic support to their tenants and excel at supporting groups of tenants with special needs. But even more importantly, their financial structure means they can do some things that Housing NSW cannot do. For example, their tenants receive Commonwealth rent assistance, which public housing tenants do not receive. That means that 25 per cent of community housing

tenants' incomes are worth more than 25 per cent of the income of a public housing tenant—money that can be invested in maintenance or additional dwellings. They can also take advantage of charitable tax exempt status.

The fund will establish a long-term revenue stream of about \$44 million per year, which is welcome. But much more needs to be done. In my electorate, the wait time for each dwelling type is more than 10 years for all dwelling types except one-bedroom units, which have a five to 10 year wait. Eighteen months ago, when I was first elected, two- and three-bedroom places had a shorter five to 10 year wait, so things are getting worse and not better. Hopefully, the Social and Affordable Housing Fund will make a bit of a dent in this. Maintenance is really problematic. There are 500,000 maintenance requests per year in New South Wales, although I am not sure how many are repeat requests that are regularly ignored. The separation between Housing NSW and the Land and Housing Corporation has only made this worse. Communications between the two entities are really problematic.

Every week I hear horror stories about housing maintenance. Some maintenance problems are really simple to fix, but if ignored result in far more expensive problems—like a tenant from Westmead who had a few tiles missing from his roof. He complained about it for years but to no avail. In the meantime, rain seeped in and damaged the ceiling, the carpets and the floor, causing thousands of dollars worth of damage while the relatively easy roof repairs were ignored. There was also a woman's home in Granville that was overrun by rats. She treated her accommodation many times at her own expense as Housing NSW was not responsive. She contacted my office and we contacted Housing NSW, and finally in February 2016 pest control attended her property, but only after this tenant had suffered for a long time.

Another example is a 70-year-old woman from Guildford with multiple health issues who was without a working stove for almost three weeks. She contacted Housing NSW several times but it took the intervention of my office to have the matter fixed. A constituent from South Wentworthville reported to us a long list of issues that had not been dealt with until our office became involved. She had a blocked sewer in her backyard with a rat infestation. She needed new carpet in bedrooms, the front and back security doors replaced, internal and external painting, insulation, her hot water system to be repaired or replaced, a new stove, inoperable windows fixed and flyscreens on the windows she could open.

I have seen numerous examples of cracks in ceilings in dwellings across my electorate, which have been reported by the tenant previously but not acted on as well as numerous examples of cracking and subsidence of room walls in South Wentworthville, which have been reported by tenants previously but not acted on. I have also seen examples in Guildford and South Wentworthville of water damage to carpets, which are not attended to for months and lead to health problems for tenants. Another example is in Merrylands where every time it rains water gushes into the home like a waterfall, causing great distress to the tenant and her young children. This week a tenant from Guildford complained that her plumbing leaks into the units below hers every time she uses the bath or shower. Her unit is less than 10 years old. Some tenants have been told that the reason for no maintenance being done on their properties is that the Department of Housing wants to redevelop the property.

But when they request a transfer, that too is denied. I understand that the Land and Housing Corporation owns many properties that are at the end or beyond the end of their economic lives. But they are also people's homes and those people deserve to live in safe, secure and watertight homes. I have spoken to dozens of people who have an urgent need for housing but who have waited for years, and to transfer applicants. I have heard heartbreaking stories of people who can no longer walk up the stairs to their unit unassisted, but who must wait three to five years for a transfer. Another bewildering case is of a family that was taken off the transfer list despite obvious overcrowding. A housing officer visited them and ascertained that they no longer wanted a transfer even though they only speak Arabic and the officer does not. It took months just to reinstate that family on the transfer waiting list. Issues with wait times for public housing and the lengthy waiting list for social housing are not unique to my electorate.

Today the Public Accounts Committee's report on the management of public housing maintenance contracts was released. It follows the Auditor-General's 2013 performance audit, "Making the best use of public housing", which examined the capacity of government agencies to meet changing public housing needs. It concluded that there was an increasing shortfall between the supply of and demand for public housing in the State. It also noted that the average cost for each dwelling rose from \$15,000 to \$27,000 per annum from 2003 to 2013, in many cases exceeding rental income.

The Public Accounts Committee found that despite a commitment to attending promptly to repairs for issues that affect the health and safety of tenants within between four hours and 20 days, there was evidence that it was often longer than 20 days. Certainly this has been the experience of many tenants who contact my office. The committee also found that the widening funding gap between increased maintenance needs and declining rental income was met by delaying maintenance and upgrading and selling off housing stock. This, of course, then affects the people on the waiting list by removing social housing properties from the pool of potentially available dwellings.

I have asked a number of questions on notice about social housing and, interestingly, none of them have been adequately answered. Instead I am directed to the Department of Family and Community Services [FACS] website that does not provide the level of detail I had sought, such as the number of vacant dwellings in my electorate, the number of properties with outstanding maintenance orders in my electorate, the number of tenancies and the specific average waiting times for housing. This is really disappointing. As there are hundreds of social housing dwellings in the Granville electorate, I would like to get a better understanding of the extent of the problems facing the tenants and applicants I meet with so often. Like others who have mentioned the volume of inquiries on social housing coming to electorate offices, for my office these housing inquiries are exceeded only by inquiries about local councils since the forced amalgamations.

I have also been concerned that much of the redevelopment of estates in recent years has not delivered additional social housing dwellings and, in many cases, has resulted in a net loss of dwellings. While I acknowledge the importance of building mixed communities where social housing tenants live alongside private rental and owner-occupied homes to overcome some of the structural long-term disadvantage we have seen with intergenerational poverty in traditional public housing estates, there has also been a wholesale loss of communities, such as the one in Millers Point. The redevelopment of both Waterloo and Telopea is so extensive it should be delivering more social housing dwellings, but it is not.

In relation to this bill, I have some concerns with clause 16—Review of the Act. It sets out the framework for a five-year review of the bill, which should occur. But at the outset, it requires the Minister to determine whether the policy objectives of the Act are still valid and whether the terms remain appropriate. This is something that should involve far more stakeholders than just the Minister to determine. It should be comprehensive and consultative. However, I do hope that this bill represents a new direction for this Government, facilitating the construction of new social and affordable housing rather than just selling it off. This is welcomed.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (18:19): I speak in debate on the Social and Affordable Housing NSW Fund Bill 2016. The object of this bill is to establish the Social and Affordable Housing Fund for the purpose of providing funding for the delivery of social and affordable housing in New South Wales. The bill aims to introduce a program that will deliver 3,000 new social and affordable houses to take pressure off the social housing sector, which is bursting at the seams. In my electorate of Cabramatta and throughout south-western Sydney, thousands of families struggle day after day, waiting and hoping for social housing.

The vast majority of inquiries or visits to my office are from people seeking assistance with housing. Many of these require priority or emergency housing. About 10 years ago it was said colloquially that, if people needed public housing, they would have to wait for 10 years. That is right: A decade would pass before housing became available to our most desperate and vulnerable. These days housing applicants are told that they will have to wait 15 to 20 years. That is a huge chunk of someone's life spent waiting for something as important as where family members will rest their heads that night or indeed whether those heads will have something to cover them.

Currently social housing developments face a huge funding gap between the rental stream they receive from tenants plus government subsidies and the revenue required to sustain a commercially viable project. The 3,000 new properties promised by the Government will be built, owned and maintained by community housing providers. The department will not own any of this stock. The fund will be set up with \$1.1 billion in seeding capital from TCorp and provide certainty to the sector. The return on this must also be used to fund social and affordable housing projects. Unfortunately, more needs to be done: The sheer demand for public and community housing is so immense that this is just a drop in the ocean. There is no point using a brick to try to block a tsunami. If as legislators and representatives of our community we are unable to provide sufficient housing for people, we all must hang our heads in shame.

There is nothing more fundamental for a person or a family than to have a roof over their heads. Housing needs to be driven up the priority list. Community housing providers should be provided with more support, such as the money from this fund, to build and establish more affordable housing. Everything should be on the table from the Government when it comes to housing: financial incentives for investment for community and social housing providers, and training and education emphasis for the children of public housing and social housing tenants so that the cycle can be broken. I applaud any initiative that helps meet the demand for housing. I also pay tribute to community housing providers such as St George Community Housing and Hume Community Housing Association, and all the community housing providers that do an outstanding job in what is a very difficult environment. The Opposition does not oppose this bill.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (18:23): In reply: I thank all the members who contributed to debate on this very important piece of legislation: the members representing the electorates of Wakehurst, Parramatta, Keira, Bankstown, Prospect, Lake Macquarie, Charlestown, Sydney, Newtown, Blue Mountains, Londonderry, Balmain, Granville and Cabramatta. I note the significance of this piece of legislation, which provides for the establishment of the Social and Affordable Housing

Fund and sets aside dedicated funding to facilitate the delivery of social and affordable housing in this State. By enshrining this fund in legislation we are sending a strong signal to everybody who wants to participate in this process about the permanency of the fund and about the assurance the Government has given in relation to the fund. It will be established as a ring-fenced financial structure following strong feedback we received, and again it demonstrates our long-term commitment to this sector. We are of course looking forward to ensuring that this fund delivers much-needed housing along with tenancy and asset management, social support programs and services.

In addition to noting all the comments made by members in this place, I reiterate that I acknowledge the support of the Opposition for this important legislation. I also want to stress that the Government has been in a position to establish and ring-fence this fund because we have a strong budget position and a strong balance sheet. If we did not, we would not have these opportunities for the most vulnerable in our community. It is a significant milestone in the history of this State to be able to establish a permanent ring-fenced fund which will see the delivery of much-needed housing to those most vulnerable. Again, I thank all members for their contributions and I look forward to receiving similar support in the other place. I look forward to being able to provide the community with an update, working with the Minister for Family and Community Services, Brad Hazzard, who I know made a contribution to this debate, in making sure that those most vulnerable are served best by the action that we have taken this evening.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

EDUCATION AND TEACHING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 21 September 2016.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (18:26): On behalf of the New South Wales Opposition I lead in debate on the Education and Teaching Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. As we see in the overview of the bill, its objectives include: to rename and reconstitute the Board of Studies Teaching and Education Standards NSW to the NSW Education Standards Authority, also to be known as the authority; to require the authority to have a charter approved by the Minister and an annual statement of expectation from the Minister; to authorise the authority under functions of legislation to conduct reviews into matters that arise as a result of the legislation; to authorise the authority to approve teacher education programs in connection with the accreditation of teachers; and to approve persons or bodies to provide professional development in line with the requirements in the professional teaching standards.

Further objectives include: to provide that the authority will monitor and provide advice to the Minister for Education and the Secretary of the Department of Education; to replace the Quality Teaching Council with the Quality Teaching Committee, as well as undertake leadership changes such as the size of the board as well as having a part-time chairperson and a full-time CEO who will effectively manage the day-to-day operation of the organisation; to make amendments to the education and teaching legislation that are of an administrative, minor or inconsequential nature; and, most significantly, to allow the unannounced inspection of the education premises, schools, early childhood education centres and premises used for the delivery of professional development as defined by the Act.

There are a number of practical elements to this bill. I acknowledge that the bill is a result of a thorough review that was conducted earlier this year after having received submissions from a range of stakeholders, many from within the education community. I have read the bill before us with a number of hats on, so to speak: as a former educator, as a parent and with other considerations such as the practical and political landscape in which this bill will operate. I was present when the Minister gave his second reading speech, which I re-read—I acknowledge the Minister's presence in the Chamber now—and I have consulted with a number of stakeholder groups. It is our intention not to oppose this bill; however, we reserve our right to propose amendments in the other place. I have a number of points seeking clarification to elements of this bill.

Of significance is the changing make-up of the board as well as the changes in name and the reduction of the Quality Teaching Council. I note that the board will have 13 members with an independent person appointed by the Minister to act as a chair. Six will be appointed by the Minister, including a representative from each of the three education sectors, two from teacher unions and one from Aboriginal education. I suggest that more explicit information be provided in the legislation regarding the specific groups involved. In other words, will the Aboriginal education representative be nominated from a peak Indigenous body? Are the unions referred to the NSW Teachers Federation and the Independent Education Union? How will the sectoral school representatives be nominated? In addition, between four and six members of other groups could include teachers, school leaders, academics, professionals from vocational education, early childhood education, special education, parents of schoolchildren, or people with business acumen and strategic advisory skills.

In the case of the abovementioned, there are too many ambiguities. Would it not be wise to nominate a senior officer of Parents and Citizens Federation, given that it is the recognised peak body? Would a minimum of four and maximum of six encompass all the possible specialities, including of course vocational education and early childhood education? This list of "other appointees" should be more explicit so that we have as members experts or recognised leaders in the field, because they will be best placed to make a positive and valuable contribution to the board.

It is also important to note that in 2018, all teachers, regardless of when they entered the service, will be accredited and expected to undertake a cycle of maintenance in relation to the teacher professional standards. Given the massive spike in teachers required to submit their maintenance portfolios, it concerns me that the Quality Teaching Council [QTC] will be much smaller but will be required to deal with a larger number of teachers needing to meet their maintenance compliance. I seek clarification from the Minister about the ways in which he expects the QTC to manage the massive increase in the number of teachers requiring a service with a vastly reduced number of committee members. A framework that delivers a consistent and strong accreditation process for early childhood educators is welcomed. However, it is important to note that for most people working in the early education space, access to professional development and improved rates of pay are issues of great concern and importance. My colleague the shadow Minister for Education and member for Port Stephens will have more to say about that in her contribution to this debate.

I would like the Minister to advise the House whether the QTC will have any input into the way money generated from accredited professionals paying their annual maintenance fee—currently \$100—will be spent by the authority. For example, will the QTC be able to utilise some of this money for educational research to support best practice? Further to the QTC membership, I propose that rather than having five elected members and six nominated members, the Minister consider including a government school principal representative in the elected number. In this case, there is consideration of the added value a school leader will bring to the group. I have nominated a government school principal because of the number of educators working in the public education system.

I have a similar suggestion in respect of parental representation on the QTC board. The Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW [BOSTES] in its current form and in previous incarnations has always had a strong reputation for its consultation and rigour in syllabus. That is clearly demonstrated by the development of the national curriculum and New South Wales' strength in curriculum. For example, the School Registration and Accreditation Committee has been acknowledged for its work in ensuring quality and public confidence in schools by a range of stakeholders with whom I have consulted. It is pertinent to point out that the objects of the Education Act 1990—particularly part 2, section 4—articulate, among many other things, that "the principal responsibility of the State in the education of children is the provision of public education". As such, the charter, the annual statement of expectations and the principal objectives of the authority should reflect that as a guiding element of its charter.

I would like the Minister to reconsider schedule 3, entitled "Amendment of Teacher Accreditation Act 2004. I refer to new section 20—Matters to be dealt with by professional teaching standards". High professional standards are to be expected of teachers, and the capacity to suspend or revoke teacher accreditation being left with the authority has been welcomed. However, concern was expressed that there could be a denial of natural justice principles if a person is found innocent but lost his or her employment. This legislation leaves room for tweaking. One specific area should be explored and explained in greater detail; that is, the principal objectives of the authority. These objectives are to provide strategic leadership in improving standards of school education. As an aside to this specific objective, I take this opportunity to recognise improvements in a number of areas and suggest that the language dealing with "improvement" could be couched in terms that acknowledge previous improvement and call for "continuous improvement" or "further improving", lest it be interpreted through its lack of qualification that schools and education have not improved in recent times.

Other objectives include ensuring that matters of school curriculum, forms of assessment, regulatory standards for schools and teaching quality and professional standards are developed, applied and monitored in a way that improves student learning while maintaining flexibility across the entire school education and teaching sector. I make it clear that the Opposition does not disagree with the implementation of a rigorous, high-quality and supportive audit or inspection of schools. However, the proposal to have the authority's inspectors conduct audits and inspections without any requirement to give notice raises serious concerns. It could become a precursor to creating the culture of fear that we saw emerge from the implementation of similar practices in England under the auspices of the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills [OFSTED].

As it stands, schools in all sectors have strong compliance requirements. Government schools are now all undertaking a comprehensive accreditation process through audits conducted by a team of educational professionals. Non-government schools have a thorough registration process to maintain their accreditation to provide education in New South Wales. Teacher and principal appraisal programs are now conducted on an ongoing basis and are grounded in a clear, systematic and professional framework. Defined articulations about what evidence will be required to support the appraisal are in place and enough time is given to ensure those being appraised have the opportunity to gather and to provide all the materials required of them as part of their evidence and work.

In the case of classroom teachers, that may include lesson observations by one of their line supervisors; work samples that highlight their meeting of syllabus requirements; work and practice that correlates directly with the professional teaching standards; a review of their classroom practices in the management of students; records of meetings, including context and outcomes, with parents and other stakeholders; membership of professional associations and professional learning; and their own professional goals for the year ahead. The requirement is comprehensive and already exists within a plethora of highly developed accountability measures. Of course, appraisals are also conducted with the school leadership. Depending on an individual's responsibility, proof of fulfilling the specific duties associated with his or her position also fall under this category of scrutiny and accountability.

