



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 10 November 2016

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 10 November 2016

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

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Documents

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

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

- (1) Financial Audit Report, Volume Five 2016, received this day and authorised to be printed.
- (2) Special Report entitled "Fraud Survey", dated November 2016, received this day and authorised to be printed.

[Notices of motions given.]

Motions

CENTENARY OF ANZAC

Debate resumed from 21 September 2016.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (10:19): Anzac Day is an important day not only for the nation but also for small local communities, such as my local Macarthur region, which were permanently changed as a result of the First World War. Anzac Day officially marks the anniversary of the first major military action in which Australian forces were involved at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. The day is significant not only as a commemoration of the bravery of soldiers who fought and sacrificed their lives for their country but also as a pivotal event that shaped Australia's national identity.

Before the Great War, Australia was a new federation and had not yet proved itself as independent from England. The country's history and culture was closely tied to the British Empire, and the question remained unresolved as to whether the different States and Territories of Australia could perform as one unit in a practical way. The Gallipoli campaign created that unity through the values of mateship and courage that were shared by the troops. When the Anzacs were pulled out of Gallipoli, more than 8,000 soldiers were killed. That had a profound impact on the home front given that Australia, despite its small population, suffered heavy casualties. Although the Australian nation was still very young, the First World War became a significant cornerstone of our heritage that is still acknowledged today.

Since the first anniversary of the Gallipoli landing in 1916, Anzac Day commemorations have been a fundamental ritual in our national calendar. First commemorated with simple marches, it has developed over the years as a national public holiday involving dawn vigils, marches, reunions and, of course, the obligatory two-up games. The commemoration is no longer restricted to those who died in the First World War but, by extension, any serviceman or servicewoman who has lost their life in any military or peacekeeping operation in which Australia has been involved. It is a day on which all Australians reflect on past and current sacrifices. It also encourages citizens to be active participants in our national history by recognising their own qualities in light of the Anzac spirit. The Anzac legend demonstrates that, despite the grave hardships experienced by Australians, we managed to overcome the odds and significantly contribute to the outcome of the war.

In the Macarthur region, the legacy of Anzac is a strong component of local civic life and heritage. Like people in many other cities and towns across Australia, the people in our area actively supported the war effort through recruitment, training troops, and taking on obligations on the home front. Today, the Macarthur area actively commemorates the efforts and losses sustained in global conflicts whether it be through the work of community groups, memorials, or the general respect of ordinary citizens. Each year our community commemorates the fallen with dawn services and day services at an array of memorials around the city. A special Anzac Day march down Queen Street and a commemoration service at Mawson Park attract hundreds of people from all walks of life who gather to pay their respects. A moving dawn service is also held at Ingleburn RSL Club, which draws crowds of young and old to reflect on our nation's history and to pay their respects to current and former serving men and women of the Armed Forces.

A typical service includes hymns, prayers, addresses by key members of the community, singing of the national anthem, performance of the Ode and the last post, a period of silence, and the laying of the wreaths by local schools and community groups. It is a day when the people of Macarthur, no matter their age or experience in warfare, pay their respects to the fallen. Community groups also exist to uphold the significance of the Anzacs throughout the year. The Ingleburn RSL and Liverpool RSL sub-branches play a vital role in the Macarthur community, assisting with commemorative services and fundraising efforts. The Ingleburn RSL Sub-Branch hosts the annual Anzac Day dawn service in its Memorial Garden Complex, and breakfast is served in the club after the service. The event continues to grow each year, with students from local schools participating, and key addresses are made at the event by local high school students.

The RSL sub-branch at Ingleburn was formed in 1926 by ex-servicemen at Ingleburn Memorial Park. Members cultivated roses and hedges and planted palms, and an obelisk was constructed. During the Great Depression, the sub-branch was instrumental in delivering parcels to the needy, visiting the homeless along the Georges River, and undertaking house repairs and construction. With the onset of the Second World War, the sub-branch assisted with farewell functions for soldiers. The involvement of local RSL sub-branches has been significant not only in the commemoration of Anzac Day but also in practical activities and better town projects that keep building on the positive vibes of the community. During the Second World War, a training facility at the Bardia Barracks was used as a camp for the troops of the Second Australian Imperial Force [AIF]. It was also used as a training camp for the soldiers who fought in the Korean and Vietnam wars. Despite the closure of the barracks, a vertical stone tablet stands today as a memorial to those who died while posted to the barracks.

Our Anzac history is also commemorated and prevalent at our local schools. Many Anzacs came from Glenfield, which is home to Hurlstone Agricultural High School and its memorial forest. Ingleburn North Public School was renamed Bardia Public School to reflect our local and proud military history. Hurlstone Agricultural High School's memorial forest is one of Australia's first living war memorials and is also one of the most significant parts of the school because it is intimately connected with the school's history and legacy. Former student and Victoria Cross winner John Edmondson enlisted in the AIF and was quickly promoted to corporal. One of his feats of bravery was to charge German defences at Tobruk and although wounded in the neck and stomach he continued to advance under heavy fire, saving the life of his platoon commander.

Our community has a long and very proud military history. Local resident Lauren Hokin recently compiled a book outlining more than 1,000 local soldiers, sailors and nurses who had served in the First World War. Our local community had no shortage of people recruited to different facets of the war, whether they were foot soldiers, light horsemen or involved with heavy machinery. Some brave examples include George Denham Bland, who fought in the Somme and in 1918 single-handedly held back a 100-man advance with his Lewis gun and was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Macarthur's legacy, however, is not restricted only to soldiers. Elizabeth McRae from Minto experienced more combat than some soldiers and she was only meant to be a nurse. She enlisted in the Australian Army Nursing Service and departed Australia in 1915 with the 1st Australian General Hospital and dealt with all forms of battlefield wounds. In 1918 she was assigned to the 1st Australian Casualty Clearing Station, which was within range of enemy fire. She spent much of her time tending to wounds and comforting scared soldiers and received a military order for her efforts and bravery. Elizabeth McRae Avenue in Minto is now named in her honour. The Anzac spirit is not only a national virtue but something that is celebrated and commemorated at a community and personal level. As citizens of Australia we recognise Anzac Day not only as a significant tradition but also as something that shapes our very identity as Australians in our day-to-day lives and communities. Lest we forget.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) (10:20):

In reply: On 7 May last year I had the great honour and privilege of moving, "That this House notes the Centenary of ANZAC". Since then numerous members from all political parties have spoken passionately, eloquently and emotionally on the motion. I commend you, Madam Speaker, for your reminders prior to question time at the beginning of each sitting week of the battles that were fought and the deaths that occurred. I can confidently say that the legend of the Anzacs, which now encompasses all those who have served and fought for our country, is something that unites us all, despite our political differences. To me, that is incredibly inspiring.

On 4 August 1914 Britain declared war on Germany and, like all staunch and loyal friends, Australia quickly followed. That was the birth of the Anzac legend—the acronym for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. Let us not forget our Kiwi cousins who are a major part of that legend. The Centenary of Anzac commemorates our entry into World War I. However, the Anzac Centenary national program from 2014 to 2018 is Australia's most important period of national commemoration. Marking 100 years since our involvement in the First World War, the Anzac Centenary is a time to honour the service and sacrifice of our original Anzacs as well as the generations of Australian service men and women who have defended our values and freedoms in wars, conflicts and peace operations throughout a century of service.

