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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

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I**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY****Tuesday, 8 November 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.*]

*Rulings***NOTICES OF MOTIONS**

The SPEAKER (12:12): Some of the motions this morning were excessively long. I have given warnings in the Chamber previously about the length of motions, especially if, as a consequence, other members miss out on giving their notices of motions. Members should not expect to give more than one notice of motion. I suggest that members who have not had a chance to give their notice of motion talk to their colleagues about the length of some of their motions.

*Private Members' Statements***MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (12:13): Approximately 17 per cent of people in New South Wales live with at least a mild mental illness and 3 per cent live with severe mental illness. The New South Wales Government has identified the need for more resources in this important health area and has committed \$115 million to boost mental health funding over three years. The funding will be used to overhaul the delivery of mental health services, especially at the community level. Over the past decade not only have there been higher rates of mental illness but also the New South Wales Government has become better at recognising the need for more funding and support. Since 2010-11 the New South Wales Government has increased direct recurrent expenditure for mental health services by more than 32 per cent to a record \$1.6 billion in the 2014-15 financial year. Key commitments of this Government have been to improve the wellbeing of the community and to ensure better outcomes for people with mental illnesses.

Local resident of Davidson and mental health advocate Stephen Howald recently raised concerns about the lack of mental health support for adults in my local area. While there are mental health facilities and services available nearby, particularly to older constituents, there is potential to make services more localised and accessible in line with community needs. The confronting family tragedy that recently occurred in a suburb in my electorate of Davidson reinforces the need for busy families to have greater access to such services in their local areas. It also reinforces the link between mental illness and the pressures on carers as well as people with a disability when coping with their unique life stresses.

We all know life can be difficult at the best of times. The culmination of minor and major problems can trigger feelings of overwhelming grief and anxiety. The New South Wales Government is continuing to improve and to expand community and mental health services to ensure that flexible and responsive services are available when those situations occur. The 2015 Mission Australia Youth Survey found that one in five females aged between 15 and 19 indicated that mental health was a personal concern. Approximately one in five youth also highlighted depression and family conflict as significant personal issues. At a stage in their lives marked by rapid change and growth, it is imperative for young people to be equipped with the right skills to cope with stresses, including study, body image and bullying problems. October was Mental Health Month. The theme this year was—

Mr Jai Rowell: "Learn and Grow".

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA: It was "Learn and Grow". The member for Wollondilly indicates he is growing his facial hair. As a former Minister for Mental Health he appreciates the importance of this issue. I attended a Mental Health Month event in the Speaker's Garden, which I thank Madam Speaker for kindly hosting, and was impressed by the displays. Some of the displays emphasised the importance of learning new and exciting things and the positive effects those experiences can have on mental health. Other suggestions for improving mental health were learning to stress less by setting aside tech-free time and enjoying the outdoors, listening to other people's views and sharing one's love of certain hobbies or activities with others. Those ideas are not only

beneficial for one's own mental health but also may assist the people with whom we interact. It is important for people to know what mental illness is and how it can be treated. Strong communities can provide solid support for sufferers who are struggling to cope with daily life. That might be as simple as a regular phone call or an offer to help with the school drop off.

The New South Wales Government has also identified the need to support first responders, who regularly put themselves in danger to protect or to others in the course of their jobs or voluntary responsibilities. As a result of their activities they are often exposed to traumatic events that can affect them over the long term. The New South Wales Government has developed the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy for First Responder Organisations to promote and to protect the mental health and wellbeing of those staff and members. The Government accepts responsibility to help those who help us when they need it. Good mental health is imperative for people to work productively and to cope with the normal stresses of daily life. By empowering ourselves with more knowledge about the potential for mental health challenges we can take some control over our future mental wellbeing and help others who may be struggling.

STRATHFIELD ELECTORATE DEVELOPMENT

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (12:18): I have spoken many times in this House about the development pressures being experienced by residents in the Strathfield electorate. Again I say to the House that I am not opposed to development, but I am opposed to ad hoc and poor planning that impacts not only on the amenity of an area but also personally on residents. I raise again the pressures being experienced by residents, particularly in North Strathfield and Homebush. Last week the Government released the master plan for Sydney Olympic Park. The master plan was presented to Government late last year, so it has taken almost 12 months for it to be released publicly for consultation.

I will make further comment on the master plan, but to understand the concerns of residents who live in those two areas—which come under two councils—other projects have to be considered, including WestConnex, the Concord West Master Plan, the proposal for light rail and now possible metro, the Parramatta Road Urban Transformation Strategy, the development of the district plan by the Greater Sydney Commission, and council amalgamations. It is a matter of concern that those projects are occurring largely in isolation; there appears to be no coordinated approach by government.

The Sydney Olympic Park Master Plan, which was released recently and which is currently on exhibition, focuses on a 210 hectare area that includes the railway station, is bound by Hill Road to the west and has parkland to the north and east and the M4 motorway and Homebush Bay Drive to the south. The Government is proposing to develop a town centre which includes mixed-use development along key roads, including Olympic Boulevard and Australia Avenue. Under the plan, 23,500 residents and 44,000 workers will be at Olympic Park by 2030. The plan also proposes a new high school, possibly at the corner of Australia Avenue and Homebush Bay Drive.

I support development in Olympic Park; the area has long cried out for increased activity and density. Last year the Government committed \$1 billion for light rail from Parramatta through Olympic Park to Strathfield. This route is supported by Labor. Unfortunately, the plan that was released for Sydney Olympic Park does not provide a commitment to transport. The Commonwealth Bank has removed thousands of employees from Sydney Olympic Park simply because of the lack of transport and willingness by the Government to address the issue. When the Government followed Labor's lead and made a commitment to light rail, we welcomed its decision.

I also believe that light rail will be a catalyst for development for revitalising the Strathfield town square by creating a new interchange and opportunities for local businesses. The preferred light rail routes were supposed to be released in July and August 2016, but we are still waiting. Under pressure, the Minister confirmed in budget estimates that the preferred routes will not be released until early next year. We know that North Strathfield station—which is still waiting on an easy access upgrade—was one of the potential stations identified as a light rail connection. The vague plans we have seen show that light rail will be cutting through the community of North Strathfield. The Olympic Park Master Plan appears to show light rail travelling down Australia Avenue and Underwood Road. The information that has been released to date is contradictory and vague.

The delay in this project comes at a time when the Government is finalising its Parramatta Road urbanisation plan. This plan proposes significant rezoning to high rise in the Homebush precinct and was developed without any consideration of transport. In fact, when the draft document was released the Government had not agreed to light rail. The finalised Parramatta Road plan will apparently be included in the district plan, which will be released shortly. Again, this significant planning document will make rezoning decisions without having all the information, particularly related to transport.

The uncertainty of this plan is impacting on residents in North Strathfield. Whether or not they support rezoning, many are experiencing severe anxiety and concern about what is happening in their local area. In recent

weeks, we have also discovered that the Government is now extending the Metro to include a possible Sydney CBD to Parramatta route. We know nothing more than this. I find it extraordinary that billion-dollar transport decisions are being made on the run. It could be said that the Government is making it up as it goes along.

I remind the House of another project that is impacting on these two communities, namely, WestConnex. In summary, the Government is mismanaging the entire project. It is shambolic and it is impacting North Strathfield and Homebush in particular. It is too late to do anything about WestConnex, but it is not too late to ensure that the planning for this area is the best it can be. I note that the Minister for Planning is seated at the table. I thank him for his support of this community. I am confident that the Government will be able to progress with rezoning decisions when it has a transport plan in place.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) (12:24): I thank the member for Strathfield for her advocacy on behalf of her electorate. Some of her constituents were concerned that the original draft strategy would result in overdevelopment. I recently visited North Strathfield to hear firsthand from the member. The Government has considered the advice that was given and we will make sure that the final plans are reflective of those concerns. We want to get the balance right. We want not only to ensure that the amenity of the area is preserved but also to provide opportunities for redevelopment supported by available infrastructure and proposed infrastructure upgrades. However, I want to clarify that the district plans will not be rezoning instruments. The district plans will set strategic priorities to which local councils can respond in local planning processes with specific rezonings. I look forward to the release of the district plans and to working with the residents of the inner west for a great outcome along Parramatta Road.

BATHURST ELECTORATE SOCIAL HOUSING

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Local Government) (12:25): I take this opportunity to inform the House about the Government's record investment in the Bathurst electorate. Indeed, hardly a day goes by when a significant investment or an announcement on funding is not made by the Government. This clearly demonstrates that regional communities such as mine are getting their fair share of funding from this Government. I know that people like Douglas and Angeli are watching this broadcast this morning and that they are keen to hear about our recent funding announcements for the Lithgow community.

Earlier this week, the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing, Mr Brad Hazzard, visited Lithgow where he met with council members, residents and employees of Family and Community Services and the Department of Housing. Minister Hazzard also visited Emora Park. Sadly, for a number of years that park, which is in a social housing area, has been neglected: the basketball court is overgrown, the fence is falling down, and there is no playground equipment. Minister Hazzard announced that funding of \$50,000 from the Social Housing Community Improvement Fund has been allocated for the upgrade of Emora Park. This is a significant investment and it will make a big difference to those who live in that neighbourhood.

It does not have to be funding of millions of dollars. This money will be used to fix the basketball court, to install playground equipment and additional seating, and to improve the barbeque facilities. Mayor Stephen Lesslie and Councillor Maree Statham from Lithgow City Council, local police representatives, an Aboriginal liaison officer and community members were also present. The residents we spoke to told us how pleased they were that the park is being upgraded. In New South Wales every dollar counts. In our Social Housing Community Improvement Fund we have \$20 million for hundreds of improvement projects across this State. The maximum amount of funding per project is \$50,000. People like Kailee and Ray, who live near Emora Park, are happy to be receiving this funding. In fact, Ray, who lives in units across from the park, spoke about the opportunity this funding will afford to the younger folk in the community. We met a lady who has eight young children. They now have a place to enjoy after school, on the weekends and in the school holidays, which is going to make an incredible difference for them.

On top of that, we also announced almost \$40,000 that will go towards improving the outdoor common area of Eskbank Street, which is another community housing area. The look of the area will be improved, which will encourage children to come there, and they will feel safe and supported. They will want to go there and to connect with the local residents. In New South Wales the Government is continually protecting and supporting the most vulnerable people in our communities. Yesterday, we also opened the new Family and Community Services building in Lithgow. It is the old, refurbished Commonwealth Bank building in the main street. We spoke to the staff, who do an incredible job while undertaking some challenging tasks. They protect and support the most vulnerable people in our communities. They protect children and young people from abuse and neglect and they support people with disability so that they can realise their full potential. They also support people who are at risk of experiencing domestic or family violence. They support the Aboriginal community, as well. At the official opening we saw housing and community services under the one roof. It is a one-stop shop and it means

that people in the Lithgow community who walk through the door will be given the appropriate services that they need and deserve. Well done to the Minister and to all the staff involved in that project.

WARRINGAH-PITTWATER DISTRICT RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) (12:30): Pittwater has some of the most beautiful reserves and bushland on the northern beaches and, indeed, the whole east coast of Australia. Whilst we are lucky to have natural beauty on our doorstep, we must be extra vigilant coming into summer, and be prepared in the event of a bushfire. Unfortunately, our community knows all too well the devastation and destruction bushfires can cause. We need only look up to the scorched headland at Palm Beach to be reminded of how cautious we need to be. On 28 September 2013 it took 80 firefighters and three helicopters—as well as volunteer surf lifesavers, who assisted—to contain the flames which engulfed the lush green headland at Palm Beach. Faced with strong winds, the firefighters were able to save the State heritage-listed lighthouse and prevent the fire spreading and causing further destruction.

Pittwater has some of the State's most challenging landscapes for bushfire protection, with the elevated ridges and deep valleys of the Garigal National Park and the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, and the unique locations of our offshore hamlets presenting significant challenges for fire crews and personnel. Thankfully, however, our community is home to 10 of the highly skilled Rural Fire Service brigades which make up the Warringah-Pittwater District Rural Fire Service. These brigades are on call around the clock, every day of the year, and include Cottage Point, Duffys Forest, Coal and Candle, Coasters Retreat, Great Mackerel Beach, Terrey Hills, Tumble Down Dick, Scotland Island brigades and the West Pittwater brigade with stations at Elvina Bay and Lovett Bay.

It is the remarkable men and women that make up these brigades who are seen running into the danger zones when the rest of our community are being shepherded out of harm's way. They are our educators on fire mitigation, awareness and safety, our guardians when uncertainty is approaching and our saviours when disaster strikes. The NSW Rural Fire Service is the world's largest volunteer fire service. The Warringah-Pittwater District RFS has 1,200 volunteers who provide service to our local community. Its volunteers have served our community with dedication and distinction. Whilst combating and preventing fires may be the brigade's primary role, its members also perform a wide variety of roles, from assisting with road accidents and storm damage to educating residents about fire prevention and safety.

As all members of the House understand, rural fire brigades are vital in our communities and cannot continue to function without the ongoing generosity and commitment of local residents. Our volunteer firefighters do an outstanding job and make an enormous contribution to our community. The past few weeks have seen the Rural Fire Service busily preparing for bushfires with hazard reduction burns. We are now entering a crucial time of the year for residents to inspect their properties and to start taking necessary precautions.

While there are elements of bushfire fighting that we cannot control, such as the weather, there is a wide range of planning and preparation activities that we can undertake which will dramatically increase the chances of people, their families and their homes surviving in the event of a bushfire. Steps to prepare include small maintenance jobs around the house, including installing metal gutter guards, repairing damaged or missing roof tiles and fitting seals around doors and windows to eliminate gaps. Around the garden, we should keep lawns short and gardens well maintained, cut back trees and shrubs overhanging buildings, and have hoses that are long enough to reach around the perimeter of the house. Whether it is cleaning out gutters or clearing overgrown vegetation, a small effort now can make a huge difference when a fire is approaching.

Our community is fortunate to be surrounded by incredible natural environment, but this also means we must be extra vigilant. During a bushfire, embers can travel many kilometres in the air, meaning properties away from the bush can still be at risk. It is never too early to start preparing for the bushfire season. While the past summer thankfully presented our local community with no major bushfire incidents, largely because of lower than average temperatures and substantial rainfall, our local Rural Fire Service volunteers were all on call, training, preparing and assisting local residents in mitigating potential threats to their properties.

It is unfortunate that Rural Fire Service volunteers are often recognised only after disasters or high-activity summers. Being an active member of the Rural Fire Service is a year-round commitment that involves considerable personal sacrifices, regardless of whether fire emergencies are occurring. Many volunteers forgo employment opportunities and family time and donate their weekends over summer to support and to protect our community. That selflessness is to be applauded.

It is not only the volunteers themselves who make a sacrifice but also their families. Volunteers are the backbone of our entire Rural Fire Service. Whether they are fighting fires, undertaking hazard reduction, preparing, training, fundraising or improving community awareness, their work is never complete, and they simply

cannot be thanked enough for their efforts. Those who are old enough to remember the 1994 fires in Pittwater will remember just how devastating things can be if people are not properly prepared. I thank all the local volunteer firefighters in advance of the upcoming bushfire season and hope that all of those involved keep safe.

CAMPBELLTOWN SPORTING CLUBS

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:35): Today I draw to the attention of the House the incredibly rich array of sporting clubs operating in the Campbelltown area and I express my gratitude to those clubs for the great work they do in our local community. As most members in this place know, sporting clubs are a fundamental feature of Australian society and culture. They serve as a building block in the physical and social development of our children and they foster a strong sense of community within their local area. Campbelltown is particularly blessed with a significant number of clubs representing dozens of different sporting codes, from the more mainstream rugby league, cricket and soccer clubs to the equally valuable but more obscure clubs such as Campbelltown Joggers Club and the Collegians.

One of the greatest things our local sporting clubs foster in athletes of all ages is a sense of pride about our region. Whether it is an under 8s soccer game against another team from our arch-rivals in Camden, or the East Campbelltown Eagles representing our region and ultimately going on to win the Sydney Shield in rugby league this year despite being massive underdogs, Campbelltown's sporting clubs at all levels are proud to call Campbelltown home and to represent our wonderful city and region in their chosen sport.

While all these clubs differ in size and the sport they play, they all share a number of common values that are central to local sport. These include values such as mateship, resilience, loyalty and dedication that are embedded in the Australian culture and way of life and are integral to the health of our local communities and our broader society. The ideal of fairness that sport teaches our kids from a young age is not limited to the footy field or to the netball court; it shapes the operation of our justice system, our workplaces and, at the most basic level, our social interactions with one another every day.

There is perhaps no better example of the commitment of Campbelltown's local sporting clubs to the ideal of fairness than that of the Campbelltown Warriors Rugby League Club. Just under 18 months ago, the club started its Boots in Macarthur social outreach program. The program involves members of the under 15s and under 16s teams volunteering at the Nagle Centre community kitchen, which feeds homeless and disadvantaged people and families in Campbelltown, and which is aimed at educating players about the importance of giving back to their local community. But the contribution of our sporting clubs is not limited to the Campbelltown Warriors. Many of Campbelltown's local sporting clubs go above and beyond in their support for our local community by generously supporting countless local charities and groups. For example, the East Campbelltown Eagles Rugby League Football Club does a massive amount of work supporting great causes in our community, such as the 24 Hour Fight Against Cancer, Macarthur Disability Services, White Ribbon Day and headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation, as well as many others.

One of the most important things Campbelltown's sporting clubs teach our young people is the value of looking out for one another and lending a helping hand when someone falls on hard times. Earlier this year, their front rower, Kyle Shay, suffered a severe neck injury in a match against Narellan. While the doctors expected Kyle to make a full recovery from his injuries, he was left unable to work for five months. With no sick leave or income insurance, and a wife and child at home with a second due later this year, Kyle and his family were doing it pretty tough. The response from the entire Campbelltown Kangaroos club and local community was nothing short of remarkable. The club organised a fundraising dinner that raised thousands of dollars for Kyle and his family to make sure they were able to survive during this incredibly tough period.

I could go on for hours about the countless achievements and contributions of each and every sporting club in Campbelltown, but I conclude by saying that I am proud—proud in every way—to be an honorary member and patron of a number of sporting clubs across Campbelltown, and to be a supporter of each and every club and athlete in our region. Supporting our sporting clubs is something I enjoy not only professionally but also personally and in which I take a great deal of personal pride. I am humbled and fortunate that all of Campbelltown's sporting clubs welcome me with strong support and open arms, no matter where I go. I look forward to continuing to work with every sporting club to continue their invaluable contributions to the city of Campbelltown, our community, and indeed our broader region.

DRONE TECHNOLOGY

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (12:40): On Friday 28 October I was a guest at the supporters' luncheon for the Cudgen Headland Surf Life Saving Club [SLSC]. During the afternoon I had the pleasure of meeting Little Ripper Lifesaver Pty Ltd's chief executive officer, Mr Eddie Bennet, who demonstrated the capabilities of drone technology for lifesaving and surveillance purposes. It was a fascinating demonstration of

technology that has a great deal of potential. Little Ripper is working with Surf Life Saving NSW to roll out drones to surf clubs across New South Wales for surveillance, rescue and addressing shark problems. I thank Westpac for being the major sponsor and I was pleased that its representative at the luncheon provided a great deal of insight into the rescue capability of the technology.

Services were provided as a trial at Ballina's Lighthouse Beach during the September school holidays and were well received. Given the concern regarding sharks in this region and after seeing the drones in action, I believe this technology has much to offer. Several weeks earlier I had the pleasure of announcing the provision of additional mooring buoys at a marine reserve off Cook Island, which is a great recreational resource in the local Tweed district. In company with Peter Comerford of Tweed Seaports, I dived offshore from the island and enjoyed seeing myriad sea life that included sea turtles, dolphins, fish and whales that could be heard in the surrounding waters.

The Cudgen junior classic, which was held over the last weekend of October, became the first non-trial event watched over by the Little Ripper group. The nine-hour junior surf lifesaving event at Kingscliff was patrolled by a dozen drone flights on Saturday along with the normal water patrols. The drones, which have been implemented on the back of a spate of attacks, stream real-time vision back to operators who are keeping an eye out for dangerous sharks. The high-tech devices are worth \$25,000 and are fitted with a loud speaker, sirens, SOS lights, and a flotation device with a shark shield, which, in theory, bombs sharks with electric pulses to deter the animals. The drones also can drop a flotation device to any swimmers in distress. I pay credit to the Hon. Catherine Cusack, who represented the Premier at that event.

The demonstration showed one of the large drones dropping a light green four-man life raft several hundred metres off the beach. It was great to see the quick response time, which was just on 30 seconds, for the drone to leave the beach, go out to the back of the waves and to drop the flotation device. It was a truly incredible demonstration that underscored what the New South Wales Government is doing to protect all those who enjoy our lovely beaches. Drones also have emerged as a preferred way to spot and deter potential marine killers. More than \$7 million has been set aside by the New South Wales Government for the trial of new technologies, and aerial and coastal surveillance, but the best is yet to come. Drones have the capability to be involved in search and rescue, and the provision of emergency services. It was an incredible experience to watch the demonstration and to see real-time images being streamed back to the controller.

Telstra did a great job of streaming the trials live to the Internet. We set up a dummy rescue with a number of surf lifesavers from the great club of Coogee. They overturned one of their boats out behind the breakers and the drone was quick to respond. I understand that further research is being undertaken that will identify, through algorithm, the movement of sharks and of people in distress. It will also identify the movement of non-dangerous wildlife in the area. We have a large colony of green turtles breeding off the coast of Tweed Heads. It was good to see corporations and the New South Wales Government coming together in the development of this important technology.

A large number of locals were present to see the drones in action—regular beachgoers and members of the boardriders association and the surf life saving club. We watched as the drones, one after the other, followed predetermined courses up and down the beach. The live streaming from the drones provided beach users with a greater sense of security and wellbeing. I congratulate Eddie Bennet from Little Ripper Lifesaver Pty Limited on these technological advances. He assured me that there are more great things about to happen in that area. It is all about keeping the wider community safe and keeping the community advised as to our great natural resources. Once again, I am 100 per cent for the Tweed.

NORTHERN SYRIA CONFLICT

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:45): I bring to the attention of this House three alarming issues that have been raised directly with me by local constituents and about which I am greatly concerned. I refer to the plight of the people fleeing the conflict in northern Syria; to the recent outrageous arrest of the leadership of the People's Democratic Party [HDP] and its parliamentary members in Turkey; and to the situation of the Kurdish-Australian journalist, Renas Lelikan, who until recently was held at the Goulburn Correctional Centre. Mr Lelikan is an Australian citizen who arrived here as a refugee a decade ago. He has been accused of purported ties to the Kurdistan Workers Party [PKK], an organisation listed as a terrorist organisation in Australia, but which is not considered as such by the United Nations. In fact, the PKK is currently fighting the so-called Islamic State.

Mr Lelikan is a journalist who extensively documented the PKK's activity in Syria long before the conflict broke out. That is what he was doing when the so-called Islamic State began to encroach on more Kurdish territory and he was forced to flee to an Iraqi refugee camp. He spent nine months trapped at the camp before the Australian Government granted him temporary travel documents. However, shortly after arriving in Australia his home was raided and he was arrested. Last month Mr Lelikan was granted bail but on strict conditions, which

included his supporters having to find more than \$1.5 million in surety. I attended the Supreme Court, along with many of his supporters, to put my view that this man should not be prosecuted and, in fact, has done nothing that would require the interest of the Australian Government or Australian authorities.

Mr Lelikan has reported that he has been repeatedly threatened with beheading by so-called Islamic State sympathisers who are inmates at the Goulburn Correctional Centre. Friends and relatives were unable to visit him after his transfer there from Silverwater, but he has seen his psychologist who reports that he cannot sleep at night because of the threats and trauma he has experienced. The devastating conflict in Syria, and the ongoing embargo from neighbouring Turkey and Iraq have led to a humanitarian crisis for the Turkish people living in the autonomous region of Syrian Kurdistan, known as Rojava. With critical shortages of both food and medical supplies, the PKK in Rojava stands for peaceful coexistence, secular democracy and gender equality. In the view of The Greens it should not be listed as a terrorist organisation.

It is imperative that a human rights corridor be established and aid provided to Rojava. The Simalka border is an area where a humanitarian corridor could be established to provide the critical food and medicines necessary to support the millions of people in that region who are suffering. It is also critical that the sanctions and the embargo on the Rojava region are ended. I call on the Federal Government to take an active role in supporting the displaced peoples of that area, lifting the embargo and establishing a humanitarian corridor. I also call on the Federal Government to express outrage in regard to the arrest of the HDP members of Parliament and their leadership in Turkey, and to support the concerns that have been raised by the European Union. The harassment of the HDP—the third-largest party in the Turkish Parliament—is something about which all who are concerned about democracy and human rights should be alarmed. We should be doing everything we can to take action. Finally, I call on members of this House and on the Premier to stand up for human rights and to press the Federal Government to support Mr Lelikan—rather than to seek to prosecute him. I thank the House.