Some may argue that the proposed random visit approach will improve education standards and the teaching of literacy and numeracy in schools as part of the wider curriculum that is offered. This is not the case. A random inspection will not uncover shortfalls in curriculum implementation. Rather, a well-planned, appropriately timed inspection, and detailed audit will allow for forensic examination of things such as teaching and learning programs, availability and implementation of school policies, and the way data from the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN], the Higher School Certificate, and other external examinations is used to tailor teaching programs for specific cohorts and individual students.

The alignment of what is produced for inspection and the reality of what occurs can then be verified through an analysis of student workbooks, teaching registers, assessment tasks, and feedback, along with staff professional learning within the school. If the Minister is genuine in using the inspection process and gathered information to formulate policy that best supports education in this State, I suggest that he expect all schools to meet certain benchmarks for their inspection, provide a time frame, and employ educational experts to visit schools to conduct these audits. That is happening now. Good practice is about letting people know what is expected to be presented for inspection, giving enough time and keeping a sense of professionalism.

A number of additional questions arise from this proposal. They include questions about who the inspectors will be and the parameters within which they will operate. It is fair to say that too many ambiguities remain about the areas of inspection and what they will be. In other words, what will the inspectors be looking for? The Minister's second reading speech did little to clarify this issue, other than stating that "All schools should be aware that even those assessed as low risk can be subject to a random audit." This further compounds the concerns that I raised at the outset of the announcement foreshadowing BOSTES changes when the Minister used phrases such as "Schools should be nervous." Sweeping statements such as those do not serve the purpose of quality audit processes with the intended outcome of creating a greater education system. Unannounced inspections are not conducive to an environment of good school management and teaching practice.

In any work environment appraisals, inspections or reviews, or whatever we may choose to call them, are common practice. This is certainly the case in education. I very much support the principle of high accountability. However, in any work environment, if we are to get the best out of people they must be provided with a clear set of expectations and be given an opportunity to meet those expectations and display their achievement. If in this case it is about quality assurances and raising standards, inspections like those that currently take place should continue—and there is the potential for them to become more rigorous. Unannounced visits that could occur at any time are not designed to support schools—rather, it seems, they are designed to try to catch schools out, to make examples of them and to create fear of the authority.

Once again let us keep in mind that the primary focus of education is and must always be the achievement of the best possible learning outcomes. Whilst every stakeholder group and individual teachers and principals to whom I have spoken are supportive of accountability and high standards, every one of them also indicated their concern about this approach of unannounced visits. They all said the same thing—departmental and non-departmental figures can currently visit the school at any time. Adding an element of inspection as proposed in this legislation will change the context of these visits.

As I have stated, there are current provisions for inspections, audits, reviews and appraisals. The best ones allow for schools and teachers to prepare all the required materials requested and present them as an example of their practice. This may include all the data that may be required to support or discount any claim that is made by a school or a teacher. This also involves adequate time for a professional conversation to discuss the materials presented and the practice of individuals and the school. Pre-planned visits for holistic school audits allow for the collation of all materials, whether teaching programs, school procedures, financial records, student attendance records, class visits or anything else that may be deemed important for the purpose of an accreditation inspection.

From a purely practical viewpoint, unannounced visits do not allow for this to happen in a calm, measured and supportive way. It could be implied that any opposition to this proposal is because schools have something to hide, but this could not be further from the truth. The support for a rigorous and high-quality inspectorial system is clear. It is the means by which it occurs that has raised concern across the spectrum. Historically there have always been inspections of schools in all education sectors. There is a strong element of accountability and a professional and supportive approach to the constant audits that take place in a school. The power to issue warnings and ultimately close schools is something that already exists.

I am seeking clarity around the selection of inspectors, what they may specifically be looking for and why this cannot be achieved with proper notice. This is the sort of respect we would provide to any professional organisation or individual. I make it clear once again that the New South Wales Opposition is unequivocal in its support of high standards in schools and education premises. Our community deserves no less. However, this can be achieved without creating a culture of fear through random, unannounced inspections designed specifically to, as the Minister said, make schools nervous.

Education is the key to a better nation. The Minister and I are in agreement that a fair and well-funded education system is at the heart of an egalitarian State. Reform of education as part of continuous improvement is a good thing. The achievement of higher educational standards is important and the ability of students to become great citizens—confident and skilled learners, proficient in their learning—is even more important. Parents send their kids to school and they must know that everything is done correctly. Audits and reviews are an important part of this. This bill goes some way towards addressing this through the charter and objectives of the authority but it raises some questions, as I have described. The bulk of the bill is sensible, manageable and put together well. However, one key element has been continuously raised with me by people from a wide variety of backgrounds and groups—that is, the issue of unannounced inspections. As I have said, the Opposition will have more to say about this in debate in the Legislative Council.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Local Government) (18:44): It is a pleasure to speak in debate today on another important bill—the Education and Teaching Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I congratulate the Minister for Education who no doubt will read the debate in *Hansard*. He is an incredible Minister who has reformed education in this State and ensured that we have quality teachers who support students in New South Wales. I commend the Minister for his tireless work in travelling throughout the State, speaking to teachers and students, and delivering significant and important education reform. The Minister has ensured that students are at the forefront of government changes.

Teachers have an important responsibility—to educate our students. Through the Gonski reforms this Minister is driving significant change in the education sector. As a former schoolteacher I know that teaching is a great career and that students remember the lessons they are taught. I still run into former students of mine who remember incidents that took place at school, in the classroom and in the schoolyard. It is rewarding for teachers to leave a mark in the hearts of their students.

This Government is ensuring that all students receive a high-quality education by making changes to the State's education framework to provide quality teaching and learning in every classroom. As recommended by the recent review of the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards [BOSTES], the Education and Teaching Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 will result in a number of governance changes to BOSTES which is now to be known as the NSW Education Standards Authority.

The new authority's regulatory approach will shift from minimum compliance to a risk-based approach with an explicit focus on quality. There will also be an enhanced focus on teacher quality and student engagement and a strong alignment with the Government's evidence-based reforms. The vast majority of the 3,000 schools in

New South Wales are committed to maintaining and improving quality teaching and learning. However, we need to have confidence that all schools will continue to deliver high quality education in a safe and supportive environment. The new authority recognises this with a risk-based approach to registration that will cut red tape while maintaining appropriate levels of oversight.

For example, school principals will now be able to certify that their school meets the registration requirements. Spot checks will encourage compliance. This will alleviate the need to collate and send in copies of all the paperwork to be laboriously checked by BOSTES staff. The certification approach will free up resources to focus on the issues that impact student achievement. This will include a direct focus on the quality of teaching and learning by school inspectors at the individual school level. More broadly, the authority will explicitly consider quality in the registration of schools and will have enhanced powers to inspect as part of that process. Resources will also be redirected to thematic reviews into areas of educational priority that impact education in New South Wales. This will enable a focus on systemic issues that may be affecting student engagement and how well students are learning. Outcomes will be shared across all schools and sectors.

To ensure that all students benefit from the refreshed focus on quality and student performance, there will be a greater alignment between the regulation of government and non-government schools. The move from a minimum compliance to a risk-based approach will ensure that issues with any school or system can be identified and rectified in a timely manner. Government schools will be subject to the same risk-based audits and spot checks as non-government schools. Where issues are identified in government schools, the secretary will be advised and action recommended. The authority will need to be informed of what action is being taken. This external oversight will help government schools to continuously improve and strive for the highest educational standards.

We know that teacher quality is one of the most important drivers of quality education and student learning and performance. A skilled, prepared and engaging teacher can have a profound effect on students and can help them to achieve to their capacity. To ensure that graduate teachers are properly prepared for their jobs, the authority will be able to improve initial teacher education programs with conditions. There will also be explicit provision for suspension or revocation of program approvals. Initial teacher education providers will also need to provide relevant data, for example, data that demonstrates that the graduate standard is being met.

The approach of the new authority will align with the suite of evidence-based reforms the New South Wales Government is implementing to enhance quality teaching and education. The authority will help to build the evidence base. Thematic reviews will look at the big picture, such as what is impacting performance and quality across all sectors. The authority will better leverage research, data and expertise to analyse those issues and questions. This will include forging a stronger relationship with the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation and other research bodies to develop evidence-based, practical and implementable responses.

The Government is moving quickly to implement the recommendations of the review of the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards. The new governance arrangements and a reduction in red tape will free up resources to better focus on quality and the factors that assist student achievement. The authority will drive high standards in education across all schools in New South Wales to support our students to perform to their fullest potential. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (18:51): As The Greens education spokesperson I speak in debate on the Education and Teaching Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 and note the contribution of the shadow Minister for Education. I note also that Minister Piccoli was in the Chamber a short time ago. The bill amends three major pieces of legislation that govern schools and education in New South Wales—the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards Act 2013, the Education Act 1990, and the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004. While in many respects this legislation merely reflects the authority that already exists with the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards [BOSTES], it provides for the additional power of random inspections and is grounded in a governance and management theory model that, in our view, does not engender safe and settled learning environments.

I state at the outset that The Greens do not oppose the bill. There are a lot of positive things in the bill, but we are concerned about certain aspects of it and will propose amendments in the other place. The Greens understand that respectful relationships in learning environments are at the heart of positive student outcomes. In my capacity as the education spokesperson for The Greens, it has been communicated to me by a number of stakeholders and constituents that the attitude of the Minister in his media comments and in his second reading speech relating to random compliance audits—and that if schools are doing the wrong thing they should be very afraid—belies a deficit and fear-based view of learning environments that we reject. Having a regulator to ensure compliance and standards is expected because all students in this State deserve the best, their families expect the best, and teachers and educators want the best for their students.

Teachers and educators deserve to work in the best possible learning communities. However, a fear and punishment approach is completely at odds with the qualities that we know engender the best outcomes for school communities—trust, adequate resourcing, support and respect. We welcome the changes to the board because the current board has only two teachers on a board comprising 23 members and the new governance model allows for greater representation from stakeholders who work at the coalface of teaching and learning. The potential inclusion of parents, teachers and principals at the committee stage is also an improvement.

The NSW Education Standards Authority will remain a single independent statutory authority and will retain all the current functions of the Board of Studies, Teaching and Education Standards. The bill clarifies that a principal objective of the Education Standards Authority is to drive improvements in the standards of school education. This involves recommending improvements to schools and school systems and changes to government policy where necessary. A governing body will be established to provide leadership in improving standards of school education across the State and overseeing the performance of the authority. The governing board will be guided by an annual ministerial statement of expectation to ensure that the authority is clearly focused and delivers on its objectives.

The size of the governing board will be reduced from 23—to 12 to 14 members. The board will be comprised of members from across the different school sectors—Aboriginal education, the NSW Teachers Federation, the Independent Teachers Union, universities, vocational education, parents, early childhood education, special education, business and strategic advisory skills, and rural and remote representation. We welcome this change. The board will exercise its function through five decision-making regulatory committees. The committees will focus on teacher accreditation and registered professional learning, syllabus development and curriculum engagement, technical assessment issues, school registration and assessment, and initial teacher education accreditation. The existing Quality Teaching Council will be replaced.

The bill aims to reduce the regulatory burden associated with the registration of schools on the authority and schools. The registration process will focus on the quality of learning rather than on the existing administrative or process-driven approach to compliance. The authority will be able to undertake random and risk-based audits and unannounced inspections. The government system will also be subject to random and risk-based audits and spot checks by the authority in the same way as non-government schools and non-government systems are. The new power of the authority to conduct random, risk-based audits and spot checks will also apply to quality assurance arrangements with teacher accreditation authorities.

I will not go through the amendments to the three pieces of legislation because the Minister made a detailed second reading speech. I will now discuss the areas that The Greens believe should be looked at again. It is the position of The Greens that new section 14 (2A) must be amended to allow for procedural fairness. We will be seeking amendments in the other place to insert a requirement that at least five days notice be given before the authority inspects a premises and that the nature of the non-compliance be identified to enable a person or body to suitably prepare. We understand, however, that in cases of genuine urgency where the authority would be remiss in its duty to protect children and young people, or to respond to serious matters where time is of the essence that the authority should be able to do so. We do not think that random compliance checks for non-urgent matters will engender improvements in learning settings. In fact, it has the potential to set up a bullying and fear-based culture in schools and learning settings, which was foreshadowed by my colleague.

For example, if we wanted to embrace the Minister's governance and management model for schools, which is at odds with evidence-based research on the kinds of learning environments in which teachers and students thrive, how does this sit with the management of employees in any other sector? Imagine if I walked into my electoral office and randomly conducted a performance review of my staff and did not tell them what it would be for or what aspect of their incredibly diverse job description I would be reviewing. They would get no notice and no time to prepare. I can assure members that the Parliament would have something to say to me about administrative principles of due notice, reasonable notice, procedural fairness and plain old poor management. Why then is the Minister not applying basic management principles of due notice and procedural fairness to one of the most diverse working environments in the State? Would a random audit of my staff give me a cohesive and complete picture of their work? Would my random inspection engender a spirit of professional trust and collegiality? I think not.

Analysts suggest that the new section 14 (2A) is modelled on the United Kingdom's version of our Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards [BOSTES]—the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills [OFSTED], which is the inspection authority in the United Kingdom [UK]. The provision in the United Kingdom legislation was drafted in 2012 in direct response to an allegation that a nest of terrorists had infiltrated an English school, which OFSTED argued it could not investigate properly if it had to give the school notice of an inspection. The law was changed in the United Kingdom to allow that. I do not propose to go into why OFSTED and not a counterterrorism unit might be the appropriate authority to investigate, but suffice it to

say that there was no finding of terrorist activities in the school, but rather a very poor and disadvantaged school community.

OFSTED kept the no notice provision until 2005, but amended it after significant professional and community backlash. Under the current UK legislation, schools are usually notified at around midday on the working day prior to the start of a routine school inspection. Schools previously rated inadequate for behaviour may be subject to no notice inspections, as may schools about which there are significant concerns. If the Minister is looking towards the UK for precedence this may assist his thinking around the blanket no notice provision. The Greens urge the Minister to amend section 14 (2) and allow for serious matters to be inspected without notice, but allow due process for non-urgent matters.

I am sure none of us wants to see a culture of bullying in learning communities, and if we are not careful this model may engender just that. When the Teacher Assessment and Review Schedule [TARS] was introduced in New South Wales many overzealous supervisors used it to place unprofessional and unreasonable demands on subordinates. Even though the department made it very clear in the wording of the review process that TARS was not intended to be used in a punitive fashion, it had that potential, and it did happen. What potential is there then for the notion of random compliance checks being used as a bullying tactic? We will need to carefully monitor this if the no notice provision prevails.

I will finish on the morale of students, teachers and parents within a learning community when deficit- and fear-based models are applied to teaching and learning. What sort of demeanour do we want the teacher of our children to have? Does this model engender safe, settled learning environments? Respectful relationships are a prerequisite for that kind of learning environment and we encourage the Minister to look at a whole school as the sum of its parts, and do everything he can to support respectful relationships and professional trust.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (19:01): I speak in debate on the Education and Teaching Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. The New South Wales Government is implementing a comprehensive set of reforms to education focused on ensuring that all New South Wales schools have great teachers and that our students are supported to achieve. We are improving the State's education architecture to drive these reforms. In 2014 we established the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards [BOSTES], which combined the functions of the Board of Studies and the Institute of Teachers in a new body that was the first of its kind in Australia. This organisation brought together the key education pillars—curriculum, student assessment and teacher quality.

The recent review of the BOSTES considered the effectiveness of the amalgamation and the ability of BOSTES to meet emerging challenges. The review found significant support for BOSTES, and made 13 recommendations to improve the organisation's governance and regulatory arrangements. The Government has accepted the review recommendations, and the Education and Teaching Legislation Amendment Bill will provide the legislative basis for implementation. The functions of BOSTES will be retained and the organisation renamed as the NSW Education Standards Authority. The new authority will have enhanced accountability as well as contemporary governance arrangements; a streamlined, risk-based approach to regulation; and a strong outcomes focus.

In relation to governance, the advisory board of BOSTES will be replaced with a new, streamlined governing board with a strategic, outward-looking focus. The new board will have an independent part-time chair. The day-to-day operational functions of the authority will be led by a full-time chief executive officer. Five decision-making regulatory committees and two streamlined advisory committees will replace the 12 existing advisory committees. The creation of this body is an example of the activities of a Minister who is streamlining administration and reducing red tape. Well done, Minister!

Much of the authority's regulatory work will be delegated to the decision-making committees, ensuring that the board's focus is on strategic issues. The committees will focus on curriculum, assessment, school registration, quality teaching and initial teacher education. These changes provide contemporary governance arrangements to ensure clearer accountability and enhanced decision-making. In relation to representation, the new board and committees will continue to be inclusive of the New South Wales education community and support productive relationships.

The governing board will be leaner—from 23 members down to a much more sensible 12 to 14—reflecting its change from an advisory board to a governing board. Six members will be appointed from the three school sectors, unions and Aboriginal education, and the remaining appointments will have regard to teachers and school leaders, tertiary and vocational education, parents, early childhood education, as well as business and advisory skills—a true broad cross-section of all those involved in the education system. Membership of the new

decision-making committees will continue to reflect the breadth and expertise of the education sector, and appointments will ensure a mix of knowledge, skills and experience.