Our gallant and brave service personnel have seen numerous wars and conflicts since: the Second World War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Iraq War, and today we still have troops in the Middle East. In the First World War 416,809 men enlisted, of whom 61,508 were killed and 156,000 were wounded, gassed or taken prisoner. Sixty-six Victoria Crosses were awarded to Australians in the First World War. The Second World War saw around 993,000 personnel serve, of whom 39,652 paid the ultimate price. Twenty Victoria Crosses were awarded to Australians in that conflict. In the Korean War, Australian casualties were 340 dead and more than 1,200 wounded. During the Malayan Emergency, 39 Australians died and another 27 were wounded.

As part of the Indonesia-Malaysia confrontation, Australian casualties were 23 dead and eight wounded. During the Vietnam War almost 50,000 Australians served and we witnessed 521 killed and 2,396 wounded. Four Victoria Crosses were awarded. During the Gulf War, from 1991 Australia deployed a naval task group of two warships, a support ship and a clearance diving team, with around 750 personnel serving. A number of Australian airmen and ground crew posted to or on exchange with the United States of America and British air forces also participated in enforcing the no-fly zones that were imposed over Iraq between 1991 and 2003.

Since 2001 Australian service personnel have been serving in Afghanistan. Our casualties to date include 41 killed and 256 wounded. Four Australians have been awarded the Victoria Cross. Approximately 400 personnel remain in Afghanistan as trainers and advisers and are stationed in Kandahar and Kabul. More than 26,000 Australian personnel have served in Afghanistan. During the Iraq War from 2003 to 2011, Australia's initial contribution was 2,058 personnel. Two soldiers were accidentally killed, while a third Australian died serving with the British Royal Air Force. A further 27 personnel were wounded.

Since 2014, Australia has been participating in the military intervention against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant [ISIL]. In June 2014 a small number of Special Air Service Regiment personnel were deployed to Iraq to protect the Australian embassy when the security of Baghdad was threatened by the 2014 northern Iraq offensive. Later, in August and September, a number of Royal Australian Air Force C-17 and C-130J transport aircraft based in the Middle East were used to conduct airdrops of humanitarian aid to trapped civilians and to airlift arms and munitions to forces in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq. In April 2015 a 300-strong unit known as Task Group Taji was deployed to Iraq to train the regular Iraqi security forces and air strikes were extended to Syria in September 2015.

In total, Australia has been involved in close to 100 separate peacekeeping missions, involving more than 30,000 personnel. I am proud to say that both Minister David Elliott and I served proudly in Bougainville, which is a wonderful island with a wonderful parliament that happens to be twinned with this Parliament. Unfortunately, 14 Australians have died during these peacekeeping operations. It is clear that our contribution has been enormous and we all owe our sincere thanks to the brave men and women who have kept us safe and secure over so many conflicts. The many members of this place have already told true stories of the brave men and women who sacrificed their lives, livelihoods and lifestyles to protect this country and to protect the downtrodden and persecuted in other countries.

All governments around Australia are doing their part to commemorate the selfless deeds of our heroes and heroines to remind the public and to educate schoolchildren of their supreme sacrifices. In that regard, the New South Wales Government is playing its part with a wide array of events throughout the State and educational tools for all New South Wales pupils. Again I commend the Premier and the Minister for Veterans Affairs, David Elliott, for the great work that they are doing in this area. These programs and tools include the Anzac Community Grants Program, for which applications are still open. Schools, historical societies and community organisations are invited to apply for up to \$2,000.

These grants are for a range of projects that commemorate and educate New South Wales communities about the service and sacrifices of current and former military service men and women. Grants that support activities benefitting the New South Wales veteran community are also eligible for funding. There is also the 2017 Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship for which schools across New South Wales are invited to submit an expression of interest. In fact, over the next couple of years the celebrations continue. For more information on what is on and what is available, people can go to the Government's website www.centenaryofanzac.nsw.gov.au. The Australian Government's 100 Years of ANZAC portal eloquently states:

The Anzac Centenary gives families, schools and communities an opportunity to start important conversations that continue long after the national program has concluded, and in doing so ensuring an enduring and unifying legacy for current and future generations.

Why is that so important? It is important because in these dangerous days of radicalism and terrorism there are those very few who would decry the deeds and efforts of our service men and women. A commemoration such as this and the ongoing education programs and remembrance services will ensure that well into the next 100 years we will continue to say "Lest we forget". In commemoration, I will put on the record a list of the members of this House who served in World War I: James Guy Dailey Arkins, Joseph Lievesley Beetson, Lieutenant-Colonel

George Frederick Braund, George Cann, Ambrose Campbell Carmichael, Captain Frank Augustus Chaffey, William Fraser Dunn, Charles Stuart Fern, Thomas Henley, Edward Rennix Larkin, Major- General James William Macarthur-Onslow, Lieutenant-Colonel John Brady Nash, Charles Edward Nicholson, William James Bradley, Sir Michael Frederick Bruxner, Walter James Butler, Frederick Joseph Cahill, William Joseph Carlton, John Markham Carter, Major John Courtney Chante and Albert Edward Chapman.

The list continues: Sir Hector Joseph Richard Clayton, Sir Arthur Edmund Colvin, Major Hugh John Connell, Frederick George Cooke, Douglas Donald Cross, William Matthew Currey, Christopher Alfred Dalton, Samuel Douglas Dickson, Ernest Durack, Eldred James Eggins, William Montgomerie Fleming, John Stanley Freeman, Eric Hearnshaw, Alfred Stephen Henry, Reginald Stanley Jackson, Roy Stanley Jackson, Harold Vivian Jacques, Milton Livingstone Fredericks Jarvie, Sir Norman William Kater, Christopher Augustus Kelly, Francis Daniel Kelly, Ebenezer Thomas Kendell, Edward Parnell Kinsella, Frederick Percival Kneeshaw, Joseph Lamaro, John Robert Lee, Christopher Baron Lethbridge, Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert William Lloyd, Henry James McDicken, Donald Peter Macdonald, Hugh Main, Lieutenant-Colonel Ernest Meyer Mitchell, Major George Dean Mitchell, Cecil Horace Murphy, Charles Joseph Parker, Stanley Evan Parry, Raymond Stephen Perdriau and Henry John Frederick Peters.

The list continues: Thomas Alfred John Playfair, Albert David Reid, Athol Railton Richardson, Sir Charles Rosenthal, James Clyde Ross, William Forrest Maxwell Ross, Thomas Lloyd Forster Rutledge, Gerald Blake Rygate, Sir Granville de Laune Ryrie, Major James Barclay Shand, William Francis Sheahan, Sydney James Shillington, Albert Frank Smith, David Hugh Spring, Thomas Steele, Frederick William Stuart, Norman Thomas, Alwyn Uren Tonking, Sir Vernon Haddon Treatt, Roy Stanley Vincent, Sir Edward Emerton Warren, James Eli Webb, Harold Fletcher White, Gordon Wilkins, George Alan Lachlan Wilson, Sir Robert Christian Wilson, Cecil Gordon Wingfield, Stanislaus Wyatt, Joshua George Arthur, Henry Jefferson Percival Bate, William James Bradley, William Adolphus Chaffey, Sir Hector Joseph Richard Clayton, Arthur Edmund Colvin, William Matthew Currey, Herbert Paton Fitzsimons, Raymond George Hamilton, John Robert Lee, Herbert William Lloyd, Clarence Edward Martin, George Deane Mitchell, Harrie Robert Croft Mitchell, Frederick Graham Pratten, Ewan Murray Robson, James Clyde Ross, Eric Saxby Solomon, Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Steele, Norman Thomas and Henry Basil Turner.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bills