NORTHERN BEACHES HOSPITAL

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing) (12:48): I acknowledge the very hard work of those employed on the site of the new Northern Beaches Hospital and I thank Healthscope for the speed at which the new hospital is being developed. It will be a nine-storey, 488-bed hospital, which will serve the Northern Beaches well for many years to come. The building is expected to be ready for its topping out in the next few months and it will be fitted out during 2017, with the hospital to be operational in 2018.

During the development phase some work has been undertaken by the Northern Beaches Council, formerly the Warringah Council, to investigate how rezoning the area adjacent to the hospital should proceed. On behalf of the local community I wish to place on the record my concerns about the structure plan, which the council is developing in concert with a number of government agencies. The council and the agencies need to understand the imperative that the community has an entitlement to know what the various agencies consider to be appropriate for the adjacent area. As the local member of Parliament I believe the concept of rezoning the adjacent areas is entirely appropriate, but this rezoning is now dependent on a further aspect because in the last couple of months it has become apparent that the council, working with some State government agencies, now considers the site currently occupied by the wonderful Forest High School may be an appropriate area for a new town centre.

The community has not yet been made aware of this possibility, and as the local member I want to ensure that the community is made aware of it as soon as possible as there must be an opportunity for community input on any rezoning. In the process, I wish to point out to local residents that if the rezoning of the site occurs it will be pivotal to adjacent development, particularly along Frenchs Forest Road East and Naree Road, as well as some streets that are perpendicular to it, and possibly Karingal Crescent on the southern side. As a result of the lack of certainty about precisely what is planned for the Forest High School site, I requested that the Minister for Education issue a letter confirming that there will always be the Forest High School, either on the current site or on a site that is within a relatively short distance of the current site. I am pleased to say that on 20 October I received a letter from Minister Piccoli stating:

Dear Brad

I write regarding our recent conversation about the future of The Forest High School in the context of the adjacent development of the Northern Beaches Hospital, and the consequent rezoning being considered by Northern Beaches Council.

I note your concerns that the Department of Education and Northern Beaches Council have discussed Council's proposal to rezone the current Forest High School site for a new town centre. I understand that your concerns relate specifically to the need to ensure Forest High School continues to exist, either on its current site, or on a new site within a relatively short distance.

The Department of Education has confirmed their previous advice to me that there is no educational imperative for the school to be relocated, or for the land to be rezoned.

If Northern Beaches Council, in conjunction with other Government agencies, considers that the Forest High School site should at some stage be rezoned, the Department of Education would be open to discussions about the relocation of the school to a new site. Any newly constructed school would need to be within a short distance from the current site.

The community can rest assured that the school will continue to exist on the current site, irrespective of any zoning, unless and until a new school is constructed.

This letter is a very clear statement by the Minister for Education that the future of the Forest High School is guaranteed. Some local residents are concerned that the school should stay on its current site, but times change and the possible rezoning of the site might be a wonderful opportunity to get twenty-first century school buildings on a new site that is a relatively short distance from the current site.

I would like the Forest High School to have new school buildings, either on its existing site or on a nearby site. I look forward to the release of the council's rezoning structure plan in the next few weeks—I am told the plan should be out by the end of November. I encourage the community to have its say on any rezoning and to make sure it is kept abreast of developments. I reassure the community that the Forest High School will always be part of Frenchs Forest, and I look forward to hearing from my local community about what it expects and wants from the rezonings around the new hospital site and the current school site.

WARLGA NGURRA WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S REFUGE

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (12:53): Recently I visited the wonderful women at the Warlga Ngurra Women and Children's Refuge. Warlga Ngurra provides help and support for Indigenous women and children, many of whom have experienced domestic violence for over 25 years. It is courageous for any woman to leave a domestic violence situation, and it is more difficult for Aboriginal women forced to separate from their communities and extended families. The importance of family and kinship structures to Indigenous families makes it more difficult for those women to acknowledge and to report domestic violence.

Two years ago Warlga Ngurra's funding was in limbo due to the changes proposed by the Baird Government's Going Home Staying Home policy. Warlga Ngurra was one of nine specialist homeless services in the Hunter on the chopping block. I feared that its small specialist service would be absorbed by a larger more generic provider. Fortunately, Warlga Ngurra continued as one of two specialist Aboriginal women's refuges in the State. Women and children fleeing domestic and family violence need tailored and specific services, not just a roof over their heads.

Two years later, Warlga Ngurra is in a similar situation—facing an ever-increasing need for an ever-decreasing and inadequate funding pool. It is consistently at capacity and rarely has a vacancy for more than 24 hours. In the last 12 months the refuge housed 128 women and 134 children. During that time it had to turn away 935 women and children. The refuge survives with a meagre staff of three full-time and two part-time workers. Refuge manager Delece Manton told me that many of the centre's clients and their children go through hell before they get to the centre. Delece told me, "Some of our mob will not go to a non-Indigenous service or even go to the doctor without one of us by their side."

I have permission to tell the story of one woman who was recently at the refuge. The story starts in another State where her husband stalked and terrorised her. She obtained an apprehended violence order after her husband ran her over. He sent text messages threatening to kidnap the youngest child. Two months later, he broke into the house and beat her so badly she needed to go to hospital. She begged him to leave but he would not let her go. He told her he would kill her if she called the police. As this woman relayed her story to me she started jittering. She said that telling the story made her really jittery. Following that beating her girlfriend took her to the hospital and the police.

When she returned home he was there. She called the police and four police cars turned up. She got away, stayed with a girlfriend and then went to a refuge. The police contacted her to say they were trying to find her husband to arrest him and to ask whether she knew where he was. Jokingly she said, "Try my house." That is where they found him. He had broken in and spent the weekend there. He was convicted and sentenced to a mere four years in jail. There is also evidence that he had hacked her phone, enabling him to track her and monitor her conversations. If it were not for the protection and programs offered by Warlga Ngurra this woman would have been floundering.

She stated, "I do not know what I would have done and I would not have been here. I just had to get away. I would have had to sleep in the car with my children. I just had to leave." She is now safe, is rebuilding her life and is a strong courageous example to her children and community. This story is one of the hundreds of stories that Warlga Ngurra staff hear every day. If we multiply that need by State and throughout the country, it becomes evident how vital these frontline services are. They make a real difference to people being terrorised by domestic violence. I ask the Government to prioritise addressing the impact of domestic violence and the proper resourcing of the excellent front-line services dealing with this issue every day.

GRENFELL MEDICAL CENTRE

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (12:58): Access to primary healthcare is a big issue in the regions, particularly for the areas that I represent, the towns and villages located between the major regional centres of Wagga Wagga, Griffith, Orange and Canberra. Grenfell is one town that has for a number of years grappled with how to attract and to retain doctors. There is currently one general practitioner serving a town with a population of over 2,000 people and a greater population of around 4,000 people. That is an extraordinary workload for one doctor, on top of commitments at the local hospital. The waiting list has meant that many residents have had to travel some distance to towns in the area surrounding Grenfell, such as Forbes and Cowra, both of which are 45 minutes drive from Grenfell at 100 kilometres an hour. The roads around Forbes have been heavily impacted by floods in recent times, so they are not in the greatest condition right now.

As we know, having adequate doctors in town can make or break a community—particularly one with an ageing population. The Grenfell community, led by Weddin Shire Council and its mayor, Mark Liebich, has prioritised a solution to this problem, which is to build a new medical centre in the main street to provide a much-needed update of existing facilities, in the knowledge that this will help attract more doctors to the community. The plans are in place and the site is ready—I have inspected the site and it is a great location—but Federal Government funding is needed desperately to achieve this goal. The 28 October *Grenfell Record* contained an article entitled "Weddin Shire DESERVES a quality, functioning medical centre!". Ngairé Soley, the editor of the *Grenfell Record*, has done a great job recently of making sure that this issue is firmly on the agenda. In that edition she wrote:

The town needs a functioning medical centre with VMOs at the hospital for it to remain the thriving community that it is!

I could not agree more. I acknowledge Councillor Carly Brown, Kathy Parker, Alynn Pratt, Colin Cooper, Terry Carroll on behalf of the Grenfell Lions Club, Michael Pocock, Wendy Hands, Ron Lamkin and Isabel Holmes, who have all been in contact with my office over recent weeks to relay their concerns about this important issue. Residents of Grenfell are passionate about the future of the community, and they can be assured that their concerns have been heard.

I have made representations to Minister Skinner, and I have also addressed those concerns to the Federal Government. I received a reply from the New South Wales Minister for Health advising me that Scott McLachlan, who is the chief executive of Western NSW Local Health District, had looked into the matter and confirmed that Dr Patrick Akhiwu is the doctor who runs the general practice in Grenfell as well as providing services to the residents and an on-call service to the general multi purpose service [MPS] emergency service in Grenfell. In recent weeks Dr Akhiwu was required to return to Botswana for family reasons and had been unavailable to attend the MPS due to demand for his services at his general practice. Mr McLachlan further confirmed that the second general practitioner in Grenfell had resigned suddenly from his practice and left Grenfell in the first half of this calendar year. He had not been providing any services to the MPS.

It is obvious that we need a medical centre in Grenfell urgently. Thankfully, the urgency has eased a little with the announcement of a second doctor to start on 5 December. Let us hope that that person comes and stays this time. According to last week's edition of the *Weddin Shire Council News*, a doctor visited Grenfell last Friday with an interest in providing general practitioner services from the Weddin Street Medical Centre and has subsequently agreed to relocate to Grenfell. The doctor will also provide visiting medical officer services to the hospital and is planning to commence on Monday 5 December 2016. This is outstanding news and testament to a proactive campaign led by Mark Liebich and Weddin Shire Council general manager Glenn Carroll. As I mentioned earlier, Ngairé Soley, editor of the *Grenfell Record*, has also been outstanding. I know that my colleague the Federal member for Riverina, Michael McCormack, is a big supporter of having a medical centre in Grenfell. I am sure that Senator Fiona Nash, who is meeting with Michael and the Weddin Shire Council in Canberra today, will see how important the facility is for that community.

BATTLE OF BEERSHEBA

TRIBUTE TO COMMANDER CHARLES BOURNE

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (13:04): I speak about the Battle of Beersheba and the role of the 7th Light Horse Regiment. I recently attended the annual breakfast of the New South Wales Harness Racing Club at Menangle Park commemorating the battle on 28 October 1917. It was an honour that His Excellency General the Hon. David Hurley, AC, DSC, (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales, was in attendance. Menangle Park was a training ground and camp for the Australian Light Horse. Little did those young men, who formed a bond with and trust in each other, realise what was ahead of them when they left the safety of our shores to go into battle overseas.

The Battle of Beersheba was not without its casualties. The battle unlocked the Turkish stranglehold on the desert campaign, turning the tide of the First World War in the Middle East and creating the legend of the Light Horse. It was one of the greatest Australian victories of the Great War. Some 800 Anzacs defeated 4,000 Turks, against all odds. It was typical of the Aussie soldier to never give up. Beersheba is the largest city in the Negev desert, in the south of Israel. Water in the area was scarce. With the horses carrying approximately 120 kilograms of equipment and their riders, it was imperative that water be found. After studying maps and speaking with local Arabs, the soldiers discovered wells that were vital for the welfare of the mounted troops and their horses. The enemy was relying on the lack of water to give it the upper hand over the Australian troops and their horses. Our plan was to deceive the enemy into thinking the attack was going to be at Gaza. Consequently, the enemy was caught by surprise.

Light Horse regiments have always been a notable inclusion in our war history, even though they initially were considered unsuitable for operations in Gallipoli. To this day, those horses and their riders are considered to be among our bravest in war. Their deployment and courage were vital to Allied success in the many conflicts during the First World War. Next year will see the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Beersheba. Those who took part in the battle will forever be remembered for their contribution to success in the First World War, giving us the lifestyle we all sometimes take for granted. I thank the 7th Light Horse Regiment Menangle Historical Troop, which supported the event. Len Carter did a wonderful job of leading the troop. I also thank guest speaker Brad Manera, senior historian and curator of the Anzac Memorial in Sydney, and master of ceremonies Steve Wisbey, whose great-grandfather served at Beersheba.

I also acknowledge a current member of our armed forces, Commander Charles Bourne. Commander Bourne was recently appointed to command HMAS *Melbourne*. Commander Bourne's parents, Judith and Malcolm, are well-known and very well-respected residents of Camden. They are very proud of their son's appointment. Commander Bourne joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1994, graduating from Naval College HMAS Creswell. He served on naval ships HMAS *Watson*, HMAS *Kanimbla*, HMAS *Hobart*, HMAS *Brisbane*, HMAS *Darwin*, HMAS *Brunei*, HMAS *Newcastle*, and HMAS *Canberra*. On his appointment to HMAS *Melbourne*, Commander Bourne gave his personal assurance to his crew that their welfare and professional development were his priorities. The current HMAS *Melbourne* is the third ship to bear the name. The first was launched in 1912 and the second in 1955. The current vessel was launched in 1992 and is an Adelaide-class guided missile frigate.

The HMAS *Melbourne* has been deployed to the Persian Gulf on several occasions. After some maintenance, the ship will once again take to the seas on a tour of duty. I congratulate Commander Bourne on his appointment. I wish him and his crew all the best, and safe sailing. While I speak about the commemoration of the Battle of Beersheba and the son of constituents who has achieved great things in the armed forces, I also take this opportunity to commend and pay respects to all service men and women who have fought for our wonderful country and who continue to do so. With Remembrance Day upon us, this Friday, I know that every member of this House honours those service men and women who have gone before us. We remember them, and we thank those currently fighting for our country.

CESSNOCK CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (13:09): I am as mad as hell about the way this Government is treating my community. I refer of course to the jail expansion occurring at Cessnock. The Cessnock Correctional Centre has been on its current site and in its current format for about 40 years, and there have been no real problems during that time. It is on a large block of land and is surrounded by forest. About five years ago it was announced that the centre would be expanded to accommodate another 250 people. That expansion has been completed and everything has progressed as it should with a minor amendment to the original plans. However, earlier this year the community of Cessnock learnt that the jail would be expanded to house 1,000 people. The jail was built to house about 700 people, although it now houses almost 800 because of the overpopulation of this State's prison system. It is proposed to more than double the prison's capacity. The visual amenity that protected the community from the sight of the jail will be lost as a result of the proposed expansion.

Of course, this could not happen without a conspiracy and manipulation of the planning instruments of this State. I will draw members' attention to a number of documents. It was announced that the planning instruments of New South Wales would be changed to provide that amendments could be made to the prison planning system effective earlier this year. That document was released during the Christmas and New Year period at the direction of the Minister for Planning, and it was exhibited from 13 January until 10 February 2016. On 18 March, the Minister released the new infrastructure State environmental planning policy [ISEPP] for jails and prisons. His media release states:

The changes will allow low impact additions to be completed under exempt and complying development arrangements.

Of course, before this change took place if a prison development project cost less than \$30 million it would be dealt with using a local planning instrument, and if it cost more than \$30 million it would be dealt with as a State significant development, and therefore would be assessed by the Department of Planning and Environment. The \$30 million limit was subsequently removed for the expansion of jails. On 20 March, the good Minister announced an incredible expansion project at Cessnock Correctional Centre. The original project involved an expansion to accommodate another 620 beds, but that later became 1,000 beds. However, neither the number of beds nor the expansion of the jail are the issue. The issue is the manner in which this has happened. If the project had been dealt with as a State significant development and had then been assessed by the department, all the relevant factors would have had to be considered. The media release about the proposed ISEPP states:

The existing provision (clause 26) permitting certain developments to be carried out without consent is proposed to be amended to allow additions to existing correctional complexes without a restriction on the number of prisoners to be accommodated or staff to be employed at the site...

The words "without restriction" are incredibly important, as is the phrase "existing correctional complexes". This change in the planning instrument means that an existing prison footprint will allow the Government to do whatever it wants as long as the proposal is subjected to a review of environmental factors [REF]. I received a letter from the Parliamentary Secretary yesterday identifying some of those factors. It states:

The NSW Department of Justice is required to consider a number of factors, including the social and economic impacts, amenity, traffic, geotechnical information, stormwater and waste management... The reality is that the REF document, which comprises about 600 pages, has failed to consider any of those issues in any significant way. At the moment, we are dealing only with the footprint inside the prison boundary, which I know is important and must happen. However, the Government must also consider the outer footprint. We know from previous studies for Lithgow, South Coast and Kempsey jails that there are impacts outside the fence, which include the social and policing infrastructure of towns or communities and the impact on other services such as schools. We know that from government reports. Cessnock jail will now have an additional 1,000 prisoners and the community will not receive any other contributions.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (13:14): I cannot allow such folly from the member for Cessnock to go on the record without responding to it. The member for Cessnock quite clearly needs to be in closer contact with his community. As recently as last Friday I met with his Labor mayor who did not raise any issues relating to the planning of this jail. I remind the member for Cessnock that when his party was in government it gave away Parklea jail to the private sector and did not consult with the community—the sort of consultation that the member for Cessnock is now seeking from this Government. I have bent over backwards to meet with the Labor mayor of Cessnock. As recently as yesterday I spoke to councillors in Cessnock. The Cessnock Chamber of Commerce believes this proposal is fantastic, given the employment stress in the Cessnock area at the moment. I encourage the member for Cessnock to talk to me instead of trying to score political points by negatively placing this issue in the public domain.

MICHAEL TYNAN MEMORIAL CHALLENGE

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) (13:15): Last month I walked the Royal National Park coast track from Otford to Bundeena as part of the inaugural Michael Tynan Memorial Challenge. The fundraiser was established by Madeline Tynan, daughter of the late Michael Tynan, OAM, to raise \$500,000 to support the outstanding work of the St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation. Michael Tynan passed away in February this year after a two-year battle with cancer. His contribution to life in the Sutherland shire over several decades and, in particular, his support for medical research and local health services was enormous and enduring, as I outlined in my speech in this House in February.

Tynan Motors has been a major supporter of the St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation since the foundation was established 10 years ago. The Michael Tynan Memorial Challenge supports not only a terrific cause but also is a fitting tribute to a giant in public life in the shire. A number of activities were involved in the recent memorial challenge, the first being the outrigger challenge. In support of the challenge Cronulla Outrigger Canoe Club established a group of paddlers from various clubs who participated in a recreational event from Wollongong to Bundeena. The second activity was the road challenge. In most board games there is a set of rules according to which each game is played and participants then play the game. There is also a set of rules for road rallying—the road rally was a bit like a board game—which went from the University of Wollongong to Sutherland shire.

The challenge also involved a 100-kilometre journey from Wollongong to Sutherland shire and through Sutherland shire and the St George area over two days. On day one, after walkers met at the University of Wollongong, they were transported to Lady Wakehurst Drive, Otford, where they began a 27-kilometre hike to Bundeena. This was followed by a ferry trip to Cronulla with the first part of the expedition wrapping up with a movie night at Southern Districts Rugby Club. Day two of the expedition commenced at Cronulla Sharks Football

Club with the route taking walkers through to Miranda, past the public and private hospitals to Hazlehurst in Gympie, where they met up with Paul Gallen with the one and only trophy, through to Kirrawee and Sutherland before weary travellers kicked up their feet at St George Leagues Club.

So far participants have raised about \$155,000 with roughly one month to go. I encourage people to make a donation online at www.michaeltynanchallenge.com in order to support the outstanding work of the St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation. The foundation is an independent charity that supports cutting edge medical research in a number of areas, including diseases of ageing; blood diseases and stem cell research; cancers; skin disease; mental health; gut and liver disease; immunity, allergy and infection; and intensive care and emergency medicine. The foundation has a particular focus on supporting new areas of research and emerging researchers competing for more substantive external grant funding. In other words, the foundation helps to launch promising researchers and provides them with tools to help progress their careers and to expand areas of innovative medical research. Of the 18 grant recipients since 2008 only two were considered mid-career while the others were only early doctoral scholars or at the very commencement of their medical careers.

A number of those grant recipients have subsequently been awarded external and highly competitive grants. The foundation also funded medical and biomedical postgraduate scholarships in 2016. This scheme supports talented graduates to pursue a higher degree and to conduct medical research at St George and Sutherland hospitals. Every year the foundation brings together up to 500 of its doctors, researchers, corporate supporters, sponsors and ambassadors for a charity ball. This year the annual foundation dinner will be held in conjunction with the Tynan Motor Group fiftieth anniversary black tie dinner on Friday 18 November at the Four Points by Sheraton at Darling Harbour. All proceeds raised on the night will go towards the foundation and its efforts to support life-saving and life-improving medical research at St George and Sutherland hospitals.

I congratulate the Tynan family on this tremendous contribution, which will ensure that groundbreaking research continues to be supported and promoted in our local hospitals. I also acknowledge the support provided by prominent institutions including the University of Wollongong, Cronulla leagues club, the *Illawarra Mercury*, the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*, St George Bank, Optus, Tradies, Westfield Miranda, and Masterton Homes. To the courageous walkers who took part in last month's gruelling 100 kilometre journey, well done. I wish you all the best in reaching your fundraising goals.

STRONGER FAMILIES ALLIANCE

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (13:20): Today I acknowledge the Stronger Families Alliance in the Blue Mountains. I specifically refer to the launch of the evaluation report, which has been a long time coming. A huge number of people who work across our community services sector, health sector and education sector in the Blue Mountains were in attendance, along with the Stronger Families Alliance executive. We were joined for the official launch by the Hon. Brad Hazzard. The Blue Mountains community sector has long been recognised in this State as innovative, collaborative and smart. It comes as no surprise that a best practice model in working with children and families should emanate from my electorate.

The Stronger Families Alliance [SFA] is a pioneering network of more than 30 organisations working together to create better outcomes for children, young people and families in the Blue Mountains. The alliance formed in 2006 and has become one of Australia's most established collective impact initiatives. A key initiator of the alliance was the Blue Mountains City Council working in collaboration with local services. The Mountains Community Resource Network is a key partner in the alliance's success. By working collaboratively with services at the coalface, the Stronger Families Alliance has engaged a wide range of services which all play an important role in the lives of local families. These services include local neighbourhood centres, the Mountains Outreach Community Service, family support services, Gateway, the Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre, local schools, community health services, and childcare centres and preschools, to name just a few.

Over the years, the SFA has sponsored a number of important conferences which have brought speakers of international renown to the Blue Mountains. The SFA's groundbreaking Child and Family Plan was launched in 2010 by the then New South Wales Minister for Community Services, the Hon. Linda Burney. This plan established the framework for much of the SFA's work. Since then, it has gone on to develop and to foster collaborations across the Blue Mountains, including a network of school-centred community hubs located in Blackheath, Mount Victoria, Katoomba, Katoomba North, Wentworth Falls, Lawson, Hazelbrook, Winmalee, Blaxland, and Warrimoo. These hubs have brought important child and family services into the school environment to work with parents, their children and staff to promote access within a prevention and early intervention framework.

Other initiatives include the child-friendly communities strategy Moving Children Beyond Vulnerability, which targets families with complex needs. More recently, the SFA has recognised the challenges for families with teenagers and also the very real difficulties for our young people in navigating this period of immense change.

Yesterday, I had the pleasure of attending the launch of the Stronger Families Alliance evaluation report. The report was prepared by Associate Professor Frances Press, Dr Sandie Wong and Associate Professor June Wangmann. The Charles Sturt University team evaluated the work of the alliance. It examined the impact of the alliance on the work of its members and their collaborations and the implementation of the objectives of the child and family plan of the alliance.

At the launch I joined Blue Mountains mayor Mark Greenhill, and the community and members of the Stronger Families Alliance to welcome Minister Hazzard and to see firsthand the work of this collaborative network. More importantly, it was an opportunity to celebrate the successes of the Blue Mountains Child and Family Services and the wider community sector. It is important to note that in the current environment much of this work may be placed at risk by mooted reforms and cutbacks. Services funded through community builders such as the Mountains Community Resource Network, the neighbourhood centres and the Women's Health and Resource Centre face uncertain futures.

I call on the Minister to recognise the value of those services in the prevention and early intervention response. I echo the words of the Charles Sturt University researchers and note "strong collaborations are often attempted but they hard to achieve. The model for change adopted by the Alliance has been highly successful." I congratulate all involved in the Stronger Families Alliance on their achievements to date and their role in improving the lives of children and families in the Blue Mountains.

SUTHERLAND HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (13:24): I recently had the pleasure of joining the Minister for Health, Ms Jillian Skinner; the Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and member for Cronulla, Mr Mark Speakman; the member for Holsworthy, Melanie Gibbon—and Audrey Gibbons—and members of the Southern Region Health Board for a topping out ceremony at Sutherland Hospital. A topping out ceremony is inspired by a Scandinavian tradition in which a tree is placed on top of a building to signify it reaching its highest point. The ceremony was held at Sutherland Hospital on 31 October. The tree used was a native bloodwood, which represented the safe completion of the highest point of the building. It will be planted in the hospital grounds once the building is finished.

The \$62.9 million redevelopment of Sutherland Hospital includes 60 new acute inpatient beds, a new emergency department, additional storage space for theatres, and an expansion of the imaging department. The redevelopment is progressing well. Refurbishment works will commence once construction is completed. The project follows the building of a \$9.1 million multi-deck car park, which was completed in 2014 to provide an additional 300 car spaces, and an additional 140-space, ground-level car park to replace car spaces removed due to the hospital expansion. More than five years ago, members of Parliament from southern Sydney electorates met with leading clinicians from Sutherland Hospital who were requesting our assistance in recognising the important role that Sutherland Hospital plays in providing health care for the southern region. After many years of lobbying the need was recognised and important planning commenced to redevelop Sutherland and St George hospitals in tandem. This major investment in health infrastructure will future proof the southern Sydney suburbs for decades to come.