One of the board's new committees—the Quality Teaching Committee—will replace the current Quality Teaching Council. The committee will have responsibility for teacher accreditation, teaching quality and standards, and ongoing professional development. The reduced membership—from 23 down to 12 to 14—reflects a balance between appropriate representation and the need for a leaner committee to enhance decision-making. Five members will be elected from teaching professionals, ensuring a strong teaching voice on standards and professional learning.

In relation to streamlining and strengthening school registration, the NSW Education Standards Authority will adopt a streamlined, risk-based approach to school registration. This approach recognises that most schools are committed to high standards of education and do not require the authority to check every document to ensure compliance. Processes will be simplified and paper-based compliance will shift to a system where principals certify compliance, which is sensible. Reduced red tape will free up capacity for the authority to focus on better supporting quality teaching and learning.

Thematic reviews in priority areas, such as literacy and numeracy, will inform policy and practice, and support high standards across all schools. The authority will gain the capacity to undertake stronger and more proportionate compliance action, targeting risk. This will include random and risk-based audits and spot checks to incentivise compliance and respond to issues appropriately. The authority will be able to impose conditions on school registration, which will allow a more proportionate response than the blunt instrument of deregistration. Schools will be required to address specific concerns within certain time frames.

In relation to better alignment across school sectors, the New South Wales Government recognises that all schools, government and non-government, should be accountable and have independent oversight. Parents expect no less. This bill better aligns school registration arrangements across the school sectors. This means the new risk-based approach, including risk-based audits and spot checks, will apply to both government and non-government schools. The Secretary of the Department of Education will be advised of any issues that the authority identifies. The secretary will advise the authority of action taken by the department. This approach is similar to the process for non-government schools, where conditions can be placed on their registration. This increased alignment between the regulation of government and non-government schools will help to ensure independent oversight of the quality of student learning in all schools in New South Wales.

Teacher quality is one of the most important drivers of quality education. The New South Wales Government partners with initial teacher education providers in delivering initial teacher education through the provision of practicum places. We know that it is essential that our graduate teachers are properly skilled and prepared for their jobs. To enhance the quality of beginning teachers, the authority will now be able to impose conditions on approvals of initial teacher education programs. In line with other jurisdictions, the authority may also suspend or revoke a program approval.

Initial teacher education providers will also need to provide relevant data to the authority—for example data that demonstrates student achievement to the graduate standard. In addition, the authority will streamline its regulatory approaches to teacher accreditation and professional development. Employers will be legally required to alert the authority to issues that may impact on an individual teacher's accreditation. These regulatory changes will help the authority to better focus its efforts on teacher quality. The Government has responded positively to the outcomes of the review of the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards. It is moving quickly to implement the recommendations of the review to strengthen the organisation's governance and regulatory capabilities. The community expects that our teachers and schools are world class and this legislation will assist in achieving that goal.

In conclusion, it would be remiss of me not to mention that the Cootamundra High School recently lost part of its roof during fierce storms. I thank the school's principal, Mr Neil Reaper, for his professionalism in ensuring that it is full steam ahead for the conduct of the Higher School Certificate [HSC] examinations, which begin tomorrow. I wish good luck for all year 12 students from across the electorate of Cootamundra who are undertaking the HSC. The clean-up operations involved approximately 30 people over the past three days. All is in readiness for the reopening of the school tomorrow. I thank the Department of Education in Wollongong for being absolutely wonderful at this time of need.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (19:09): As part of my participation in debate on the Education and Teaching Legislation Amendment Bill 2016, I note that the Baird Government is again refusing to admit its underinvestment in education—but this time, by blaming the teachers. This bill aims to rename the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards to become the NSW Education Standards Authority. The bill will develop a charter of responsibility with an annual statement of expectations handed down from the Minister. In

some respects, one may say that the statement resembles a military order. The bill also provides for creation of a new board comprising 12 members, who will include six members representing educational sectors and groups, and six members who will be cherry-picked by the Minister.

The bill will create the appointment of a part-time chair and a full-time chief executive officer. The abolition of the Quality Teaching Council will be followed by its replacement, which will be known as the Quality Teaching Committee, comprising five elected teacher representatives and six appointed representatives. I note that the appointed representatives have a convenient majority. The bill will allow a greater delegated power for committees of the authority, provide the new authority with power to approve teacher education and accreditation courses, provide the new authority with power to revoke a teacher's accreditation and, most controversially, provide inspectors with the power to make unannounced visits to schools.

School inspections should simply be an inspection to assist in increasing education standards, not a raid to catch out teachers and staff. According to the Minister for Education, schools should be scared of inspectors, who can unexpectedly come to a school to catch out wrongdoers. The Minister should be aware that in the Prospect electorate, schools already are scared. For too long the Baird Government has allowed the schools in Prospect to crumble due to an unfulfilled maintenance backlog amounting to some \$5.4 million, becoming overcrowded with demountable buildings, and even going without a steady supply of electricity in some schools. What would inspectors visiting Prospect schools see if they made an unannounced visit?

Let me take as the first example the Girraween Public School where inspectors would see nothing but an asphalt playground and 27 demountable buildings baking in the summer heat. They would see children carefully crossing the road to visit council parks at staggered times because there is no room left in the school grounds in which to play. They would also see children crowded into demountable classrooms because the Baird Government has failed to address the overenrolment and the school is at 109 per cent capacity. At the Pendle Hill Public School, they would see a full school next to a site that is about to become a redevelopment with 1,500 units, which will result in a 50 per cent surge in population in Pendle Hill. The Pendle Hill Public School has grass on its grounds, unlike the Girraween Public School. However, like the Girraween Public School, I fear this will become "demountable city" as the population of the area continues to increase dramatically.

At the Metella Road Public School staff, parents and students also are feeling the heat with enrolment at 100 per cent capacity and as the population of their neighbourhood continues to grow. At the Girraween High School, which is one of the State's top selective schools, inspectors would not see much of anything because the Baird Government has failed to adequately upgrade the power supply to cope, on a hot summer's day, with both the load of lighting and air-conditioning supplied and paid for by the parents. At the Prairiewood High School, inspectors would see a wonderful diversity of students from all backgrounds in a rare partially selective environment, packed into 102 per cent capacity but with no air-conditioning. Then the inspectors could go to see the students of the Prairie Vale Public School, who have spent their lives in a school with enrolments at 100 per cent capacity.

At the Bossley Park High School, the inspectors would see nearly \$1 million worth of backlog maintenance work that cannot be completed due to a lack of funding. At the William Stimson Public School, the inspectors would see a wonderful community, with families of disabled children being held hostage by the Minister. Despite a promise by the Minister that work would commence in February 2019 to upgrade parts of the school, they will be deprived of additional funding until a section of the Hurlstone Agricultural High School is sold off to developers that will enable expansion into year 12. What a funny coincidence that the upgrade will commence in the same year as a State election. At the Smithfield Public School the inspectors would meet a principal who would do anything for the students at her school and they would see a school that needs hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional funding to complete its maintenance backlog. The very same maintenance issue could be found at the Smithfield West Public School and at the Bossley Park Public School.

Then there is the Greystanes Public School, the Greystanes High School, the Beresford Road Public School and the Widemere Public School that are all in dire need of additional funding to update and maintain their infrastructure. At least with the Greystanes Public School, a fence, which was promised by a former Liberal member of Parliament and member for Smithfield, Andrew Rohan—promised but not delivered—was built, thanks to the Community Building Partnership grants, in the year after I was elected to Parliament. The Greystanes High School has benefited from a \$35,000 audiovisual upgrade. The Widemere Public School, which has not been upgraded for more than 20 years, will have new toilets—hopefully, by the end of the grants program this year.

I think inspectors would find that schools in the Prospect electorate are doing their very best to serve their wonderful communities, but they will find that the real underperformer is the Baird Government through its neglect of schools in the Prospect electorate. If the Baird Government is serious about education reform, perhaps instead of trying to catch out hardworking teachers it should seriously consider further investment in Western Sydney schools. I believe it may be time for at least a new primary school to be constructed in my electorate of

Prospect to address the overcrowding issues that are at risk of worsening, especially in the northern part of my electorate.

Instead, this bill seeks to provide the Minister for Education with even more power to demand from teachers a completely arbitrary and unscrutinised statement of expectations and with the power to appoint committees with a lopsided balance of power. That is why education providers, teachers and parents' representatives are rightfully concerned about this power grab by the Minister for Education. For example, there are concerns that the soon-to-be-introduced annual statement of expectations should reflect the Education Act 1900, which states that the principal responsibility of the State in the education of children is the provision of public education. Other representatives have stated they would like to see clear and specific criteria for the future random inspections. They also expressed concerns about the increased burden but reduced numbers of the Quality Teaching Council as well as the removal of a teacher's presumption of innocence. Additionally, concerns have been expressed to me regarding parent representation not being explicitly mentioned in the bill.

It is vitally important for more funding and resources to be provided to schools for special needs, assessments and classes. This is an issue on which the department is silent, but it desperately needs to be addressed. In conclusion, I have concerns about what the bill means for early childhood education—teachers, staff and institutions—because the bill is unclear about its purpose regarding those institutions. Therefore, in consideration of what this bill has to offer, and balanced with the concerns that I outlined during my speech, while the Opposition does not oppose this bill, Labor nevertheless reserves its right to move amendments in the Legislative Council.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (19:17): I support the Education and Teaching Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. The future of our society and our communities is dependent upon our young people of today whose futures are in the hands of teachers. This Government respects teachers and the professionalism of our teachers while at the same time the Minister for Education sets the policies and the agenda for our schools. I believe that history will record that the current Minister for Education is reforming areas of education that need reform, but not for reform's sake. I believe that the current Minister for Education will be recorded in history as one of the State's great Ministers for Education and, in that sense, one of the State's great educators.

I will address some of the comments made by members who preceded me in this debate. The member for Prospect claims that there is underinvestment in teachers and in education, but nothing could be further from the truth. There has been record investment in education in New South Wales under the current Minister. In 16 years of Labor Government, the backlog of schools maintenance reached a total of more than \$1 billion. In five short years, the Baird Government has reduced that to \$750 million—a fantastic achievement. When Labor was in government, schools were closed.

Dr Hugh McDermott: Point of order: I was talking about Prospect. There has been no money spent in Prospect. The member for Myall Lakes may get money in his electorate, but there has been none in Prospect.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): Order! The member for Prospect will resume his seat. The member for Myall Lakes has the call.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: Under Labor, schools were closed but we are building new schools with record amounts going into maintenance to get rid of the backlog left by those opposite. We introduced Local Schools, Local Decisions to enable local communities to decide on the best educational outcomes for the students in their schools. We were the first State to sign up to Gonski. In the Myall Lakes electorate resource allocation model [RAM] funding in 2013 was \$4.5 million and in 2016 it was \$11.5 million. This funding is needs based and is not based on politics. Nothing could be more important than basing funding on needs. These are great outcomes because of this Minister for Education.

The member for Lakemba and the member for Ballina said that unannounced inspections are not professionally undertaken and therefore undermine teachers. Nothing could be further from the truth. In private enterprise and in professional circles employees are constantly under surveillance and are being monitored, whether announced or unannounced. Secret shoppers go into retail outlets not to catch out staff or to scare them but to show how the staff could improve their service. Private enterprise is constantly looking at ways of improving its services. Government agencies also have implemented unannounced visits. When I was in the NSW Police Force there were unannounced visits. When I was working as a nurse there were unannounced visits. Everywhere in the business world employee performance is monitored, and we should embrace that rather than be scared of it. Unannounced visitors inspect and make recommendations about how employees can undertake their roles to achieve better outcomes.

The objects of the Education and Teaching Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 are numerous. The first is to rename and reconstitute the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards as the NSW Education

Standards Authority. The second is to provide for the authority to have a governing board comprising an independent chairperson and up to 12 other members appointed by the Minister, along with a chief executive officer who will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the activities of the authority. The third is to require the authority to have a charter, prepared by the board of the authority and approved by the Minister, outlining its key responsibilities and objectives and to provide that the Minister may, in an annual statement of expectations, determine priorities in relation to the authority's functions.

The fourth object of the bill is to ensure that the functions of the authority may be delegated to committees of the board, which will include the Quality Teaching Committee established under the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004. The fifth is to authorise the authority, in addition to its other functions under the education and teaching legislation, to conduct reviews into matters arising under that legislation. The sixth is to enable the authority's inspectors to conduct audits and carry out inspections on education premises, which will include premises that are used to provide professional development in accordance with the professional teaching standards under the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004 and the premises of teacher accreditation authorities under that Act and to provide that the powers of an inspector may be exercised in relation to education premises without any requirement to give notice.

The seventh object of the bill is to ensure that the authority is informed of the establishment, change of name or closure of government schools. The eighth is to provide that the authority is to monitor and provide advice to the Minister and the Secretary of the Department of Education on the compliance by government schools with similar requirements to those applying to non-government schools under section 47 of the Education Act 1990 and to enable the authority to recommend the taking of action in relation to any non-compliance with those requirements. The ninth is to modify the registration requirements for non-government schools, including a new requirement that the school must be financially viable. The tenth is to ensure that matters relating to the quality of student learning are taken into consideration in determining whether the registration requirements will be or are being complied with at or in relation to a school.

The eleventh object of the bill is to enable the Minister to impose conditions of registration in relation to non-government schools and to provide that the registration of a school may be revoked if such conditions are not complied with. The twelfth is to abolish the Quality Teaching Council and to re-establish it as a committee of the board of the authority to be known as the Quality Teaching Committee. The thirteenth is to authorise the authority, rather than the Minister, to approve of teacher education courses and programs in connection with the accreditation of teachers and to approve persons or bodies to provide professional development in accordance with the requirements of the professional teaching standards. The fourteenth is to provide that the authority, but not any other teacher accreditation authority, may suspend or revoke a person's accreditation as a teacher.

The fifteenth object of the bill is to require employers of teachers and teacher accreditation authorities to notify the authority of information that may be relevant to the grounds on which a teacher's accreditation may be suspended or revoked. The sixteenth is to establish a new public service staff agency comprising those persons who are employed under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 to enable the authority to exercise its functions and to provide for the chief executive officer of the authority to be the head of that staff agency. The final object of the bill is to make a number of other amendments to the education and teaching legislation that are of an administrative, minor or consequential nature.

In March 2016 the Minister for Education commissioned a review of the Board of Studies' teaching and education standards. The review received 43 submissions from stakeholders and 4,700 responses to an online survey completed by principals, teachers, parents and students. The review made 13 recommendations and 41 sub-recommendations containing four key themes that emerged from the review. These themes were shifting the regulatory focus to one that is outcomes and risk-based, directing effort to areas that will have the greatest impact on student outcomes, improving the strategy and agility, and ensuring clearer accountability in decision-making. From that it is clear that student outcomes were at the forefront of that review and this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (19:25): I speak in debate on the Education and Teaching Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. We all want the highest possible standards of educational quality for students in New South Wales. Access to quality education is the key to productive and successful citizens. Educational standards are therefore necessary roadmaps to guide quality practice. Over recent years we have seen the advent of the quality teaching framework and the professional teaching standards in New South Wales schools, and this has been a positive direction to enhance classroom teaching and learning. This has been the precursor to the formalised teacher accreditation process that is being rolled out to ensure that teachers' skills stay relevant and contemporary.

The School Excellence Framework supports all New South Wales public schools in their pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of the key elements of high-quality practice across the three domains of learning, teaching and leading. The framework describes 14 elements across these three domains that define

the core business of excellent schools in three stages. That description comes from the document. I think it has been a good step forward to have a good framework for schools to work with in developing school plans. Each year, schools assess their practices against the framework to inform their school plans and annual school reports. The description of excellence in the framework supports schools as they engage their communities—part of the process is making schools conform to a standard with some schools doing better than others—in the development of a shared vision, the identification of strategic priorities and the ongoing tracking of progress towards them.

Schools are held accountable for their operation and delivery in fields as diverse as finance, work health and safety, human resources and student outcomes through internal and external data, and school attendance and retention rates. The most important data is known as value-added data. This data maps where a child starts from and his or her improvement is measured over time across a range of issues. This data can be used to demonstrate a school's effectiveness and focuses on the individual child's improvement. This is important because schools are not about systems but about individual students and how they improve. All these measures and data collection across every part of a school's operation can be useful and effective if used as a developmental and improvement tool—that is, to make each school, teacher and student better.

Our system has to have external accountabilities to ensure that schools and educational institutions are delivering quality teaching and learning experiences and opportunities no matter where the school is located, what cohorts are clients and what system the school belongs to—public, Catholic or independent. Essentially, I believe this legislation is designed to deliver this outcome by creating a framework for developing, supporting and monitoring strong educational outcomes.

I believe it should be viewed with that intent, that it is a developmental system with the students at the centre and systems that are focused on student achievement. We no doubt all agree that academic outcomes, such as literacy and numeracy, are vital but educational facilities are also tasked with moulding the physical, spiritual and cultural aspects of children. Schools are complex places with many influences impacting on them, both good and bad. I have a great deal of time and respect for Dr Phil Lambert, PSM, who played a role in this review. The fact that he was involved gives me great confidence that the overall intent of the legislation is good.