LAND ACQUISITION (JUST TERMS COMPENSATION) AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Consideration in Detail

Consideration resumed from 9 November 2016.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melinda Pavey): The House will now proceed with the deferred division on the question: That Opposition amendments Nos 1 to 13 on sheet C2016-109B be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes34
Noes47
Majority.....13

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Finn, Ms J
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McDermott, Dr H
Minns, Mr C
Piper, Mr G
Warren, Mr G (teller)
Zangari, Mr G

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Dib, Mr J
Foley, Mr L
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Park, Mr R
Robertson, Mr J
Washington, Ms K

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Doyle, Ms T
Greenwich, Mr A
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Parker, Mr J
Smith, Ms T
Watson, Ms A

NOES

Anderson, Mr K	Aplin, Mr G	Ayres, Mr S
Baird, Mr M	Barilaro, Mr J	Berejiklian, Ms G
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)	Brookes, Mr G	Conolly, Mr K
Constance, Mr A	Coure, Mr M	Crouch, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V	Elliott, Mr D	Evans, Mr L
Fraser, Mr A	George, Mr T	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)
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	

PAIRS

Daley, Mr M	Gibbons, Ms M
Mihailuk, Ms T	Lee, Dr G
Smith, Ms K	Marshall, Mr A

Amendments negatived.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melinda Pavey): The question is that schedule 1 be agreed to.

Schedule 1 agreed to.**Third Reading**

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: On behalf of Mr Andrew Constance: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.*Budget***BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2016-17****Debate resumed from 20 October 2016.**

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (10:37): It is my pleasure to commence the next instalment of my budget estimates speech about how the Wyong electorate fared in the recent State budget. I have talked already about the growth occurring in the Wyong area, particularly the unfunded road project through the centre of Wyong, which has significant implications for my electorate. Today I wish to talk about public transport issues, in particular, the Tuggerah railway station. Anyone who knows the Tuggerah railway station understands that it serves a large number of commuters. It is situated near two business parks and two major shopping centres—the Westfield shopping centre and the Tuggerah Super Centre. Unfortunately, the Tuggerah railway station does not have any lifts. This is an interesting story, because in 2010 the then transport Minister, the current member for Blacktown, allocated \$5 million to have lifts installed at Tuggerah railway station.

In fact, the work began and they built an awning on one side of the track, but then there was an election. The people of Wyong elected a Liberal member of Parliament. One of the first things that happened was that that lift program was abandoned. So the reward for the people of Wyong for electing the first-ever Liberal was that the funds were withdrawn. That meant that there was a strange situation. There was an awning on one side of the track and holes had been dug so that lifts could be put in place. When the Liberals came into power the holes were filled in and the lift project was stopped.

Now, six years later, we still do not have any lifts. It was interesting that not only did the Government, in a base political act, withdraw the funding, but in the following year, 2012, the Government sent a survey to the station staff to ask how the installation of the lifts went. So, Labor provided the funding, the Liberals took the

money away and the holes were filled in, but the Liberal Government managed to send a survey to the station staff to ask how the non-existent lifts were operating. The people of the Wyong electorate and the Entrance electorate are still waiting for lifts to be installed. That is one of the busiest stations on the Central Coast, and it is amazing that we still do not have lifts at that location.

The situation is made worse by the fact that Labor had allocated the funds and the work had been started, but when the Liberals came to government the funds were withdrawn, the work was stopped and the holes were filled in, but the Government did manage to survey the station to see how the non-existent lifts were working. I suppose we can congratulate it for that! One day, when the lifts are eventually installed—that will be after 2019, when there is a Labor Government in New South Wales again—the station staff will be able to fill out the survey and say that the lifts are working well. This is just an example of how a Liberal-Nationals Government treats the people of Wyong. The Liberals, on the Sunday afternoon before the election, matched a Labor promise. Labor had announced a \$200 million upgrade for Wyong Hospital. The Liberal candidate as well as the then Minister for the Central Coast the Hon. Rob Stokes, stood at Wyong and said, "Yes, we promise the \$200 million, as well."

Debate adjourned.

Bills

CLIMATE CHANGE BILL 2016

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 20 October.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (10:42): I continue my second reading speech on the Climate Change Bill 2016 on behalf of The Greens. To reiterate, the aim of this bill is to set targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; to facilitate the Government's development of strategies, policies and programs to meet those targets and to adapt to the effects of climate change; to promote transparency and accountability by facilitating the provision of accessible information about the effects of climate change on people, communities and ecosystems across the State; and to encourage the local government sector, the private business sector and the wider community to take action to address climate change.

Since the discussion started on climate change and the need for a climate change bill in this place, the New South Wales Government introduced a plan which was reported as setting a net zero carbon emissions goal by 2050 as Australian pollution increases. The Greens welcomed the Baird Government's announcement that it would set a net zero emissions target by 2050 and allocate money to encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy. This announcement shows that the Government has been listening to the calls by The Greens and by many groups and organisations across this State, across this country—in fact, across the planet—who have been calling for governments to take action in relation to zero emissions. But it is clear that much more needs to be done. In fact, a report on the New South Wales Government plan that was announced on 3 November made the comment:

There are no interim targets, such as 2030, at this point. Nor are there guarantees that policies promoting increased emissions, such as new coal mines or increased land clearing, will be blocked.

It is important to note that this announcement by the New South Wales Government, which looked as if the Government was attempting to address the serious impact of climate change on our communities and our planet, lacked any commitment to shedding the dinosaur attitudes towards energy and climate that we have seen for too long in New South Wales. A zero net emissions target will not be reached unless we deal with coal. Banning new coalmines is an essential step if we are to truly reach that goal. We need a State-based renewable energy target, and to formulate a concrete transition strategy away from the fossil fuel industry and into renewable energy. If we do not have targets and if these things are not measured, they will not get done. That is a simple mantra that is repeated time and time again, because we know that it is essential if we are going to see any action to address dangerous climate change.

In this place, both sides—the Liberal-Nationals Government and the Labor Opposition—have refused to oppose the introduction of new coalmines. The Government's New South Wales Climate Change Policy Framework does not go anywhere near far enough towards ensuring the action that is needed. We need to see a respect for a whole-of-government approach to dealing with the issue of climate change. The Climate Change Policy Framework has been introduced in the shadow of the land clearing laws being introduced by the Minister for the Environment. These laws will see millions of tonnes of greenhouse gases emitted. There is a climate change catastrophe waiting to happen and this will propel climate change even more.

When the Queensland Government had the same open-slather approach to land clearing not that long ago, it resulted in the clearing of land the size of the Australian Capital Territory as well as the release of 35 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. This cancelled out 80 per cent of the abatements purchased by the Federal Government.

I note that the Premier is in the Chamber. This Government is happy to talk the talk on climate change, but until targets are set and are measured, and until people, governments and the sectors are required to report on them we will not see the action needed. This Government is happy to talk the talk on climate change—to talk about renewables and zero emissions—provided it is not held to account on it. Although there are calls for people to be held to account and calls for targets to be set, that has not occurred. If this Government really cares about climate change it needs to drop the proposed land clearing laws. Instead, it would be setting strict renewable energy targets and looking at what all government sectors need to achieve in relation to climate change policy.