In January this year, the New South Wales Government announced the fast-tracking of the St George Hospital project, resulting in \$30 million in savings on the original project budget. There was no change to the project scope as a result of the announcement. St George Hospital also held a topping out ceremony on 16 September this year to signify this major achievement. Years of neglect had taken its toll on the tired facilities at Sutherland Hospital. The new emergency department will ease the pressure on other parts of the hospital. The Baird Government will spend more than \$5 billion to build and upgrade more than 60 hospital and health services around the State. Over two terms and eight years the Baird Government will invest almost \$10 billion in hospital infrastructure—more than Labor spent in its entire 16 years in government.

EPPING ELECTORATE RURAL FIRE SERVICE BRIGADES

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (13:28): Over the weekend New South Wales experienced its first significant outbreak of destructive bushfires. The bushfires located at Port Stephens and Cessnock were significant bushfires, posing a risk to life and property. Thankfully, there are no reports of significant injury. Today, the advice from the NSW Rural Fire Service was that at 7.30 a.m. there were 42 bush and grass fires in New South Wales, with 32 uncontained. All fires are at "advice" level. It will be another warm day with temperatures in the mid-30s in many areas and there is a very high fire danger in the far North Coast, North Coast, New England, Greater Hunter and Greater Sydney areas.

I take this opportunity to praise the services of volunteers of the NSW Rural Fire Service. Every year this body of people volunteer to protect the citizens of New South Wales against the significant risks posed by

bushfires. Australia is, because of its climate, prone to bushfire risk. As a result, we rely on the efforts of a volunteer bushfire brigade to protect us from the extreme outcomes of that risk. It was sad to report yesterday that police had detained three people who were associated with potentially deliberately lighting those fires. Their actions, quite frankly, are inconceivable in their stupidity. To deliberately light a fire effectively puts at risk the lives of the volunteer bushfire brigade personnel, properties that adjoin bushfire-prone areas and the lives of people who live in bushfire-prone areas. The reckless disregard by those people who deliberately light bushfires is impossible to comprehend.

I pay tribute to the volunteers of the Cherrybrook Rural Fire Brigade in my electorate. Over the weekend, they combined with the rural fire brigade services from Hornsby-Ku-ring-gai to help fight the bushfires in Cessnock. On 29 October I had the pleasure of attending a briefing by the Cherrybrook Rural Fire Brigade at North Epping. The professionalism with which they briefed the local community on the steps that should be taken to protect their property and their lives in times of bushfire was enormously beneficial to the community. My electorate is fortunate to comprise bushland suburbs. North Epping, in particular, adjoins Lane Cove National Park and, as such, it is potentially exposed to significant bushfire risk. The members of the Cherrybrook Rural Fire Brigade took care in organising the meeting with the residents of North Epping to advise them of the steps that they should take when preparing their properties and making a plan for circumstances that may arise in the event of bushfires.

The Cherrybrook Rural Fire Brigade was founded in 1952 and has undergone significant change since that time. Initially, the brigade commenced with a trailer-tanker, which was pulled by a privately owned tractor. The capacity of the tanker was 80 gallons. In 2008, the brigade received a new Isuzu tanker to replace the previous tankers. I am proud to say that in conjunction with the Community Building Partnership grants, a contribution of close to \$100,000 was made to the Cherrybrook Rural Fire Brigade team for the purchase of a new fire truck. The new truck will be fitted out with state-of-the-art firefighting equipment and will be commissioned in early 2017. This is the least we can do to assist the efforts of the volunteers who risk their lives for our benefit.

I pay particular tribute to the leadership team of the Cherrybrook Rural Fire Brigade. First, Captain Gavin Pringle. Gavin organised the presentation at North Epping and the professionalism of that presentation was extraordinary. I acknowledge the contributions made by Senior Deputy Andrew Berriman, Deputy Rex Wright, Deputy Gerard Martin, Deputy Stacey Fishwick, Deputy David Close, Deputy Graham Mole, Deputy Wayne Everett, and Deputy Craig Salthouse. Those volunteer firefighters provide strategic guidance in field positions for the Cherrybrook firefighting service. They are ably assisted by many other volunteers who occupy non-executive positions. We should always encourage young people to join the volunteer fire service. We cannot say enough for the work that they do in our community. In conclusion, I repeat the admonition of the NSW Rural Fire Service to us all—prepare, act, survive.

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: Welcome to all our guests in the gallery this afternoon. First, I acknowledge that the member for Kogarah, Mr Chris Minns, and his wife, Anna, have announced the birth of their third son. His name is George Thomas Minns, born on Wednesday 26 October 2016 at a weight of 3.16 kilograms or 6.96 pounds. Well done to the member for Kogarah, his wife and the two little brothers.

I also welcome Bruce and Elaine Grimley to the Chamber today, guests of the member for Miranda. I welcome all of our students in the gallery today. They are from the Riverstone Senior Youth Leadership Encounter, from Wyndham College, Quakers Hill High School, Riverstone High School, Glenwood High School, St Mark's Catholic College, Norwest Christian College, Australian Christian College, and The Ponds High School. They are guests of the member for Riverstone. I enjoyed meeting them all earlier in the day.

Commemorations

CENTENARY OF FIRST WORLD WAR

The SPEAKER (14:20): The failure of the first conscription referendum on 28 October 1916 served to remind Australian military planners of the fact that there were no longer inexhaustible supplies of recruits to be thrown into the maw of the trenches. While the overall battle of the Somme dragged on to its mournful conclusion, smaller battles continued to rage. One such was the Battle of Flers, in which a largely Australian-led attack on German positions started with small barrages on 1 November and a full-scale attack on 5 November. The 1st Brigade advanced against trenches north of Gueudecourt, and the 7th Brigade against a complex of trenches known as "the maze". Both attacks managed to capture some of their objectives, but the brigades were eventually

forced to withdraw. Another attack was launched against the maze on the morning of 17 November. It also succeeded in capturing a portion of the German trenches, but a surprise attack two days later returned this to the enemy.

The ground across which they advanced had been deluged with rain, and the attacks were made in atrocious conditions. Charles Bean, the official war historian, called the attack at Flers "the most difficult in which the AIF was ever engaged", and it achieved nothing. The attacking waves of troops were sucked down by the cloying mud and thus, unable to keep up with their creeping artillery barrage, became easy targets for German machine-gunners and riflemen. In these days of drone warfare, it is easy to lose sight of the nature of direct hand-to-hand combat or of the horror of fighting both man and nature at the same time. It reminds us of the exceptional qualities of those who did so 100 years ago. For the benefit of people who are present in the gallery, each week, as a part of our commemorations of the Centenary of Anzac, I deliver a centenary statement, which coincides with events that occurred roughly 100 years ago. Lest we forget.

Bills

HOUSING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2016

JUSTICE PORTFOLIO LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL 2016

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (NO 2) 2016

**CHILD PROTECTION (WORKING WITH CHILDREN) AND OTHER CHILD PROTECTION
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2016**

**WASTE AVOIDANCE AND RESOURCE RECOVERY AMENDMENT (CONTAINER DEPOSIT
SCHEME) BILL 2016**

Assent

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

Notices

PRESENTATION

[During the giving of notices of motions]

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

Question Time

CANCER TREATMENT REVIEW

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:26): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Given her promise on 2 August that all public cancer patients who have received treatment over the past five years will be reviewed and that there are approximately 200,000 patients, I ask: When did she decide that she would instead review only 1,800 cases in a so-called random sample?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (14:26): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I have taken advice from the experts in the field. We are following the practice of the scientific audit, which always has been followed in NSW Health. NSW Health is doing random sampling and then will do a deep dive. If errors are found and patients have been concerned about their treatment, it will go even further. NSW Health also has announced that any patient who is concerned about their treatment can call a hotline and they will have their cancer care reviewed by experts in the field. I believe that in this way the New South Wales Government will be able to reassure people about the quality of care they have received.

I take this opportunity to reassure the people of New South Wales that they will not obtain better care anywhere else in the world than they receive in New South Wales, particularly in the State' public hospitals. I am very pleased to reassure patients who have had cancer treatment that, if they have any concerns at all, they should contact the helpline or their local health district and their care will be reviewed.

ILLAWARRA INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (14:28): My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government investing in projects across this great State that make a real difference in people's lives? How does that compare with the plans of the Labor Opposition?

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:28): I thank the member for Kiama for his incredible work in the Illawarra region. He is undoubtedly the best member of Parliament in the Illawarra region; he is doing a fantastic job. Regional New South Wales is undoubtedly part of the big success story of our State. We are very proud to support regional New South Wales, including with the jobs that we are creating—indeed, the jobs we are creating in regional New South Wales are the envy of the nation. For 5½ years we have been representing those in regional New South Wales by building infrastructure and creating jobs. This is a record of which we are very proud, and I am sure that those opposite do not like it.

The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics statistics, which I am sure the member for Keira has looked at, show that in regional New South Wales in the past 12 months there has been an increase of 14,600 jobs. These jobs have accounted for 73 per cent of the total increase of jobs in the nation. We continue to invest in great places such as the Illawarra—indeed, our infrastructure program is delivering real benefits and the employment growth that comes with that program is also delivering real benefits. There has been 3 per cent growth in the Illawarra in the past 12 months. This Government continues to deliver for the people of the Illawarra great projects such as the Albion Park Rail bypass that is to come.

Ms Anna Watson: They do not think that.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Shellharbour Hospital project is to come and the Foxground to Berry bypass.

Ms Anna Watson: Not happy, Mike.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: This Government is actually delivering. Those opposite spoke about projects and put in money, but they did nothing. This Government is delivering. However, I note that those opposite have come up with what could almost be called a policy—it is on the edge of being a policy. Labor's Illawarra Jobs Action Plan is very special, a little ripper. Members opposite went down to the Illawarra and had a press conference. They started to live stream it on Facebook. The Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Treasurer were on Facebook, but the only problem was that they were upside down. That was the best part of the live stream, I have to say. Once that was fixed up, it got special because the member for Keira, the shadow Treasurer, held up a brochure, Labor's Illawarra Jobs Action Plan. I knew we were in for a bit of a ripper. We looked at some of the plans in the brochure. The shadow Treasurer said, "This is the single most comprehensive plan for jobs growth Wollongong has ever seen." Twelve months ago there was Labor's 10-point action plan for supporting Illawarra jobs, but that was delivered by the member for Maroubra, so forget about that.

The new action plan has a steel plan. Those opposite are going to build infrastructure across the State, and that is how they are going to support the steel industry. But they have come into this Parliament and opposed \$20 billion of infrastructure. Thank goodness for the Government's Treasurer and Minister for Transport, because 90 per cent of the Metro infrastructure project is constructed using domestic steel. This Government is the greatest friend the steel industry has ever had. I could not put down Labor's plan, like some of those books we just cannot put down. Those opposite in their plan then started talking about supporting the construction of the Maldon-Dumbarton rail link. This is very special because they will put \$50 million towards foundation capital. Wow! How cool is that? What is foundation capital? You put in capital first and then you borrow against it. I reckon those opposite have been watching *Utopia*.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: People might believe this claim is true, but we do not. We have seen it all before. The brochure contains so many more things. Those opposite worked out what roads to build, including a new Masters and Springhill Road interchange. That sounds reasonable, although Roads and Maritime Services has had no complaints about the interchange. How did the Opposition come up with this policy? The candidate doorknocked and was told the interchange should be fixed up, so that became Labor policy. But Labor did not include the Albion Park Rail bypass—the action plan has no Albion Park Rail bypass. The bypass was in the member for Maroubra's plan.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thought Labor's plan could not get any better but it did; we now have Labor's jobs action plan for the people of the Illawarra. [*Extension of time*]

This was the conclusion of my plan for how to fix jobs growth in the Illawarra.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. What is the Premier's candidate's jobs action plan?

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. This is not an opportunity for the member for Maroubra to ask a question.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The people of the Illawarra should look out, because Labor's action plan is special. Those opposite are going to produce an ongoing state of the region address—that will be special—and then have an Illawarra cabinet meeting. The shadow Treasurer said this is not hokey pokey. I have never seen anything as spectacular as Labor's action plan.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Members on this side of the House deliver for the people of the Illawarra. We have delivered record jobs growth, record investment in roads, new hospitals.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: In terms of the campaign of those opposite, when members get on the phone to constituents in the Illawarra they say, "By the way, do you know the number one achievement of our candidate, Paul Scully? He stood up to Noreen Hay." They will throw their own candidate under the bus. Noreen Hay is Labor's former member for Wollongong. The man of principle has been busy throwing members under the bus and doing whatever it takes with hokey-pokey plans. We are delivering for the people of the Illawarra.

CANCER TREATMENT REVIEW

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:36): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. I refer to the Minister's earlier answer. If the best expert advice the Minister received was to review the treatment of 1,800 cancer patients in a random sample, whose advice did she receive before she made her earlier promise to review the treatments of all 200,000 patients?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (14:37): I believe I have answered that question. I am very confident that all cancer patients who attend our public hospitals get expert care. Anyone who has concerns about their treatment in the past, whether it is in the past 20 years, the past five years or since the protocol came in before 2006—because many of the patients we are talking about were treated when those opposite were in government—can seek to have their care reviewed by experts. I stand by the answer I gave previously.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: The question was about advice.

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

Mr Jihad Dib: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being relevant to the question.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Asseyez-vous. Por favor siéntate.

Mr Jihad Dib: Do not talk to me like that.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lakemba will resume his seat. I think that is threatening behaviour.

REGIONAL RAIL SERVICES

Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (14:38): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. How is the Government delivering the next generation of regional rail travel and what will be the benefits to the bush?

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

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) (14:39): I thank the member for Oxley for her question. She is a member who knows how vital rail passenger services in the bush are to regional communities. Regional communities are not blessed with the scale of public transport options available in cities; we rely very much on our road network to be up to standard because we have to drive long distances. Regional aviation is going ahead in leaps and bounds with

investment being made by the Minister for Regional Development and the wonderful work being done by the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure.

In regional communities, passenger rail is an absolutely vital means of transport. People need to access Sydney for goods and services through the rail network, whether on the northern line, where the member for Oxley is from, the southern line through the wonderful area of Goulburn and out through Cootamundra to Melbourne, or the western line through the beautiful Central West, finishing at Dubbo. The fleet we have used and have been accessing is 35 years old. Modern expectations of rail customers are that those journeys should be on a more comfortable fleet. They want the passenger experience to be the best it can be. When a train fleet is 35 years old, as the XPT fleet is, it is time for it to be given a boost. We need to provide services that will factor in the timeliness and the timetables of the services. People undertaking a long journey do not want to be getting up at the crack of dawn every day to access that rail service; they want the timetables to work better. That can be achieved with investment in the regional fleet.

In the 2015 election we made the commitment to invest in the XPT fleet towards the end of this term. However, thanks to the great work of this Government and the Treasurer's management of our finances, we are able to bring forward that investment. I was very proud to be with the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure in Orange recently to announce a \$50 million injection to bring forward that fleet replacement program, starting with the XPT fleet. The Minister is working tirelessly with regional members to get the best options available for other regional fleets, the Xplorer and Endeavour. Many discussions have been held with industry and many are planned throughout the first half of 2017 to ensure the procurement of the right trains to meet all the needs of regional New South Wales and to cater for the one million passenger trips undertaken on the XPT. With this investment, we expect patronage to rise. The fleet will have modern technology such as wi-fi.

The experience will be a lot better, cleaner, faster and more reliable, and it will be a welcome addition to what is available to regional communities for their travel. A big component of this investment will address the issue of breakdowns and the location of maintenance crews so that breakdowns and disruptions to services are minimised as much as possible. The Government's intention with the Xplorers and Endeavours is very clear. The Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Roads and Rail is working very closely with the Minister to work out the best way to invest in and to enhance that fleet. Having made this announcement, it was important to get feedback on what the community thinks about it. The *Central West Daily* said that this is good news for Orange—and it is. There is no doubt about it; that city is one of the key locations. The newspaper said:

For all those people that have suffered train delays, broken down engines, dirty seats, filthy toilets, taps that don't work and the general feel of being a second-class citizen in a third-class carriage, this one is for you.

I do not think the *Central West Daily* could have summed it up any better. Treating people like second-class citizens and leaving them with filthy toilets is exactly the way the Labor Government treated regional New South Wales for 16 years. Those days are long gone. The XPT is a demonstration of the investment that this Government is prepared to make and will continue to make for the good people of regional New South Wales.

HOSPITAL CANCER TREATMENT

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:44): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Does the Minister stand by the New South Wales Government's investigations into the overdosing at St Vincent's and the Central West, given that three junior doctors, one senior doctor and a nurse refused to participate in those investigations because they feared professional repercussions?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (14:44): All of this was canvassed when Professor David Currow put out his report many months ago. In fact, he said, the fact that some doctors did not appear, give evidence to him or talk to him had no material difference to his findings.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra has had the opportunity to ask his question.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: In fact, the reports that he brought down—both the interim report and the final report into St Vincent's, and then the report into the treatment in western New South Wales—have been accepted by all concerned as informative and accurate. There has been no question of that. Further to that, the parliamentary committee is ongoing. It is usual practice for Ministers to not comment about parliamentary inquiries, but if anyone has any concerns, they should take it up with the committee.

RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (14:45): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. How is the Government delivering better infrastructure and services for commuters in regional New South Wales?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:45): That is a great question from a great member who knows only too well what 16 years of Labor government was like for regional New South Wales—that long, cold, dark winter where we did not receive a single cent towards services and infrastructure. Is it not interesting that there are a couple of by-elections coming up and Luke Foley has all of sudden discovered Orange?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. Those who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber. I call the member for Londonderry to order for the second time.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The only thing he likes that is orange is his bucket. Luke Foley was preferencing The Greens in Wollongong this weekend and preferencing the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers in Orange as well. It must be somewhat confusing for those opposite but regional people can sniff out when they are being hoodwinked.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Regional New South Wales remembers better than anybody what happened under those opposite. Under us, there is an \$8.8 billion spend across the regions—on road and rail infrastructure, particularly in terms of highway investments; health infrastructure under the Minister for Health, who has largely rebuilt every regional hospital in the State; the major work we are doing in terms of rail; and, as outlined by the Deputy Premier, \$50 million to progress more quickly the procurement around the XPT fleet, which of course will happen with vital service reform. I also indicate to the member for Albury that his station upgrade is due to commence very soon.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: What about mine?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maitland will not be juvenile. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure has the call.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: That comes at the time we are about to start upgrades in Coffs Harbour, Tamworth and Wagga Wagga. We have already completed upgrades at Albion Park, Ballina and Goulburn. We will continue to work on better access to assist regional commuters. As Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, I am also investing in better CCTV across our rail stations, with 21 stations such as Bathurst, Orange, Dubbo and Wellington receiving new CCTV and customer help points as part of a \$2 million program. As we invest in road and rail, we are also mindful of investing in regional aviation. There is \$96 million to invest in vital airport upgrades, and that is something that regional communities and in particular councils are very pleased about. In this process we are also starting to deregulate some of the routes.

As a result of that, flights have resumed in and out of places such as Cobar, Cooma, Mudgee and Narrabri. This is the type of public policy work that is required to deliver better transport outcomes for the bush. Of course, the Government will continue to pressure Canberra about increasing landing slots into Sydney Airport so that we have even better connected services for people from the regions. The Government wants the Commonwealth Act amended to provide an additional five exclusive slots, which will benefit regional airlines and capitalise on this Government's infrastructure investment in regional airports. As I indicated, this comes at a time when routes are being deregulated across New South Wales.

It is fair to say that regional New South Wales is experiencing an extraordinary period of investment in roads. I know what happened to highways when members opposite were in government. It is pleasing that since 2011 the New South Wales Government has invested \$1.4 billion into upgrading and maintaining the Princes Highway. That is an increase of 110 per cent on roads investment during the Labor Government's last six years in office. Major duplication work has also been undertaken on the Pacific Highway, and more than 48 kilometres of road have been opened. This major investment has been used to address the crash rate on the highway, which has been too high for too long. The Government has also invested \$400 million in the Newell Highway since 2011, and another \$500 million will be invested as part of Rebuilding NSW. This is the type of investment that regional New South Wales has been crying out for for generations. We now have a government that is able to invest in the regions. [*Extension of time*]

Members obviously do not want to hear about regional New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! Some members are not interested in regional New South Wales.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: What we are seeing as a result of this Government's work is major investment in regional New South Wales. It is always good to receive compliments. Only last week I was complimented about investment. Admittedly, the compliment came from someone in the city. The tweet read:

Thank you Andrew Constance for our new station, which is nearing completion. Look forward to the opening in the new year.

Jodie McKay, Strathfield.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: The Minister is misquoting me. Can I have an invitation to the opening?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. The Minister has finished his answer. There is no point of order.

Ms Jodi McKay: Can the Minister also look towards Strathfield station?

The SPEAKER: Order! I will not tolerate that behaviour. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the first time.

HOSPITAL CANCER TREATMENT

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (14:52): I direct my question to the Minister for Health. Given that the local health district last week received crucial Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme data on chemotherapy doses in the Central West, will the Minister now release that information to patients and their families?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (14:52): Any data that has been provided by the Commonwealth Government about patients who have undergone chemotherapy was provided through the Medical Benefits Scheme, which involves privately referred patients. It is therefore not our data. We said that when we released the report into the chemotherapy dosing we would provide that information to the districts, which through their clinical services arrangement and their expert doctors and cancer specialists will be able to examine that information and provide ongoing counselling and support for patients and their families.

REGIONAL HOSPITALS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (14:53): I address my question to the Minister for Health. How is the Government investing in bigger and better hospitals in regional New South Wales?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (14:53): I am pleased to have a health question time, and particularly to have a question from the member for Central Coast, or should I say the wonderful member for Terrigal. I regard him as the member for Central Coast because I do so much with him on the Central Coast. Everyone knows that this Government's investment in hospitals has been massive. When I became the Minister for Health in 2011, I inherited a hospital system in which more than 50 per cent of hospitals were more than 50 years old. Country communities in particular had been promised time and again that their hospitals would be the subject of major upgrades, but nothing had happened. They were empty promises. This Government has opened hospitals at Tamworth, Dubbo, Parkes, Forbes, Wagga Wagga, Bega, and Lismore, and upgrades are also now underway.

Recently the Government announced the Health Partnership Program, which will provide additional hospitals in partnership with the non-government sector. The hospitals concerned are at Wyong, Maitland, Bowral, and Shellharbour. I am pleased to announce that those projects are proceeding well, and there has been very strong interest from the non-government sector. By the "non-government sector" I mean any hospital operator that has a track record in Australia. They might be private hospital operators such as Healthscope, which is involved in the Northern Beaches partnership, or not-for-profit operators such as St Vincent's Hospital, St John of God Health Care at Hawkesbury, Mater Hospital or the San. Negotiations will continue with those organisations. I assure the community that we will gain from these projects benefits similar to those that will be delivered by the Northern Beaches Hospital. We will get bigger hospitals built more quickly, a wider range of services, more staff and, above all, free care for public patients.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Port Stephens that she is on three calls to order. This is her final warning.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: That prompts me to deal with some of the mistruths that have been spouted about the project. It is hysterical.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cessnock will cease interjecting. Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: I will quote a contribution made in this place by the member for Maitland. On 18 October she told this House that she was advised by a "reliable source" that the new Maitland Hospital would provide only 240 beds, which was barely 40 beds more than the current hospital provides. I want to know who was the reliable source. We have not finished the discussions, so there can be no reliable source. The member went on to say that "if the public beds are no more than 30 per cent of the hospital beds in the new facility, we could end up with only 67 public beds in Maitland, a net loss for our community of 120 hospital public beds".

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

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: That is absolute rubbish. The Northern Beaches will have 488 public beds in the new hospital, and another 55 beds in the maintained facility at Mona Vale. That is more than 550 beds.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members, particularly those on the front bench, will come to order.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: There will be many more beds across all of these hospitals. I assure everyone that those facilities will be providing emergency department care and will have add-ons that would not have been envisaged if the Government had built them. If the bidders are interested, they could co-locate a general practitioner practice, an aged care facility, or even a medi-hotel. Patients and staff we will be better off and there will be more staff. There will be 1,000 more staff at the Northern Beaches Hospital. Can members believe that? The nurses are thrilled because not only are they all getting jobs but Healthscope has also offered them more pay, and they will carry over their conditions. The patients will get a better deal, the community will get a hospital that is larger in scope and scale, and patients will be able to get treatment closer to home so they will not have to travel.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Swansea thinks she is advancing her cause by interjecting, I assure her that she is not.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: The member for Maitland said, "It should be your Medicare card not your credit card that determines your health care." Is that what members opposite believe? If that is the case, none of them should be a Minister for Health. It is a person's clinical condition that determines health care.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mount Druitt will refrain from such behaviour.