The review made 13 recommendations and 41 sub-recommendations that addressed the need for the board to modernise its government structures, adopt a streamlined and risk-based approach to regulation, have an outcomes-focused approach, and to better leverage national reforms, data and research. I do not think that anyone could argue with that. Underpinning the recommendations was the need to enhance accountability and decision-making, and for the board to ensure its processes and structures can best support quality teaching and learning.

I will now comment on parts of the bill that cause me concern. The current Minister for Education is the Hon. Adrian Piccoli, but that may not always be the case. When looking at legislation one should always look to the future to see how other people might use it and to consider what might be any unintended consequences. One of the issues raised with me by stakeholders is that the legislation will be renamed the Education Standards Authority Act 2013. There is consternation in the sector that a third change to the name of the organisation in a short time is expensive and unnecessary.

The principles of the bill could have been maintained without changing the name of the organisation and the expense involved in printing new letterheads, et cetera. The new authority will remain a single independent statutory authority and will retain all the current functions of the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards. The shadow Minister has raised some issues with me about the proposed composition of the new entity. The proposed size of 13 plus the chief executive officer is too small and omits a couple of important groups or sectors. For example, one from the government sector ignores the fact that primary, secondary and TAFE institutions all need a voice because of the very different manner in which they operate.

An alternative proposal of 17 members has been put to me as follows: the chair; three members from the government sector representing primary, secondary and TAFE institutions; one from the Catholic Education Office—not the Catholic Education Commission, which is the national body; one from the independent schools sector; one from the NSW Teachers Federation; one from the Independent Education Union; one from the Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales; one from the parent body for independent schools; one nominated by the vice chancellor's committee; one representing Indigenous education; one representing early childhood education; one representing special education; one with recognised business acumen; one recently graduated student; and the chief executive officer.

A former member of the Board of Studies told me that when they had a recently graduated student—one who had graduated within three years—having someone on the board who had recently gone through the system was valuable to the board members in their decision-making. Having 17 members covers every area of the sector and is only four more than is currently proposed. With the exception of the member with business acumen and

the student, who can both be nominated by the Minister, the others could be appointed by the Minister after nomination from the appropriate organisations.

Another issue the Minister might wish to consider is on page 5, paragraph 10, part 2. I have a strong objection to this provision as it can lead to too much political interference in the education of children—a concern that has also been raised with me by others. The word "determine" should be struck out. I believe the Minister should be able to state desired priorities with the final list of priorities being determined by the board in consultation with the Minister. [*Extension of time*]

I will briefly address some other aspects of the role of the new body. Other speakers have mentioned risk audits and I support that where there are indicators such as very poor academic results, concerns about finances or a rapid turnover of senior staff. Board inspectors may conduct inspections at "reasonable times". As with spot checks with non-government schools, the amount of notice is determined by the authority. In the new provision it says the power "may be exercised on or in relation to education premises without the inspector being required to give notice to any person or body before exercising that power". In his second reading speech the Minister said:

The authority, of course, will have suitable rules in place to guide inspectors on the appropriate use of such powers.

I welcome that, but I ask the Minister to clarify the circumstances in which the use of these powers is appropriate. People need to have confidence that they are being offered support, rather than feel somebody is attempting to catch them out. In the United Kingdom [UK] a similar practice started with one purpose, but was then used to monitor behaviour in schools. Inspectors would turn up unannounced and wander the corridors to check on things such as unruly classroom behaviour. That was not a constructive use of the power and that is why the system in the UK was eventually abolished.

As a former principal I feel strongly that it is sometimes inappropriate to turn up unannounced on a school's doorstep. Schools are dynamic places and the principal, administrative and executive staff are rarely without predetermined tasks as well as the need to attend to the myriad unforeseen tasks that can arise on any given day. At one school, each morning I played a role in what I called "tucking students in". A group of students was unable to remain long in the classroom in the morning because they came to school quite angry. I would spend the first hour of each day making sure they were calm and I would deliver them to the class when they were ready to be reasonable. If an inspector turned up and interrupted that sort of practice it could lead to suspensions because a teacher would be prevented from undertaking that role. The practicalities of the operation of schools must be considered and I ask the Minister to clarify on what occasions such inspections might occur.

Another issue raised, although not directly addressed in the legislation, is accreditation fees. This issue was also raised by the shadow Minister. There is no guarantee that the accreditation fees paid by teachers would go directly to support teachers to gain and maintain their accreditation. On 1 January 2018 the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards [BOSTES], which will have been renamed the NSW Education Standards Authority, will have invoiced teachers in our State for more than \$10 million in accreditation fees simply to retain their licence to teach. The review makes no specific recommendation to address the lack of financial governance of the millions of dollars paid by teachers in accreditation fees. The Quality Teaching Council [QTC] is presented with no financial plan, no accounts and has no oversight of these hypothecated funds. How the money collected from teachers is spent is a closely guarded secret and the percentage used to support those who provide initial teacher education and teacher accreditation authorities—the employers—is not reported.

Schools in New South Wales have undergone massive change in a short time. I went through the history of major reforms that have occurred in schools. If we do not count Learning Management Business Reform [LMBR], the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN] and the Digital Education Revolution and all those sorts of things that were implemented prior to this Government, there have been 20 major reforms in the past five years. That is 20 major reforms that schools have had to learn to cope with and change their plans. I spoke previously about the framework whereby schools created a vision and then created plans. My experience was—particularly when we went to five-year plans—that each of those plans generally lasted between 12 and 18 months because when such changes came in, one had to go back to review and change one's plans. Schools need time to bed down some of these reforms and they need time for teachers to understand such things as the framework, the teaching responsibilities and the change in curriculum.

Constant review, change and accountability pressures will build into the system a tick-box mentality. Schools will engage in meetings because they have to have meetings and they will produce documents because they have to produce documents, and they will lose the connection to teaching children. Whenever there is reform in education the primary focus must be on how it improves delivery and outcomes for kids. At the moment, a graph would show the number of accountability measures and the standards would be heading in different directions. Unfortunately, schools are trying to cope with so many changes that teaching and learning have become secondary to the reforms. The intent of the legislation is welcome. The Minister must continue to drive the focus towards

kids and learning and must not be distracted by accountability to people outside the sector. The focus must remain on a child's growth through the school system.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (19:40): I contribute to debate on the Education and Teaching Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I echo the sentiments and concerns raised by my colleagues, the member for Lakemba and shadow Minister for Education, the member for Wyong, and the member for Prospect. The discussion of this bill has largely focused on the impact that the proposed changes will have on schools. As the shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education, I highlight that these changes will also impact the early childhood education and care sector which includes preschools and long day care centres where teachers also work—although one would not know it from the Minister's second reading speech. I note the Minister is in the Chamber.

There are more than 3,500 words in the Minister's second reading speech, yet "preschool" or "early childhood education" are not once mentioned. Perhaps he does not want to remind people of his Government's abysmal record in early childhood education. The Minister's speech and this bill reflect the Government's dismissive attitude toward the sector. It is globally recognised that the impact of investment by a government in early childhood education has an enormous impact on a child over his or her lifetime. If this Government was serious about improving educational outcomes it would value the early childhood education sector and fund it appropriately. The lack of value placed on early childhood education by this Government has families purchasing toilet paper, tissues and paint for their child's preschool because the service cannot afford it.

Meanwhile, the Government sits on an enormous bucket of funding. In May this year, the Auditor-General issued a scathing report confirming that more than \$350 million was budgeted for early childhood education and not spent. It confirmed that New South Wales has the lowest preschool enrolment in Australia and parents are paying the highest fees. The recent rushed announcement of a new funding model for preschools and long day care will leave many parents and preschools worse off. With this history of neglect, it is no wonder that the early childhood education sector has again been overlooked by the Minister. This bill has major implications for the early childhood education and care sector. Perhaps as a consequence of the Government's inattention, or lack of care, the bill leaves the sector with more questions than answers.

The bill states that the principal objectives of the new authority are to provide strategic leadership in improving standards of school education and to promote an evidence-based approach in improving standards of school education. That is great for schools, but there is no mention of early childhood education in the objectives of the new authority. The objectives suggest that the new authority will have no responsibility for the early childhood education sector. Schedule 1, section 14 (6), changes the definition of an "education premises" to include an early childhood education centre.

Where is the term "education premises" used in the bill? For that, we need to go back to the beginning of section 14 of schedule 1, which relates to the "inspection of education premises". This provision authorises an inspector of the Department of Education to enter any education premises without any notice. This is the only section of the bill that uses the term "education premises". The bill has expanded the definition to specifically include preschools and long day care services. Preschools and long day care centres will be subject to inspection by Department of Education inspectors without notice.

Preschools and long day care services are not mentioned in the objectives of the authority. This makes little sense. It makes even less sense in the context of the National Quality Framework which applies to the early childhood sector. Preschools and long day care centres in New South Wales are already regulated for quality under the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority [ACECQA]. On face value, this bill could see the doubling up of regulatory activity on preschools and long day care centres. Worse still, it could result in the imposition of inconsistent standards of assessment. It is entirely unclear why the definition of "education premises" has been expanded by this bill to include early childhood centres with the sole purpose of authorising unannounced inspections by Department of Education inspectors. This will be in addition to the strict national regulatory requirements.

I ask the Minister to revisit this inclusion. Is it the Government's intention to create another regulatory layer of inspections and audits on preschools and long day care services in New South Wales? One of the most significant changes proposed in this bill is to reconstitute the board of the renamed NSW Education Standards Authority. It will now consist of six members appointed from the education sector and six members appointed by the Minister. There will be one member from the government school sector, one from the Catholic school sector, one from the independent school sector, two from teacher unions, and one from Aboriginal education. The Minister can then pick up to six people provided they have experience with teachers and school leaders, universities, vocational education and training, parents of schoolchildren, early childhood education, special education, business acumen and strategic advisory skills. For those counting, that is nine areas of consideration from which the Minister has to choose a maximum of six appointees.

Under this model, it is entirely possible that there will be no members of the new board with a background in or exposure to early childhood education and care. If this Government is committed to early childhood education, if it has seen the error of its underfunding ways, the Minister should respond by committing to the appointment of a board member with experience and expertise in early childhood education to ensure that those teachers and educators who work in that sector have a voice at the table. The fact that early childhood teachers, vocational education teachers and parents have been left in the Minister's discretionary appointees category while other groups have guaranteed places speaks volumes about the Government's commitment to early childhood education. Under the current system, of the 19 people appointed by the Minister one must have "knowledge and expertise in early childhood education". It is disappointing that the Minister did not see fit to retain this knowledge and expertise on the new proposed board.

The Minister may be pleased that he has halved the size of the governing board, but with less input from the various sectors which make up our education system in New South Wales there will be less opportunity to identify opportunities for improvements or to hear back from the sectors being impacted by changes the board oversees. If the board was to hear from the early childhood education sector I envisage one of the issues it would be keen to raise is the annual accreditation fees charged to all teachers in New South Wales. The annual fee is payable by all teachers whether they teach in high schools, primary schools or early childhood centres. If the board was to hear from these early childhood teachers it would be clear that they earn two-thirds of what a primary schoolteacher earns, and a centre director can be on half of what a principal earns, yet they pay the same accreditation fees.

I note that one of the many issues raised during the review of the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards [BOSTES] initiated by the Minister related to the different impacts of the teaching accreditation system on the sector. The sector is pleased to be included in the accreditation system and to be given the same professional regard—except for pay. Contributors to the review raised difficulties faced by teachers in the early childhood education sector, including access to mentors, the cost of training and access to appropriate training. The review noted:

The early childhood education and care sector supports accreditation of early childhood teachers, but has raised concerns about the way the process is being approached. These stakeholders feel that the implications of accrediting early childhood teachers are not fully understood by BOSTES, in particular that a model that works for schools does not easily translate to early childhood settings. Without a voice on the board of the Education Standards Authority I am concerned that early childhood teachers will not be able to have their concerns about the accreditation process and its impacts in the early childhood education sector properly addressed. This issue, raised and reported on during the review, appears to have been ignored in the creation of this bill. The early childhood education sector is being overwhelmed by new programs, new funding models and new agencies introduced by this Government. The complexity of the funding model and the regularity of changes to it belie the small bucket of funding dished out in teaspoons to the sector. The Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards [BOSTES] was created only in 2014 and is being changed again. There is no holistic approach to early childhood education by this Government. The piecemeal changes are having an impact on workers on the ground.

If the Government's goal is genuinely to improve educational outcomes instead of making more bureaucratic changes, it would adequately fund early childhood education to ensure that every child can access quality preschooling. The Minister has an opportunity, before this bill is passed, to display some understanding of the importance of the early childhood sector and to show some appreciation of the many committed teachers who work in early childhood education. The Minister should commit to appointing to the new authority a board member with experience and expertise in early childhood education. I ask the Minister to clarify the intent of the provisions that give rise to the prospect of additional unannounced inspections of preschools and long day care centres, with different standards and requirements. Further, I suggest that the Minister make one of his statements of expectations so that the newly formed board can investigate the inequality in pay between preschool and school-based teachers.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (19:50): The Education and Teaching Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 restructures the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards into a new body, to be known as the NSW Education Standards Authority. This is important because the Board of Studies provides an essential function by protecting children from discrimination, and that must continue after the change. In 2013 I introduced a bill to remove exemptions in the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 that allow private schools to discriminate against students on the grounds of sex, transgender, marital or domestic status, disability and homosexuality. The exemptions allow a private school in this State to expel students or treat them differently, including in ways that disadvantage their education, just for being gay, lesbian, transgender, a teen mum or having a disability. Even the threat of expulsion and discrimination has a negative impact on these often vulnerable students and their learning and development.

When I introduced the bill I told the House of a number of cases of discrimination against private school students. Those stories appalled and shocked many, and there was widespread agreement that something needed to be done. While The Greens and Labor agreed to support my bill, the Government instead asked the Board of

Studies to investigate complaints by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex [LGBTI] and other vulnerable students and to potentially deregister any school not providing a safe and inclusive education environment for all students. I raise this issue in debate on the bill before the House because the new NSW Education Standards Authority must continue the role of investigating complaints about discrimination against vulnerable students. It must take action against schools that refuse to address concerns about discrimination, harassment and bullying.

I note that the bill provides the authority with inspectors and enables the Minister to impose conditions of registration, with the power to revoke registration due to non-compliance. All students must have access to a safe and inclusive learning environment free from discrimination, regardless of their sex, LGBTI, marital or domestic status or disability. I ask the Minister to ensure that this is part of the new authority's role and to address the matter in his speech in reply.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (19:52): An education is one of the most precious things that we can give to future generations. A good education can set students up for life by providing them with the building blocks to succeed and create a decent life for themselves. With something so precious we must naturally tread carefully whilst also striving for the best. All of us in this place want to ensure that children in New South Wales have the very best education and achieve the very best outcomes. I have no doubt that those on the front line delivering those outcomes share that ambition. Our teachers are there each day, educating students, equipping them with the knowledge and skills they need in life.

In New South Wales we have a strong education system—one of the best. That is due in no small part to the hard work and dedication of our teachers in both public and independent schools, and in the early childhood sector. The pragmatic approach to this legislation taken by most stakeholders shows exactly how committed we all are to improving education. Yes, we have a strong education system, but we can make it stronger. To do this we need to ensure that all stakeholders are actively engaged. After all, we are all heavily invested in making sure children have the brightest of futures.

While I note the Minister's efforts to make decision-making more effective, a number of stakeholders have expressed concern at the reduction in the size of the governing board. This legislation would see the number of representatives on the governing board halved from 23 to 12. It is a concern that, coupled with the reduction in representation, there is also a distinct lack of clarity from the Minister on whose interests will be represented. Between four and six of those 12 representatives will be required to represent a diverse number of interest groups. They include the early childhood sector, metropolitan areas, regional areas—one of which I represent—and both public and independent primary schools and high schools. Currently, the make-up of the Quality Teaching Council is detailed in the Teacher Accreditation Regulation 2015. There is no such corresponding specification in the legislation before us today, beyond the reduction in representation on the new Quality Teaching Committee.

As pointed out by unions, the Quality Teaching Committee will be the new professional voice of teachers in New South Wales. At a time when the number of teachers is increasing, it is inappropriate to limit that voice to five representatives, particularly when it is such a diverse profession. It was rightly pointed out by the Independent Education Union [IEU] that one of the strengths of the New South Wales education system has always been its consultative approach to introducing changes, particularly to the curriculum. Although to the Minister it may seem ineffective and inefficient, the end result is a well fleshed out product that has far-reaching benefits for end users, that is, the students. Teachers in New South Wales are concerned that the "adopt and adapt" approach will undermine this strength to the detriment of the education system as a whole.

Though it may take more than a year to implement changes to the curriculum, that is not due to dithering by decision-makers. There are practicalities that must be taken into account, including ensuring that the appropriate resources are available and developing a workable methodology to deliver changes in the classroom. It is all the more difficult for frontline workers to adapt when they do not have the tools they need to do so. That is why it is so important that consultation happens before change. I had hoped that the Government had learnt its lesson about introducing change and then consulting afterwards. All stakeholders have expressed serious concerns about the apparent lack of trust that this Government has for those in the teaching profession. Halving the number of teacher representatives says that this Government does not want teachers to own their profession.