In conclusion, I recognise the incredible work that has been done by a number of organisations and groups that have been campaigning to ensure that members of this House do not forget the importance of climate change. This week Naomi Klein is visiting Sydney to receive the Sydney Peace Prize, which is yet another reason to remember that the push to ensure that our governments respond to the urgent need to address climate change is not one that is supported only by members of Parliament and by The Greens who stand with those communities but by a significant number of organisations. I recognise the support and the work done on this bill by Environmental Justice Australia, which worked on a proposal for a Victorian climate charter. The bill draws on their work. I also recognise the Environmental Defenders Office in New South Wales, which has contributed important advocacy for legal frameworks on climate change.

I also acknowledge a number of other groups that have campaigned consistently and assisted with support: the Climate Council; Solar Citizens; the Australian Youth Climate Coalition; Climate Action Network Australia; the Climate Institute; the Australia Conservation Foundation; the Climate and Health Alliance; the Centre for Australian Weather and Climate Research; 350.org; the World Wildlife Fund—Australia; Greenpeace; GetUp; Planet Ark; Clean Energy for Eternity; Farmers for Climate Action; one of everyone's favourite organisations, the Knitting Nannas; the Nature Conservation Council New South Wales; Lock the Gate; the Grassroots Community Climate Network; the Wilderness Society; the Sunrise Project; Doctors for the Environment; the Sutherland Environment Centre; Stop CSG groups across the State and throughout our country; Psychologists for a Safe Climate; and Front Line Action Against Coal. I also recognise two local initiatives in the Newtown electorate, the Climate Action Newtown group and the Green Living Centre. As the late John Kaye, MLC, said as the slogan in his 100 per cent renewables campaign, "This is possible, affordable and essential." I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

GREYHOUND RACING (REPEAL OF BAN) BILL 2016

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Luke Foley, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (10:51): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Greyhound Racing (Repeal of Ban) Bill 2016 simply seeks to give effect to the stated backdown announced by the Premier in recent weeks. It will repeal the Government's ban on greyhound racing. As it currently stands, the law of New South Wales will ban greyhound racing as at 1 July next year. The legislation to ban greyhound racing was passed in August. It was declared urgent and the House sat until four o'clock in the morning. Imposing a ban on greyhound racing was so urgent that members of this House were kept here until four o'clock in the morning. Now the Premier says that there is no urgency about repealing the ban; it can wait until sometime next year. Why?

This Government is trying to con us. The Premier cannot say that he wants to overturn his wrongheaded ban on greyhound racing and then say that we will not do it now and instead will wait until some undetermined time in the future. There is a con on here. The Parliament, having carried legislation for a greyhound racing ban as a matter of great urgency, ought to repeal that legislation before Parliament rises for the Christmas break. The work of this Parliament for 2016 is not done until we repeal the greyhound racing ban. That is what this bill will do. It is very simple and it is less than half a page in length. Members will be pleased to know that I have no intention of repeating my speech that took two hours and 10 minutes. Instead, I refer all members to it and I recommend that all members with insomnia read it. During the debate on the Greyhound Racing Prohibition Bill 2016, I canvassed in great detail the reasons that the greyhound racing ban is a very bad idea. I refer all members to the points I made during that speech.

The Premier has admitted that he got it wrong. He now needs to take action in Parliament to complement his words. He needs to put his money where his mouth is and repeal this ban. The Premier should can this harsh

and cruel ban this year before Parliament rises. The work of this Parliament for 2016 is not done. I do not want the people of Orange to be conned this weekend that the Government will repeal the greyhound racing ban only for Mr Baird to come back to Parliament next week and say, "Maybe it's still an option, you know." The Premier must repeal the ban this year and give a commitment. It was urgent to ban greyhound racing. Why is it not urgent to repeal that awful piece of law and take it off the statute books? That is what this bill will do. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

**TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION COMMISSION AMENDMENT (FUNDING
GUARANTEE FOR TAFE) BILL 2016**

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 23 June 2016.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (10:55): I am delighted to make a brief contribution to debate on the Technical and Further Education Commission Amendment (Funding Guarantee for TAFE) Bill. The provisions in the bill are the very same as New South Wales Labor's policy in the 2015 State election. I wish to put on record the hard work of my Illawarra colleague, the member for Keira, who, as the former shadow Minister for Education and Training, laid the foundation for the provisions in this bill. I also pay tribute to his successors in the shadow Education and Training portfolio, the member for Wyong, who is present in the House, and the member for Londonderry for continuing to build on that foundation. The members for Londonderry and Wyong are very passionate advocates for vocational education and training. They have shown forensic skill in exposing the shortcomings in the Government's Smart and Skilled policy.

This bill confirms that Labor is on the right side of education history when it comes to providing opportunity for all in education and vocational training. When in government, the Tories cannot help but thug education at every single opportunity. They simply do not understand what an education means to people's lives. The Tories are about entrenching privilege and leaving everyone else to fend for themselves. It is the role of government to ensure there is a strong, affordable, quality and accessible public education system in this State. The provisions in this bill cap contestable funding at a maximum of 30 per cent. This cap guarantees that TAFE receives a minimum of 70 per cent of public funding. This cap on contestability will provide the TAFE sector in this State with the certainty it deserves. Similar moves are now underway in Victoria where the Labor Government is implementing the findings and recommendations of a recent report into TAFE funding.

I also acknowledge the tremendous hard work by the former Federal shadow Minister for Vocational Education, and another of my Illawarra colleagues, the Federal member for Cunningham, Sharon Bird, in the development of Federal Labor's vocational and skills policy framework for the Federal election. Sharon Bird truly is an incredibly hardworking member of the Federal Parliament and she has done so much to support vocational training and skills. Federal Labor's policy on TAFE and vocational education and training not only demonstrates a key Labor value—the crucial importance of education—but also was a very popular policy on the ground in electorates right across the country. The Federal Liberals do not have regard for the importance of TAFE, and neither do the State Liberals. We can see their contempt for TAFE in the Illawarra.

I have said before in this place that this Government slowly garrotted the Dapto TAFE campus in my electorate. The indisputable figures reveal that in 2011 there were 658 enrolled students on that campus. There were 111 teaching staff. There was a range of courses on offer and a range of services. The Dapto campus was a place that was bustling with activity and further learning. But, upon its election, this Government slowly and secretly gutted the campus. It removed the services and transferred those to other campuses. Then the Government removed the courses on offer. Once these too were gone, and the choices on offer to students were gone, it put the campus on a secret sell-off hit list. It was going to offer the parcel of land to its developer mates. I have tracked the garrotting of Dapto TAFE since I was first elected to this place. Endless questions on notice to Ministers slowly revealed the whole truth of what the Government was planning. I unapologetically used every opportunity in the local media to highlight the Government's agenda.

The member for Kiama said publicly that I was being "hysterical" and that I was unnecessarily scaring the local community. But what I predicted would happen to the Dapto TAFE campus did, in fact, happen. There is one thing we can be certain about in the Illawarra: When the member for Kiama says something will not happen, you can bet London to a brick that it most certainly will. The member for Kiama is the Illawarra's Nostradamus; you can predict the future by his denials. Although I would have preferred the Dapto TAFE campus to remain in operation, I am quite pleased that my local community stood up to the Government on the planned sell-off of the campus. It will now be used by the police for training purposes for the next three years under a lease arrangement.