[Extension of time]

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: It should be a person's clinical condition that determines whether they get treatment before anyone else.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maitland will come to order. She can debate this matter with the Minister at another time.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: Anyone knows that if they turn up in the emergency department in any of our hospitals whether they get care first or second will be determined on the basis of whose need is more urgent. That is how it will apply in any of these hospitals. That is how it applies at St Vincent's; that is how it applies at the Mater in Newcastle. I am surprised the member for Maitland does not know that. That is exactly how it would apply. I will talk about some of the other things that some of our members have said—and I have referred to these in this place before. The member for Swansea said that residents going to hospital will not to be able to afford care—that is absolute rot. All public patients admitted to one of these hospitals will have their care paid for by the public purse. It will be free care.

Mr David Harris: How much?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: Free care. Don't you know how much it is? Free care for public patients admitted to a public hospital—free.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maitland will cease yelling and screaming. I remind her that she is on three calls to order.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: It is Standing Order 73. The Minister is impugning our motive. She will not come clean on what the issues are and she will not tell us the reality.

The SPEAKER: Order! I see the member for Maitland do that every day in this Chamber. The member will resume her seat. Whilst ever the member respects the Chamber, she will be respected. There is no point of order.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: I do not understand how I could be accused of impugning the motive of those opposite when I am merely reading what the member for Swansea said in this place. The reality is that all public patient care will be paid for by the public purse regardless of what it is.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Maitland under Standing Order 249.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Maitland left the Chamber at 15:00, accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: If they need a heart stent, they will get it free—any patient that turns up. There will be free public patient care. I point out that the hospitals will revert to public ownership at the end of the contract.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn members that if they do not cease shouting and interjecting they will be removed from the Chamber for the remainder of the day, as the member for Maitland has been—and she is not the worst offender by any means. The level and nature of interjections lead me to suspect there has been some sort of function today at which people have perhaps had too much to drink.

ASYLUM SEEKER LIFETIME BAN

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (15:01): My question is directed to the Premier.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will be heard in silence.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: Given his past statements of support for refugees, does or does he not support the Federal Government's announcement of a lifetime ban on refugees who arrive by boat from ever entering Australia?

The SPEAKER: Order! That is a legitimate question. There is no need for any interjections from Government members. The Premier may answer the question.

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:01): If ever we need a case study or an example of why the Opposition is in so much trouble, it is right there.

Ms Jodi McKay: This is a question on refugees.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: How on earth does that relate to the State Government?

Mr Luke Foley: Your Facebook post.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will allow the Premier to answer the question.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: There is a difference.

Ms Prue Car: You are the one who entered the debate.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Londonderry to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of two hours.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Londonderry left the Chamber at 15.03 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I have made my position clear on refugees. Everyone has seen my position and understands it. I have said that on television and I have said that in private. At the same time, I have congratulated the Federal Government in relation to its increased intake, particularly in relation to the Syrian refugees. I was very proud to advocate for that, very proud to see that the Government responded, and very proud that New South Wales has taken more than its fair share. That is something I am proud of because I continue to stand up for what I believe in, as does this Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Summer Hill will cease interjecting.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Whereas on the Opposition side there is a Leader of the Opposition, a man of principle—who goes to one corner without talking to his shadow Cabinet and says, "By the way, we are going to do a preference deal with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. That is what we are going to do. We are going to do a preference deal with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party."

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: It is relevance. The question is not about the shooters. The question is quite clear: Does he or does he not support Malcolm Turnbull's lifetime ban on refugees who arrive by boat from ever entering Australia?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has been relevant to the question and he remains relevant. He is talking about his stance on refugees.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The same Leader of the Opposition goes to the other corner of the room and says, "By the way, we support The Greens. We want to do everything possible to get a Greens preference deal." Why are The Greens doing a preference deal with a party that is doing a preference deal with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party? Only The Greens members can answer that. But only the Leader of the Opposition can answer this: Where are your principles, mate?

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Fairfield that I just ruled on the point of relevance. I said the Premier remained relevant to the question. Does the member have another point of order, because the Premier has not changed his tack?

Mr Guy Zangari: My point of order is Standing Order 129—

The SPEAKER: Order! That is regarding relevance. The Premier remains relevant to the question.

Mr Guy Zangari: —which is relevance. The Premier is talking about The Greens. That has nothing to do with refugees. The question is about refugees, Premier, not The Greens.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: We will continue to be true. And I cannot believe we have a question of principle from the Leader of the Opposition who at the same time as trying to win Wollongong is canvassing everyone in Wollongong and saying, "By the way, our candidate stood up for Noreen Hay." That is the principle we get from this Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. Once again, the Premier is not referring to the question regarding refugees.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Fairfield listened and did not interject, he would realise that the Premier is answering the question on refugees.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Were those opposite happy with a preference deal with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party on one side and The Greens on the other? Did they stand up, member for Strathfield, to the preference deal with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party?

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. I have not ruled on the point of order from the member for Fairfield. I uphold it and ask the Premier to return to the question of refugees.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I will finish on this: On this side of the House and in this Government we continue to stand up for and deliver on what we believe in. Before the last election we went to the people of New South Wales and said: "We know the political scare campaign the Opposition is going to bring. We know about it, but we are prepared to stand up for what is right and true because the people of New South Wales deserve \$20 billion in infrastructure that those opposite denied them." We are prepared to fight for that. We have fought for that and we will continue to stand up for what is right for the people of New South Wales.

REGIONAL SCHOOLS TECHNOLOGY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:07): My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. How is the Government providing students in regional New South Wales with access to high-speed technology in all learning spaces and related matters?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI (Murray—Minister for Education) (15:07): I thank the member for his question. This is another example of the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals Government again delivering for schools across regional New South Wales. In this example, \$46 million is going toward upgrading the wi-fi systems of every public school in country New South Wales. Quite a few already have it. Parents and citizens associations have installed them. In some cases schools have used their own resources to install wi-fi. In some high schools they still have the wi-fi systems put in by the Federal Labor Government, but it is old technology now. The technology we will put in is at least four times faster than that. It will be across every learning space. There will be two units for every classroom so we do not have slowing down of the internet speed when there are lots of devices in use.

Some schools are not connected to high-speed internet. We will connect more and more of those schools. This is about making sure that schools in country New South Wales have access to the same connectivity as metropolitan schools. In many cases, the wi-fi connectivity will be better than it is in metropolitan schools. We know that distance can be a disadvantage in country New South Wales. We are overcoming that with this significant investment in technology. This investment could happen only under this Government because it is funded by the poles and wires transaction, which the Opposition opposed. Every time members visit a school in their electorates in country New South Wales, or if their metropolitan friends visit country schools, they should be reminded that this would never happen under a Labor Government because it would not have the courage to take a policy and transaction like this to an election. That is why we can afford to make this \$46 million investment, which will create 13,000 learning spaces across 900 schools.

That investment is in addition to others this Government has made in schools in regional New South Wales, including investment under the Gonski model. Only a couple of weeks ago we announced \$219 million in additional funding for schools across New South Wales. Some of the biggest winners were schools in country areas. For instance, in the electorate of Cessnock the Abermain Public School is \$416,000 better off as a result of the difficult decision we made in government, which the Opposition opposed every step of the way.

Mr Jihad Dib: Our Federal counterparts are with us.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: How does the member for Lakemba think we made our contribution? Branxton Public School is \$352,000 better off.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cessnock will cease interjecting.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: That is how good government is delivered in New South Wales. We can learn from the Coalition and what it has done for the past six years. We reduced central business district rentals that the Department of Education was paying for because the Opposition set up the bureaucracy across the central business district. We reduced the number of public servants who were not working in schools. We reduced the amount of consultancy expenses that we were paying in schools. We reduced the amount of money we were spending on travel. We made those difficult decisions. We went through the budget forensically, line by line.

As I said a couple of weeks ago, we can talk about millions and millions of dollars, but this is the hard work of government and managing a budget of \$80 billion. We went through the budget line by line. We did not touch inside the school gates. I said that on 11 September 2011, when we made the announcement about the difficult decisions we had made. All Government Ministers have to make decisions. We inherited massive budget deficits year by year. We could not have done what we have done in government if we had kept doing what those opposite did in government. That is why the people of New South Wales overwhelmingly voted them out. [*Extension of time*]

I remind Opposition and Government members that we inherited expenses that were growing faster than revenue. I do not care whether it is the State Government, the Federal Government, or households; no-one can continue when expenses are growing faster than revenue. We had to make the difficult decisions. There were protests out the front of this Parliament; there were protests out the back. The Opposition opposed everything we did. Five years later, we are reaping the benefits. We said we would take measures in the back office, in bureaucracy. We went to the election saying we were going to do that, which is what people expect from a good conservative government. We have taken the costs out of the back office and we have put them into frontline services.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: More nurses.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: There are thousands more nurses, thousands more teachers, more police and more emergency service workers. This is exactly what good conservative governments do. The Opposition did not have the courage to do it. Those opposite were the captives of public sector unions. They are great supporters of nurses—unions. They are great supporters of public education—unions. The budget is now in a good position. We have budget surpluses; we have money in the bank and no net debt. The Opposition wants to take credit for all spending. It claims to have built more schools. The Opposition could not build the schools that we are building.

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

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: This House needs reminding now and again that we have done a great job. In 2½ years we will be reminding every person in New South Wales about the Opposition's record.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I extend a warm welcome to Commissioner Greg Mullins of Fire and Rescue NSW, who is in the gallery. He is the guest of the Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veteran Affairs, and member for Baulkham Hills.

Ministerial Statement

FIRE AND RESCUE NSW COMMISSIONER GREG MULLINS RETIREMENT

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veteran Affairs) (15:14): Today I recognise and express my deep gratitude for the service of Fire and Rescue NSW Commissioner Greg Mullins, ASFM, to the people of this State and the firefighters under his command, and note his retirement. His retirement comes after 39 years of dedicated service

to the community as a fire officer and later as commissioner. Prior to becoming a full-time fire officer, Commissioner Mullins was a bushfire volunteer for six years—meaning he has continuously served this State for 45 years, which is an outstanding achievement. Interestingly, there has not been a longer-serving chief in New South Wales since the second chief officer who led the then Metropolitan Fire Brigade from 1898 to 1913. Greg is currently the longest-serving fire chief in the Commonwealth of Australia.

Commissioner Mullins joined Fire and Rescue NSW on 31 March 1978. After serving in a variety of positions, he was appointed as commissioner on 4 July 2003—which made him the twenty-first chief since 1884. Commissioner Mullins has been integral to the modernisation and development of Fire and Rescue NSW, and for its close interaction with other emergency services. During the past decades he has overseen the rapid growth in the agency's capabilities beyond fire response to fire prevention, hazardous materials response, road accident and building collapse rescue, flood and storm response, response to medical emergencies, and counterterrorism. Fire and Rescue NSW is now recognised as one of the most professional, capable fire services in the world, and certainly one of the most high-tech. All fire engines are tracked by satellite, ensuring the fastest response times, with critical information available literally at our fingertips. All frontline fire engines also have advanced mobile data terminals.

Commissioner Mullins was the first person to come from the ranks to hold the roles of chief fire officer and chief executive officer, commanding operational and corporate sides of the organisation while bringing together the management of all the activities of Fire and Rescue NSW into one office. Commissioner Mullins leaves the organisation even better than when he took office 13 years ago, in 2003. Fire and Rescue NSW is renowned nationally and internationally as a leader in many fields, and it is ready and prepared for the multiple challenges it faces in the future. Commissioner Mullins is not only the most experienced and knowledgeable fire officer in New South Wales, having been awarded multiple decorations for bravery and saving lives when he was still on the trucks, but also well qualified, with a masters degree in management, and has experience as an executive. His personal style is widely known as being firm, fair, and fun. He is approachable and friendly, but demands good results while supporting his people to achieve them.

Under the leadership of Commissioner Mullins, gender equity in firefighter recruitment now exists, ensuring that 50 per cent of recruitment roles are filled by suitably qualified women in order to improve the proportion of female firefighters and ultimately to improve the organisational culture. No other fire service has achieved this and no other fire service has been able to secure the support of their unions for such an initiative. For his commitment to service, Commissioner Mullins has been awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal, the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal with two clasps, the National Medal with two clasps, the Commissioner's Commendation for Courageous Action, Chief Officer's Commendation, and—my favourite—the St John Ambulance Emergency Service Award.

Under Commissioner Mullins' strong leadership, many new firefighting management strategies and tactics were introduced, improving firefighter safety. They are too numerous to detail here today; however, they include the use of advanced chemical detection equipment; the most technologically advanced helmets in the world; drones and satellites; mobile command centres; a firefighting robot; high-volume pumps; and new firefighting foam technologies. He also implemented computerised operational management systems that help commanders to monitor emergency operations. One of his initiatives that has saved and will continue to save many lives each year was the introduction of mandatory smoke alarms in all homes throughout New South Wales from 1 May 2006. This followed a campaign in which he advocated their importance in fire prevention and in saving lives.

All of us will be familiar with television images of the commissioner's black helmet, which has been prominent at major emergencies, with Mr Mullins reassuring the community during crises. I know that this is something that his people particularly appreciate, and it shows his deep respect for, and connection with, the firefighters he leads. I take this opportunity also to recognise the efforts over the weekend of our firefighters who responded to a number of significant fires, including in the Shoalhaven and Penrith areas, in the Hunter around Cessnock, and in Kempsey to the north of the State. The Lone Pine Fire around Port Stephens has currently burnt a total of 8,623 hectares. Today, our firefighters are battling more than 40 fires across the State to ensure that our families are safe and our homes are well protected. I thank our firefighters for their ongoing sacrifice and service.

I also personally thank Commissioner Mullins for his support, advice and tenacious leadership during my tenure as Minister. I have often called him the "Henry VIII of emergency services"—not because he has had six wives but because he has survived about eight Ministers. I am delighted to be the final one—I hope! Commissioner Mullins has served the people of New South Wales incredibly well, and leaves a huge legacy—one of which he and his family should be very proud. Commissioner Mullins will end his extraordinary career with Fire and Rescue NSW on 6 January 2017 with a mandatory parade. On behalf of the Parliament I wish him

and his family—including his 92-year-old father Jack, who has served as a volunteer with the Rural Fire Service for more than 60 years—the best of health, and many happy and restful years ahead.

I visited the firefighters of the Parkes Fire Station just last Wednesday, and it was clear to me that under the commissioner's leadership our 366 fire stations are well coordinated and our firefighters are energised, valued and well informed—and so they should be. I am reminded by members of Parliament from the Northern Beaches that they are looking forward to having one of their favourite sons back at home more often. I take this opportunity to thank Commissioner Mullins for his service. The people of New South Wales, the Government and I will never forget the sacrifices he has made, and the time he served, both as a volunteer and a salaried firefighter, to keep us safe and well protected.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:22): On behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition, I pay tribute to, and honour, a great man, Commissioner Greg Mullins, AFSM, of Fire and Rescue NSW, who is in the gallery today. Commissioner Mullins has announced his retirement from Fire and Rescue NSW and, on behalf of all members of this House, I extend to him our sincerest gratitude for his dedication and service to New South Wales for more than 40 years. Commissioner Mullins will leave a legacy of positive organisational reform and enhanced services for Fire and Rescue NSW, which will serve our firefighters and our wider community for many more years to come. Commissioner Mullins started his stint as a firefighter in a magical period known as the seventies—when there were flares on pants but not necessarily on boats. He joined the New South Wales Bush Fire Service, now known as the Rural Fire Service [RFS], and after being with the RFS for six years he decided to take the plunge and make firefighting his full-time career.

In 1978 a young Greg Mullins joined Fire and Rescue NSW, where he steadily rose through the ranks, serving in operational and specialist positions prior to becoming a station officer in 1990. In 1992 Mr Mullins was promoted to a District Officer (Inspector), and Superintendent in 1995, when he was also awarded a Churchill Fellowship to study fire services in the United Kingdom, Spain, France, Canada and the United States of America. In 1996 Mr Mullins became an assistant commissioner and in 2000 he was appointed as Director State Operations. During this time he represented Australian fire services nationally and internationally on issues regarding emergency management, urban search and rescue, and managing the consequences of terrorist attacks. On 4 July 2003 Mr Mullins was appointed as Commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW, becoming the first person in the history of the organisation to be appointed from the ranks as both chief fire officer and chief executive officer.

Commissioner Mullins is a passionate, well-trained, educated and engaged leader, who has over the years been awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal, National Medal with two clasps, New South Wales Fire Brigade Long Service and Good Conduct Medal with two clasps, Commissioner's Commendation for Courageous Action, Chief Officer's Commendation and—the Minister's favourite—the St John Ambulance Emergency Services Award. In light of all these tremendous achievements, Commissioner Mullins will be remembered for standing against and changing the longstanding culture of bullying and harassment that plagued Fire and Rescue NSW. Because of the widespread changes championed under Commissioner Mullins, Fire and Rescue NSW will continue to improve its workforce diversity, to stamp out bad practices, and to continue pushing to improve Fire and Rescue NSW. As the longest serving urban fire chief in New South Wales in more than 100 years, he has certainly earned our respect and our praise.

I wish Commissioner Mullins all the very best in his future endeavours. I also wish his family well. Fire and Rescue NSW is poorer for his departure. However, things tend to go full circle, and the commissioner will be moving across to be a volunteer with the Rural Fire Service—which will be the richer for his retirement. In closing, on behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition I join the Minister and the Government in thanking Commissioner Mullins for his dedicated service to Fire and Rescue NSW.

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:26): By leave: On behalf of everyone in New South Wales I say a simple thank you to the commissioner—to Greg. My thanks go well beyond gratitude for his incredible decades of service. His service typifies the service of all fireys, who are prepared to put their lives on the line for all of us. Words are not enough to describe that. The commissioner's service has been incredible. This is about more than his roles and responsibilities; it extends to who he is and the way he has carried out his role.

The commissioner's grace and humility have been an inspiration and an encouragement to every one of us. He has fulfilled his leadership role in a way that all of us look up to. So on behalf of the people of New South Wales I thank him. His dedication is typified by his actions over the past few days, when he was out there, on the tools with his troops, in some very difficult circumstances. That shows the man he is. On behalf of everyone in New South Wales I thank him and wish him well in his retirement.

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (15:27): By leave: I join the Premier, the Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs and the shadow Minister, the member for

Fairfield, in paying tribute to Commissioner Mullins. This is one of the great offices of public service in our State. The Fire Brigade of New South Wales was created in 1910, and it has served this State very well. It is one of the most effective urban fire services anywhere in the world, and is respected as such.

Commissioner Mullins has come through the ranks. He is truly a firefighter—someone who has risen from the rank and file to hold, for the first time ever, the positions of both Chief Fire Officer and the Chief Executive Officer of the service. All of us in the Parliament deeply respect his service, over decades, to our State. I thank him and I thank all the men and women whom he leads for their outstanding public service. He does us a great honour.

Members stood in their places and applauded.

Documents

NSW OMBUDSMAN

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 31AA of the Ombudsman Act 1974, I announce receipt of the report of the NSW Ombudsman for the year ended 30 June 2016, received out of session on 27 October 2016. I order that the report be printed.

POLICE INTEGRITY COMMISSION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 103 of the Police Integrity Commission Act 1996, I announce receipt of the report of the Police Integrity Commission for the year ended 30 June 2016, received out of session on 27 October 2016. I order that the report be printed.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption for the year ended 30 June 2016, received out of session on 27 October 2016. I order that the report be printed.

OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 190 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1988, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of the Children's Guardian for the year ended 30 June 2016, received out of session on 28 October 2016. I order that the report be printed.

INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 39 of the Government Information (Information Commissioner) Act 2009 and section 61D of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998, I announce receipt of the report of the Information and Privacy Commission for the year ended 30 June 2016, received out of session on 28 October 2016. I order that the report be printed.

OFFICE OF THE PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 61D of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for the year ended 30 June 2016, received out of session on 28 October 2016. I order that the report be printed.

OFFICE OF THE ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 35 of the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People for the year ended 30 June 2016, received out of session on 28 October 2016. I order that the report be printed.

INSPECTOR OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES CRIME COMMISSION**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 68 of the Crime Commission Act 2002, I announce receipt of the report of the Inspector of the New South Wales Crime Commission for the year ended 30 June 2016, received out of session on 28 October 2016. I order that the report be printed.

INSPECTOR OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the report of the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption for the year ended 30 June 2016, received out of session on 28 October 2016. I order that the report be printed

INSPECTOR OF THE POLICE INTEGRITY COMMISSION**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 103 of the Police Integrity Commission Act 1996, I announce receipt of the report of the Inspector of the Police Integrity Commission for the year ended 30 June 2016, received out of session on 28 October 2016. I order that the report be printed.

INSPECTOR OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 16 of the Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012, I announce receipt of the report of the Inspector of Custodial Services for the year ended 30 June 2016, received out of session on 28 October 2016. I order that the report be printed.

AUDITOR-GENERAL**Reports**

The ACTING CLERK: In accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the following performance audit reports of the Auditor-General entitled:

- (1) "Government Advertising 2015-16: Department of Premier and Cabinet", dated October 2016, received out of session on 27 October 2016 and authorised to be printed.
- (2) "Implementation of the NSW Government's program evaluation initiative: NSW Treasury, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development, Department of Justice, Department of Planning and Environment", dated November 2016, received out of session on 3 November 2016 and authorised to be printed.

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

The CLERK: In accordance with section 68A of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the report of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled "Review of the Independent Commission Against Corruption: consideration of the Inspector's reports", Report 2/56, dated October 2016, received out of session on 27 October 2016 and authorised to be printed.

*Documents***NSW OMBUDSMAN****Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 20A of the Restricted Premises Act 1943, I announce receipt of the report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled "Restricted Premises Act: Review of police use of firearms search powers and new offence provisions", dated October 2016, received out of session on 3 November 2016 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE****Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 28/56**

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled "Legislation Review Digest No. 28/56", dated 8 November 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. 27/56.

*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS****Papers**

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That, for the remainder of the 2016 sittings, standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide:

- (1) The tabling of papers by Ministers may be effected by an announcement in the House without handing up copies of such papers.
- (2) Any papers tabled by announcement shall be lodged with the Table Office prior to their announcement in the House.

Motion agreed to.*Petitions***PETITIONS**

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

Powerhouse Museum Ultimo

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

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**.

Companion Animals on Public Transport

Petition requesting that companion animals be allowed to travel on all public transport, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Surry Hills Light Rail Station

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

Route 389 Bus Service

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

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

Wyong Special Area (Protection) Bill 2016

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly vote in favour of the Wyong Special Area (Protection) Bill 2016, received from **Mr David Harris**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

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

The Hon. Troy Grant—ICE Smoking Room Proposal—lodged 21 September 2016 (Ms Melanie Gibbons)

The Hon. Mark Speakman—Wild Horse Cull—lodged 21 September 2016 (Mr Gareth Ward)

The Hon Mark Speakman—Centennial Park Entry Gate Relocation—lodged 11 October 2016 (Mr Ron Hoenig)

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

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I advise the House that, in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3), General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) Nos 959 to 987 and 989 to 1005 have lapsed.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery the State's Small Business Commissioner, Robyn Hobbs, and Candace Barron from the Office of the Small Business Commissioner.

*Motions Accorded Priority***STATE BY-ELECTIONS****Consideration**

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (15:33): On 30 October my constituents witnessed an outstanding event on the shores of the Illawarra. The *Radiance of the Sea*, which is part of the Royal Caribbean fleet, sailed into Port Kembla. It was the first cruise ship to do so, and I hope it will be the first of many. It was a great day as residents greeted 2,400 passengers and 800 crew and there was a sense of renewed optimism and pride in our community. As visitors came ashore, they saw an economy that is 4.7 per cent stronger in jobs growth than it was last year. They saw cranes in the sky and jobs on the ground. All in all, they saw the benefits of five years of this Government in office.

However, the more that some things change, the more they remain the same when it comes to Labor campaigns. We know that the order of the day is fear, smear and vote buying. That began with preselection. Labor did not allow preselection for the seat of Wollongong, despite having a potentially great candidate in Deb Langton. Someone who should have had the opportunity to put herself forward to Labor Party members is being prevented from doing so by the Leader of the Opposition, who is more interested in controlling the numbers inside caucus than he is in giving branch members of the Labor Party a say in choosing their candidate. Worse than that are the campaign tactics of the Labor Party and push polling. Labor members have been phoning local residents and saying, "We got rid of Noreen Hay." But hold on: Where did Noreen Hay come from? She was a Labor candidate who was endorsed by the Leader of the Opposition, yet he is making out that there was nothing to see in that and she was never part of Labor.

How does the Leader of the Opposition dismiss the 13 years of service of a Labor Party member who was a parliamentary secretary and who, only months ago, was the Labor Whip in this House? He has been ringing up members of the public and telling them that he has been responsible for seeing off Noreen Hay. I think that is absolutely disgraceful behaviour. Labor has released a jobs plan. As the Premier mentioned earlier, first Labor had a 10-point plan and now it has the Jobs Action Plan. At the most recent State election Labor released its State infrastructure strategy. The Premier will tell you that there is never a better indication than at an election of what a political party's plans are. In Labor's State infrastructure plan, was the Illawarra once mentioned? No, not once! The Albion Park Rail bypass and the Spring Hill Road and Masters Road intersection also were not mentioned, despite the topic of the intersection having been raised by Labor's candidate for Wollongong, Paul Scully. The *Illawarra Mercury* produced an article, which stated:

Mr Scully initially said RDA Illawarra was calling for the project, later stating he had heard complaints about the intersection while doorknocking residents in the area.