The language used by the Minister, that schools and teachers "should be nervous", has done nothing to allay the fears of those on the front line. Of most concern for schools and their staff are the unannounced inspections of which the Minister seems particularly proud. While stakeholders do not appear to oppose the risk-based approach that has been adopted by this legislation, they are rightly concerned about the lack of detail in this area. There is no information available on what criteria schools and teachers are to meet in order to avoid being classified as at risk. The Minister must clarify this. I note that in his second reading speech the Minister articulated that this was not about punishing schools but about identifying weaknesses and working with schools to strengthen them. I applaud his intention, but it is only fair that schools and teachers should have a framework to work within.

Teacher representatives have expressed concerns about the accreditation process. While they welcome the streamlining of this process by delegating the power to a single authority, they are concerned that the revocation of a teacher's accreditation, in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness, does not necessarily allow for the presumption of innocence. While those on this side do not oppose this bill, I hope that the Minister and indeed the Government will consider these broader concerns. For more than a quarter of a century we have enshrined in legislation that the principal responsibility of the State in the education of children is the provision of public education. This must continue. Education has always been a public good available to all and to be shared by all.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (20:00): I speak in debate on the Education and Teaching Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 and state at the outset that I am a former schoolteacher. I taught in public education for nine years, between 1994 and 2002, and I chose to leave that profession to find other things.

Mr Adrian Piccoli: Lucky for the kids, he became an MP!

Mr CLAYTON BARR: My records are all available for the Minister to access. I think I still have a teacher number; if he would like to have a look, he is welcome to go ahead. The important thing is this: In contributing to the debate on the bill today and in talking about some of the context, I am speaking from real-world experience. The Cessnock community is in a difficult socio-economic position and we have our challenges. Sometimes teachers going into a classroom can be faced with issues other than teaching content; sometimes it can be about managing students, teaching them safety, mutual respect and things like that. Teaching the curriculum was not always the easiest thing to do and often many other life lessons were taught. I have said in this Chamber many times before that Cessnock education levels are the lowest in the State. This was recorded in 2006 and 2011 census data and I fear that it will be repeated this year.

A public school is a difficult environment in which to teach; it is pretty tough. In that regard I treat any education bill with respect and I appreciate the Minister introducing this bill which contains a lot of complicated parts. I know it has not yet been referred to as an omnibus bill but it contains so many structural reforms and changes to our education system that it might well be referred to as an omnibus bill. I thank the Minister and acknowledge that he called for a review and for submissions, made the review available for comment and allowed everybody to see what informs this bill. I also acknowledge the Minister as being a good—dare I say, excellent—Coalition Minister for Education. In some regards he has protected public education from some of the drier positions of former Liberal Ministers for Education to which I have been exposed.

I was at school in 1988. It was the lead-up to the first time I did my HSC. I was pretty hopeless the first time, so I did it a second time in year 13—I have no problems acknowledging that. My teachers were constantly going on strike, coming to Macquarie Street to march on Parliament House, and assembling in the Domain. The member for Wyong was one of those rebellious teachers. I wondered at the time what was happening in education and what these massive changes were that brought about so much civil unrest. At the time the Minister for Education was Terry Metherell. I make that point because I have concerns about this bill, which the shadow Minister has already outlined. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that Mark Scott, who then worked for Mr Metherell, is now the head of the NSW Department of Education and would have had some responsibility for encouraging and informing this bill. In acknowledging the work of the Minister—who, as a member of The Nationals, is resisting some of that dry Liberal position on education—my concern now is that they may be infiltrating the process somewhat with the appointment of Mr Scott.

Mr Adrian Piccoli: That's ridiculous.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: The Minister just said, "That's ridiculous." I appreciate that but I have to read the Minister's comments with that view. I am giving context about the lens through which I view this bill and read the Minister's second reading speech, and that is the context in which I make my contribution today. I note that the Minister said at one point in his second reading speech:

The authority will take an evidence-based approach to identifying and responding to areas of concern.

I am up for evidence-based approaches to education. I know that some in the media attempted to trash the Minister for going to Scandinavian countries to look at their education standards. I applaud the Minister for doing that, because their education standards are the best in the world. The Minister has my full support for doing that and putting aside the comments by some in the media who were rubbishing him for doing so. If one is to take an evidence-based approach to what is required in education one has to look to those countries. Countries that we might not look to are those that have an educational crisis at the moment such as the United Kingdom [UK] and the United States.

In the UK teachers have been fleeing the public education system for more than 10 years. There has been a worldwide recruitment process in the UK to try to get teachers to teach in their system. One of the reasons for

teachers fleeing is the enormous burden placed on them by things like these frameworks around regulation, registration, inspections and unannounced inspections. That is a burden. That is not to say that those teachers were not fantastic, fair or otherwise, and that is not to say that some of them were not exceptional or wonderful and that some of them were quite poor. In education, the masses are very good and there are extremes on both ends. But if the burden is scaring away the masses that is something about which we need to be afraid.

When I was a schoolteacher, my workload was probably 50:50. I spent about 50 per cent of my time doing meaningless paperwork that no-one would ever check on, but I had to do the registrations and the independent learning plans and have them up to date along with my programs, my syllabus and my lesson plan. No-one ever checked on that but I had to have it there just in case. The other 50 per cent of my time was spent on teaching: preparing meaningful lessons, coming up with dynamic methods of delivery, doing some research and background work and spending time on weekends, afternoons and mornings making sure that that happened. A schoolteacher's day can be incredibly busy. When I had that 50:50 balance as a schoolteacher, I sometimes wondered why I was spending so much time doing paperwork. I will get to the Minister's point about that in a second. I was doing some teaching in a school about six years ago, just before I came to this place. I had been out of teaching for five or six years and I went back and did a term's worth of work. I can tell members that the load had shifted from 50:50 to about 30:70—that is, 30 per cent of one's time—

Mr Adrian Piccoli: You weren't a maths teacher, were you?

Mr CLAYTON BARR: It was 30:70. About 30 per cent of the time was spent teaching, preparing for classes and preparing material and things like that, and about 70 per cent of the time was spent on preparing paperwork, et cetera. I wonder what the ratio is today, and I wonder what it will be under the burden that could potentially be imposed on teachers here. The Minister in his speech made the comment:

The question for the authority to consider will no longer be: Is the curriculum being delivered? Instead, the question will be: Is the curriculum being delivered in a way that meets the needs of quality student learning?

I wonder what that really means. I welcome the inspection process, I am happy for people to inspect and I have done a whole bunch of paperwork to make sure that when someone came it would all be there. But if someone is going to do an inspection there has to be an evidence-based "What have you actually done and what can you prove to me that you have done?" approach, although undoubtedly in education that tends to be paperwork. But there are also the elements in what a teacher does that are harder to determine, derive and prove.

There were things I was very proud of in my classroom—that the children felt safe, that they felt I was hard but fair, that everyone was treated with respect and that I expected respect in return—but none of that stuff is measurable, none of that stuff can be caught in a National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN] test and none of that stuff could go on the piece of paper I signed at the end of the day. I was working in a difficult school where kids were violent and abusive, and came from terrible home environments. I cannot convey that in a registration form. I understand that an inspector who comes to judge my approach to teaching will want some evidence. The shadow Minister talked about the difficulties of an unannounced visit, how we prepare from them, and what they mean. [*Extension of time*]

This part of the education process is what I call the "hidden curriculum". I do not mind saying publicly that nothing drives me more nutty than NAPLAN maths and English. I know those subjects are fundamental to people's lives, but there are many other important aspects of education that should concern us. As a teacher, I would often accompany sporting teams on away trips, attend school discos, and go on school camps. I was very involved in extracurricular activities. I sat beside a teacher who did none of that. That teacher had his feet up on the desk at lunchtime and read the newspaper.

However, teachers were tickety-boo and tops at doing the paperwork, registers and lesson plans, and they were terrific at turning up to class and delivering a lesson. I had an arrangement with the principal and the head teacher, who would say, "Clay, your register is a bit behind. Can you have it up to date by the middle of the term?" They might say, "I know you have that representative sporting team in the State finals, and I understand that that has had you flat out all of first term. But I need your paperwork up to date by the end of term." We would negotiate and arrive at an agreed time line for submitting the paperwork—which no-one would ever look at. Unannounced visits would change that for me.

If I thought that someone could turn up tomorrow and ask to see that material or that the principal suddenly wanted it because an inspector was coming, I would be driven by a fear of not having it up to date. Being a diligent teacher, I would probably need to make choices some days about whether I work with a team that is due to play an away match, or whether I get my paperwork and register up to date. Do I attend next week's school camp, or do I stay at school and get the material ready for presentation? These are the questions that will confront teachers who involve themselves in extracurricular activities; that is, those who deliver the hidden curriculum. They will be forced to make some judgement calls. I emphasise that this is not about the inspection process and

being accountable. It is about someone being able to say, "This is coming up and you need to have it done by this time. I know you have been doing extra work, but this is non-negotiable."

If the spot-check visit could happen any day, I would constantly be confronted by decisions about attending the school disco or going home to complete the paperwork. If the Minister wants to change something in schools, he should consider changing school reports. I get my kids' school reports and I cannot understand them. Schoolteachers spend months preparing them, and they put aside lesson preparation to do so. However, when my children bring their reports home I do not understand them, and I was a schoolteacher. Instead, I go to the school and ask my children's teachers how they are going, whether they are safe, whether they are applying themselves, whether they are making friends, and whether they are respectful. That is what I want to know. Preparing detailed reports, and getting registration and so on up to date can be a problem. That is the reality of the work-life balance. It is important that we understand the impact of unannounced inspections. The Minister stated:

For example, a school could be directed to remedy a problem with the school's physical infrastructure that poses a safety risk to students.

I visit many schools and they have many infrastructure problems that I believe are safety issues. Schools have an asset maintenance budget and a global budget. Ideally, the assets will be repaired using the maintenance budget, and the global budget will be spent on educational activities. If an inspector points out a crack in the concrete that must be fixed, and if it is not the school will be non-compliant, I fear the school will use money that should be spent on computers, books or pens and so on to repair the concrete. That is a real concern. This bill has many good provisions, and I applaud, support, and endorse them. However, I have some concerns about it. I trust the implementation of this bill in this Minister's hands more than I would in the hands of others.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI (Murray—Minister for Education) (20:15): In reply: I thank all those members who contributed to debate on the Education and Teaching Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I thank the member for Cessnock for his contribution, and particularly his opening remarks about the poor results we see in some schools across New South Wales. He represents the regional electorate of Cessnock and I represent the regional electorate of Murray. I acknowledge that the results in some parts of New South Wales are not acceptable. The question is: What we do about that? This Government has undertaken a great deal of reform to address school performance, and most of it has attracted bipartisan support. This issue is not exclusive to regional New South Wales; there are plenty of schools in metropolitan Sydney whose performance is not good enough. Indeed, even some high-performing, selective, and expensive non-government schools have problems.

This Government wants to ensure that no school is coasting and that every student gets one year's growth out of one year of schooling regardless of which school they attend. That is at the heart of all of the education reforms that have been implemented in New South Wales, including this reform package. Yes, the Government is reducing the size of the board. It is doing that because it needs to be more agile. It has 24 members, and it is difficult for an organisation that size to generate a strategic direction for education. The members of the board are great people; I have met with them on a number of occasions since I became Minister. Smaller boards are most effective because they can be more strategic. I did use the word "nervous", but I also used it when I spoke to the board. I said, "What I want out of these reforms to the board is that it makes the Government and Ministers nervous." I am talking not only about me as the current Minister but also about whoever succeeds me and so on.

The board is a high-powered group of very capable people, not only educators but also people with a strong interest in education, who will make strategic decisions about what needs to happen in all three education sectors—teaching, early childhood education, and initial teacher education [ITE]. The board should be able to say that this is the strategic direction that should be taken, and it should be able to identify the weaknesses. We have a declining number of students doing extension subjects—mathematics and English in particular. We want the board to recommend what the Government should do to address issues like that.

The board might recommend that universities change the way they provide ITE to their students. It might also recommend that the three sectors make various changes. The Government wants the board to present strategic decisions that make the Government and Ministers nervous. It should provide objective advice to the Government and organisations interested in education about the reforms that need to be implemented to ensure that we improve those results and that we get one year's worth of growth from every year a student is at school. That is the objective of these reforms. I appreciate the comments of the member for Cessnock about my visit to Finland a few years ago.

It has been suggested that the issues of standards and accountability are somehow a phenomenon only of Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom. First, we do not follow what the United States and the United Kingdom do. They perform much more poorly than New South Wales and Australia in education. In the same way I would hope the Australian rugby league team does not follow the advice of some other countries—the Italians, for example—because they are not as good. I hope they follow what the New Zealanders do. In

Australia we look at those countries and those jurisdictions that outperform us—places such as Alberta and Finland. Some countries in Asia are not great comparisons. Singapore, for example, is a city State. There are things we can learn but we do not share a similar geography. But we certainly take notice of Alberta and countries such as Finland.

In Finland they have very high standards. Any suggestion that Finland does not have high standards is completely wrong. The standards are incredibly high to get into teaching in Finland—probably among the highest in the world. Through their department of education they are also very responsive to changes in what is happening in education in Finland. Whether it is in Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA] results or another source of data and information, they are very responsive in how they then get the education system and the schools in Finland to address that changed data. For example, they had declining performance in maths in their PISA results. When I was there they told me that within three months of the last PISA results showing their declined performance in mathematics their equivalent standards authority was talking to universities about changing the way in which they teach mathematics at university. That is a responsive feedback loop in the education architecture of a country. I want to see the same thing happening in New South Wales.

We make these changes based on advice from three eminent people who conducted a review of the board. Some of the other changes we have made took place prior to this review, including the fact that all sectors are now under the auspices of the board. We made some changes a couple of years ago by bringing the public education system under the registration requirements of the board so that government, Catholic and independent sectors are all treated the same. We are in the process of bringing all teachers under the registration and accreditation requirements of the board. Three panellists conducted an extensive review, sought submissions and sent emails to individual teachers. Much of the consultation and interviews with key stakeholders were conducted by the panellists and me, so there was substantial consultation.

In response to a couple of issues raised by the Opposition spokesperson for education, I talked about the composition of the board and why we have reduced it from the current 24 members to between 12 and 14 members. Previously lots of different representative groups got an individual appointment. In the future, even though there are six designated positions—the three sectors, the two unions and an Aboriginal education representative—it makes clear in the legislation that they are not there representing the sectors; they are there as educational experts. I would expect the other six or so that are appointed by the Minister are there for exactly the same purposes. As I said, the point is to have an agile board that can make strategic decisions and give strategic advice about reforms that are needed in education.

Another issue that was raised was whether the Quality Teaching Committee determines the spend of the registration and accreditation fees. Yes, it provides advice to the board—it is one of the subcommittees of the board—but technically the board makes the decision about how those funds are spent. The other issue was about a government school principal and a parent representative being appointed. There are six representatives to be appointed by the Minister and it may be that a government school principal or parent representative is appointed. But as I said, we cannot appoint a representative for every organisation that has an interest in education otherwise we will end up where we are at the moment with a board of 24, and potentially it could be even bigger than that.

A number of members raised the issue of unannounced inspections. The board already has the power to make inspections without notice. For example, a complaint was made to my office about the Aspect school in Camden and the manner in which a student with a disability was being treated. We immediately provided that advice to the Board of Studies. Given that it is an independent school, it is subject to the registration requirements. The Board of Studies sent a representative and inspected the school straightaway, essentially without notice. There are examples of inspections without notice.

Beyond that, the current process is to sometimes give schools many months notice before an inspection occurs. We are moving away from the "tick-the-box" process—an issue raised by the member for Cessnock—because principals have asked us to move away from it. Even one of the most prestigious independent schools said, "We got an inspection. We printed out all the documents and put them on our board table. The board inspectors came along and had a look." They had been given the requisite notice. They said, "What we want is an inspection about how we provide education—how we deliver the curriculum, how we provide teaching and how we provide other types of support to students." So we are getting away from the question of whether they have every policy document sitting on their desks.

It is not our intention to create a culture of fear. Rather, as I have said, it is about focusing on supporting schools. We are not following the United Kingdom model at all. This is about identifying weaknesses in systems and potentially in individual schools and then providing either the system or the school with advice on how to address that weakness. Sometimes it is about identifying it with systems. It may be issues around how maintenance is conducted and that may be the advice that is provided to a school about how to remedy it.

Clause 14 (2) (a) was not modelled on United Kingdom Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills provisions. Rather it was a recommendation of the panel of the three Australian education experts who conducted the review. I appreciate the contribution of the member for Wyong. With the name change, there was some confusion around the name "Board of Studies". It was the name of the board but also the name of the organisation. That created some confusion and that is why one of the recommendations was that the operational arm of the organisation be called the Education Standards Authority and the board of between 12 and 14 members be called the board of the Education Standards Authority. No-one ever likes to change names but sometimes it is necessary.

There are no punitive penalties. The ultimate penalty the board can impose is the deregistration of a school. It is done reluctantly. When the board does inspections and finds inadequacies or failures it tries to help schools remedy them. For example, with the inspections made of Malek Fahd that have been in the media a great deal, the board has tried as much as possible to help that school to meet its registration requirements. It does that with other schools which, for whatever reason, from time to time do not meet the registration requirements. The member for Port Stephens raised some issues relating to early childhood education. For many years the sector has been asking that early childhood education teachers be included in the board's registration and accreditation process. Indeed, they were asking for that before 2011, which was before I had responsibility for early childhood education. They are happy to be included as part of that process.