Unfortunately, we do not know how much the lease arrangement contributes to vocational education and training. The Government refuses to tell us how much the lease is worth. It claims it is commercial in confidence, despite the fact that the police and TAFE are both public institutions. The public—the taxpayers—are entitled to know from the Government what the lease of the Dapto TAFE campus is worth. Other TAFE campuses around the State probably will not be saved under this Government's sell-off agenda. As we move into an economy dependent on lifelong knowledge and skills, this Government is taking the wrong approach to training. It favours the private providers, many of whom have been exposed over the past 12 months as being dodgy.

Others are going into administration and receivership, leaving students high and dry with mounting debts of thousands of dollars. Not only will those students not get a qualification but also they will be left with lifelong debt, which will curtail their ability to get a home loan, start a family and move on in life. On 7 October the *Illawarra Mercury* published a story under the headline "Declining enrolments at every Illawarra TAFE campus", which is damning for the Government and concerning for the future of the TAFE campuses in the region I represent. The story cited new data that revealed that student numbers at TAFE Illawarra campuses have plummeted by almost 30 per cent over a three-year period.

Ms Prue Car: Thirty per cent?

Ms ANNA WATSON: Yes, 30 per cent. The story went on to say that there were 32,369 enrolments in the Illawarra TAFE in 2013. In 2015 there were just 23,116 enrolments. Across the board, at nearly every TAFE campus in the Illawarra, enrolments are down. The Wollongong campus saw enrolments drop by 26.9 per cent between 2014 and 2015. The Labor candidate for Wollongong, Paul Scully, recently highlighted that students studying butchery at the campus had no meat to practise their skills on. This is what the Government's Smart and Skilled policy has done to TAFE. This bill demonstrates that Labor values public education and vocational training. I am very pleased to add my voice of strong support in debate on the bill.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (11:02): On behalf of the Government I speak in debate on the Technical and Further Education Commission Amendment (Funding Guarantee for TAFE) Bill 2016 and say from the outset that the Government opposes this Opposition bill. I take this opportunity to correct the rewriting of history by those opposite and highlight how we have arrived at a contested skills and vocational education and training [VET] budget and program. I will debunk some of the myths in the figures cited by those opposite relating to TAFE NSW. I have always said, and will continue to say, that those opposite pose the greatest threat to TAFE in this State, as evidenced by their production of this bill after six years in opposition.

Ms Prue Car: Come on. Unbelievable!

Mr JOHN BARILARO: In this one-page bill—apart from the title page—Labor guarantees funding for TAFE to the tune of 70 per cent. That is the total input of those opposite on vocational education and training in this State.

Ms Anna Watson: Contestable funding.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: They are happy to protect inefficiencies in TAFE that have resulted in 60 per cent of resources being pulled away from the front line—from teachers in great learning environments—to be consumed by administration, such as turning on the lights.

Ms Prue Car: What has your input resulted in? How many teachers are left? They are still sacking teachers.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melinda Pavey): Order! Members will cease interjecting. The Minister will be heard in silence. The debate will be conducted in an orderly manner.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: In 2015 the Government introduced a new model of funding for vocational education and training in New South Wales. Smart and Skilled is a demand-driven funding model, where the funding follows the student and additional loadings are paid for students with a disability; students in regional areas; and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Under Smart and Skilled a limited amount of funding is contestable and so open to competition between TAFE NSW, non-government providers and not-for-profit providers to deliver qualifications up to and including certificate III and all apprenticeships and selected traineeships. In addition to being eligible to compete for the contestable funding, TAFE NSW is also awarded direct funding to deliver qualifications of certificate IV and above, as well as operational funding.

The TAFE NSW budget in 2016-17 is \$1.82 billion, from a total skills budget of \$2.2 billion. The member for Londonderry moved that a bill be introduced for an Act to amend the Technical and Further Education Commission Act 1990 to ensure that not less than 70 per cent of funding for vocational education and training is allocated to TAFE NSW. The member reintroduced the bill after the Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, failed

to bring it to debate. Let us go through the key points of the bill. Only 12 per cent of TAFE NSW's revenue comes from the contestability market that is the Smart and Skilled entitlement program. I remind those opposite that contestability is Labor's policy, both State and Federal. Federal Labor introduced contestability in the early 1990s under Dawkins and it was implemented progressively by successive State Labor governments. The Gillard Government designed and implemented the National Partnership on Skills Reform, from which the New South Wales Smart and Skilled framework emerged.

VET FEE-HELP is Federal Labor policy, designed and scoped by the Rudd-Gillard Labor Government. New South Wales Labor provided greater support to private training providers than we are currently providing. In 2010 New South Wales Labor handed over \$200 million directly to 500 private providers. This Government provided \$117 million in funding to 440 non-TAFE providers last financial year. Smart and Skilled provides a robust framework of accountability and transparency through a contestability framework—something that never existed under Labor. The Government is paying less money to private providers than Labor and providing less funding due to the increased quality assurance requirements introduced by this Government and the significantly higher level of scrutiny on those providers.

The only thing that has changed is that both TAFE and private registered training organisations [RTOs] are now accountable directly to students under the Smart and Skilled demand-driven funding framework. While TAFE now has to compete for some of its students, so too do private training providers. Labor's funding to private providers was guaranteed—no need to compete with TAFE and other providers to get it. The contestable funding pool is small compared with the total skills budget of \$2.21 billion. Last financial year it was \$289 million, with TAFE winning \$205 million and private providers \$84 million. Labor's bill puts New South Wales at risk of losing hundreds of millions of dollars of funding through the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform—an agreement introduced by Labor Prime Minister Gillard and to which New South Wales Labor contributed heavily.

Labor's bill will remove opportunity for students to choose when, where and how they train. Labor's bill will remove the need for TAFE NSW to be accountable for the hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars it receives. Labor's bill takes money away from training more students and puts it into maintaining the expensive overheads and management of TAFE NSW. The Smart and Skilled funding model is fundamentally demand driven. Students can choose from one of 440 approved providers and be confident they will receive a generous subsidy towards their training. Each training provider is rigorously assessed and monitored to ensure quality, and is paid as the student completes key milestones.

This quality framework has prevented the worst rorts of the Federal system. For example, Unique International College was refused funding in New South Wales but still signed up to millions of dollars of student loans via the Federal Government's VET FEE-HELP system. Only 440 of the 3,000 training providers in New South Wales have a contract with this Government, and we apply extra regulatory controls to safeguard quality. The Department of Industry and NSW Fair Trading share complaints data and market intelligence to identify problem training providers. All 2015 Smart and Skilled providers are monitored by the department, and monitoring of newly contracted 2016 providers commenced in May 2016. Providers are paid in three stages as a student progresses through qualification, unlike what happens with the Federal Government's VET FEE-HELP. Each provider has a funding cap and is restricted to offering only those qualifications that it has a proven track record in delivering.