However, an RMS spokesman said they had not heard from anyone about issues with the intersection.

Labor wants to spend \$40 million on an intersection that no-one has complained about. Labor has a 10-point plan and a Jobs Action Plan, but in the Illawarra Labor has only killed jobs, cut services and destroyed the confidence of that great region.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira will come to order. This is his final warning.

LAND AND PROPERTY INFORMATION

Consideration

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (15:37): The motion of which I have given notice should be accorded priority because undoubtedly everybody has read with horror reports over the past 10 days of up to 205 homes or properties along the F6 road corridor being bought and sold under false pretences as a result of government privatisation. The Government will feign care and concern while at the same time maintaining its priority of shifting the blame, but I will outline the blunt and stark reality. This unprecedented resumption error is a result of the privatisation process that the current Government has recklessly pursued—no matter the cost. To highlight the Government's role in this debacle, I present to the House three key facts.

Fact number one is that in 150 years of land titling in the Land and Property Information [LPI] unit, when the agency existed for the people and not for profit, we never saw a catastrophic event such as this. Fact number two is that as at 1 July this year, the Government prevented public access to the LPI for people who wish to make property inquiries. The Government privatised and outsourced that service, which is a key factor in this entire debacle. Fact number three is that future road projects, like the F6, are collated at the Central Register of Restrictions.

Mr Alister Henskens: They haven't done it yet, you idiot.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: The member for Ku-ring-gai does not understand the process, so I think he is the idiot. It is a fact that the Land and Property Information staff responsible for following up on errors within the Central Register of Restrictions were made redundant as at 30 June this year in preparation for privatisation and that there is no designated person currently following up on registration errors. This arrogant Government does not understand the business it is selling and it simply does not care. This Government has ignored, denied, criticised and insulted any person willing to speak out against this reckless privatisation of land titling agenda. It has displayed the height of arrogance. Indeed, in debate just a few weeks ago in this place when dealing with legislation relating to the privatisation of the Land and Property Information, the Government described me and other colleagues fighting against this privatised model as "scaremongering", "ill-informed" and "unaware of the issues". It turns out, as evidenced over the past 10 days and in the preceding four months, that the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister are the ill-informed, unaware and emphatic deniers of the obvious.

The 205 families and people affected by the Government's gross incompetence on this issue should be compensated. They have been exposed to an error caused by government greed. I would like to think that the compensation would come from the pocket of these same uncaring Ministers, but of course it will not. It will in fact come at the expense of all land title holders across New South Wales including, quite perversely, those 205 who have recently purchased in the F6 road corridor. This horrific incident is a first step toward compulsory land title insurance in New South Wales, which is set to cost families as much as \$1,000 per year. It is a fact that those opposite do not really care about the costs that they impose on families in New South Wales. They do not care about the prospect of title insurance and the cost of road tolls that they have introduced. They did not care about the costs when they took the Australian Energy Regulator to court. There are two things that they could do today that would benefit the State: stop the privatisation of the Land and Property Information and resign from their posts. This motion should be accorded priority for debate in this Chamber today.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion of the member for Kiama be accorded priority.

The House divided.

Ayes46
Noes33
Majority..... 13

AYES

Aplin, Mr G
Barilaro, Mr J
Brookes, Mr G

Ayres, Mr S
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K

Baird, Mr M
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A

AYES

Coure, Mr M	Crouch, Mr A	Dominello, Mr V
Elliott, Mr D	Evans, Mr L	Fraser, Mr A
Goward, Ms P	Grant, Mr T	Gulaptis, Mr C
Hazzard, Mr B	Henskens, Mr A	Hodgkinson, Ms K
Humphries, Mr K	Johnsen, Mr M	Kean, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D	Notley-Smith, Mr B	O'Dea, Mr J
Patterson, Mr C (teller)	Pavey, Ms M	Perrottet, Mr D
Petinos, Ms E	Piccoli, Mr A	Provest, Mr G
Roberts, Mr A	Rowell, Mr J	Sidoti, Mr J
Skinner, Ms J	Speakman, Mr M	Stokes, Mr R
Taylor, Mr M	Toole, Mr P	Tudehope, Mr D
Upton, Ms G	Ward, Mr G	Williams, Mr R
Williams, Ms L		

NOES

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

PAIRS

Anderson, Mr K	Minns, Mr C
Lee, Dr G	Smith, Ms K

Motion agreed to.**STATE BY-ELECTIONS****Priority****Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (15:47):** I move:

That this House condemns the Opposition for failing the communities of Wollongong, Orange and Canterbury over 16 long years, and for now spreading fear and smear in a shameful exercise of vote buying.

The Labor Party could not trust its branch members with selecting its next member, so why should the people of Wollongong trust the Labor Party with selecting the next member?

Ms Jodi McKay: Are you standing up for Noreen Hay? Do not tell me you are standing up for Noreen Hay.

Mr GARETH WARD: I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Strathfield about standing up for Labor's former member for Wollongong, Noreen Hay.

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

Mr GARETH WARD: Why did the member for Strathfield not stand up for one of Labor's members? Why is the member on the phone to constituents in Wollongong telling them that Labor got rid of Noreen Hay? Why are those opposite saying things about someone who was part of their team? The member for Strathfield has just made one of the most amazing interjections ever—and she has not made many amazing interjections. That is an example of what Labor was doing in the electorate of Wollongong. The largest single election commitment in the history of the Illawarra was made by this Premier from this side of the House on the Albion Park Rail bypass.

Ms Anna Watson: Give us a start date, Gareth.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Shellharbour to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of two hours.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Shellharbour left the Chamber at 3.49 p.m.]

Mr GARETH WARD: What a great example of Labor's appalling representation in the Illawarra.

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

Mr GARETH WARD: The member for Shellharbour was just thrown out of the House for interjecting across the table because she is not interested in debating the issues in the Illawarra. In fact, the member for Shellharbour was one of the signatories of Labor's Jobs Action Plan. Let us look at Labor's record on jobs in the Illawarra. In the last four years of Labor, how many jobs did it generate in the Illawarra? Did the number go up by 1,000, 2,000, 10,000 or 20,000? The number went backwards by 50. In the five years this Government has been in office, we have seen 22,500 jobs generated in the Illawarra. Do not take my word for it; that figure comes from the Australian Bureau of Statistics in relation to jobs creation. Labor has demonstrated that it kills jobs in the Illawarra. Did Labor build the upgrade of Wollongong Hospital at \$106 million? No. Did Labor upgrade and double the car parking spaces at that hospital with a \$27 million commitment? No. Did Labor commit to a new hospital at Bulli with funding of \$50 million? No. Did Labor come up with money to start the work for the Mount Ousley interchange at \$1 million in this budget? No. What did Labor do in relation to Port Kembla?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Port Stephens that she is on three calls to order.

Mr GARETH WARD: Labor said that it was opposed to the lease of Port Kembla but at the last election it said, "Forget the fact that we voted against it. We're now in favour of allocating its proceeds." The members opposite say one thing in Parliament and another in the region and attempt to divvy up the spends from an asset they voted against leasing. Councillor Leigh Colacino, who was responsible for *Radiance of the Seas* coming into Port Kembla, recently remarked that without the private sector running that port that cruise opportunity would not have been possible because of government red tape and regulation.

The Jobs Action Plan put forward by Labor mentions Appin Road. The problem for Labor is that I recently opened the upgrade. The member for Wollondilly had strongly campaigned for \$6.35 million to get rid of two crash clusters on a notorious section of road at Cataract. The Labor candidate is talking about the Masters Road and Springhill Road intersection. The problem is that Labor will be spending \$40 million on an intersection that nobody has complained about. Those opposite have to be seen to be believed; they kill jobs. When it comes to steel procurement, the Coalition backed the workers of that plant with a \$60 million payroll tax deferral. The last two projects in the Illawarra backed by those opposite were the Western Grandstand, which did not have an ounce of Australian steel and its roof blew off, and the Shoalhaven Correctional Centre, also without an ounce of Australian steel other than perhaps the paperclips that were used in procurement.

I say to the voters of Wollongong, do not look at what Labor says, look at what it has failed to do, which has led to jobs going down, businesses leaving the region and falling confidence. In contrast, under this Government we see business confidence returning, cranes in the sky and jobs on the ground. We see companies like NEC in the region and 120 jobs at the Innovation Campus. We see this Government investing \$16.5 million in the first business incubator, iAccelerate, in this country. We see Advantage Wollongong and a \$1 million partnership with the university to attract more small businesses to leverage from the work being done at the university. This government is listening and delivering for the Illawarra. The Labor Party and its candidate are failures.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Keira.

Mr Mark Coure: Take your own advice: Just sit down.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Oatley will take my advice. I call the member for Oatley to order for the second time.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (15:53): I cannot believe this; I have five minutes to talk about Labor's fantastic policies and about our great candidate in the by-election. What a decisive tactical action that is from the Government. Imagine its tactical meeting this morning. Someone says, "I've got an idea. We will raise in the House the Wollongong by-election. We will talk about how great our candidate is and about all our policies." Then someone else says, "That's a great idea." There is one slight problem: the Government is not running a candidate in Wollongong. It does not have any policies in Wollongong.

I thank the Government for the five minutes I have to speak. I greatly appreciate it. This motion is a criticism by the Government of Labor's plans—when the Government has no candidate. I will make sure that everyone is clear on this: the Government has no candidate. It removed the Minister for the Illawarra from the Cabinet table. What a fantastic decision that was. A few months ago it had a policy—wait for it—to pay people \$7,000 to move out of Wollongong across a ginormous rivulet, a massive piece of infrastructure all of 100 metres in length, and into Shellharbour. That is good fiscal discipline. What else did the Government do? It sold our port for a pretty penny: \$700-odd million. What did we get? We got \$100 million—about three years ago. You would think that in three years that money would have been spent. But no, it still has not all been spent. That is fantastic.

What has Labor and our hardworking candidate Paul Scully committed to? Lifts at Unanderra railway station, tick; 90 per cent steel in major infrastructure projects, tick; the relocation of Liquor and Gaming, 200-odd jobs, tick; upgrades to Appin Road, tick; an upgrade to WIN Stadium, tick. I love it when the Premier's office makes these tactical decisions. The Government members say that Labor did not deliver anything for 16 years. The member for Kiama raised in his speech an interesting piece of infrastructure—relatively "small" in nature—the Kiama bypass. That was delivered by Labor. In the Heathcote electorate is one of the greatest iconic bridges in the country, the Sea Cliff Bridge. That was delivered by Labor. Those opposite mentioned Wollongong Hospital. That was upgraded and delivered by Labor. On the matter of some "smaller" infrastructure, nearly all of our schools across the board were upgraded under Federal and State Labor governments. I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out all words after "That" with a view to inserting instead:

"this House:

- (1) Condemns the Government for failing to run a candidate in the electorates of Wollongong and Canterbury.
- (2) Notes the Premier's Olympic-style backflip on greyhounds in order to try to save the seat of Orange for The Nationals." The Opposition has detailed policies and a great candidate in the field. It will ensure that the people of Wollongong remember that members opposite did not even bother to field a candidate.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:59): It is with great pleasure that I support this motion and highlight the difference between what has happened under a responsible Coalition Government as opposed to what happened during 16 years of Labor governments—complete inaction. The electorate of Orange has attracted no attention from the Labor Party since 1947, when Bob O'Halloran lost the seat. Since 2011, the Coalition Government has either completed or has in progress \$91.5 million worth of road projects in Orange alone. That includes some big projects such as the \$56 million project being carried out on the Mitchell Highway, and the \$33 million project being carried out on the Newell Highway. The Government is also delivering smaller but equally important projects such as the \$96,100 project designed to improve the Cabonne-Cumnock bends; the \$317,500 project on the Cabonne-Hanover bridge; and the \$170,000 project on the Parkes access upgrade. These small projects are just as important as the major highway projects.

Of course, this Government does not focus only on roads. Members opposite will hate hearing about what the Government is doing in the education sector. They will hate hearing that Orange TAFE is now the subject of a \$5.2 million upgrade. The Government also spent \$3.9 million in 2014 on the Aboriginal Learning Centre at Orange. I have spoken about roads and education, but this Government is also working in the health sector. Work on the Parkes Hospital costing \$2.5 million was completed in October last year. In 2015, the Government spent \$12 million in a joint funding arrangement to deliver a respite and palliative care service at Peak Hill. It has also provided a 24-hour aeromedical helicopter. In addition, it has facilitated a \$1.46 million runway reseal at the Orange Airport, which is vital to the Central West. The Government has invested in water, sewerage, health, education, roads, and policing. The Parkes police station received a \$14 million upgrade in 2013. These are just a few highlights— [*Time expired.*]

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (16:03): I am delighted to have the opportunity to say a few words about my dear friend the member for Kiama. He drew the short straw this morning in the party room when his colleagues were looking for some poor sod to say a few words about the by-elections this Saturday. Everyone else in the party room stepped back, but not the member for Kiama. He said, "Me, me. Pick me so I can say a few words." It has been a very lonely campaign for the member for Kiama; he has been a lone voice in the Illawarra. He has been out every day putting up posters for Gordon Bradbery during the late hours, distributing pamphlets and letterboxing. He has also done 5.45 a.m. hook-ups with Gordon. We must feel sorry for the poor member for Kiama, who has been dialling Gordon at 5.45 a.m., only to be diverted to message bank because Gordon was not available. We should pity the poor member; I know it has been hard for him.

Let us consider why the Government has not fielded candidates in Wollongong and, more importantly, in Canterbury. I will tell members what is happening there. I am delighted that the member for Oatley is in the Chamber, because he might have a better idea of why the Liberal Party has not fielded a candidate in that electorate. I know it is because the Independent Commission Against Corruption recently raided the City of Canterbury Bankstown offices and all the former Liberal councillors are busy looking for legal counsel.

Let us now consider why the Government backed down and backflipped in respect of Orange. Members opposite panicked when they saw the polling. Andrew Clennell made it clear that if they did not do something about the greyhound racing ban they would end up with Premier Andrew Constance. Of course, that sent shivers down spines in both party rooms. It was not the idea of losing the Deputy Premier that terrified them; it was the thought that 39 per cent of those polled preferred Andrew Constance to Mike Baird. How bad is that? That is the reason for the backflip on the greyhound racing ban. I am delighted that the member for Monaro is in the Chamber. I read the small print on the flyers distributed in Orange. They assured the residents of Orange that they are still going to topple Troy Grant. [*Time expired.*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that five of them are on three calls to order.

Mr Michael Daley: Name them.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will. They are: the member for Bankstown, the member for Keira, the member for Port Stephens, and the member for Strathfield. I was going to include the member for Swansea, but she is on only two calls to order. However, she will be on three calls to order shortly. Members have had their fun.

Dr Hugh McDermott: I haven't.

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

Mr Mark Coure: Kick him out.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Oatley to order for the third time. The member for Kiama will be heard in silence.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:07): In reply: I was waiting to hear mention of the Labor candidate in Canterbury. However, all we heard was a reference to the local council, which is run by the Labor Party and which the member for Bankstown reminded us has been raided by the Independent Commission Against Corruption. It had a Labor mayor.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Port Stephens that she is on three calls to order.

Mr GARETH WARD: The member for Keira had five minutes in which to talk about the great things that the Labor Party wanted to do for the Illawarra, but I did not hear anything. That is because members opposite have no substantive policy for the Illawarra. They made a great deal about preselected candidates, but why did they not have a fair preselection contest in Wollongong? Why did they not allow their local loyal Labor Party member to contest for preselection? Why did they shut down Deb Langton, who is an experienced businessperson, a lawyer of repute, and a former lecturer at the University of Wollongong? They did not let her offer herself to the local party members to test whether they wanted her or Paul Scully. Instead, the Leader of the Opposition imposed his candidate on the people of Wollongong, who now need to assess whether he is good enough.

Well, I do not think it is good enough. It is this side of the House that has made the largest election commitment in the history of the Illawarra, not Labor. It is this side of the House that has seen employment growth increase by 4.7 per cent in the past 12 months. It is this side of the House that is delivering real reform that is driving opportunities for the university in the Illawarra. It is this side of the House that is investing into our public schools through the Gonski reforms that this Government signed up to. It is this side of the House that is delivering for people with disabilities. The National Disability Insurance Scheme is something that we on this side of the House signed up to and which we are delivering for this region. It is this side of the House that delivered an extra 125 express services to the region. It is this side of the House that delivered an increase of 110 per cent in Princes Highway funding to the region. It is this side of the House that is encouraging business in the region. That is evident in the results of the business confidence survey released by the Illawarra Business Chamber.

But we hear from Labor members that they wanted to talk about policy—well, there was their chance. The best they have come up with is a \$40 million intersection that no-one has complained about. Are those opposite embarrassed by that? It was raised by the Hon. Daniel Mookhey from the other place during budget estimates. Representatives of Roads and Maritime Services were scratching their heads asking why. Even that great journal of record the *Illawarra Mercury* in Glen Humphries' 2 November article, which I commend to members, questioned why the candidate misled the media by saying it was arranged by RDA Illawarra when it was not and then he said it came up during doorknocking.

At the same time, those opposite are throwing their former member under a bus by saying they got rid of her. They are ashamed of Labor's representation. It all comes back to Labor taking the Illawarra for granted. Those opposite have taken the constituents for granted. They have taken their membership for granted. They did nothing

when they were in government. They had 16 years to deliver. Those of us on this side of the House are delivering for the Illawarra and we always will.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The original question was that the motion as moved by the member for Kiama be agreed to, to which the member for Keira has moved an amendment. The question is that the words proposed to be left out stand.

The House divided.

Ayes46
Noes25
Majority.....21

AYES

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Dominello, Mr V
Fraser, Mr A
Gulaptis, Mr C
Humphries, Mr K
Leong, Ms J
O'Dea, Mr J
Pavey, Ms M
Piper, Mr G
Rowell, Mr J
Smith, Ms T
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Ms L

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Coure, Mr M
Elliott, Mr D
Goward, Ms P
Henskens, Mr A
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
Parker, Mr J
Petinos, Ms E
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

Barilaro, Mr J
Brookes, Mr G
Crouch, Mr A
Evans, Mr L
Greenwich, Mr A
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Kean, Mr M
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Piccoli, Mr A
Roberts, Mr A
Skinner, Ms J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

NOES

Atalla, Mr E
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
Mehan, Mr D
Robertson, Mr J
Zangari, Mr G

Barr, Mr C
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Warren, Mr G (teller)

Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McKay, Ms J
Park, Mr R
Washington, Ms K

PAIRS

Baird, Mr M
Grant, Mr T
Lee, Dr G
Perrottet, Mr D

Foley, Mr L
Lynch, Mr P
Minns, Mr C
Smith, Ms K

Amendment negatived.

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

The House divided.

Ayes42
Noes30
Majority.....12

AYES

Aplin, Mr G	Ayres, Mr S	Barilaro, Mr J
Berejiklian, Ms G	Bromhead, Mr S (teller)	Brookes, Mr G
Conolly, Mr K	Coure, Mr M	Crouch, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V	Elliott, Mr D	Evans, Mr L
Fraser, Mr A	Goward, Ms P	Gulaptis, Mr C
Hazzard, Mr B	Henskens, Mr A	Hodgkinson, Ms K
Humphries, Mr K	Johnsen, Mr M	Kean, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D	Notley-Smith, Mr B	O'Dea, Mr J
Patterson, Mr C (teller)	Pavey, Ms M	Petinos, Ms E
Piccoli, Mr A	Provest, Mr G	Roberts, Mr A
Rowell, Mr J	Sidoti, Mr J	Skinner, Ms J
Speakman, Mr M	Stokes, Mr R	Taylor, Mr M
Toole, Mr P	Tudehope, Mr D	Upton, Ms G
Ward, Mr G	Williams, Mr R	Williams, Ms L

NOES

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

PAIRS

Baird, Mr M	Foley, Mr L
Grant, Mr T	Lynch, Mr P
Lee, Dr G	Minns, Mr C
Perrottet, Mr D	Smith, Ms K

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***ROCK FISHING SAFETY BILL 2016****First Reading**

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

Second Reading

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (16:23): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Rock Fishing Safety Bill 2016. Rock fishing is one of Australia's most dangerous pastimes. In 2015-16, 10 people died while rock fishing in New South Wales, and over the past 10 years there have been, on average, eight rock fishing related deaths in New South Wales each year. Last year the Coroner held an inquiry into the circumstances surrounding nine tragic rock fishing deaths. This bill acts on the Coroner's recommendation that the Government introduce legislation making the wearing of life jackets mandatory while rock fishing. This bill delivers on the commitment of this Government to improve safety for rock fishers by requiring them to wear lifejackets in high-risk locations. In developing this legislation, the Government has consulted with a range of stakeholders. When I announced the intention of the Government to introduce this

legislation, I also established the Rock Fishing Working Group to inform Government on appropriate high-risk locations where the law would operate and on other related matters such as the content of this bill.

The working group is comprised of Government and non-government stakeholders, including the Department of Primary Industries, Marine Rescue NSW, NSW Police Force, Transport for NSW, Office of Local Government, Surf Life Saving NSW, Royal Life Saving New South Wales, Local Government NSW, Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW, and experts, including Associate Professor Rob Brander of the University of New South Wales and Associate Professor David Kennedy of the University of Melbourne. The working group has provided valuable advice during the development of this bill and the Government is grateful for their contribution. We hope that the working group will be able to continue its good work by guiding the implementation of this bill should it pass into law.

The bill creates two new offences. First, a person must not rock fish without a lifejacket at a high-risk rock fishing location. Secondly, a person must not permit a child in their care or supervision to rock fish in a high-risk rock fishing location. A child is defined as a person who is under 12 years of age. However, those offences are limited to specific types of fishing and to certain locations. The lifejacket requirements of the bill will only apply to rock fishing by means of a rod and line or handline, or assisting a person to take fish in that manner—for example, by using a handheld net to assist the person to land fish. The offences in the bill will not apply to broader legislative definitions of fishing or taking fish that are found in other statutes. Those definitions encompass fishing with, for example, large nets, or spear fishing, or collecting crustaceans from rocks. It is not proposed to regulate other types of fishing such as these as they are not commonly associated with rock fishing fatalities and near-drowning incidents.

A high-risk rock fishing location is defined as "naturally occurring rock platforms or other rock formations exposed to ocean swell" at a declared place. The Rock Fishing Working Group considered data on rock fishing fatalities and near drownings, and advised that while a small number of fatalities have occurred at manmade structures such as breakwalls, overwhelmingly, naturally formed rock platforms and formations were the places that were most dangerous. The Government has adopted their advice and limited the lifejacket requirements to naturally occurring rock platforms and rock formations within declared areas. The law will be trialled for 12 months in Randwick Local Government Area [LGA]. The Government is pleased to be able to partner with Randwick City Council to conduct the trial.

I am advised that there have been more rock fishing related deaths and near drownings in Randwick than in any other Local Government Area in New South Wales. Data from Surf Life Saving NSW has recorded 18 rock fishing related drownings and 23 near drownings in the Randwick LGA between 2004-05 and February 2015-16. However, I am also aware that Randwick City Council is proactive in working to make Randwick a safer place to rock fish, and to alert rock fishers to the dangers they face and encourage them to take precautions. Officers from the NSW Police Force, local council, National Parks and Wildlife Service, and Fisheries will be authorised officers for the purposes of the bill, and will be empowered to enforce the proposed offences. The proposed offences carry a maximum penalty of 50 penalty units, or a fine of \$100 if dealt with by way of a penalty notice.

The bill provides for a moratorium of 12 months from the time the bill commences. During that time, a person may not be convicted of, or be issued a penalty notice for, an offence under the bill. The moratorium provides time for rock fishers to learn about the lifejacket requirements and to obtain an appropriate lifejacket. The Government intends to use the 12-month moratorium period to run a community awareness and education campaign about the new laws, and about rock fishing safety more generally. If the Randwick trial is successful and further areas are declared, the bill also permits 12-month moratoriums to be declared by regulation at those places if required.

Once a moratorium has ceased and fines are issued in a declared area, any fine revenue that is collected must be paid into the Recreational Fishing (Saltwater) Trust Fund. The trust fund is established under section 235 of the Fisheries Management Act 1994. That Act permits money to be paid out of the fund for purposes such as taking measures to enhance marine fishing and ensuring compliance with laws relating to recreational marine fishing. Having fine revenue paid into the trust fund will allow that revenue to be put toward enhancing education and safety for rock fishers, and to assist in promoting compliance with the lifejacket requirements of the bill. The bill is specific about the types of lifejackets that must be worn and how they must be worn to avoid the penalties outlined in the bill. These lifejacket requirements are closely modelled on those within the Marine Safety Act and Regulations.