The issue about the inspection of early childhood facilities, long day care and preschools was also raised. The inspection of those facilities is not the responsibility of the new board. The responsibility of the board is to inspect early childhood education teachers who will be accredited under the new authority. Board members will not inspect the plumbing to ensure it is not leaking, or establish the number of square metres of playground space. They will go to the premises for the purpose only of inspecting early childhood education teachers who are registered and accredited under the Teacher Accreditation Act.

It is important when debating a bill to have read the bill and to have read the review from which the bill was derived. I can say with confidence that the member for Prospect has not done either of those things because he talked about the underfunding of schools. I have the numbers here, but I will not go into them. I remind the member for Prospect that under the agreement this Government signed for Gonski funding, every school across New South Wales, including public schools, Catholic schools, independent schools—and schools in the electorate of Prospect—will receive additional resources. In a few weeks time Independent, Catholic and government schools will be in a position to announce next year's funding for the resource allocation model for public schools. I am sure that schools in the electorate of Prospect will receive a substantial increase in funding.

Given that the member for Prospect made some political comments, I note that the reason we are able to provide that additional funding to government and non-government schools in his electorate is that we made difficult decisions four or five years ago. Opposition members opposed every decision. They opposed everything we did to try to provide additional recurrent funding for government and non-government schools in this State, including schools in the electorate of Prospect. The member for Prospect referred also to capital works. Opposition members have opposed everything we have done to attain additional funding to put into capital works—whether it be the 49 per cent lease of poles and wires to free up \$1 billion to put into public schools or the sale of the Hurlstone Agricultural High School site in order to build an agricultural high school on the Hawkesbury—a fantastic showpiece of public education in this State. The balance of the proceeds will be spent in south-western Sydney, including on some of the schools in his electorate.

The Opposition opposed all those decisions. The member for Prospect should not talk about spending additional capital in his electorate when at every stage he opposed everything that this Government has done to spend additional capital in electorates across New South Wales, including in the Prospect electorate. I again thank all members for their contribution to debate on this bill. We all want to achieve what the member for Cessnock referred to earlier—that is, to deliver for every student in New South Wales, irrespective of where they live, what their parents do for a living, their parents' circumstances, when they were born, where they are raised, and what their parents earn. Every student deserves an equal opportunity. As a First World country that is what we must deliver. This bill is part of the Government's reforms to ensure that we deliver equal opportunity for students.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.**FAIR TRADING AMENDMENT (COMMERCIAL AGENTS) BILL 2016****Returned**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the abovementioned bill with amendments. I set down consideration of the amendments as an order of the day for a later hour.

CRIMES (ADMINISTRATION OF SENTENCES) AMENDMENT BILL 2016**First Reading**

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

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later hour.

BUILDING PROFESSIONALS AMENDMENT (INFORMATION) BILL 2016**Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 21 September 2016.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (20:35): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Building Professionals Amendment (Information) Bill 2016. The quality of our buildings and the highest assurance we have that our buildings, particularly our homes, are built safely according to plan and according to best practice is a fundamental cornerstone of our society. It gives regulators, owners and the broader community the certainty that construction is carried out according to the rules. Buildings and their construction underpin our economy and our domestic lives. They literally are the building blocks that shape how our suburbs, cities and town centres work. Good planning and good building design and construction are a fundamental part of shaping the way in which we live, work and interact with each other in a sustainable, safe and fair manner. This underlines the importance of the Building Professionals Act 2005.

The bill is the initial outcome of a review commissioned by the Government, which was overseen by former Treasury Secretary Michael Lambert. I urge all members of this House to take the time to read the review because it is clear that much effort and a lot of passion has gone into the report. I take this opportunity to thank Mr Lambert for his work on the report as well as the staff of the Department of Planning and Environment, and the Building Professionals Board, whose expertise, working knowledge and insights have helped to shape this fine report. We see buildings, especially apartments, going up around us everywhere. The Government must assure the public that the construction of buildings, their certification and the accreditation of those reviewing the building work, as well as statutory insurance requirements, are appropriate and provide the necessary safeguards and checks and balances to ensure quality and safe construction in our communities. The Lambert report was an overdue examination of what I have said is a critical part of our lives. The report contains 150 recommendations on strategies to improve the compliance and safety of our homes and other buildings.

It is important to reflect on what the review sets out as the 10 key priority areas for action because I feel the Minister glossed over those in his second reading speech. The Lambert review, which was submitted last October, identified 10 priority areas for reform. They are, first, a new principles-based Act combining relevant provisions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and the Home Building Act for better and clearer regulation; secondly, strengthening the administration of building regulation and certification; thirdly, the implementation of an information systems strategy; fourthly, to enhance accountability and clarify the role of certifiers; fifthly, to establish partnership models between State and local governments; sixthly, to achieve and maintain a best practice regulation and certification system; seventhly, to enhance the professionalism of certifiers through accreditation, education, training and support; eighthly, to improve timeliness and effectiveness of complaint handling; ninthly, to enhance the sustainability of professional indemnity insurance; and, tenthly, to provide appropriate resources and funding.

This bill addresses the third point—one point out of 10. While the Minister alludes to more reform a number of recommendations—around half of the review in fact—will not be looked at. This includes some of the fundamental issues that detract from the effectiveness of the Act. First, there will be no more resources and, secondly, there will be no consideration of how to structure our legislative and organisational response to building certification. My fear is that this is like trying to build a house with two of the key cornerstones missing. My concern is that by rejecting half of the review recommendations the Government is choosing a short-term route over a long-term solution, and this will ultimately cost us all. I draw to the attention of the House the cost benefit ratio provided by the review.

External consultants estimated that, based on a 4 per cent discount rate and a 20-year evaluation period, the implementation of the reforms as a package would generate a net economic benefit in present value terms of \$13.5 billion—a 4.61 per cent benefit-to-cost ratio—something that those involved in the WestConnex project could only dream about. If only for the dollars and cents, the Opposition implores the Government over the next two months to rethink its response and to come back to the House with a bill that fully delivers the Lambert review. The Lambert review presents a package and should be considered as such. Cherry-picking short-term wins and ignoring long-term implications will result in higher costs and more adverse impacts down the track, but what we have come to see is a government focused on short-term prospects against the long-term interests of its citizens.

There is a sense of frustration within the Lambert report and one gets the sense that the Government has been dragging the chain. Members would recall the tragic death of student Connie Zhang, who died in a fire in her Bankstown apartment. The apartment in question was wracked with certification issues. After critical findings of the NSW Coroner there were numerous calls for something to be done about the certification of buildings to prevent more deaths like Connie's. The Lambert report addressed this issue and found that general building certifiers were given too much responsibility for checking safety compliance in new buildings, and that they needed to draw on more specialist advice. The Lambert review iterated earlier concerns such as the report undertaken by the Fire Protection Association, which found that up to 40 per cent of buildings in New South Wales were in breach of fire rules. Yet here we are, four years after this tragedy, and the Government has just got around to allowing agencies and governments to share information.

We must question why the Government is moving at such a slow pace. Why is this happening when there is formal and anecdotal evidence that critical parts of building safety are being missed, either deliberately or intentionally? Why is this happening after there has been a damning Coroner's report into Connie Zhang's death? Why, after a string of industry reports and the extensive Lambert review, are we merely discussing data sharing? I implore the Government to bring back to the House a bill that will fully address the Lambert report, and bring it back in the first weeks of the 2017 parliamentary session. This issue is too critical to put on the backburner for a moment longer.

We are witnessing an increasingly fragmented and uncoordinated Government. During budget estimates, the Opposition grilled three Ministers on what was being done to address unsafe building products like Alucobest. Apart from shoulder shrugs the clearest response we got was from the Minister for Local Government who asked, "Aluco-what?" This gives us an insight into some of the systemic issues facing the New South Wales Government—why things will go wrong and will continue to do so. The Baird Government's response reflects the buck passing and poor regulatory framework to which New South Wales is currently subject, exacerbated by a terrible arrangement of public service reporting lines, where legislation rests with one Minister, yet staff report to another. This is why the Lambert review called for a reappraisal of the bureaucratic and regulatory framework for building certification.

We see mixed lines of reporting right across the New South Wales public service—which adds to red tape, public confusion and poor public policy outcomes. Added to job cuts and lack of resourcing—another critical part of the Lambert review—we are getting into dysfunctional territory when it comes to the ability of the New South Wales Government to react, respond and address issues in the delivery of public goods and services. Rather than messing with compulsory third party insurance, or trying to deregulate debt collection, I respectfully suggest that the Minister and the Government get to work on critical issues identified in the Lambert review. People's lives, living standards and peace of mind are being put at risk each day this Government dithers and delays on a process that has already taken more than two years.

With respect to the substance of the bill, it is minimal and presents no ground for opposition. The bill amends the Building Professionals Act 2005 to allow two relatively straightforward things: to allow the Building Professionals Board to enter into information-sharing arrangements with councils, State and Commonwealth agencies and other persons or bodies prescribed by the regulations to share information relating to the certification or regulation of, or statutory insurance requirement relating to, building work; and to provide for the making of regulations regarding the provision of information about certification work, building work and related matters by persons who carry out, or are accredited to carry out, building certification work and other related work.

The bill provides for a new section 82A to be inserted into the Act so as to assist the board and any other party to such an information-exchange arrangement to exercise functions relating to the certification or regulation or statutory insurance requirements related to building work. Secondly, paragraph (j) will be added to new section 94 (2) to provide for the making of regulations regarding provision of information about aspects of building works, in accordance with the objectives of the bill. Data sharing is a smart and strategic way of addressing aspects of the broader problem. Innovative governments should always be looking to harness the power of information in addressing wicked policy problems and improving the performance and outcomes of its regulatory framework.

I also note that the Minister in his second reading speech emphasised the importance of protecting the privacy of individuals. This is important if we are to bring the community along with us in using data more effectively and holistically. Yet information sharing—point three of the Lambert review 10-point plan—is it. This is all we are contemplating in the bill before the House. One year after the Lambert review was presented, two years after first being commissioned, we have a meagre bill that acts on just one part of the 350-page report. Of the 150 recommendations, 78 did not get a look in—including, as I previously said, the restructure of the administrative and regulatory oversight of building certification and, importantly, the appropriate and effective funding of the Building Professionals Board and the staff who service the board.

What concerns me is that the people who will be impacted disproportionately are those living in strata complexes. This is where most of the problems arise. Around one in four people now live in strata—and this will increase to around half the State's residents by the middle of this century. The Government again is treating those who live in apartments as second-class citizens. Come 30 November, their property rights will be severely eroded, with new scheme termination laws making it easier for developers to buy and knock down apartments without the owner's agreement on terms and price.

In the area of building certification, strata owners are being punished and in some cases paying for repair work out of their administration funds when the developer should be fixing it out of his own wallet. A 2012 survey conducted by the University of New South Wales found that 85 per cent of strata owners and strata committee members in post-2000 buildings identified two or more defects. Seventy-five per cent of these said that they were yet to be fixed. The lack of action in regard to the Lambert review disproportionately affects those who live in strata title properties. The Government is not just a government for the lower North Shore; this Government is dominated by those who do not live in strata buildings and who do not know the day-to-day concerns of those who do live in strata buildings. This Government sees strata schemes as an investment, not a home. In conclusion, I think it is best to state in *Hansard* the concluding remarks of the executive summary of the Lambert review:

There is broad industry support for the reforms set out in this report and a certain level of fatigue and frustration at the number of reviews undertaken and the lack of progress in addressing the well-documented problems.

The consequences of inaction will not necessarily be apparent for some time but there is a significant level of risk in the system that will, at some time, manifest itself in a major negative event. In such circumstances the worst of all worlds is to have a regulatory system that is ineffective and has been acknowledged as such.

Use of the terms "fatigue", "inaction", and "lack of progress" is quite uncommon in government reports. I shudder to consider the real sentiment behind the expression "major negative event". As I have stated, the Opposition does not oppose the bill but implores the Government to introduce to this House a bill in 2017 to give full effect to the Lambert review.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (20:51): I support the Building Professionals Amendment (Information) Bill 2016. I congratulate the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation on introducing the bill. The Minister is doing an outstanding job of reform in this area. It was interesting to hear the member for Swansea refer to a lack of action by this Government in relation to the Lambert review, which was completed in 2015 and contained 150 recommendations. Unlike Labor members when they were in government, this Government wishes to engage with stakeholders to ensure that the legislation introduced is proper and appropriate and takes into account all ramifications of its implementation, rather than simply adding to the statute book. For example, independent certifiers were introduced by the Labor Government.

The problems referred to by the member for Swansea, which included units and deaths and other things, all happened under the Labor Government. This Government, through the Minister, is fixing up the mess that has been inherited from Labor. The Minister is doing an outstanding job. The member for Swansea also said that the Government is a government for the lower North Shore only, but nothing could be further from the truth. The Liberal-Nationals Coalition is renowned throughout New South Wales as being the political parties and the Government that represent the workers. We represent the lower socio-economic areas of all New South Wales. This Government listens to the people. Having listened to communities, this Government introduces legislation, unlike Labor when it was in government. The object of the bill is to amend the Building Professionals Act 2005 as follows:

- (a) The Building Professionals Board is authorised to enter into information sharing arrangements with councils, State and Commonwealth agencies and other persons and bodies that may be prescribed by regulations to share information relating to the certification or regulation of, or statutory insurance requirements relating to, building work. The purpose of sharing the information will be to assist the Board and the other party to the arrangement in the exercise of functions relating to the certification or regulation of, or statutory insurance requirements relating to, building work.
- (b) Regulations may be made with respect to the provision of information about certification work, building work and related matters by persons who carry out, or are accredited to carry out, building certification work and other related work.

The background to this legislation is that the former Secretary to the Treasury, Michael Lambert, was appointed in September 2014 to conduct a review of the Building Professionals Act, in particular in relation to its certification and its application to the wider building industry. As I stated earlier, the review was completed in October 2015. This amending legislation represents the first of the New South Wales Government's priority reforms that have emerged from the independent review of the Building Professionals Act and other reforms will follow. This legislation represents the first of the reforms. Unlike the Labor Government, which introduced legislation over the disgraceful 16 years in which it was in office when so much had been rushed and later had to be revisited, amended and/or repealed, this Government has proceeded carefully.

The building industry is critical to the people of New South Wales and involves a number of stakeholders such as builders, councils, certifiers, owners, public authorities and others. They all need to be consulted before each stage of the reform is introduced. One would expect a government to undergo such a process, and that is what a proper government does. This Government has carefully and systematically embarked on a process of consultation and subsequently has introduced legislation. The first of the Government's reforms will create a valuable centralised source of information about development and construction activity throughout New South Wales.

Subject to further consultation, it is expected that a certifying authority or an accreditation holder will be required to provide notification to the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation about specific information at the time of appointment, at one or more key points during the development, and at the end of the development process. While some of this information and documentation is provided to councils and consent authorities and, in certain circumstances, may be requested by the Building Professionals Board, there is no current requirement for accreditation holders and certifying authorities to report specific pieces of information about a building project to the New South Wales Government on an ongoing basis. Those data-gathering provisions will assist in overcoming an uncoordinated and piecemeal approach and will provide government agencies with crucial and practical information about building progress across the State.

The design of the certifier data gateway and database will be completed by the OneGov team in the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation. This team has a proven track record in this area, having already developed and delivered new smart visual tools, FuelCheck and smart meters. The Department of Finance, Services and Innovation will continue to work with industry during the development of these reforms to determine the content and form of the data and to help it transition to the new requirements. The set of data collected from accredited certifiers and certifying authorities has substantial value for a range of purposes, which includes better targeting of compliance, regulatory activity, better targeting of industry and consumer information, improved government service provision and more informed evidence-based policy for the New South Wales building sector.

By bringing data together in a single location, the Government can also seek to reduce unnecessary duplication, thereby potentially reducing the reporting burden for certifiers and councils. The sharing provisions of this amending legislation also will enable greater integration between government agencies that work in the planning and development sector. Data that is gathered by the certifier data gateway will help to fill information gaps of councils and other government bodies in the building construction space, and will assist them with carrying out their functions. That will include preparing and cross-referencing certifier data with statutory building insurance details, planning data, builders' licensing records and complaints data, thereby enabling improved data analysis and risk management of government activities. This amending bill is the first stage in an ongoing and open dialogue with those involved in the certification, building industry, local councils and other government agencies to deliver a better system of building and certification regulation New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (20:58): I join in debate on the Building Professionals Amendment (Information) Bill 2016 to point out that, after being asleep at the wheel, the Baird Government has finally decided to introduce legislation that addresses concerns raised by the statutory review of the current Building Professionals Act 2005. Although a number of issues were raised by the statutory review, this bill deals with only one issue—information sharing. In 2014 the Baird Government commissioned a statutory review into the Building Professionals Act. The review was led by former Treasury Secretary, Michael Lambert. One year ago, in October 2015, 10 priority areas for reform were identified.