High quality deserves a range of training providers, including TAFE NSW, not-for-profit, niche, industry associations and community colleges, and most have been operating for more than 25 years. Providers such as the Housing Industry Association, the Australian Institute Group, Anglicare NSW, Deaf Society of NSW, House with No Steps and NOVA Employment are only a small portion of the reputable training providers operating within the Smart and Skilled framework. It is these providers that Labor's bill has in the crosshairs. Of the 500 providers funded by Labor, 85—that is, one in six—did not pass the rigorous Smart and Skilled quality assurance framework. This does not include those providers funded by Labor that have collapsed, have deregistered or are the subject of Federal Government investigation. For example, of the 50 providers that received the most funding in Labor's last year of government, 13 have collapsed and one is under Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] investigation.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melinda Pavey): Order! I call the member for Londonderry to order for the first time.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Those providers received \$21 million in the final year of the Labor Government and were training 8,500 students. Let me name one of the providers. The Electrical Trade Unions owned and operated a training provider called Electro Skills, which collapsed in 2013 following problems with training quality. The collapse left 1,000 apprentices without a qualification. The Australian Skills Quality Authority regulates all training providers in every State except Western Australia and Victoria. Under the national reforms implemented by the Federal Labor Government, State and Territory governments agreed to reform the

sector towards a contestable market. New South Wales took a cautious approach to the implementation. In other States, such as Victoria, there was a debacle and those States are now looking to New South Wales as the model for how the reforms should have been implemented. VET FEE-HELP is a Federal income-contingent loans scheme designed in the first year of the Rudd Government at the same time as pink batts, and by the same architects.

Priorities are set by the NSW Skills List, which contains around 760 qualifications from certificate IIs to advanced diploma and selected foundation skill courses. The list supports the New South Wales Government's priorities, such as the \$68 billion infrastructure program, the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and initiatives that encourage the take-up of qualifications in science, technology, engineering and maths. Electrotechnology, early childhood education and care, business administration, carpentry and ageing support are the most popular qualifications, courses and areas of jobs growth. The Smart and Skilled funding and fee structure maintains equity, fairness and quality. New South Wales regulates fees to ensure that training providers compete on quality, not price. This is why we commissioned the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to assess the efficient cost of delivery—something Labor never did. Students pay one set fee for the entire qualification rather than an annual fee, which ensures students who take longer to complete a qualification are not penalised.

The New South Wales Government pays community service obligation [CSO] funding loadings for regional and remote students and for students with disability to ensure that training and support is available to anyone, anywhere, regardless of their circumstances. CSO funding is key to supporting training in regional New South Wales. I turn now to Labor's hypocrisy. The former New South Wales shadow Minister for Skills got his head start with the thriving training provider we spoke about before. What is good for the goose must be good for the gander. In 2010 Benchmark College was the single biggest recipient of New South Wales Government training funds, receiving \$4.3 million in one year—a 600 per cent increase from 2009. The Electrical Trade Unions owned and operated the provider Electro Skills, which I mentioned earlier. It collapsed in 2013 and left 1,000 apprentices without a qualification. It received funding under those opposite.

New South Wales approved the funding for Careers Australia in 2010—the same company that is under ACCC investigation. It had to repay \$44 million to the Federal Government's VET FEE-HELP loans because it fraudulently enrolled disadvantaged students. That is what we saw under Labor. Labor's bill is not about accountability. True to form, Labor proposes to take TAFE backwards to a direct funding model with no accountability or transparency. This is the same funding model that it applied to private training providers when it was in government. As I said earlier, when New South Wales Labor was last in government it gave direct funding of \$200 million to 500 private training providers without their having to compete and without accountability. How did Labor's funding model perform? As I said earlier, of the 50 providers that received the most funding in Labor's last year in government, 13 have collapsed and one is still under investigation by the ACCC. Those providers received \$21 million and were training 8,500 people.

I have heard some lines not only from the member for Shellharbour but also across the TAFE debate and in the public domain. As I see it, the single biggest threat to TAFE is those opposite—and I do not say that lightly. Those opposite have consistently shown they have only one objective, and that is to spread fear and uncertainty within the community about the future of TAFE NSW. Rather than setting out a positive vision for TAFE and vocational education in this State, Labor wants to lock TAFE in where it currently stands and protect its union interests. Labor chooses to spend its time campaigning outside healthy, thriving campuses, telling prospective students that it is a bad time to enrol in TAFE. I have a great example: In October 2015 the shadow Minister for Skills campaigned outside the TAFE campus at Kingswood, holding up placards and saying that she had great concerns for its future. But if the member for Londonderry had looked over her shoulder that day, she would have seen 200 workers on site and a number of cranes in the sky because we were constructing a \$27 million state-of-the-art nursing and allied health training centre at that very campus.

Labor is playing games and employing scare tactics across the State. Labor's campaign is one of lies and misinformation. It claimed that this Government cut TAFE funding in half when it is investing \$1.82 billion in TAFE, which is a \$100 million increase on last year. Labor claims there is a continuing mass student exodus from TAFE this year, and that apprenticeships and traineeships have declined because of Smart and Skilled this year. Let us expose this lie: National Centre for Vocational Education Research data clearly shows that enrolments are up in 2016. In October TAFE NSW had had more than 501,000 enrolments since January 2016—an increase of 122,000 students compared with the same time last year. Labor continues to spread stories about the downturns in past year enrolments. Labor claims it cares about apprentices and trainees, but it conveniently omits the fact that it was Federal Labor's cuts that created a sharp decline across the country.

Labor cut funding for apprenticeships and traineeships to the tune of \$1.2 billion between 2011 and 2013, which saw numbers drop by more than 25 per cent in a single year. In 2012 alone, Labor cut \$356 million from employer incentives for existing worker traineeships, non-trade apprenticeships, which saw numbers in training

more than halve between 2012 and 2015. Nearly 150,000 non-trade apprentices were lost in response to Labor's cuts in 2012. But our \$100 million investment in apprenticeships and traineeships is working, with 2016 showing a strong turnaround. Apprenticeships and traineeships are up this year, with 39,997 approvals in just the first nine months of 2016—an increase of 6,094 on the same time last year. There have been more than 9,500 apprenticeship approvals in construction and electrotechnology, up by 1,620 on last year on the back of the Government's record infrastructure investment. Apprenticeship approvals are up by 2,947, or 19.2 per cent, compared with the same period last year. New entrant traineeships are up by 4,024, or 24 per cent, for the period January to September 2015, compared with 20,689 for the same period in 2016.

The Labor Party peddles lies and mistruths, including that fees have skyrocketed and that they start at \$4,000. I will expose that lie. The cost of delivering training for a certificate III in carpentry and joinery is almost \$14,500. The Government subsidy—or, more accurately, the taxpayer subsidy—is \$12,490. The average fee is \$2,000 for an apprenticeship in this State for the full term of the course. It costs \$6,600 to deliver training for a certificate III in early childhood education and care, and the Government subsidises that cost to the tune of \$5,600. So the student pays \$1,000. It costs \$12,700 to deliver training for a certificate III in automotive electrical technology, and the subsidy is about \$10,700. Again, the average student fee for the entire course—not the annual fee—is \$2,000.

I will explain the fee-free scholarship offer that the Government has on the table and what it does for the most disadvantaged students. In 2010—the last year the Labor Government was in office—only about 40,000 TAFE students in the State received fee-free access to vocational education and training. Under this Government's co-investment model, those who can afford to will make a contribution to the cost of their training. If they pay \$2,000 over the four years of an apprenticeship, that will cost them less than \$10 a week. Young people spend more on their mobile phones each week. I believe that is a great investment in a career that will give them a great job and a great lifestyle. The most disadvantaged in our community—the most vulnerable, those with disabilities—

Ms Prue Car: Are being attacked.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I love that. I am talking about the most vulnerable, those with disabilities, survivors of domestic violence and their dependants—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melinda Pavey): Order! The member for Londonderry will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am talking about kids in out-of-home care, people in social housing and those on welfare. They will be able to access fee-free training in this State. Under this Government's model, 100,000 disadvantaged people are accessing free training compared with 40,000 when the Labor Government was in office. Smart and Skilled enables the Government to fund more places for more students delivered by more training providers. It has allowed the Government to look after the most disadvantaged people in this State. The Government's subsidies range from 90 per cent to 75 per cent, depending on the course. This policy is targeted at creating jobs, jobs, jobs. The training being offered is designed to provide skills to people so that at the end of their course they have the appropriate tools to gain employment. The best thing we can do for anyone is to give them financial independence and a reason to get up every morning—that is, to go to work. This Government is focused on skills training that will achieve job outcomes, and that is why it continues to invest in TAFE.