For adults, an appropriate lifejacket must meet level 50S or greater under the Australian standard AS 4578 or an equivalent standard that is recognised by Roads and Maritime Services. For a child under 12 years of age, an appropriate lifejacket must meet level 100 or greater under the same standard or equivalent. To comply with the bill, a person who is rock fishing in a high-risk location must be wearing a lifejacket. It is not enough to be carrying the lifejacket or have it in a bag. Wearing a lifejacket also means having all closing or fastening

devices such as zippers, buckles and tapes correctly secured as specified by the manufacturer. Lifejackets must also be the correct size for the wearer and in a good condition. If the life jacket is inflatable, it must not rely solely on oral inflation for buoyancy and must have been serviced at least every 12 months or at a longer interval if the manufacturer provides. I am advised that life jackets that meet the minimum requirement for adults can be bought for as little as \$20.

This law is about making rock fishing safer. It is about reducing unnecessary deaths and encouraging rock fishers to take simple measures to make sure they have a great day out, catch some fish and get home safely to their families and friends. We want lifejackets to become part of the gear that a rock fisher takes fishing. One would not leave home without a rod, line and tackle. Neither should one leave home without a lifejacket. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

RETAIL LEASES AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2016

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr John Barilaro, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (16:32): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I start by recognising Robyn Hobbs, OAM, the NSW Small Business Commissioner, Candace Barron, Nicola Gorton and Alexander Chidzey, and the rest of the team from the Office of the Small Business Commissioner, and thank them for their work in reviewing the Act and bringing the Retail Leases Amendment (Review) Bill 2016 to the House. The workload over the past couple of years has been significant and their effort must be acknowledged. The bill amends the Retail Leases Act 1994. These amendments will ensure the Act increases transparency and certainty in the New South Wales retail leasing sector. The amendments will improve standards of conduct between the parties to a retail lease, as well as increase the operational efficiency of the Act by simplifying its key processes.

The Retail Leases Act 1994 was introduced to help level the playing field between tenants and landlords of retail shop leases. It was a significant reform to safeguard the rights of parties to retail tenancy agreements. We know the ability for a tenant to strike an agreement with a landlord on a fair basis is the cornerstone of any successful retail business. At the core of the Act is a dispute resolution mechanism to help parties resolve the vast majority of their disputes without having to go to court. As we all know, the cost of litigation is prohibitive for small businesses, and an important business relationship will not survive a dispute that leads to litigation or indeed a court battle. The protective measures of the Act apply equally to both retailers and landlords, as many landlords are also small business owners.

Now, more than 20 years later, we find that the combination of having a legislative framework and the provision of free strategic and procedural advice with a low-cost mediation service offered by the New South Wales Small Business Commissioner has been a resounding success. The Act is a testament to the foresight of those who pushed the first bill in 1994. It was the Hon. Ray Chappell, Minister for Small Business and Regional Development and Nationals member for Northern Tablelands, who had the vision and foresight to introduce the bill into Parliament. In 1994, as now, the Government was reluctant to interfere in commercial dealings by introducing legislation. Today, our objective remains the same: to foster good leasing practices in the retail industry—nothing more and nothing less.

The retail market contributes significantly to the New South Wales economy. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics data there are more than 44,500 retail businesses in New South Wales. The retail industry accounts for almost 390,000 jobs and \$36 billion in annual sales. Eighty per cent of retail leases in New South Wales are located outside shopping centres, whilst 20 per cent are within shopping centres. Ninety-six per cent of retailers are small businesses with fewer than 20 employees. Small businesses are indeed the heartbeat of the New South Wales economy, and to support the growth and sustainability of the retail industry we must ensure that the protective measures of the Act remain relevant. The Act must be amended to respond to the needs of an industry that is undergoing rapid and significant change. Today, I come to the House with arguably the most progressive and balanced retail leases Act review in Australia—one that increases transparency, provides equity and certainty, removes Government red tape, makes it easier to do business in New South Wales, and adapts to a digital way of doing business.

I am also pleased to update the House on an industry first development. The major retail industry stakeholders have reached agreement without the heavy hand of Government on a voluntary code of conduct, which we will call "the code". As part of the final consultation process the Shopping Centre Council of Australia, National Retail Association, Australian Retailer's Association, Franchise Council of Australia and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia have developed this voluntary code of conduct to address a number of concerns identified over the course of the review. The code addresses the reporting of sales data and occupancy costs and increased transparency in the lease negotiation process, and seeks to level the playing field between landlords and retailers through mutual obligation. It is an industry-led solution that addresses one of the most contentious aspects of the shopping centre landlord-tenant relationship—turnover data. I am pleased to learn that there are a number of specialist retailer groups seeking to enter into the code.

The Retail Leases Amendment (Review) Bill 2016 will reform the Retail Leases Act 1994 to ensure it remains consistent with the changing needs of the industry. The bill takes a practical approach to the inevitable tensions between the needs of landlords and of tenants, and the commercial rights. The bill will amend the Act to increase transparency and certainty between the parties during the negotiation stage. It ensures that landlords must disclose certain costs in some detail before the tenant is bound to the lease. The bill will improve access to justice and remedies by increasing the financial jurisdiction of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] to deal with a greater number of matters, and empowering NCAT to award compensation to a party that suffers harm as a result of breaches of some new provisions of the Act by their counterpart to a retail lease. The bill will increase operational efficiency by simplifying the process of starting or transferring a retail lease, and it repeals unnecessary provisions and makes various technical amendments to improve the operation of the Act.

The bill makes amendments to clarify the landlord's disclosure obligations. All landlords will know what needs to be disclosed, and tenants will understand what they are committing to before being legally bound to a lease. The Government is committed to ensuring Parliament's original intent for upfront disclosure of the financial cost of the lease should be mandated as a foundation of the Act. An inability for retailers to plan their businesses and manage cash flows greatly increases the chance of failure, particularly for small businesses. Incomplete or inaccurate disclosure is a source of a substantial number of disputes; the actual amount charged for outgoings can vary substantially from the estimates provided. The disclosure obligation in the Act when interpreted by NCAT identified a loophole that has allowed for an imbalance between landlords and tenants in leasing agreements. The bill clarifies the obligation for landlords to disclose certain terms of the lease at least seven days before a tenant is committed to a lease.

The amendments make it clear that tenants are not liable for undisclosed outgoings other than an outgoing in the nature of a tax, rate or levy that is imposed by any Act after the lessor's disclosure statement if given. Advertising and promotion costs are not outgoings for this purpose. The bill legislates that if the lessor's disclosure statement provides an estimate of the amount of an outgoing and there was no reasonable basis for the estimate, the tenant's liability for the outgoing will be limited to the estimated amount. Future increases in the outgoing will be limited by reference to the estimated amount—for example, the cost from the previous year. To illustrate what this means, imagine the landlord estimates that a tenant's contribution for land tax will be \$1,000 per quarter but the actual cost is \$2,000. This represents a variation of 100 per cent. Therefore, the tenant will be liable for only 50 per cent of the actual amount of the outgoing throughout the term of the lease.

A breach by a landlord to disclose outgoings is dealt with by reducing the tenant's liability for outgoings. When there are other breaches to the disclosure obligations, such as a failure to disclose when the lease for the anchor tenant expires, the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] can award compensation to put the tenant back into the position in which they would have been if proper disclosure had been made. Under the current Act, landlords are able to recover non-disclosed outgoings and potentially charge a higher rent than if the tenant factored in the actual cost of outgoings. A tenant's only alternative for improper disclosure in the current Act is to walk away from the lease—and all their sunk investment within the first six months. In fact, if a tenant walks away the landlord benefits from the fit-out work, which has been funded by the tenant, as they can charge a new tenant a higher rent. Without compensating the tenant for their lost investment, such as for expensive fit-outs, the current remedy is inadequate.

The amendments allows the NCAT to rectify a lease or lessor's disclosure statement to correct an error or omission, giving effect to the intention of the parties when the lease was entered into, or to reflect the actual disclosure of information between the parties if the disclosure requirements of the Act are otherwise met. This is particularly important if the landlord sells the building or if the tenant sells the business and the new party does not know the original deal that was struck. These changes are consistent with the Act's objective of ensuring that parties enter into a lease from the best possible negotiation position—with certainty, and the information necessary to make effective business decisions. These reforms provide incentives for landlords to share the important information they hold, and for disclosure statements to be accurate.

This change will minimise disputes over outgoing and the detriment caused to tenants, who are liable for costs for which they have not been able to properly budget. These amendments are consistent with a key recommendation in the 2008 Productivity Commission's report to encourage transparency in dealings between landlords and tenants. One of the principal imbalances between landlords and retail tenants during negotiations relates to market information. This includes access to information about the value of leases in the market, the turnover a lease is likely to produce, and the landlord's collection and use of tenant's turnover figures. The result of this imbalance is that tenants feel landlords hold all the important industry information and tenants are unable to compete on a level playing field. As a result of this review, those involved in the industry have worked together and an outcome has been achieved to increase access to market information.

I commend the Australian Retailer's Association, the National Retail Association, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the Franchise Council of Australia and the Shopping Centre Council of Australia for having reached agreement on a voluntary Retail Industry Code of Practice—the Reporting of Sales and Occupancy Costs. This code is an agreement on the collection and sharing of industry information. There is an implicit duty of good faith within the code and those associations are now working together in a collaborative way. Consistent with New South Wales Government's objective of letting industry develop its own solutions to issues, those parties have found consensus on issues that have been previously unworkable. The code will support enhanced competition for retailing space and more market-based outcomes from rent negotiations.

The bill recognises that retail is a dynamic industry and, as shopping is moving online, that there is a shift in the way the industry operates. Some tenants are required to report their turnover. That can be a significant issue when a sale comes through an online portal. The bill provides that a tenant cannot be required to provide the landlord with information about online transactions, except for transactions where goods or services are delivered or provided from, or at, the retail shop or retail shopping centre in which the shop is located, or where the transaction takes place while the customer is at the retail shop. Additionally, the bill provides that for the purposes of determination of rent by reference to turnover, turnover does not include information about online transactions other than transactions where goods or services are delivered or provided from, or at, the retail shop or retail shopping centre in which the shop is located, or where the transaction takes place while the customer is at the retail shop.

For example, if a customer is in a store and uses a store device to customise a product before ordering, turnover information can be collected by the landlord. Turning from the proposals that increase transparency, I will now outline the second area of amendments. The bill amends the financial jurisdiction of NCAT to increase it from \$400,000 to \$750,000. This acknowledges increases in the cost of leasing and, coupled with a broader range of remedies, will improve access to justice by enabling NCAT to deal with a greater number of matters. As the majority of disputes are settled through mediation, it is unlikely that the amendments will produce any long-term increase in litigation. The final amendments in the bill relate to increasing the operational efficiency of the Act by streamlining processes, repealing unnecessary provisions and effecting various technical amendments.

The bill consolidates and streamlines provisions relating to the process for obtaining a landlord's consent to assign a lease. The amendments remove confusion by separating the processes for assignment from the process for obtaining protection from any ongoing liability after a lease has been transferred. The current Act is not sufficiently clear on the assignment requirements. The amendments to the Act simplify the assignment provisions to enable tenants to transfer the lease and/or sell their business while ensuring the landlord gets a new tenant that meets the landlord's tenancy requirements. Under the current system, landlords can decide what type of tenant they require. They can require that a certain level of capital is available or that a certain level of retailing experience exists. The shop cannot be passed on to someone with less experience or financial resources without the landlord's express consent.

The bill amends the Act to make it clear that the point in time when a proposed assignee's financial resources and retailing will be assessed against those of the tenant is at the time the lease is assigned. This amendment—because it will lower the standard that the landlord can hold the new tenant to when assessing whether to consent to an assignment—will assist tenants who want to sell a business that is not doing well. This will assist tenants to assign their leases when retail businesses are sold on retail strips where there are high vacancy rates. Conversely, if a landlord is willing to take a punt on someone just starting out, who later becomes a success, they will not be compelled to consent to an assignment to a tenant with unproven skills like those of the proposed assignor at the beginning of their lease. Whether it is more or less advantageous to a landlord for a tenant to be assessed at the beginning or the end of the relationship will depend on the landlord's circumstances and the skills and financial resources of the tenant who wishes to assign their lease. In addition, particular locations, especially those with public significance, bring complexity to the issue of assignment.

There are instances in which a tender process may require a security clearance to ensure that a tenant is considered as a fit and proper person, and any other issues may weigh heavily on a public tendering process. The

amendments recognise that a landlord may impose those types of requirements for employees of a retail shop, and that landlords who award leases by a public tender process may require any proposed tenant to be held to the same criteria. The bill will also introduce the requirement for landlords to register leases for a term of more than three years, and for a tenant to be provided with an executed copy of the lease. The time for registration has been extended to three months after the tenant has executed and returned the lease to the landlord because having a lease with multiple landlords and a mortgagor is not always a simple process.

Lease registration provides a fundamental protection for a tenant's investment in a retail business against transfers in the ownership of the building. Failure to register a lease greatly weakens the position of retail tenants if a landlord sells the premises or a mortgagee takes possession of the property. Industry stakeholders have raised concerns regarding hundreds of unregistered leases in major suburban and regional shopping centres. The bill introduces a requirement for a copy of the executed lease to be provided to a tenant within three months of the tenant providing an executed copy to the landlord or landlord's agent. Tenants are disadvantaged when they are denied a copy of the lease, which is required by franchisors or a lending facility to secure finance. The largely unregulated nature of bank guarantees has resulted in poor practice among some landlords and agents.

At the end of a lease, by delaying the return of a bank guarantee document, landlords can limit a tenant's ability to raise capital to finance a new business or to move to a new location. This happens by simply holding on to the document that is a bank's commitment to unquestioningly provide a tenant's funds on demand. Bank guarantees have been used by some unscrupulous landlords as leverage to pressure a tenant into settling a dispute and accepting a less favourable outcome. Others have drawn down on bank guarantees for illegitimate purposes unrelated to a tenant's performance of obligations under a lease, such as the landlord's own cash flow problems. At other times, the return of a piece of paper is just not a priority for an agent or landlord who is possibly annoyed that the tenant found another shop to rent.

Seeking an order from NCAT for the landlord's use of a bank guarantee for an illegitimate purpose is a costly exercise that is a difficult option for most tenants. Landlords, who fail to return a bank guarantee within two months of a tenant completing performance of their obligations under a lease, will be subject to a penalty and NCAT may make an order to return funds they are not entitled to keep. One of the key recommendations in the 2008 Productivity Commission Report, "The Market for Retail Tenancy Leases in Australia," was that clear requirements for bank guarantees should be established to improve transparency and certainty in retail lease relationships. The bill clarifies when demolition clauses can be triggered. This addresses landlords' uncertainty as to when their use is legitimate. Demolition clauses in leases require a tenant to vacate the premises so that the demolition of a substantial part of the building can take place.

The Act currently provides lessee protections for termination of a lease where the landlord proposes to demolish a building. The amendments clarify when demolition clauses can be triggered by taking out the word "substantial". Termination on the grounds of proposed demolition is only permissible when the shop requires vacant possession. The bill's amendment will eliminate concern that a landlord cannot use a demolition clause unless the whole building is being demolished, yet prevent the use of demolition clauses to terminate a tenant's business for an illegitimate purpose. Demolition clauses are frequently used to change tenancy mixes and deny tenants their property rights in favour of another tenant. When used unjustly, it means a landlord can use a demolition clause as a trigger to terminate a lease if a tenant offering a higher rent wants the tenant's shop, yet the tenant is committed to a lease agreement for three to six years with no ability to terminate the lease, regardless of how things are going.

The bill also makes a number of amendments to clarify provisions in the Act that have been the source of disputes over differing interpretations. The amendments clarify when leases in an office tower will come under the operation of the Act by removing an exception from the Act for premises in an office tower that forms part of a retail shopping centre. This has been repealed on the basis that the exception is unnecessary because an office tower does not form part of a retail shopping centre merely because it is in the same building as, or is above, the retail shopping centre. A food court or shopping precinct of an office tower is capable of being separately distinguished from the office tower for the purpose of the operation of the Act. This change is certainly not intended to capture non-retail uses in an office tower.

The bill also makes it clear that a landlord cannot recover from a tenant the cost of obtaining a mortgagee's consent to a lease. There are a number of amendments to operational provisions to enable the transition of the Retail Bond Scheme as part of a new digital platform with a contract management system and secure escrow holding service. This is a very exciting development we will learn more about in early 2017. The bill repeals the minimum five-year term for retail leases, transfers the administrative process for the appointment of specialist retail valuers to determine rent disputes from NCAT to the Registrar, and repeals redundant references to stamp duty. The Government is committed to reducing red tape for industry. By repealing the minimum five-year term,

streamlining assignment and disclosure processes and clarifying provisions, the New South Wales Government is reducing red tape for the retail leasing industry.

The Government has undertaken an extensive period of consultation on the amendments. The amendments represent the outcome of the most substantive review of the Act since it was introduced in 1994. The bill introduces amendments that were put forward by the industry and developed through a lengthy and multi-tiered consultation process. Following the consultation period, the Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner has engaged extensively with industry and government stakeholders to determine sensitivities and test recommendations. The bill's proposed amendments have been developed in conjunction with stakeholders in the sector.

As mentioned earlier, the major industry associations, the National Retail Association, Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the Australian Retailer's Association and the Shopping Centre Council of Australia have been actively involved in the process on particular points concerning leases in shopping centres. Some amendments have not progressed due to the lack of consensus among the major stakeholders representing large landlords and retailers in large shopping centres. Industry associations support the amendments to the Act that relate to their members. As the Minister for Small Business I have protected the key amendments that are needed to allow small business operators, be they landlords or tenants, to make and keep their deals as leases are the lifeblood of the retail leasing industry. In summary, this bill introduces important reforms to support the future of small businesses in the retail industry. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

**ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS AMENDMENT (LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCILS) BILL
2016**

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Leslie Williams, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Ms LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (16:56): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

First and foremost, I begin by acknowledging that we meet today on the traditional lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. I pay my respects to elders past and present, and I pay my respects to all other first nations people of New South Wales and to all the Aboriginal people who have joined us here today. I am pleased to welcome and acknowledge senior representatives from the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council who are in the gallery today: Councillor Roy Ah-See, Chairman of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, and councillor for Sydney/Newcastle; Councillor Charles Lynch, councillor for Northern Region; Councillor Craig Cromelin, councillor for the Wiradjuri Region; and Councillor Peter Smith, councillor for the mid North Coast. I also welcome Mr Stephen Wright, Policy and Programs. I thank the councillors and New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council staff for their engagement, consideration and advice in preparation of the bill of amendments that I bring forward today.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Aboriginal Land Rights Amendment (Local Aboriginal Land Councils) Bill 2016 today. Principally, the bill has two interdependent aims. The first is to refine and enhance the regulatory structures and mechanisms of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983. The second is to provide better means to build the capacity and strength of local Aboriginal land councils and the Aboriginal people who run them. The catalyst and drivers of this bill came to my attention early in my tenure as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. While I have only been the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs since March 2015, in this short time I have appointed four administrators and one investigator to local Aboriginal land councils. These are not matters or decisions I have taken lightly. I know the administrative demands on small organisations and the complexity involved in managing community assets. I also appreciate the demoralising impact such appointments can have on local communities and individuals. But, as we all know, intervention when non-compliance is apparent is a necessary component in all corporate administration and regulatory regimes. The Aboriginal Land Rights Act [ALRA] is no different.

Notwithstanding this, it became apparent to me that there should be better and less interventionist mechanisms available to me and to other regulators, the Aboriginal Land Rights Act Registrar and the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council to first support local Aboriginal land councils when compliance is about to falter markedly. Although the Act currently contains provisions to appoint interim administrators and advisers as they stand, provisions are limited in their application and their effect. It is for these reasons that I have developed this

bill of amendments over the past 12 months to improve the operation of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act and, importantly, to support the growth, skill and strength of the Aboriginal people who make it happen.

I thank the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council for its partnership in developing the early intervention framework that has informed our work. While most of those here are aware of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, it is worth reminding ourselves of its purpose, for it is the purpose of the Act that the proposed amendments contained in this bill aim to reinforce. The purpose of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act is: to provide land rights for Aboriginal persons in New South Wales; to provide for representative Aboriginal land councils in New South Wales; to vest land in those councils; to provide for the acquisition of land and the management of land and other assets and investments by or for those councils, and the allocation of funds to and by those councils; and, lastly, to provide for the provision of community benefit schemes by or on behalf of those councils. It is an Act unique in this Parliament—and, indeed, in all of Australia.

The New South Wales Aboriginal Land Rights Act provides for the right of Aboriginal communities to claim certain Crown land and, when granted, hold lands in freehold title. A network of 120 elected local Aboriginal land councils represents the interests of their members and the broader Aboriginal populations in their areas to provide economic, social and cultural benefits to their communities. In anyone's book, this is a big task. Nonetheless, the Aboriginal community and the Aboriginal land council members have taken it on to fulfil the purposes of the Act and to create the statewide network of local Aboriginal land councils operating in our State today. The Aboriginal Land Rights Act remains a source of pride for Aboriginal people, for what it stands for and what it has achieved. However, it has not been without burden, some mishap and failings.

Since the commencement of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act there have been many amendments made to address governance and operational matters to ensure that local Aboriginal land councils operate appropriately as independent corporate citizens of the State. This has included managing responsibilities in relation to housing stock, the payment of local government rates and charges, financial reporting and accountability, corporate governance structures, corporate codes of conduct, community planning and land dealings. Consistent corporate governance standards over the very diverse network have been difficult to meet since the commencement of the Act in 1983. Over time, Aboriginal land council members, and especially executives and board members, have had to undertake increasingly complex duties and responsibilities not dissimilar to the directors of private companies.

I acknowledge at this point the many individuals who have worked tirelessly over the 30-plus years of the land rights Act to realise the administrative operation and function of Aboriginal land councils. I acknowledge that most of this has been done on a voluntary basis—a commendable testament to the Aboriginal people of this State in bringing the purpose and objectives of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act to effect and providence. Part 11 of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act provides for standard corporate governance intervention mechanisms. It outlines the process for addressing any non-compliance with the Act by a land council, including the grounds for appointing investigators and administrators to Aboriginal land councils. These standard corporate governance intervention mechanisms will remain intact. To date, the mechanisms that have been used when local Aboriginal land councils have failed in their administrative capacities are the appointment of: investigators, to investigate the affairs of Aboriginal land councils when there is serious concern as to their operations; or administrators, when significant breaches of the Act remain unaddressed by the land council. These mechanisms have been the main way that compliance, and indeed capacity, matters have been dealt with.

The purpose of this bill is to provide an alternative mechanism—a mechanism that is more supportive and proactive, and which will address and rectify capacity and compliance issues at an early stage. As noted earlier, a principal aim of the proposed amendments is to refine and enhance the regulatory structures and mechanisms of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983. The mechanisms within and policy intention behind this bill will enhance the intervention and compliance provisions of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, specifically in relation to the appointment of advisors to assist local Aboriginal land council boards. The intention is to make available early intervention mechanisms for when local Aboriginal land councils need assistance to comply with the regulatory and operational requirements of the land rights Act. Since 2007, the ALRA has provided the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs with the power to appoint advisors to the board of local Aboriginal land councils on the recommendation of the Registrar or the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council—section 234. However, this provision has never been used.

It has been unclear as to the role and actual powers of advisors, and so its applicability has been doubtful. Also, as it stands, the current provision to appoint an advisor under section 234 of the Act does not specify the repercussions for a local Aboriginal land council if it fails to follow an advisor's advice. The amendments I propose today will make the advisor provisions clearer. It will provide the regulators, particularly the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, with additional but less punitive tools to support Aboriginal land councils. The proposed amendments are modelled on the improved intervention mechanisms that were introduced into the Local

Government Act made by this Government in 2013. The basis of the amendments made to the Local Government Act—and those I propose here today—are underpinned by what is known as the Braithwaite regulatory pyramid, which links behaviour to responsive regulatory compliance.

Rather than classic "carrot and stick" compliance approaches and repercussions, the Braithwaite model encourages regulatory compliance on a voluntary and participatory basis. It creates a more positive relationship between the regulator and the regulated. In applying the Braithwaite pyramid to the New South Wales land rights network, we can acknowledge that most Aboriginal land councils and individuals are willing to act appropriately and that some councils and individuals try very hard but sometimes fall short of required standards. The effectiveness of "improvement orders"—the centrepiece of the amendments in this bill—coupled with the option of appointing advisors is to provide ways for local Aboriginal land councils to actively participate in their own regulatory oversight and recovery. Where there are councils or individuals who do not want to comply or follow good practice, then a more interventionist step, such as the appointment of an administrator, can still be considered. The proposed amendments will make for a midway and a more cost-effective intervention mechanism to assist councils to comply with the regulatory and operational requirements of the ALRA.

The ALRA has a tripartite regulatory structure comprising the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Registrar and the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, which, over time, as a means of Aboriginal self-determination, has incrementally delivered the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council increased regulatory powers, particularly in its oversight and support role to the local Aboriginal land council network. Since 1983, the New South Wales Government has moved towards increasing the independence of the Aboriginal land council network from government, increasing decision-making by local Aboriginal land council members and increasing the autonomy of local Aboriginal land councils in their relationship with the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council. For example, in 2015 this Government commenced amendments to the Act to provide that community land and business plans of local Aboriginal land councils, which are obligatory under the land rights Act, are now developed and approved by members. The plans no longer require approval by the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, whose role now is to set the policy guidelines for the plans.