The only priority that this bill deals with is priority No. 3, titled in the review as "Implement an information systems strategy for the building regulation and certification system". New South Wales is still waiting for the Baird Government to get a move on with legislating the other nine priority areas for reform, but will have to wait until 2017 at the earliest when the proposed Building and Development Certifiers Bill is finally read. There is a need for reform in building certification in New South Wales. There is a lack of resources, slow complaint-handling and barely any power, or regulatory teeth provided for the current regulator, the Building

Professionals Board. Given that nine of the 10 priority areas have been ignored in this bill, the bill's objective as described in Parliamentary Counsel's explanatory note is fairly straightforward:

The Building Professionals Board is authorised to enter into information sharing arrangements with councils, State and Commonwealth agencies and other persons and bodies that may be prescribed by regulations to share information relating to the certification or regulation of, or statutory insurance requirements relating to, building work.

It goes on:

The purpose of sharing the information will be to assist the Board and the other party to the arrangement in the exercise of functions relating to the certification or regulation of, or statutory insurance requirements relating to, building work.

Given that the objective of the bill is so narrow, the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation spent fewer than 13 minutes in his second reading speech introducing the bill despite having an unlimited time to speak.

Mr Jai Rowell: What a brave Minister. You would have been inspired.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: I was inspired and that is why I am standing here now. Even then, some of the Minister's speech was dedicated to addressing an entirely different area of reform, that of strata laws. The Opposition welcomes the new regulation-making powers that will be given to Fair Trading to obtain information about persons who conduct accreditation work, accreditation holders and certifying authorities. Furthermore, the additional powers will enable councils and other agencies that exercise function with regard to certification, building insurance and building regulation to enter into information-sharing agreements. However, I must channel the Minister in digressing. In his second reading speech the Minister said:

The bill allows for the department to obtain information from other agencies to ensure the certifier accreditation scheme in New South Wales is more robust, responsive and effective at ensuring only appropriate individuals are able to operate in the industry.

It is worth noting that the Minister's current interest in "ensuring only appropriate individuals are able to operate in the industry" is highly peculiar, after the last legislation he passed—and on which I spoke—removed licencing requirements for debt collectors, which is the opposite to what this legislation proposes. Considering the amount of time the Baird Government has taken to introduce this one reform, I am not optimistic about the further priority areas requiring reform as identified in the Lambert review. These include a new principles-based Act combining relevant provisions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and the Home Building Act for better and clearer regulation, strengthening the administration of building regulation and certification, enhancing the accountability and clarifying the role of certifiers and establishing a partner model between State and local government.

Although I note that this bill is half a step in the right direction for the establishment of this partner model, allowing Fair Trading to establish regulations, as well as promising to engage with councils in preparing those regulations, is what the Opposition welcomes in what the Government is doing. Achieving and maintaining a best practice regulation and certification system is important. Enhancing professionalisation of certifiers through accreditation, education, training and support, improving the time lines and effectiveness of complaint handling, enhancing the sustainability of professional indemnity insurance and appropriate resources and funding are also important. I note that the Baird Government already has a track record when it comes to increasing the burden on Fair Trading without correspondingly increasing its resources. Any reforms need to be fully and properly funded by this Government.

As noted by the Minister, the building industry is important to the future of New South Wales and requires regulation to keep up with the times. The new system of information sharing—rather than the current system, which was described by the Minister as "information wasting"—must be implemented in an effective way, and I am cautiously optimistic. I note that the Minister outlined his aim for the department to consult with software developers to create a working product, naming OneGov and FuelWatch as examples that he seeks to emulate. Whilst the contract to develop this online service will go out to tender, I suspect that the Minister already has a good idea of who will be developing the software.

Furthermore, I take this opportunity to warn the Minister and department of what can go wrong with the development of new software, citing the Census debacle in July this year. Even one of the world's biggest information technology companies can get it wrong, and concerns regarding capability and data security in any reforms must be paramount. In conclusion, the Opposition supports this bill, but notes the delays by the Baird Government in implementing the first of 10 necessary reforms. New South Wales deserves a full and adequate government response to the issues facing building certifiers—something that is currently being withheld.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (21:04): I speak in support of the Building Professionals Amendment (Information) Bill 2016. First, I acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, Victor Dominello, who is a fantastic, hardworking Minister and a great mate of mine. I am backing his beard and I know he is backing my beard. This amendment bill results from recommendations in the

independent statutory review of the Act undertaken last year by Michael Lambert. Certifiers are responsible for issuing some planning approvals, and checking that building work meets consent conditions and building standards.

Councils and private certifiers possess valuable knowledge about the progress of building projects because they see development from pre-commencement through to completion. Some of this information is currently collected by various New South Wales government agencies or retained by certifiers as part of the routine operations, but at present there is no single collection point for government bodies to easily access this information. Information is not provided in real time and is not in a format that can be easily accessed, collated or analysed effectively at a State level. This bill's data reporting requirements will fill gaps in the current data collection scheme to generate a more informed picture of the built environment in New South Wales.

I note that those opposite have made some negative points about the Government relating to this bill. However, I note that the member for Prospect said this bill was half a step in the right direction. I think it is a full step in the right direction, because those opposite had 16 years when they were in government to make adjustments to the industry but failed to do so. The reason I raise that point is that more than 70,000 construction sites have commenced this financial year. When Labor was last in power, it had the lowest housing starts for homes anywhere in the country. It is important that this State keeps abreast of modern developments. This Government is making sure that it has record numbers of housing starts. We must make sure that we have all the information captured in real time so the fantastic Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation can make informed decisions that affect the industry and every resident of this State. If those opposite were in government, very little development would happen and they would not have the necessary information to make it happen. Clearly, they should support this legislation.

Ms Yasmin Catley: We are.

Mr JAI ROWELL: If they are supporting the legislation, why are they complaining? They oppose, but it is good to hear that they support this legislation. I commend the Minister for introducing this bill. The New South Wales Government is committed to prioritising reforms that support smarter service provision, targeted compliance activities and informed evidence-based policy for the State's building and construction sector. The final report of the independent review into the Building Professionals Act has made specific recommendations regarding the use of data to improve the regulation, performance and sustainability of the State's building industry. It is important to note that councils and private certifiers are in a unique position in the building industry, possessing real-time knowledge about the progress of a development project because they see a building from pre-commencement right through to completion. While some of this information is collected by various New South Wales government agencies or retained by certifiers as part of their routine operations, there is currently no single collection point for government bodies to easily access this information.

This bill's data reporting requirements will create a simple, uniform, statewide data collection scheme that will help to generate a more accurate and informed picture of the built environment in New South Wales. The ability of government agencies to share building-related information is important to support this vision. The bill's information-sharing and exchange provisions are essential to support future reforms and the broader digital transformation of the building industry. This amendment bill will allow the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation to enter into arrangements to share or exchange data with other government agencies that exercise functions relating to certification, building regulation or the provision of statutory building insurance. Due consideration has been given to the need for safeguarding the shared data in these arrangements. New section 82A will limit the exchange of information with relevant agencies to only that which is reasonably necessary to assist in the exercise of their building certification, regulation or statutory insurance functions.

I understand that this building data has the potential to support NSW Fair Trading's investigations of uninsured residential building work and that this building project information could support Fair Trading's management of the upcoming strata defects bond scheme which could potentially use the information collected to help monitor the progress of buildings, with Home Building Compensation Fund cover. Collected data could potentially assist the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation in undertaking risk-targeted audits of certifiers to improve accountability and public confidence in the certification system.

Improvement in industry monitoring and information-sharing will enable government services to be directed to where they are needed most, improving overall efficiency and delivering better services and value to the people of New South Wales. The value of industry-wide trend data will be a valuable resource for informing and appraising future policy decisions. Access to the ongoing information in this scheme will mean that the New South Wales Government is better placed to identify and respond to emerging issues in the building sector. These amendments represent the first stage in what will be an ongoing, open dialogue with those in the certification and building industry, local councils and other government agencies.

As a former councillor who had to deal with many of these issues, I know this will be well received by the local government sector. This is important because in my area alone the Government has just announced that the Wilton Junction rezoning proposal will become the fifth-largest regional town in New South Wales with about 16,000 homes, 11,000 jobs, one public high school, one private high school and up to five primary schools. All those houses have yet to be built. It is an exciting time for the building industry in the south-west and in regional New South Wales where I come from. This will be much-needed information for the Minister and the Government to make those important decisions that affect those areas.

I have congratulated the Minister a few times. I have complimented him on his fantastic beard from which I have taken some inspiration over the last fortnight, although I was also inspired by Mental Health Month. I congratulate not just the Minister but also his fantastic team, and I acknowledge his fantastic staff: Matt Dawson, Jane Standish, William Sparling, Caity McLoughlin, Tom Green, Olivia Roth, Elizabeth Stepanian, Harnsle Joo, James Camilleri, Eloise Griffin, Steph Matti and Dora Shipley. I apologise if I have missed anyone out, but I am so excited to see a Minister so committed to reforming the sector and industry that I had to mention all the staff who have made this dream a possibility and a reality. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (21:13): I contribute to debate on the Building Professionals Amendment (Information) Bill 2016. Building regulation and certification in the planning system are highly complex and have been a constant and continuing concern for many years. In 2014 the Government commissioned former Treasury Secretary Michael Lambert to undertake a statutory review of legislation in this area with a focus on certification and its application in the wider building industry. The Lambert review was submitted in October 2015. The 400-page document was highly critical of the way in which commercial and apartment buildings in New South Wales are certified and deemed to be fire safe.

The review made 150 recommendations and the following 10 priority areas for concern were identified: introducing a new legislative framework for building regulation; strengthening of the administration of building regulation and certification; implementing of an information systems strategy, which this bill addresses; establishing the accountability and role of certifiers; establishing a partnership model between State and local government; achieving and maintaining a best practice building regulation and certification system; enhancing professionalisation of certifiers through accreditation, education, training and support; improving timeliness and effectiveness of the complaints handling process and disciplinary actions; enhancing the sustainability of professional indemnity insurance; and funding resources appropriately.

The report was released when the fatal 2012 Bankstown fire was still at the front of people's minds. Tragically, Connie Zhang died at only 21 years of age when she was forced to jump from the window of her fifth-floor apartment as a ferocious fire blazed inside. The apartment block was found to have been bedevilled by certification problems. Connie's parents have called for changes to building regulations after critical findings by the NSW Coroner. Deputy NSW Coroner Hugh Dillon found that Connie's death could have been prevented if the developer of the unit block had installed a sprinkler system as required by fire safety laws. The Coroner found that this was just one of a litany of individual and systemic failures that contributed to the fire, including the building developer and strata manager's lax attitude to safety, the lack of resources in the compliance section of the local council, and failures in the process of fire safety checks and building certification.

It is shameful that this Government has taken more than a year to respond to the Lambert review recommendations—and in fact is dealing with only one of them—and in doing so has left New South Wales people vulnerable. For too long people believed that such a tragedy was inevitable due to the broken building system in New South Wales. The record demand for apartments and unit complexes sees corners being cut. The member for Myall Lakes, in response to criticism earlier in tonight's debate from the member for Swansea, stated that the Government listens to the community and then introduces legislation carefully. I have one thing to say to that and that is greyhounds.

Common defects include the incorrect installation of fire gaps and fire dampers that prevent smoke spreading and poor fire quality separation between apartments. Developers are prioritising profit over people. There can be no excuse for not installing such important safety equipment and facilities. This bill is the Government's first response to the Lambert report and it addresses only one of the 10 priority areas—the implementation of an information system strategy. This response changes the way data about certification is collected and released. An e-Building strategy is aimed at achieving digitalised and standardised building information that is transparent and capable of generating performance and outcomes information. The necessary move to a standardised approach to both IT hardware and software across local government and the creation of compatible systems and approaches will be a huge challenge for this project and will require a significant funding commitment.

The bill amends the current legislation to authorise the Building Professionals Board to enter into information-sharing arrangements with councils, State and Commonwealth agencies, and other persons and bodies

that may be prescribed by the regulations to share information relating to certification or regulation of, or statutory insurance requirements relating to, building work. The purpose of sharing the information will be to assist the board and the other parties in the arrangement in the exercise of functions relating to the certification or regulation of, or statutory insurance requirements relating to, building work. While I recognise the benefit of having a standard format for development application [DA] forms and construction certificates, councils take different approaches for their DA and other development compliance forms to suit the nature of their environment, their topography, their density and, therefore, the required development in their areas.

Councils are already facing substantial change on a number of fronts and this bill, while worthwhile, may encounter significant hurdles in the wake of the many other reforms that have been experienced by the local government sector. I also note the Legislation Review Committee comment about sharing information relating to people's private residences, and that impacting on their right to privacy. However, the committee noted the objectives behind authorising the sharing of such information, notably, providing government agencies with accurate information about the state of buildings in New South Wales. As long as any information obtained is shared only with government agencies, not private entities, there should be no immediate privacy concern.

While this bill is a step forward, it is a small one. In light of the safety concerns surrounding this area, more meaningful and genuine action must be taken. Until the Government addresses the other nine priority actions, building safety and consumer satisfaction will continue to be compromised. The New South Wales building certification system is inadequate. Much-needed resources and urgent attention are required to tighten regulation and enforcement of the activities of builders and certifiers. The Engineers Australia Multi-disciplinary Committee report revealed that 85 per cent of strata units were defective on completion.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Shame.

Ms JODIE HARRISON: Yes, it is a shame. With thousands of new units being developed and coming on stream over the next few years, the Government must address this issue before another major incident occurs or more lives are lost. The Government's delay has caused stress and angst in the lives of families and individuals across New South Wales, including in my electorate of Charlestown. The Landmark apartment complex consists of 59 residential lots and 13 commercial lots in a nine-storey building. A consulting company has revealed hundreds of defects and hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of repairs required in the development. The main defects involve waterproofing, corrosion, cavity flashing and tiling. The residents are now taking on the certifiers in the Supreme Court. Naturally this has been an immensely stressful experience for them. When we buy a modern apartment, we think we are avoiding defects and the need for costly repairs. Clearly that is not the case with the Landmark apartments.

It is wrong for the Government to take more than 12 months to respond to urgent legislative reform recommendations, and then to address only one of 10 priority areas. As we wait for the Government to address the other nine concerns, families and individuals across New South Wales will face ongoing concerns about the lack of resources, slow complaints handling, serious safety concerns, and lack of appropriate regulatory teeth in the Building Professionals Board, which oversees private certification in this State. Having said that, the Opposition does not oppose the bill.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (21:22): In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Swansea, Myall Lakes, Prospect, and Charlestown for their contributions to debate on the Building Professionals Amendment (Information) Bill 2016. I particularly thank the member for Wollondilly for his contribution. He is sporting a striking beard. He has always been very dapper, but he has lifted his game dramatically.

Ms Eleni Petinos: But there is no competition.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Absolutely. Members have raised a number of concerns, and I will deal with them in order, starting with privacy. As I said in my second reading speech, the protection of privacy in respect of any request for data about people's homes is of the utmost importance. In fact, I said it was sacrosanct. This bill represents the first tranche of amendments to the building regulations. Certification represents just one component of the Government's broader agenda to improve home building, planning assessment, and dispute resolution in the building industry. In implementing this agenda, and with the introduction of further legislation, the Government will explore all sensible options to ensure that there is an even playing field for all certifying entities that may be exchanging personal data in the industry consistent with privacy obligations.

The Government will assess how to ensure that it has an efficient operational environment and no lessening of consumer privacy protection. The community expects the framework to manage not only issues such as safety, health, amenity, and sustainability but also issues such as the use of the valuable resource that is data without the loss of the right to personal privacy or to make a complaint if someone's personal information is not

used appropriately. Another area of concern raised by members opposite related to the number of recommendations the Government is supporting. Michael Lambert provided 150 recommendations, and the Government supports 72 of them in four parts, and 70 of the remaining recommendations have been sent to the Building Regulations Advisory Committee for further investigation. The Government has rejected only eight recommendations.

Members said they are concerned that this bill implements a small number of reforms. That categorisation does not give credit to the importance of obtaining data in respect of regulation more generally. As we all know, smart governments put the evidence and the facts on the table so that they can regulate appropriately. If we have all the evidence and the facts on the table, rather than taking a blanket approach to regulation that not only strangles industry and wraps red tape around it but also frustrates consumers, we can be far more targeted in ensuring we have smarter and better regulations. That is why this legislation is pivotal to the reforms that will be introduced next year. Because they are so significant in scope, those reforms will need to be the subject of a series of consultations beginning early next year.

Members opposite spoke about 10 critical areas. I have spoken to Michael Lambert at least four or five times about his work on these matters. After consulting him, I have synthesised the reforms into five areas. I have developed the acronym "DIAL". "D" stands for "data". If we do not have the data right, everything else will fail. "I" stands for "independence". We need to get the independence right, and we will be working on that next year. "A" stands for "accreditation". There are critical phases of building construction that require more accreditation, such as fire and safety, hydraulics and so on, and that need proper consideration. We will be looking at that shortly. "L" is for "location". What do we do about ministerial responsibility for building and construction work? At the moment it has many masters, including Minister Stokes and me. We need to relocate responsibility for that activity into one area: It will ultimately land in my lap. We will have a Minister responsible for all building and construction in New South Wales.