The Labor Party has also claimed that the Government has sacked more than 5,000 teachers and support staff. That is completely untrue. I will break it down. Since 2012, 1,266 TAFE staff members have taken voluntary redundancy as the organisation reviews and streamlines its service delivery. TAFE NSW has a large ageing workforce of more than 19,000 people, and almost 60 per cent of TAFE teachers are aged 51 and over. I will put that into perspective. TAFE NSW has nearly 4,000 staff over the age of 60 and nearly 400 over the age of 71. That leads to a measured employee retirement exit rate. Teachers in areas of low demand are not being replaced, and casual staff have continued to be employed according to business demand, which fluctuates across institutes during the year according to need. Members opposite talk in the public domain about 5,000 teachers being sacked by this Government. They do not accept the profile of the workforce and what is happening in the market. As I said, it is a demand-driven model—the more students we enrol, the more teaching staff we will require. When student numbers decline, we do not need as many teachers. That is why—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melinda Pavey): Order! I place the member for Kogarah on two calls to order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The member for Kogarah has had a number of opportunities to attend TAFE briefings. However, he has chosen not to do so because he would rather be uninformed so that he can continue to

peddle mistruths and to lie to the Chamber and to the people of New South Wales. The truth of the matter is that members opposite do not want to know the truth.

Mr Chris Minns: Point of order: I ask the Minister to withdraw the word "lie".

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I repeat, the member for Kogarah continues to lie in this House and in the public domain because he refuses to attend a TAFE briefing to find out the facts. I will not withdraw that word because it is true.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

Mr Michael Johnsen: Stop with the glass jaw.

Mr Greg Warren: I have not yet started on the member for Upper Hunter. The member for Kogarah quite rightly requested that the Minister withdraw the word "lie" because it is unparliamentary and simply untrue. Madam Temporary Speaker, I ask that you rule on the point of order as requested by the member for Kogarah.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melinda Pavey): Order! The member for Kogarah asked that the Minister withdraw the comment. The Minister declined to do so, which is his prerogative.

Mr Chris Minns: To the point of order: The Minister cannot refer to anything that I have said that is a lie. In the interests of civil debate and so that this does degenerate into members accusing each other of being liars, the Minister should withdraw.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Melinda Pavey): Order! Because of the interjections and the unparliamentary way in which this debate is being conducted, I have placed the member for Kogarah on two calls to order. The Minister will not respond to interjections.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Of course we want civil debate in this Chamber, and we should be respectful. I have been trying to provide some facts this morning. This place is called the "Bear Pit" because of the emotion involved in debates. I respect the member for Kogarah—who is a future leader of the Labor Party—and in the spirit of this place, I withdraw the word "lie". The member for Kogarah is not the only member who has indulged in a misinformation campaign. During the 2015 election campaign, the Leader of the Opposition said that he had a policy to rescue TAFE NSW. However, when he introduced a bill designed to achieve that goal, it lapsed. He simply wanted to use the policy as a political football.

That has also happened in the by-election for the seat of Orange. The member for Londonderry was at Kingswood claiming that the Government planned to close the local TAFE, but behind her were cranes and people working on a \$27 million TAFE project. The member for Maitland placed deceitful postcards in hundreds of letterboxes in her electorate claiming that TAFE enrolments had declined by more than 43,000 this year alone, that more than 4,600 staff had been sacked, and that students were unable to enrol in courses. She failed to mention the Government's \$8.4 million investment in the Maitland campus. The member for Wallsend gives notice of motion after motion degrading the reputation of TAFE NSW, and the Glendale campus in particular. Labor's fear- and-smear campaign against TAFE NSW is common to all members opposite.

If members opposite want to visit a TAFE campus, I will allow them to do so. If at any time they want a briefing, my door is open. I reached out across the political aisle and offered a briefing to members opposite. A number of them turned up to meet with the managing director and they were free to ask whatever questions they wanted to ask. Unfortunately, only a small number turned up, and the shadow Minister used it as a political stunt. She was not interested in the truth. However, many of her colleagues have come to see me since to get the facts. We have let them visit TAFE colleges and they are hearing from the staff, who support the One TAFE NSW reform package because they are sick and tired of seeing 60¢ out of every training dollar being spent turning on the lights before even one student enters a classroom and before one teacher is given resources.

The One TAFE NSW reform package has come from the teaching staff and others in TAFE who are passionate and who care about their students and course delivery. I am empowering them during the transition period to design the TAFE of the future. We want a TAFE system that is relevant to industry and to students. That means we need a number of different programs. The Government is investing in new technology and new campuses and infrastructure. We do not hide the fact that we have ageing assets; we own about 2,000 infrastructure assets, of which 25 per cent are underutilised.

What have we on this side done? We are working through a state-wide asset management plan to identify the current and future needs of TAFE. We will work out the assets that we need and then we will recycle the assets that we do not need. Every dollar will be reinvested in new TAFE assets—for instance, \$25 million at Wetherill Park and \$11 million at Kurri Kurri. Again, those opposite do not want the truth about every dollar that we recycle out of TAFE assets. Those opposite say, "They are stealing this campus and flogging it off to their developer

mates." On the issue of asset recycling, at the moment TAFE assets include blocks of land. We are not training sheep so we do not need blocks of land. We own some property: some dog walking parks and houses. Why does TAFE own houses? This Government is identifying the assets that are actually needed for training and it is investing in restoring ageing assets. Teachers are welcoming the investment and the opportunity to be part of the One TAFE reform.

What upsets those opposite the most is that the Teachers Federation has publicly supported our reform. We have reached agreement on the enterprise bargaining. The teachers are going to ballot and those opposite do not like it. I might be featured in the next Teachers Federation magazine. I will buy a new suit and wear my best tie. Imagine that: I might be the hero of TAFE. Those opposite will hate that. This Government is setting up TAFE not only for today but also for the future. Other States are looking to what is happening in New South Wales. On the subject of vocational education and training in this State, those opposite do not want to acknowledge the other factors that have impacted on enrolments, such as the deregulated university sector. With the lowering of the Australian Tertiary Admission Ranks [ATARs], possibly up to 50,000 students, who should be going through vocational education and training, are being set up to fail in the university sector.

Ms Trish Doyle: That is true, but what can you control?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: It has occurred over decades. An example that comes to mind is Prime Minister Keating saying, "Every kid should go to uni. Forget vocational education and training. Forget about being a tradie, a chippie or a sparkie." After decades of career counsellors and leaders of the community and industry convincing parents that all kids should go to uni, we are now paying the price because many kids have not looked at vocational education and training as a genuine pathway. The term that is often used is that vocational education and training is a "second chance" pathway. When you use the term "second chance", what are you saying?