This bill aims to continue the empowering, self-determining and self-regulating trend of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act by reinforcing the support role of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, but increasing local decision-making. The capacity-building aspects within this bill take on increased importance in this context. Specifically, the bill proposes to provide the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council with the power to issue performance improvement orders either separately or supplemented by the appointment of an advisor to local Aboriginal land council boards who can advise and assist the council to implement change to address the issues identified. The proposed performance improvement orders to be issued to local Aboriginal land councils are designed to give the members of councils greater oversight of the performance of their elected boards and provide transparency with regard to their governance, performance and diligence.

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs will retain the power for the highest level of intervention; that is, the appointment of administrators as last resort or interim administrators for urgent interventions. The independence of the registrar will be upheld. The registrar oversees the operation of the ALRA as a whole, and has the power to issue compliance directions to land councils to correct non-compliance with the ALRA. The option of performance improvement orders provides new and greater flexibility in how the registrar and the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council apply their respective regulatory function. I have been assured that the two regulators will apply the new regulatory matrix to the greatest benefit and effect.

As I stated earlier, the second principal aim of the proposed amendments is to provide better means by which to build capacity and to strengthen Aboriginal land councils, thereby benefitting Aboriginal people in New South Wales. This bill will put in place an alternative early intervention option that aims to support local land councils before the need for punitive action arises through the appointment of investigators or administrators. The bill provides that the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council will have the authority to issue a performance improvement order to a local Aboriginal land council if it is satisfied that action must be taken to improve its performance, and thereby protecting the interests and assets of the LALC.

The decision to issue a performance improvement order will require consideration of the following criteria, which will be set out in the Aboriginal Land Rights Regulation: whether the local Aboriginal land council has failed to comply with the Act, the regulation or any policy of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council; whether meetings of the local Aboriginal land council are being conducted in accordance with the Act and this regulation; whether the appointment of an adviser is reasonably likely to assist the board of the local Aboriginal land council to restore, to improve or to develop the capacity for the proper and effective functioning of the council; whether the behaviour of one or more board members or members of staff of the local Aboriginal land council has adversely affected the council's performance of its functions under the Act and the council's response to that behaviour; and whether there are significant risks facing the local Aboriginal land council that are not being

addressed. Any actions to improve the performance of a local Aboriginal land council may include any actions that the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council considers necessary to improve or restore the proper or effective functioning of the local Aboriginal land council.

The New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council may amend a performance improvement order affecting an Aboriginal land council if the need for amendment becomes evident during implementation. In that case, notice of the amendment in writing must be provided to the Aboriginal land council. The notice of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council to amend a performance improvement order is to specify the terms of the proposed amendment and the reasons it has proposed to amend the order. A performance improvement order may, or may not, also provide for the appointment of an adviser. If the Minister decides to appoint an administrator to a local Aboriginal land council that has been issued with a performance improvement order, the order will then cease to be in force. Compliance with a performance improvement order is the responsibility of the board of the local Aboriginal land council.

A land council will be deemed compliant with a performance improvement order only if the action taken, including any actions required to be taken by individual board members, is to the satisfaction of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council. The board of the local Aboriginal land council must supply a report on steps it has taken to implement the order, known as a compliance report, to the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council. A copy of the report must also be provided to the land council's members at the first meeting of the land council held after the report is submitted to the NSW Aboriginal Land Council. This will provide an important accountability mechanism and transparency to the members of the land council concerned.

If the NSW Aboriginal Land Council issues a performance improvement order to a local Aboriginal land council, it may also appoint one or more persons as an adviser. As I have already mentioned, the provision for appointment of an adviser is currently contained in section 234 of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, but it has never been utilised. This is because it does not provide the adviser with a clear role or powers, it does not specify the repercussions for a local Aboriginal land council if it fails to follow an adviser's advice, and it does not state who has responsibility to fund the appointment of advisers. The overhaul of the current adviser provisions and the insertion of performance improvement orders will better support and assist local Aboriginal land councils when their performance is compromised by failing compliance or operational challenges, or any of the other criteria listed in the regulations that I mentioned earlier.

An adviser may be appointed in the performance improvement order or by a subsequent order of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council. An adviser may be appointed on the recommendation of the local Aboriginal land council on its own initiative or based on the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council's consideration. An adviser will have, subject to any limitations specified in the adviser's instrument of appointment, a number of functions which include: to advise and assist the board of the local Aboriginal land council in the exercise of its functions; to provide guidance to ensure that the local Aboriginal land council complies with the performance improvement order; and to monitor compliance with the performance improvement order. An adviser's term of appointment to a local Aboriginal land council will cease either at the end of the term specified in the instrument of appointment or at the expiration or revocation of the performance improvement order affecting the local Aboriginal land council. The NSW Aboriginal Land Council has authority to terminate an adviser's appointment at any time.

Importantly, the bill contains provisions for the payment of appointed advisers. The adviser is to be paid a salary determined by the NSW Aboriginal Land Council out of that council's funds. The cost of appointed advisers may be recovered from the local Aboriginal land council concerned at the discretion of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council. The bill's provisions make clear that both the board of the land council and members of the land council are to cooperate with the adviser during their term of appointment. This includes providing any information or assistance the adviser reasonably requires to exercise his or her functions. It also stipulates that the local Aboriginal land council is to give an adviser an opportunity to review a compliance report at least 14 days before the report is submitted to the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, together with the adviser's comments, if any, on the compliance report.

If the local Aboriginal land council fails to give an adviser the opportunity to comment on a compliance report, the adviser is to advise the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council and then give the council a report on the local Aboriginal land council's compliance with the performance improvement order. If a local Aboriginal land council fails to provide a compliance report to the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council as stipulated in the performance improvement order, the adviser must, as soon as is feasible after becoming aware of the fact, prepare a compliance report on behalf of the local Aboriginal land council and provide this report to the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council.

The bill outlines that a land council is considered to have failed to comply with a performance order if it fails to submit a compliance report for the adviser's review and if it fails to submit a compliance report to the

New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council within the specified time frame. These details for the implementation of the performance improvement orders are important because they make clear exactly what is expected of the local Aboriginal land council that has been issued with an order. They allow for a constructive remedial relationship between it and the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council. Only a lack of willingness by a local Aboriginal land council will raise the need for a more interventionist approach under the other regulatory options under the Act.

The Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 currently contains no provision for the issuing of performance improvement orders. The proposed new provision will empower the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council to issue performance improvement orders to local Aboriginal land councils. It will also provide members of land councils with greater insight and transparency with regard to the land councils' governance and performance and the diligence of their elected board because directions will be made public and boards will be obliged to inform members of any performance directions issued. The issuing of performance improvement orders brings an opportunity for a land council to respond to any issues and to request support before an investigator is brought in to investigate the affairs of the land council or an administrator is appointed to remedy serious breaches.

The provision for the appointment of an adviser has both a capacity-building and an operational assistance purpose. Advisers will be chosen from a panel with a wide range of appropriate skills to assist land councils and will be appointed by the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council. They will have diverse specialist or peer skills appropriate to address particular areas of improvement or assistance, such as those that apply in the operation of the performance improvement orders and the appointment of advisers under the Local Government Act. These areas can be as diverse as mediating relationships between elected and administrative arms of a land council or developing specialist financial management systems. The result will be the introduction of a mechanism for early, low-cost assistance in the affairs of local Aboriginal land councils.

The changes focus on capacity building and providing an alternative to the highly interventionist and costly alternative with the appointment of administrators. It is expected that the proposed amendments will reduce costs funded by the ALRA network or, at the least, be cost neutral by improving operational efficiencies in local Aboriginal land councils and reducing the need for the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council to underwrite their debts. It will shift significantly the costs from administrator appointments to capacity building in the land council network and enable capacity-building assistance to be provided to a much larger number of land councils than currently is the practice. The new capacity-building aspect of the improvement framework both provides a low-cost alternative to the appointment of administrators and long-term savings to the land council network through improved capacity and performance.

I have outlined the major components of the Aboriginal Land Rights Amendment (Local Aboriginal Land Councils) Bill 2016 relating to performance improvement orders and changes to section 234 of the Land Rights Act that relate to the appointment of advisers. I will now briefly outline further amendments included in the bill that relate to other parts of the Act. Firstly, the amendment to section 52 gives local Aboriginal land councils the discretion to establish, acquire, operate or manage related corporate entities under either the Commonwealth Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 or the Corporations Act 2001 at their discretion. The Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 and the Corporations Act 2001 have different statutory compliance requirements.

This amendment will give local Aboriginal land councils the power to choose how they want to register any corporation associated with the land council, dependent upon their needs and the differing resources and capabilities of each land council. Allowing LALCs to incorporate related entities under the Corporations Act 2001 as well as the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 will provide greater scope and flexibility for LALCs and third parties to set up Aboriginal enterprises. As local land councils are currently prevented from incorporating related entities under the Corporations Act without approval from the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council this amendment will cut onerous regulatory red tape by removing the requirement for New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council to develop and implement a policy for this purpose.

In 2014, this Government enacted amendments to the land rights Act regulating how local Aboriginal land councils transfer any assets to related entities and requiring financial reporting back to the land council on their operations. These measures remain intact. The successful management of corporations by a land council represents a significant step towards the economic prosperity of the land councils, financial independence and benefit to members of the land councils, and better engagement with the mainstream economy. I say again, the improvement framework which is the linchpin of this amendment bill works on improving land council capacity for economic development and participation.

Additional and minor amendments are being made to section 231 of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act to clarify the powers of administrators in relation to boards when the terms of their appointment are extended, and to section 223B to clarify powers of interim administrators to make clear that appointees can exercise all or

specific functions of LALCs or LALC boards or exercise only specific parts of those functions. This adds to the flexibility of appointments by enabling specific assistance or interventions. The costs of interim administrators will be paid by the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council with the discretion to recover costs from the local Aboriginal land council concerned. Their terms of appointments can be varied when being extended, allowing for a flexible and graduated return to full self-administration.

The measures provided for in this bill will significantly benefit the land rights network and, by extension, Aboriginal communities throughout New South Wales. The bill will do so by providing a mechanism in the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 for early interventions in the affairs of local Aboriginal land councils to build their governance capacity and provide a less interventionist and less costly alternative to appointing administrators where land councils have fallen into significant non-compliance with the Act or are not performing as expected. It will lead to reduced costs funded by the ALRA network or, at the least, be cost neutral by improving operational efficiencies in local Aboriginal land councils and reduce the need for the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council to underwrite land council debts. That is, money currently being spent on costly administrators will be redirected to capacity-building initiatives at a lower cost and with wider application to better the outcomes for the Aboriginal community of New South Wales. I therefore proudly commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Private Members' Statements

MING YUE LAY TEMPLE THIRTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (17:26): On 23 October I was honoured to attend the Ming Yue Lay Temple's thirty-fifth anniversary dinner. The Ming Yue Lay Temple is situated in Bonnyrigg in my electorate of Cabramatta. It is probably the second-largest temple in New South Wales and the largest in metropolitan Sydney. I have had a long relationship with this temple since my first days of being elected to Fairfield council almost 30 years ago and having lived in Bonnyrigg from a young age. I remember when the temple was a much smaller premises. I remember when it was just a farm owned by a Yugoslav man who did market gardening on the property long before the temple bought it in the 1950s.

Over the years the temple expanded into a massive place of worship not only for the local Asian community in Cabramatta but for Buddhist worshippers from all over Sydney, including the inner west and the north shore. This expansion is due to the hard work of the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society that administers the temple. I congratulate chairman James Chan, OAM, and president Vincent Kong for their leadership over the years and the hard work that is involved in running and building such a beautiful place of worship. It would be remiss of me not to mention other leaders of the temple such as senior vice-president Sen Huynh, treasurer Jensen Tran, Tony Trinh, Allan Vuong, Madam Ma, Hong Wong and many other good friends of mine on the executive committee.

Each week the temple provides chanting of Buddhist sutras led by the abbot and the monks of the temple and ably supported by the clergy who all don black robes and chant for hours on end. The temple also invites schools from all over Sydney to visit, not to convert the students but to open their eyes to different cultures and show that we can all coexist peacefully and harmoniously. In the Buddhist religion, every first and fifteenth days of the lunar month are days of celebration. Thus a gigantic logistical operation takes place every two weeks, from the temple bus drivers who transport the elderly all day between the temple and Cabramatta Station to the kitchen staff who slave away behind hot stoves to provide free noodles to the public and worshippers and the team of volunteers in purple shirts who cook and sell extra desserts and sweets to assist the temple with fundraising. Events such as the Chinese New Year, Buddha's Birthday, the Hungry Ghost Festival, the Ching Ming Festival and many others make for an extremely busy temple that regularly services thousands of community members on each of those days.

I acknowledge some of the unsung heroes of the temple: the administration and caretaker staff who front up first every day and are the last to leave every evening. Anita Leong is the manager of the temple and basically knows everything that is going on. Without Anita, I am sure the temple would not operate. She is ably assisted by the temple office team including Katie Yang and Nancy Phung. They keep the wheels of the temple turning. Their commitment to their job and the community is phenomenal. I also acknowledge the contributions of the caretakers over many years, led by Keong and Oscar. Oscar came to Australia in the 1970s when he was seeking political asylum from South America. I wish the temple and the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society a further 35 years of success and prosperity. I thank all the volunteers, staff and committee who have built the temple into what it is today.

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE LOWER NORTH COAST REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (17:29): I acknowledge the work of the lower North Coast zone of the NSW Rural Fire Service for the amazing work it has done over the past three days in containing a fire that has burned through 4,700 hectares around the Kundabung area of the Oxley electorate, which I am proud to represent. Fire crews were on the ground between the south of Kempsey and Crescent Head, supported by four fixed-wing aircraft and two helicopters under the management of lower North Coast manager Lachlan Ison and the famous NSW Rural Fire Service Kundabung Brigade. They were also supported by many generous volunteers from the district. They have done an incredible job in difficult circumstances. Yesterday the situation got a little bit hairy when there was an unexpected turn in the wind. The community has supported the back-burning that has occurred.

I was in contact with Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons on Sunday morning and he told me that a section 44 had been declared. I was also in contact with Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers. The NSW Rural Fire Service is a wonderful organisation that is maintained and held together by its brigade and a band of volunteers that are second to none. As of 4.35 p.m. this evening, the fire was declared as controlled and the situation has become easier than it was a couple of days ago. I congratulate all those involved. I appreciate the work they have done to keep the community safe. I have spoken to the Minister for the Environment, who is also concerned because that area has a large population of koalas. Dogs and cars are the greatest threats to koalas during bushfires. It is important that we understand the impact the bushfire has had on the local koala population.

I now turn to one of my favourite topics of discussion, which is regional development. It is said that the bigger cities become the more insular they are. Day after day this truism becomes increasingly apparent in Sydney. We have the regular weekend clamour for real estate, gridlocks, an ever-present demand for more and bigger transport infrastructure, and the increasing costs of business expansion. Whilst this Government is responding well to those needs, we can do much more. I congratulate wholeheartedly the Minister for Regional Development, John Barilaro, on his announcement yesterday. Business must respond in a more positive way to relieve the pressures that commuters and those living in Sydney experience by promoting the financial and lifestyle benefits of living in a regional area.

On the mid North Coast at Kempsey, Wauchope, Macksville, Bellingen, Urunga, Nambucca Heads and many other towns from Taree to Grafton, there is an abundance of high-quality and affordable housing. It has light industrial land that is well serviced and is adjacent to major rail and road freight corridors. The land is approximately 75 per cent cheaper than industrial land in Western Sydney. It has a loyal and eager workforce that has a cost of living that is no doubt 30 per cent cheaper than that in Sydney. One of the challenges for businesses in Sydney is having to pay upwards of \$100,000 a year for workers to live in Sydney. People can have a great lifestyle on the mid North Coast for \$60,000 to \$70,000. There is an array of options for primary, secondary and tertiary education. It has modern, high-speed telecommunications and vast sporting fields that are run by local volunteers who manage the most incredible sporting groups. It also has first-class health services, with a new hospital in Kempsey and a hospital being built in Macksville.

The business community should look outside their neighbourhood and see what can be achieved for their workforces in our communities. When considering cost competitiveness, businesses can gain many benefits if they were established on the North Coast. The cost of land is approximately 75 per cent less than land in Sydney. Businesses can have a payroll that is not under the pressure of supporting the lifestyle demands of Sydney employees. Business must do more. This Government is spending a fantastic amount of money creating a motorway on the Pacific Highway, with \$3.2 billion being spent in the electorate of Oxley. I beg business to look at the regional development framework that was released by Minister Barilaro yesterday. It is designed to grow regional business confidence, create jobs and encourage business investment. It is the first of its kind and lays a platform for the future. Regional New South Wales is leading the nation on jobs growth, but there is much more that we can do. Two high schools in Kempsey are servicing only half the population for which they were intended. Let us fill those high schools and communities and provide people with a better lifestyle.

DURAL MEN'S SHED

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill) (17:35): It is with great pleasure that I update the House on the work being done by the Dural Men's Shed. The philosophy at the Men's Shed is simple. It is a place for older guys to have a chat and make some good mates while keeping busy and helping others along the way. The incidental effect of older men engaging with their mates about any problems they may have is that their health improves. Older men experience higher incidents of physical health concerns. An environment that encourages early intervention is vital to men getting health checks, which will prevent problems from getting too serious. The Dural Men's Shed, however, goes one step further. It encourages its members to spend one-third of their time on charity and community projects, one-third maintaining the shed, and one-third on personal projects.

This outlook has provoked the shed to team up with Whitelion to deliver a program that encourages intergenerational mentoring. It is providing a fantastic conduit between disaffected youth from areas of Western Sydney who are looking for purpose and encouragement and older blokes who bring life experience and companionship. This particular model of intergenerational mentoring has the potential to solve an enormous amount of society's problems, especially with troubled youth. The problems of our youth, particularly young boys, can alter the path they take, which may ultimately lead them to a life of crime or a stint in jail. Early intervention is not difficult for this group of older men who have spare time on their hands and who want to help the younger generation. The program was launched in 2013.

Every Friday a group of young boys from across Western Sydney spend the day attending a carpentry program with mentors from the Men's Shed. They learn life and practical skills from their older male mentors. By the end of each semester the team has created a large item, such as a rocking horse or pool table, or smaller items such as cricket bats, which can be taken home or donated to a charity for children. The program is helping young men regain their sense of purpose. They learn to use the machinery and to build something with their own hands, which gives them a great appreciation of personal achievement. The program is having incredible results. Whitelion not only introduces the group of boys, it maintains contact with them after the program so that it can track their progress and provide additional support, if necessary. Almost every participant—there are now more than 60 participants in total—has returned to school or TAFE to complete years 11 and 12, has gained an apprenticeship or traineeship, or is now in some form of gainful employment. Those results speak for themselves and are a testament to the effectiveness of intergenerational mentoring.

To highlight a few examples, Jessey, from the class of 2013, went on to undertake a bricklaying apprenticeship. Joe, who is from the same class, completed a cabinet-making course, started working as a carpenter and is also at TAFE completing years 11 and 12. Kirsten, who is also from the same class, went on to gain an apprenticeship in hospitality and started working after completing the program. Alen, Mario, Salwan, Nicholas, Tam, Kevin and Sarkis, who are all from the class of 2014, went back to school to complete year 12. James, who is also from the class of 2014, gained an apprenticeship in automotive mechanics. Jason, who is from the class of 2015, went on to complete his certificate II and year 10 equivalent, and is now doing his Certificate II in Digital Media and Technology. Whitelion State manager Kellie Hinton said:

They're great kids with lots of potential and this is just about connecting them with people who take an interest in them. I believe that these Men's Sheds are a bit of an untapped resource. These men are retired, and they have a lot of knowledge and skills and they want to pass it on. I think one of the great things about programs like this is they provide that sense of community that we don't have as much anymore. This is a way of reconnecting. I also take this opportunity to thank Anh Nguyen at Whitelion for his incredible work in helping the boys who struggle in life to get back to normal education, complete training and gain employment. On a larger scale, I commend this Government for its vision to take advantage of the infrastructure boom and in mandating that a percentage of the workforce be apprentices, trainees, women, Indigenous Australians and individuals under 25 years of age. A few weeks back I had the pleasure of joining with the Premier, the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and Minister for Skills at the Metro Northwest stabling yard behind Rouse Hill to see firsthand how this initiative has changed the lives of Jory, April, Evan and Jye—just four of the 15,000 workers that the Sydney Metro project will employ.

This initiative is giving people the opportunity to learn from some of our best engineers and construction workers on some of the biggest and most exciting projects in this country. Another example is the WestConnex Training Academy, which is helping Indigenous Australians, the long-term unemployed and people who have encountered barriers to employment to gain on-site experience and credentials. One of the participants, Greystanes local Jessica Smith, who is a proud Indigenous Australian, said:

This will change my life and I feel like I'm building a future for myself.

While this is on a larger scale, the desired outcome is the same: Young people need the opportunity to have a job, and feel a sense of empowerment and purpose. The Dural Men's Shed in particular utilises the wonderful resources of our aging population and, through the benefits of intergenerational mentoring, provides hope to so many young people. This Government does not leave anybody behind, especially those who want to have a go themselves.

LAKEMBA PUBLIC SCHOOLS MAINTENANCE BACKLOG

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (17:40): The crumbling state of schools across New South Wales has worsened under the Baird Government, with the school maintenance backlog growing by more than \$43 million in just 12 months. In particular, I would like to talk about the electorate of Lakemba and some of its specific issues. There are 15 Government schools in the Lakemba electorate, and four schools have maintenance backlogs in excess of \$1 million. An additional seven schools have a backlog in excess of \$500,000, whilst there is only one on the lowest end, with a backlog of \$10,000. Combined, the electorate of Lakemba's public schools have a maintenance backlog of \$8,455,000. That is an increase. We need to talk about these sorts of things.

Ms Leslie Williams: How much?

Mr JIHAD DIB: It is \$43 million over 12 months. A wide range of works is needed across New South Wales. These are pretty simple things, which I will say more about later. These are not for luxury items but for things like upgrading toilets and sewers; replacing carpet; painting classrooms, hallways and halls; fixing damaged roofs; installing guttering; replacing windows and other general repairs. These are not luxury items; these are the maintenance of simple items that we would expect to find in a place of education. We talk about schools because we send our kids to school and we expect that they will be treated in the best manner possible. This follows a series of appalling revelations about school overcrowding that we uncovered during budget estimates—one-third of the schools in our State are overcrowded. That is just the headlines.

The numbers are really large, and in some cases they are shocking. But I want to talk about what these numbers mean to students, teachers, members of the support staff, principals or parents who send their children to these schools. What does it feel like, over one, two, three, four, five or six years, to work and learn in an environment that feels second rate? Principals have a number of different experiences. I have spoken to some of them in preparation for this speech. Some of them talk about a sense of frustration with the bureaucracy. They can see very clearly that things need to be done, but the budget that is given to schools does not meet their needs. In other words, a school may require \$300,000 to \$400,000 worth of maintenance but the budget may be anywhere between \$40,000 and \$50,000, depending on the size of the school. So there is a massive disparity between the need and the budget.

Those on the opposite side of the Chamber couch it in terms such as "Local Schools, Local Decisions", but the principals have to decide whether they will scrimp and save in one area to invest money in another area. Schools should not be put in a position of having to make a choice between having a safe learning environment or having quality teaching materials. That is not something that we should accept. The Government should not say that it is giving schools the right to make choices, but not give them enough resources. So we invariably have this "old dead dog" syndrome, where you see, over and again something that is run down. The first day you notice it. The second day you notice it, but a week later you just keep moving along. Someone who walks through the doors for the very first time, however, notices how bad it is.

This is not about capital works; this is about maintenance. It is about peeling paint, threadbare carpets, and heating and cooling. This is about what makes a school safe and presentable. We know that environments that are conducive to learning are incredibly important. Not only do we need outstanding teachers, well-resourced schools, a very strong curriculum, proper assessment and whatever else; we also need an environment that is very conducive to learning. But when you look around you see that this is not always the case. I know, firsthand, that principals and school communities do the very best they can with what they have. They do not like to complain; they just accept that this is their lot in life.

There is no way that, as a local member of Parliament for my electorate of Lakemba, I can see a nearly \$8.5 million maintenance backlog and pretend that it is okay. It is not okay. Only last week I was in Lakemba Public School. Although the school community was trying hard to improve the school it was really disappointing to see the condition of the place. The principal did not complain. The parents did not complain, but we know that it is not acceptable and that we have to do something about it. We have to make sure that these issues are addressed as soon as possible and that the Government levels with people. Instead of saying that it has contributed an extra \$360 million; the Government says that it took it to \$360 million.