One of the stakeholders said to me, "You are going some of the way towards the Victorian Building Authority model." It was pointed out that New South Wales is doing better because we will have everything Victoria has in an agency that is also responsible for consumer protection. This is holistic reform and I believe it is an elegant fit. The last "L" stands for "legislation". The scope of this reform means that we will need to amend a number of critical pieces of legislation. Consultation about that legislation will take place next year. I have spoken to Parliamentary Counsel and to other key stakeholders, and they have conceded that this cannot be done quickly because of the scope of the reform process. As much as I would love to roll it out this year, that is impossible because of the magnitude of the reform. I have expedited the data component of the reform process so that we can start rolling it out. We can collect the data, and throughout the consultation phase that will help us to refine the process to ensure we achieve even better reform next year.

The member for Prospect referred to the potential outsourcing of the design of the portal for data collection. Obviously we will examine all options but I take this opportunity to compliment OneGov which has designed the FuelCheck website in-house. That has had extraordinary success. A professor from Stanford University said that this was the best example of open data that he had seen anywhere in the world. It is all done through the excellent work of the agency. In particular I compliment Pedro Harris who was the leading light in making sure that that platform exists. Now that we have that platform, to extend the analogy, we have the plumbing in place to collect data in relation to other areas. In this case it will be around certification.

That data can be used not just for the certification but, as the member for Wollondilly indicated, as it has reference to warranty insurance, it could have reference to the certifiers that are operating appropriately in the marketplace and those that are not. We can use the data in a very big way to improve not only the quality of the certification but also the lot of citizens who require their builds to be certified. I thank everybody involved in the formulation of this bill. I again thank those opposite for their constructive input. In particular I once again thank the member for Wollondilly for his outstanding contribution to this debate. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

*Private Members' Statements***OATLEY ELECTORATE EVENTS**

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (21:31): I update the House on some events held recently by local community groups in the St George area and in particular in my electorate of Oatley. Earlier this month I had the privilege of being invited to attend thirty-first birthday celebrations for the Georges River Lioness Club. The Georges River Lioness Club is a non-profit organisation of female volunteers who work in the St George area to raise funds for much-needed and worthy projects. Recent activities include raising funds for special education classes throughout the local area; the oncology unit at the Children's Hospital at Westmead; Bezzina House, which is part of St George Hospital; Calvary Hospital; the Rural Fire Service; Lions Hart Walker; and many more worthy projects.

The Georges River Lioness Club raises money through social events including barbecues, golf days, craft groups, the Christmas fair and carols that they have each year, the sale of cookbooks and the Lugarno Lions Spring Fair. The women who volunteer for the Georges River Lioness Club are hardworking, community minded and spirited individuals. The group is led by a real champion from our local area, Georges River Lioness President Sue Stapleton, along with Secretary Lorna Sonnerdale and a team of active committee members. The Georges River Lioness Club meets each month at Club Rivers. Club members are to be commended for all their hard work and fundraising activities throughout the year. As the local member of Parliament it was an honour to celebrate the club's thirty-first birthday at Club Rivers recently. I am sure they will celebrate many more to come. I wish the Georges River Lioness Club and all its volunteers a very happy thirty-first birthday and best wishes for more to come.

Last Friday I was delighted to be able to attend the celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary of Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre and to thank the centre's members and supporters. On the day I was joined by the Federal member for Barton, Linda Burney, and the Federal member for Banks, David Coleman. The Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre plays an important role not just in my community but also throughout the St George area. I congratulate the centre's leadership team and staff on providing care, advice and services to those in need. I also congratulate the volunteers of the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre who work tirelessly to provide a large number of services to the local community.

Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre delivers information sessions, seniors day care programs, allied health services, playgroups, family support services, mental health support to new mothers and a range of activities and group outings for those in multicultural communities. Throughout the year Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre celebrates events such as Lebanese Independence Day, Chinese moon festival and Chinese New Year. Such is the contribution of the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre that on any given day it can serve and assist more than 500 people participating in programs and activities. The centre contributes greatly to our local community and is instrumental in connecting with vulnerable and at-risk families and individuals.

I wish all members and supporters of this wonderful centre every success in their future endeavours. In particular I note the great work of Anne Farah-Hill who is the centre's chief executive officer and has been for many years. I look forward to supporting Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre, along with all members of Parliament in our community, Liberal and Labor. I am sure they will have a wonderful and well-deserved celebration of 50 years of service. I look forward to celebrating their great achievements throughout 2017.

STATE BUDGET AND CAMPBELLTOWN ELECTORATE

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (21:36): I speak again tonight to advocate on behalf of the people of Campbelltown regarding the Government's lack of appropriate investment for the Campbelltown region in this year's budget; in particular, the failure to invest funds in local services, health and of course the Government's failure to enact election commitments such as investing in the Spring Farm Link Road and the commuter car park at Campbelltown Hospital. Prior to the last election the Government made a commitment to the people of Campbelltown that it would make our area a priority in this term of government. Despite this commitment, the 2016-17 budget has allocated little for the people of Campbelltown, based on the Government's own promises. This has provided no comfort for the people of Campbelltown or the community organisations and businesses that are looking to bring jobs to our area. Disappointingly, this has been the case since 2011.

All members in this Chamber would be very aware of how important it is to fight for and deliver local infrastructure for their local areas, and particularly for areas with a massive number of people. The Government's plan to install 35,000 new dwellings to the south of Campbelltown must be noted. The Government promised \$5.5 million to improve safety along Appin Road. Whilst I welcome the recurrent funding set aside to resurface sections of the road—and that has happened in areas—the budget papers fail to outline a time line for these works to occur on a broader scale at the size our community deserves and expects. I will talk a little more about Appin

Road in due course and about connectivity and broader infrastructure. However, as members would agree, these works will provide safety upgrades. I implore the Premier to make this road and that southern region of Campbelltown a priority for local commuters and indeed future residents coming to our city and region.

It is not just the inaction on Appin Road that concerns me. I am also concerned by the fact that the budget again failed to provide substantial funding for facilities such as Campbelltown Hospital. I am not just talking about capital upgrades—the second upgrade or anything like that. There is a noticeable lack of funding in the recurrent budget for services. For example, I refer to elective surgery waiting times and the number of theatres that are not being used. The theatres are available but they are not being used because the staff are not available to provide the service that is required.

I draw attention again to the Appin Road area and the significant number of new houses and additional people that will be living there. I am also concerned that the budget failed to provide funding that was promised for the Spring Farm Link, not only from Liz Kernohan Drive to the F5, but also from the F5 to Appin Road. Prior to the last election, the Premier committed his Government to building the Spring Farm Link. It has not occurred. All we have seen so far is an inappropriate amount of scoping studies. Rightly local businesses and existing and future residents are not happy and neither are organisations such as the Rotary Club of Appin Park and trucking businesses along Appin Road, particularly towards Wilton Junction.

It is appropriate that the funding should be holistic to achieve better connectivity. When I refer to connectivity, we must look at the developing regions of Campbelltown and Camden, which are on either side of the M5. Campbelltown is to the north and Camden is to the south. They are developing areas, so we must have a holistic plan and vision to provide connectivity. At the moment, everything funnels into Narellan Road, which is inappropriate and thus it is not working. The budget must be refocused on those areas because that will provide the solution for Narellan Road. The solution is to look outside the square and to have an holistic approach. I implore the Government to reconsider what it is already putting in place and to revisit its budget allocation.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (21:41): I congratulate Mrs Leslie Williams, Minister for Early Childhood Education, on her recent announcement of the \$115 million boost in funding to early childhood education. This funding boost will deliver the largest single fee reduction in the history of New South Wales. It will make access to the 17 community preschools in the Clarence electorate more affordable and it will help take the financial burden off parents. Of this funding, \$85 million will go to community preschools such as the Copmanhurst Pre-School, which I visited recently to officially open the use of its play equipment for which it received a Community Building Partnership grant. It is a wonderful community preschool and this funding will ensure that parents can afford to send their children to preschool.

An amount of \$30 million will also be delivered to long day care services. The New South Wales Government is requiring preschools to pass on at least 75 per cent of the increased funding to families through lower fees. We know the importance of early childhood education in the year before school. Our children are more likely to arrive at school equipped with the social, intellectual and emotional skills they need to flourish. An average of 600 hours or 15 hours per week of early childhood education in community preschools and long day care centres in the year before they start school is considered a moderate level of participation.

The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is committed to providing universal access to quality early childhood education. This funding will reduce preschool fees for four-year-olds and five-year-olds and remove nearly all fees for children at preschool who are from Aboriginal and low-income families. It is important that no child is left behind and cost should not prohibit access to early childhood education. My electorate has a high proportion of low socio-economic disadvantage and this funding will help to provide equity in access to education. The funding will remove nearly all fees for children at preschool who are from Aboriginal and low-income families. We want all children in New South Wales to enjoy the benefits of a quality early education, wherever they live and whatever their background.

From 1 July 2017, base rate funding for Aboriginal children and children from low-income families will increase to \$6,600 per child per annum at community preschools. This will cover more than 90 per cent of the cost of preschool education for these children. This funding will be for children aged three to five years for the two years prior to starting school. From 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2017, community preschools will receive the increased funding for all children enrolled for 600 hours. Children enrolled for fewer than 600 hours will continue to receive the existing lower rate of funding until 1 July 2017. From 1 July 2017 onwards, community preschools will receive the maximum rate of funding for children enrolled for 600 hours only. Children enrolled for fewer hours will attract a pro-rata amount. This staged introduction will allow plenty of time for community preschools to consult families and communities and to make any necessary changes to the way they operate.

Preschools in regional areas face different challenges from those facing services in the city. I am thrilled with this package because we are providing a safety net for community preschools in regional, rural and remote areas, which guarantees funding for preschools that are licensed for 20 or fewer places. This adds up to \$132,000 per service to ensure that non-metropolitan preschools in small communities can keep their doors open, despite varying enrolments from year to year. I have attended numerous preschools and have had frequent conversations with preschool directors across my electorate during my time in this place. I know that this decision will be most welcomed by them, the children and the parents who will receive the financial benefit. Thank you, Minister. This is, without doubt, one of greatest announcements to be made in early childhood education in New South Wales. The funding has been sought for many years and it will result in an improvement in the education standards of our kids.

ENERGY SUPPLY SECURITY

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (21:46): The power blackout which occurred across the whole of South Australia on 28 September shocked the nation. The cause of that blackout has raised for us all the issue of energy security and how it impacts on our communities. The issue of energy security is of particular concern to residents of my electorate and the wider Central Coast, given that we have had three significant weather-related power blackouts in the past 18 months. Conservative politicians and commentators, including the State Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, were quick to suggest that an overreliance on renewable energy was to blame. Their comments ignored the reality that the severe weather event that struck South Australia destroyed a number of transmission towers, which saw three major transmission lines fail in the space of 12 seconds, thus causing the entire State network to trip and shut down around 3.45 p.m. local time. It was a failure of distribution and transmission, not—as right-wing ideologues have suggested—a failure of generation.

We have two priorities when it comes to energy supply. The first is to ensure that we have a stable supply of energy when we need it. The second is to ensure energy is affordable for all our citizens. Therefore, I welcome the decision by energy Ministers on 7 October to hold an independent review of the National Electricity Market and particularly its focus on security, reliability and affordability. The development of the National Electricity Market has sought to create a consumer market for electricity out of what was a monopoly service provided typically by the State. Privatisation has been central to this. In this State, privatisation was commenced by the Greiner Government with the corporatisation of State electricity providers. Privatisation was then pursued by governments of both persuasions in this State in spite of strong community opposition to privatisation of government services generally.

It is a matter of public record that opposition to privatisation of electricity was the single biggest issue in The Entrance electorate and the reason for my election. Privatisation is often promoted as a means of deriving greater efficiencies from services, leading to lowered prices, but the pursuit of so-called efficiencies can also lead to cuts to services and maintenance, which reduces reliability. The royal commission into the Victorian Black Saturday fires, which left 150 people dead, found that reduced maintenance standards on faulty privatised powerlines were responsible for causing five of the most devastating blazes. Privatisation has also failed to lead to lower prices. At the last review of regulated prices for electricity in New South Wales, the biggest contribution to price increases was the artificial retail market created for this State. The retail component increased by 4.1 per cent.

The same report found that generation costs fell 3.3 per cent and network costs fell by 0.4 per cent. Despite this IPART granted a price increase to the industry largely to support the retailers' billing and marketing activities. It had nothing to do with the efficient cost of generation and nothing to do with efficient cost of supply of electricity; it was just a prop to an artificial market. Costs in this State are now so high that more than 30,000 households each year are disconnected from the electricity network due to failure to pay. On both these points—reliability and cost—privatisation has failed us in this State. Even the Chair of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and former privatisation advocate, Rod Sims, has called for the privatisation of public monopolies to stop. I look forward to making a contribution to the review. The National Energy Market is not working for many Australians and, in particular, for many people in my electorate. It is time for the State to act, to drop its faith in the market and move to ensure that all New South Wales households and businesses have access to dependable and affordable energy.

OXFORD STREET SHOPPING PRECINCT

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (21:50): Oxford Street is a major community, arts, retail, food and beverage, entertainment, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex [LGBTI], pedestrian and cyclist hub, linking the energetic and creative villages of Darlinghurst, Surry Hills and Paddington, all of which are in the Sydney electorate. However, as with many high street shopping precincts across the country and around the world, retail businesses are being impacted by shopping malls—in this case at Bondi Junction and the Sydney central business district—and the rise in online shopping.

Retail and food and beverage outlets also suffer from traffic arrangements which encourage fast-moving, noisy and polluting traffic. Peak period clearways speed up traffic, making the street unpleasant for pedestrians at times when they should be encouraged to linger and shop, or visit a cafe. The loss of car parking prevents people stopping their vehicles to use businesses, and removes a buffer from traffic that protects amenity and pedestrian safety. The noise and pollution make footpath dining unpleasant and unviable for restaurants and cafes, and exclude other options for activation.

Adding to these woes, the lock-out laws that began in early 2014 have caused a downturn in Oxford Street's entertainment precinct, impacting on LGBTI, live music and performance venues and on restaurants where people would dine before going out. The recently closed Oxford Street late-night newsagency reported significant losses due to the lockouts. With both the day and night economies suffering, vacant tenancies have become a common sight along the street.

Notwithstanding these problems, the City of Sydney, Woollahra Municipal Council, local businesses and residents have been working together to reactivate this important heritage street. Woollahra Council's Oxford Street task force and Activate Oxford Street have developed creative projects like the art markets and shopfront window displays. Local festivals like William Street and Fiveways Fusion add a new edge. The City of Sydney's co-working and creative spaces have brought new people who support local businesses and bring new life to the street. The city's fabulous Paddington Reservoir Gardens have created a new village space and its LGBTI artwork and Art and About are helping renew public perception. Both councils are greening the space where possible, a fine example being the Three Saints Square greenery. These help to improve people's experience of the street.

Energetic and passionate leaders at the Paddington and Darlinghurst Business Partnerships are using council grants and good ideas to focus on small precincts, adding value to existing businesses. I am backing them and their efforts, and I love shopping at their unique businesses. The Darlinghurst Business Partnership, Potts Point Partnership and Surry Hills Creative Precinct have developed an East Sydney destination marketing strategy, which includes Oxford Street, and I have asked Destination NSW to meet with them to learn about the tourism potential of the proposal. There are enormous opportunities to tap into the growing segment of the tourism market that seeks specialist experiences to increase tourist stays and spend.

Property owners must work with councils and business operators to take a curated approach to filling empty shops, and I will soon meet with the City of Sydney and owners to begin collaborating tenancies. The City of Sydney, Woollahra Municipal Council, businesses, property owners and local residents all agree that removal of the clearway is essential to any fix for Oxford Street. In response to our concerns the 3.00 p.m. start for the clearway for westbound traffic was moved to 4.00 p.m. without significant traffic or transport impacts. But the clearway must be removed altogether.

The Paddington Society and BIKEast established a proposal to redesign Oxford Street, Paddington, that would involve a 40 kilometre speed limit, footpath widening, wide pedestrian medians with right turn lanes where needed, relocated traffic lights and shared bus, car, bicycle and parking lanes. It was prepared by a team of professionals in urban design, traffic management and place making, yet was rejected by the Government. Planning that aims only to move traffic, at the expense of community, business, amenity and the urban environment, has dominated for too long—WestConnex is a significantly destructive example. Traffic and transport should work with councils, residents and businesses to ensure roads planning is not destructive and helps make healthy and sustainable communities. Planned expansions to the light rail network provide opportunities to extend services along Oxford Street and link the city to the eastern suburbs.

I hope that the Government will amend the liquor laws to exempt live music and performance venues, small bars of 120 patrons or less, and well managed venues on Oxford Street from the 1.30 am lockout. My electorate office has been based on Oxford Street since I was elected—previously in Paddington and just recently in Darlinghurst—and I can attest to improvements from new creative businesses, pop-ups and cafes. I will continue to work with Woollahra Municipal Council, the City of Sydney, the State Government, local businesses and the community to restore Oxford Street to its past glory and make the most of its future potential.

Bills

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AMENDMENT (INDUSTRIAL COURT) BILL 2016

First Reading

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

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I order that the second reading of the bill as an order of the day for a future day.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 21:56 until Wednesday
12 October 2016 at 10:00.**