LAKE MACQUARIE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (17:45): I have raised in this House previously the planned Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange [LMTI] and associated works, which includes construction of the Pennant Street Bridge, the extension of Stockland Drive, and a new rail station and associated infrastructure. I wish to do so again and add to the discussion the much-needed nearby Munibung Road extension, which will complete the local road network and, in conjunction with the LMTI, deliver huge opportunities for the region. In May 2011, I informed the House that the plan for the LMTI had been unanimously endorsed by the mayors of the 11 Hunter region councils. They said the interchange plan was their major regional priority, as did the Hunter Business Chamber and many other key business and community groups.

In the newly released Hunter Regional Plan 2036, development of the interchange and the development of Glendale are listed as key objectives that would provide not just transport and road traffic solutions, but many thousands of new jobs in a strategic gateway to Newcastle. Chief among the benefits is the creation of a huge new employment zone in the Cardiff industrial area. The demographically central location offers a great deal to the region, underpinned by new connectivity to the main road network. Development of the interchange is seen as a critical factor for many people in determining their use of public transport, and the Pennant Street Bridge will enhance access to that major transport hub. I should note that the State Government has made a \$15 million commitment to the project's first stage, with significant contributions also coming from the Federal Government and Lake Macquarie City Council. I thank them for those contributions.

But that is where it ends, and that is also where another crucial deficiency begins. That crucial unresolved aspect is the extension of Munibung Road, which is essential to expanding the Cardiff industrial estate and resolving traffic congestion in the area. Land for the road extension became available through redevelopment of the former Pasmenco lead smelter site. The extension of Munibung Road would essentially connect the existing estate at Cardiff with Lake Road—Main Road B53—at Boolaroo. It would reduce travel times for vehicles travelling between Cardiff and Boolaroo and significantly reduce congestion at existing pinch points at Glendale, Argenton and Cardiff.

To give a further example, if someone from a business currently located at the western end of the existing Cardiff industrial estate on Munibung Road wanted to travel to Speers Point it would take 11 minutes. If Munibung Road were extended, it would take only one minute. As I mentioned previously, Lake Road at Glendale is currently a pinch point for high traffic congestion during peak times. It carries some 27,700 vehicle movements per day, or 2,800 per hour in peak time. Roads and Maritime Services estimates that this will swell to 35,000 per day by 2030.

The major deficiency in the road network is clearly the 700-metre road extension. With a total project cost of about \$6.3 million and some \$1.6 million provided in kind by the administrators of the Pasmenco site, Ferrier Hodgson, for land acquisition and \$312,000 worth of project management to be provided in kind by Lake Macquarie council, there is a need for \$4.46 million, which I am hoping the State Government can contribute via a Restart NSW funding application already made by Lake Macquarie City Council. The overarching objective of the Munibung Road extension project is to contribute to creating an epicentre of employment and residential growth in the Glendale-Cardiff area.

I should add that that area is described as "the key strategic centre for the Lower Hunter" in both of the State Government's most recent regional planning documents—the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy—and, as I said earlier, the new Hunter Regional Plan 2036. Those documents project that an additional 6,200 jobs and 4,000 new dwellings will be created by 2031 in the Glendale-Cardiff area. Lake Macquarie council's planning estimates predict that the greater Glendale area will host an additional 13,635 people, 6,200 jobs and 6,000 new dwellings by 2030. Traffic and transport infrastructure is absolutely crucial to support that future growth. A \$4.5 million investment by the State Government will provide huge economic returns—not only for the region but also for the State Government.

Nearby in Newcastle, the State Government is spending almost half a billion dollars on a city revitalisation project, most of which is being spent on what I have referred to as a boutique light rail project. While critical of that cost and the overemphasis in State spending on the Newcastle central business district, I am not seeking to undermine the funding commitments to that community. What I am saying is that for far less than the Government is spending in Newcastle, the Government could achieve substantially greater outcomes for many more people with more strategic and, dare I say, much cheaper investments, such as I have described.

I suggest that \$4.5 million for the Munibung Road extension would improve road transport significantly and reduce existing congestion. Funding for the remainder of the transport interchange and the Pennant Street Bridge projects would do far more to improve public transport in the whole Hunter Region than the short and hugely expensive light rail system in Newcastle—a project that has divided the community, unlike the proposed Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange, which has enjoyed broad community support for many years. I again urge the Government to recognise regional and statewide benefits and commit to funding those sensible projects.

SHELLHARBOUR HOSPITAL

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:51): Last Sunday at Benson Basin, more than 1,500 people came together to give a very clear message to the Baird Liberal Government. The message was: Keep Shellharbour Hospital public. I was delighted to be joined by the Labor leader, Luke Foley; the shadow Minister for Health, Walt Secord; the member for Wyong, David Harris; the Labor candidate for the Wollongong by-election, Paul Scully; and the Mayor of Shellharbour, Marianne Saliba. Together we were joined by Unions NSW, the Health Services Union [HSU], and the Nurses and Midwives Association. As I said, more than 1,500 community members gave up part of their Sunday to oppose the Government's plans to privatise the Shellharbour public hospital.

Of course, the one person who could not be bothered attending this community rally was the member for Kiama, Garth Ward. He was invited to attend and to speak at the rally, but simply did not attend. This is very disappointing. The member for Kiama strongly supports the privatisation of the Shellharbour Hospital. He spruiks about it at every opportunity. The Government says there will be more services and that there will be no difference in the treatment of patients. The Government says all of that, yet it will not publicly release any detailed information on the proposed public-private partnership. The Government refuses to release the expressions of interest so that the local community in the southern Illawarra can judge for themselves just how this privatisation will work.

If the Government is so confident of all its assertions, I call on it to publicly release all of the expressions of interest regarding the privatisation of the Shellharbour Hospital. We already know the Government is not confident about doing that because, on the member for Kiama's advice, the Government refused to stand a candidate in this weekend's Wollongong by-election. The Government simply has shirked a chance to put its plans to the vote. The Government is also facing an internal Liberal revolt on its privatisation plans. In the past 24 hours it has come to light that the former Liberal mayor of Shellharbour, Councillor Kellie Marsh—who is a close ally of the member for Kiama—seconded a unanimous resolution at the council meeting on 11 October that called on the council to provide a report on the "feasibility of preparing a planning proposal that would limit operations on the current Shellharbour Hospital site to publicly operated hospitals only."

That resolution follows an earlier resolution carried by the council calling on the Minister for Health to abandon the privatisation of Shellharbour Hospital. This is a very embarrassing development for the member for Kiama. A key ally of his in the Liberal Party simply does not trust or believe in the Government's political spin. Since the Government announced its privatisation plans for five State hospitals, we already have seen it abandon its plan for the Goulburn hospital, which will be upgraded by traditional means. Aside from the 1,500 community members who attended the community rally last Sunday, I have in my possession two folders that contain 1,000 individually signed letters addressed to the Premier and Minister opposing the privatisation of Shellharbour Hospital. I wish to table the folders. More letters are flooding into my office every day from people inside and outside of my electorate who simply do not trust this Government's assertions on the privatisation of the Shellharbour public hospital.

The people of my electorate of Shellharbour who use and love their hospital can smell political BS a mile away in a fog and have not fallen for the Government's spin since the announcement was first made 10 weeks ago. They are not buying the political spin of the member for Kiama. The Government is heading down the wrong path on this issue as well as into a world of political pain. Everyone knows about the Port Macquarie hospital debacle. We do not want the Shellharbour Hospital ending up the same way. I call on the Government, and particularly the member for Kiama, to listen to the community, upgrade the Shellharbour Hospital as the Government promised at the 2015 election, and abandon this privatisation plan now.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Shellharbour that only a Minister is permitted to table documents in this House. The member for Shellharbour is unable to table the folders.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (17:55): There is no privatisation of the Shellharbour Hospital. If the Government was selling the Shellharbour Hospital, the member for Shellharbour's statements would be absolutely correct, but what the member for Shellharbour has done is deliberately continue a campaign of lies about Shellharbour Hospital. Claims have been made about Americanisation; they are not true. As a member of this House who comes from a working-class family, I would never ever support a denial of services to public patients. The proposal is to partner with non-government providers.

I remind members that Labor cut maternity services from the Shellharbour Hospital. There is demand for half the maternity services being provided by the public sector and half the maternity services being provided by the private or non-government sector. Either sector on its own will mean that the people of Shellharbour will not have maternity services, but in a combined effort between those two sectors, we will be able to have not only maternity services but also many other services. The Government's proposal will guarantee public patients that public health care will remain free. Labor is simply repeating the scare campaign it began with medicare. In contrast to that, I will stand up for better health services in the Shellharbour area whereas the member for Shellharbour has not.

QUAKERS HILL LITTLE ATHLETICS CLUB

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (17:56): I will update the House on the Quakers Hill Little Athletics Club, which has been working on my electorate for approximately 28 years and which has been supporting the young people of the district as well as providing them with not only a healthy outlook but also the opportunities by which to improve themselves and reach personal bests. On Friday 28 October I visited Wright Reserve at Quakers Hill to see how the club is operating and the use that the club has made of the grant received from the local sports program of \$2,795, which was sought to add to the club's electronic timing gates. The club had been working on the project for a couple of years to update facilities and to provide the best opportunities for young people in the club. What I saw was very impressive.

On my visit, I saw a well-oiled machine composed of many volunteers and other enthusiastic participants ranging from the youngest, who I believe were only three years old, up to 17-year-olds. The volunteers comprise parents, people who are not parents but rather are volunteers from the community, and some who are parents of children who were formerly members of the club and who have remained in the club as a very useful way of giving back to their community. That well-oiled machine had hundreds of people in motion and engaged in

different activities at the same time. The activities ranged from a sausage sizzle to hurdles to the shot-put right across the park. People were engaging in healthy activity, and children were excelling and receiving acknowledgement for their efforts while parents and other volunteers were contributing to the wellbeing of those young people. It was a fabulous sight.

It seems that that wonderful effort happens every Friday night throughout the season at Wright Reserve in Quakers Hill. In 2015-16 the club had a very successful season. I will cite part of the report of the president, Scott Kitto, who said that of the more than 450 athletes who were members of the club that year, 129 attended the zone carnival with 90 athletes qualifying for the regional championships and 23 qualifying for the State championships. At the State championships, the club achieved two gold medals, two new State records and three bronze medals. To Mr Kitto's knowledge, that was the most success at a State carnival in the club's 28-year history. It is a pleasure to report that the Quakers Hill Little Athletics Centre is going from strength to strength and continues to serve the young people of the district so well. As I said, I am impressed with the volunteers who make this club operate. The generous efforts of volunteers make so many sports clubs possible. In his report Scott Kitto also said:

Of course we also need to recognise the parents who step up week after week to help set up, pack up, entertain the kids in their downtime and in particular to those who go that extra mile and volunteer to age manage a group. These "Wiggles" in red shirts are an integral part of our club and we are very grateful to them all.

It is wonderful to hear of such generosity. We all grew up knowing about the generosity of volunteers working throughout our communities, but we can take their generosity for granted. I do not want this generosity taken for granted and that is why I am acknowledging it tonight. I thank the committee members of the Quakers Hill Little Athletics Centre for the current year: Mark Elliott, David Smith, Sharon Allen, Kathy Clarke, Tarnya New, Debra Wicks, Ray Berwick, Todd Scicluna, Kelly Thompson, Yvette Smith, Scott Douglas, Maggi Roynon, Vince Di Fabrizio, Lisa Smith, Dan O'Shea and Peter Hewitson.

I also thank all the other volunteers who make activities at the club possible. We know healthy activity encouraged by Little Athletics clubs is a counter to the risk of childhood obesity. These clubs provide a healthy outlet for all young people and add an element of family involvement in group activity, where parents and older siblings can assist in the running of the clubs. This bonding experience builds communities in recognising the efforts of those involved and giving kids a sense of achievement for what they have done. It is a healthy activity, and I commend Quakers Hill Little Athletics Centre for continuing to serve the people of Quakers Hill.

AUSTRALASIAN HELLENIC EDUCATIONAL PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:01): On Sunday 28 August I had the pleasure of participating in celebrations to mark 82 years of the Australian Hellenic Educational Progressive Association of New South Wales, commonly referred to as AHEPA NSW. I thank the Grand Lodge President, John Kallimanis, and all of the team at AHEPA NSW for organising the event and for the wonderful work they do in our community. I acknowledge the Hon. Sophie Cotsis, a former member of the Legislative Council, who attended the event because of her strong connection with AHEPA NSW.

Now in its eighty-second year AHEPA NSW is part of the largest Hellenic diaspora organisation in the world. The Greek diaspora is one of the oldest and most significant communities in the world. Historically, they have had a strong presence throughout parts of Europe. Today there are chapters in the United States, Canada, Greece, Cyprus, New Zealand and across Europe, but the New South Wales chapter of AHEPA is very much committed to, as its mission states, the promotion of the Australasian Hellenic ideals of education, philanthropy, civil responsibility, family and individual excellence, as well as community involvement.

The organisation implements the principles of the mission statement by supporting and undertaking fundraising activities for vital medical research, providing care and financial assistance over the years to the aged and disadvantaged. The work of AHEPA NSW also ensures that all Hellenic-Australians, and those with an interest, have access to cultural, educational and social activities, which strengthens the community and its ties with the St George area. AHEPA is steeped in history with its establishment in the United States in 1922 by Greek-Americans to protect Hellenes from prejudice and discrimination. The establishment of such a group provided protection for Hellenic people and their culture. It was a place of comfort to those seeking to establish a life in a new country with different laws, traditions and expectations. These Hellenic-Americans went on to build successful lives, open businesses, raise families and participate in American life, but as with the experience of many migrants it was hard work and at times difficult and challenging.

The Australian story is similar to the American story, with the New South Wales chapter formed in 1934 outside of Tamworth but is now at home in the area that I represent in the St George community. I cannot help but wonder what was discussed at that first meeting in Werris Creek, south-west of Tamworth in May 1934. I am sure it involved prayer, the sharing of a meal and a commitment to maintain the Hellenic culture as new lives were

established and built in New South Wales. The meeting in May 1934 may not have been as structured as AHEPA meetings are today, but I am sure those early discussions and sharing of ideas have played a significant part in the current objectives of AHEPA NSW.

AHEPA NSW believes strongly in the principle of loyalty and patriotism to Australia, supporting its Constitution, obeying its laws and respecting its history and traditions. These objectives are at the heart of the organisation and are evident in the charitable causes AHEPA NSW supports including raising funds for the Variety Children's Charity and the Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation. By nurturing Hellenic history and culture AHEPA NSW contributes much to the welfare and needs of some of the most vulnerable people in our community. In 2017 AHEPA NSW will begin a new chapter as it relocates its headquarters to the Bexley Bowling and Community Club.

I am confident that AHEPA NSW's new home in Bexley will embody the rich tradition and history of the its people and will continue to promote Hellenic culture as well as fundraising for charities, and promoting education and dialogue in New South Wales. What started as a co-operation of small businesses has grown into a community committed to the principles of Hellenism. The ideals of freedom and democracy are at the core of this, and AHEPA NSW works tirelessly through forums, conferences and symposiums to educate people on these matters. The focus on charitable work was evident at the national convention, which representatives from across Australia attended. During the convention a genuine commitment was made to continue to raise funds for Australian and international charities in excess of \$250,000 per annum, once again demonstrating a deep and lasting desire to service children and communities in need.

I hope that the bonds created by AHEPA NSW continue to strengthen through cultural exchange, fundraising and community events. The Hellenic people have proven themselves to be resilient, triumphant and capable, and Australia is lucky that many have chosen to call this beautiful place home and bring with them their culture, family, traditions and strong work ethic. I wish the President, John Kallimanis, members John Theodoridis and Bill Skandalakis, and all members of AHEPA NSW and their families the best as they celebrate 82 years, but more importantly I wish all associated with AHEPA NSW a prosperous and bright future.

JUVENILE DETENTION

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (18:06): Like most Australians, I reacted with horror to the revelations of child abuse in detention centres in the Northern Territory. The images from the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre shocked and appalled the nation—images of boys being tear-gassed, or stripped and tied to chairs, their faces covered with hoods; or the fact that some were left in solitary confinement for up to 17 days. At the time, I called on the Government to assure New South Wales citizens that what we saw at Don Dale did not and could not happen here. There were calls from others for the royal commission in the Northern Territory to be expanded to all States, so we could be assured children caught up in juvenile detention are being rehabilitated and properly cared for, especially Indigenous kids who disproportionately populate our detention centres. I and others made those calls because we understand that there is simply no circumstance in which subjecting young people to solitary confinement or bouts of isolation is acceptable. Yet that is exactly what we now know has occurred in New South Wales.

A fundamental tenet of our society is that we have entered a pact. We respect and celebrate our freedoms, but can be forced to surrender them if we break the law or cause harm to another person. What is often forgotten is that although we may lose our freedom, we do not lose our rights. For a young person caught up in the law, detention should be the last resort. It should be one of many options, all focused on rehabilitation and helping that young person to realise their full potential in our community. For that to occur, our justice system must be focused on preventing criminal activity in the first place, on diverting young people from detention and if there is no alternative to detention, ensuring they leave more equipped than when they go in. Those aims are achieved by properly investing in our justice system, by investing in our communities to address the root causes of crime, by adequately funding diversionary programs like the merit and credit programs, by properly funding mental health and addiction services and by making sure that those in detention are offered quality education. And for young people, those aims are achieved by helping them better understand empathy and their connection to other people.

The practice of solitary confinement or locking kids in isolation is diametrically opposed to that approach—it teaches them nothing and only causes greater harm. Like the many residents who wrote to me about this issue, I was frankly disgusted to learn that young people have been subjected to isolation whilst in detention in New South Wales. We have now learned that children have been kept in isolation for up to 23 hours. We know that at least one detainee spent 166 days in isolation—that is, 166 days without meaningful contact with another human being. We know that two young men are planning legal action after being subjected to long periods of isolation as recently as in the past few months. One cut his own face after a period of isolation and, tragically, the other attempted to take his own life by hanging himself with his shorts. This is all at the same time as the Minister

for Corrections claimed in budget estimates hearings that solitary confinement and isolation were not practised here.

I welcome the Minister's decision to launch a review into the practice of solitary confinement and I welcome the announcement of a \$1 million fund to help high-risk offenders. But the community is right to ask questions about how the Minister failed to know that this was happening in juvenile detention in this State. The community is right to ask why the practice is being used at all. The community is right to ask where this Government's priorities lie when it has permitted this to happen, while at the same time cutting funding for the CREDIT program and outsourcing education services in our prisons. The community is right to ask whether we are doing anything to close the gap regarding Indigenous incarceration rates, particularly now that those rates are worse than after the royal commission 25 years ago.

I call on the Minister to launch a full inquiry into youth detention, because these questions deserve answers. An internal review may have provided the Minister with the information he should have had back in September, but the community rightly deserves to know more. We want to know what the Minister knew and when he knew it, and we want to know how juvenile detention in New South Wales really measures up against best practice. But, most of all, we want to know how we can stop failing our young people.

NUNDLE COURTHOUSE MUSEUM

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (18:11): It was with great pride that I joined the Nundle community, including Nundle Public School, on 2 November to officially open the Nundle Courthouse Museum following a \$50,000 renovation. The funding was made available through the New South Wales Government's Community Building Partnership, and the \$48,872 for the project will see the historic building preserved for many years to come. Our history is who we are, which is why it is so important for the Government to invest in projects like the refurbishment of the Nundle Courthouse Museum. The Nundle District Lions Club does an incredible job looking after the iconic building, and I am proud to be able to support it in these vital upgrades. The refurbishment included carpeting, installing new remote-controlled blinds, structural work, painting, waterproofing and replacing parts of the guttering—so there will definitely be some notable changes for visitors. It really is a wonderful snapshot of Nundle's history and I highly commend anyone who has not been there to take a drive and see it. Nundle Lions Club Secretary Stephen Millar was at the opening, and said:

The renovation will protect the valuable historical collection, stabilise the building and provide a more comfortable experience for visitors.

The nineteenth century colonial building was built by local builder George Davidson in 1880. Nundle District Lions Club took over custody of the building in 1988 to use it as a museum. The collection includes farm equipment, kitchenware, furniture, clothing and information relating to the 1948 aircraft crash on Crawney Mountain. I congratulate the Nundle community on its efforts in making sure that Nundle stays at the front of the mind of anyone who decides to tour the great New England north-west. Nundle is a progressive community, and I congratulate it on its approach. The Nundle Courthouse Museum is open on Saturdays from 10.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. and on Sundays from 12.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (18:14): Wollondilly in the Southern Highlands is a great place to live, work and raise a family. We are not quite country and not quite city. We are a large agricultural producer, particularly in the area of beef. We are the custodians and protectors of Australian farmers, with scientists from Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute tackling issues such as myrtle rust and dealing with equine influenza. We are one of the largest coal producers. We are home to many small businesses. We are the tourist capital of New South Wales, with the Southern Highlands hosting Tulip Time and Wollondilly hosting the Thirlmere Festival of Steam, to name but a few events. We have many beautiful natural areas to visit, such as Dharawal, Thirlmere Lakes and Nattai national parks, and great places to visit, such as Mowbray Park and K Ranch. We are also the source of more than 80 per cent of Sydney's drinking water.

Under Labor, Wollondilly and the Southern Highlands were neglected. Since I have been the member for Wollondilly and since this Government was elected this is no longer the case, with billions of dollars invested in delivering much-needed services and infrastructure for the region. Some of the things achieved only recently include: planning for Bowral Hospital upgrade, with construction to commence in 2017; delivering 10 classrooms for Wilton Public School and eight classrooms for Bowral Public School; ensuring all our schools having flashing lights; providing additional funding for all our schools under the Gonski reforms; upgrading the intersection of Hume Highway and Picton Road; commencing construction of a new bridge for Willow Vale; planning for a new bridge at Range Road, Mittagong; opening a new service centre in the Southern Highlands; allocating money for upgrades to roads, including Wilson Drive, Hill Top, Drapers Road, Colo Vale, and Oaks Road, Thirlmere; grants

to Wollondilly and Wingecarribee shire councils to help them repair local roads; planning to heighten the wall at Warragamba Dam; and committing to fund Wollondilly Shire Council to reopen council-owned Broughton Pass.

I could spend all day informing the House of what has been achieved; however, I now inform the House of what I am working on. This includes: advocating for a new Wollondilly link road connecting Wilton-Maldon to Picton-Tahmoor to help with traffic congestion; securing funding for Wingecarribee Adult Day Care Centre extension; fighting for a curfew at Badgerys Creek airport; providing even more funding to council for Silverdale Road; establishing Bargo National Park; providing more mental health services for our region; and convincing all levels of government to provide incentives for people who have land to use for agricultural purposes. It is easy to say that we have zoned land for agricultural purposes, but without incentives it is hard for people with land to create new agricultural ventures.

I am currently working to: eliminate mobile and internet blackspots, with the Federal Government; put more train services on the Southern Highlands line; secure more multi-category classes for our primary and secondary schools; encourage governments to protect our food bowl; further secure our water supplies by building new dams and/or linking more dams together interstate and intrastate so as not to waste water during floods; invest more in sporting groups and facilities and in the arts; further upgrade Appin Road; ensure the Northern Road is completely upgraded to two lanes; secure funding for Music for the Brain to help people with dementia; secure more police for our local area commands; provide a pedestrian crossing and bus shelter at Tahmoor, with council; create a Sports Centre of Excellence at Wollondilly; establish a business park to attract businesses and create new jobs; establish a science centre to cater for the region; deliver bus services to Wollongong; complete the Maldon-Dombarton line and make it both a passenger and a freight line.

I am working on securing a paediatric hospital; upgrading all old Rural Fire Service sheds in Wollondilly and the Southern Highlands; increasing ambulance staff and crews; ensuring that all baby clinics remain open; ensuring every train station has wheelchair access; providing more sewerage connections to towns without them; providing more parking for Bowral central business district and Bowral Hospital; providing a new bridge for Hill Top. I am investigating options to upgrade the entire length of Wilson Drive; funding stage 2 of the Bowral Distributor; upgrading facilities and picnic grounds for Hill Top, Colo Vale, Yerrinbool and Yanderra; and lobbying to have Wollondilly and Wingecarribee local government areas declared a special economic zone for reduced government taxes. This would attract new businesses, create employment, and alleviate pressure on existing businesses, allowing them to expand.

I am also currently working to: deliver a new public high school for Wollondilly; investigate the need for a new public high school at Mittagong; duplicate Appin Road and/or build a new road from Appin Road to Menangle Road; investigate the feasibility of duplicating Picton Road; secure a new entertainment centre; investigate the need for a rail trail from the northern villages of the Southern Highlands to Thirlmere; dedicate land to build a TAFE; lobby and provide incentives for a university to be built in the region; help council to increase flood mitigation works at Picton; open Warragamba Dam to the public all year round; restore walking tracks and the suspension bridge at Warragamba Dam to promote tourism; allow horseriding in our national parks; electrify our train line; extend the South West Rail Link to Camden and Campbelltown; widen the Hume Highway from Wollondilly to Southern Highlands; and reserve land for a future hospital. This is just a snapshot of things that are important to our region and to me. I continue to work hard with the community on these projects. Wollondilly and the Southern Highlands deserve nothing less.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:19 until Wednesday
9 November 2016 at 10:00.**