Mr John Sidoti: You are devaluing it.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: You are devaluing it. I am glad I had a second chance and became a chippie—I have ended up in this place. I know the value of training and education, and I know the value that vocational education gives young people in this State. I refer to this Government's investment and reforms. I ask members in this House, including the shadow Minister, to judge me in 12 months' time when the enrolment figures are on the table and TAFE is positioned as the public provider. I repeat the words "when TAFE is positioned as the public provider" because there is no plan whatsoever to privatise TAFE. Where there is a TAFE today there will be a TAFE tomorrow.

Ms Trish Doyle: How many?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I can guarantee that. Judge me on what happens within TAFE.

Ms Prue Car: We will.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Under the reforms, the changes to policy—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mrs Melinda Pavey): Order! The member for Blue Mountains will come to order. The member for Londonderry will come to order. They will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate. Members who continue to interject will be placed on calls to order. Under Standing Order 52, the Minister is entitled to be heard in silence.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I want to finish on these points. In the past 12 months, the Government has made a number of policy changes in regards to TAFE in New South Wales. Did we get Smart and Skilled completely right? No, we did not. Good governance acknowledges that sometimes policy settings are not right. After seeing what happened in Victoria—a deregulated market, as compared to our regulated market—we were careful with implementing reforms and that has allowed us extra time to amend those policy settings. Over the past 12 months, we have changed some of the policy settings, including TAFE policies, in order to allow more people access to vocational education and training. We have announced a new IT system. We acknowledge that the IT system in TAFE has failed. Again, it was scoped by others, but as the Minister I take responsibility. An IT system that does not work impacts on staff and staff morale. That is why I made the announcement that TAFE will go to a new IT system.

The asset management plan is about recycling and reinvestment. That is the key: every dollar is being reinvested in new technology, new buildings and new learning and teaching environments. We are going to roll out 12 Connected Learning Centres in remote rural and regional areas in this State, giving more young people the opportunity to access vocational education and training. We have come to an enterprise agreement and that will go to ballot shortly. We are working with the Teachers Federation on the One TAFE reform to replace the institutes model, which is not as relevant today as it was when first designed. We are empowering the good people who are the secret ingredient of TAFE.

I can talk about bricks and mortar and assets and buildings, but without the great teaching staff, the great people in TAFE who care passionately about the future of their students and their organisation, we will not get this right. They are now part of the journey. I have often said that one of the failures of many governments over time, including this one, is that sometimes they do not include the people. I have changed that position. The One TAFE reform includes everyone in the journey to empower, to grow and to make TAFE NSW not only the strongest public provider in New South Wales but also the number one public provider in the State. TAFE NSW will look after the most disadvantaged and vulnerable and at the same time will build the skilled workforce needed by industry and business to continue to grow the economy and job opportunities for our young people into the future.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mrs Melinda Pavey): Order! Before I call the member for Blue Mountains, I remind Government members to observe the standing orders.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (11:36): I speak in support of the member for Londonderry's private member's bill, the Technical and Further Education Commission Amendment (Funding Guarantee for TAFE) Bill 2016. This bill will cap contestable public funding for private training providers at a maximum of 30 per cent. This bill has been introduced as a private member's bill by Labor twice now after the Government blocked its progress earlier this year. The bill is necessary because the Baird Liberal Government is responsible for the attempted decimation of TAFE in New South Wales.

TAFE is one of the great public institutions of New South Wales. It is one of the great democratic and social equalisers that allows working-class people to improve their lives. Young people, the unemployed and older workers rely on TAFE to provide them with the opportunity to gain skills for a new career. Access to quality education, trade training and new vocational skills are social justice issues. Today, Labor members say unequivocally that we support public education, we will fight to save TAFE, and we will not stand by while this conservative government further erodes TAFE's status as the first choice public training provider of New South Wales.

There are 126,000 fewer students enrolled in TAFE this year than in 2012. That is a fact. There are 14,500 fewer students with a disability enrolled. That is a fact. These people are being turned away either because courses are being cut, staffing and resources are inadequate, or, all too often, fees have been jacked up so high as to be completely unaffordable. As well as the many thousands of students who are not enrolling in TAFE anymore, there are also more than 5,000 TAFE teachers who have left since 2012. The Minister says this has happened through voluntary redundancies. They have been sacked. That is the legacy of the Baird Government. In years to come, this Government and its Premier will not be remembered fondly for their new tollways or casinos. They will be best known and held in contempt for being the conservative government that tried to destroy TAFE. It is a disgraceful legacy and members opposite should be ashamed of themselves.

We already have a skills shortage in this State and in this country. The Federal Government tells us that we need skilled migrants to move here temporarily to undertake work that local workers do not have the skills and experience to do. Rather than see this Federal policy as the alarm bell that it is, the Baird Government and the Minister for Skills choose to further undermine and belittle the role of TAFE in providing crucial skilled workers for our economy. The *Sydney Morning Herald* repeatedly notes that many of the TAFE teachers being purged by the Baird Government teach core trades like building, carpentry and plumbing. What an absurd situation to force upon the people of New South Wales. It is a situation where, in the midst of growing demand for these trades, our Government is deliberately and systematically deskilling our workforce and eroding the collective capacity of Australian workers to undertake skilled and rewarding work.

The Liberal-Nationals would rather condemn a generation of young Australians to unemployment or menial work and import labour from overseas. It is hardly surprising because, as we know, this will have the effect of eroding standards of employment, safety expectations, wages and workplace conditions. That is their reason for being. There is not one Australian worker whose pay they do not want to cut. They work on behalf of big business and their donors who resent paying workers a decent wage and ensuring safety on the job.

Unsurprisingly, a privatisation angle is at play. If the Baird Government can discourage enough students from enrolling and sack enough teachers, it will be left with empty campuses across the State which it can flog off to its mates in the private sector. That is the strategy at play in New South Wales under Mike Baird: privatisation 101. In order to privatise, it first has to destroy the quality of service that is provided to the public. It then has to demoralise, bully and demean public servants on the payroll. Once the public has lost confidence, a private operator is offered up as an alternative to the once excellent public service that has been deliberately wrecked. A leaked Cabinet document showed that the Government is planning a fire sale or closure of \$63 million worth of TAFE campuses across the State. TAFE sites earmarked for full sale include Chullora, Epping, Belrose, Scone, Dapto, Vincentia, Maclean, Murwillumbah, Corowa, Narrandera, and Grenfell. That is what is happening in New South Wales under Mike Baird and the Liberals. They are wreckers.

The Nationals, who should know better, are sitting alongside Mike Baird and offering absolutely no opposition. They are the party of the bush apparently, but one would not know it in this place because they are incapable of offering any resistance to the city-centric policies of Mike Baird and the Liberals. They serve absolutely no purpose. TAFE is a crucial public institution across the State, but it is especially important for working-class people in our regional and rural areas. The Nationals deserve to lose the by-election in Orange for a number of reasons. The people of Orange should first consider the future of the Orange college, which is part of the TAFE Western network of colleges. TAFE Western in Orange delivers more than 65 courses across a diverse range of industries, from engineering and fabrication to veterinary nursing. The skills taught at Orange are critical to the economic and social health of a major regional centre.

What does this Government have planned for TAFE Western in Orange? We know from its track record that course cuts, staff cuts and fee hikes will continue unless some legislative protection is passed by this Parliament. At a recent budget estimates hearing, the Minister for Skills refused to rule out selling off the campuses in Orange. The voters in Orange should be grateful that Andrew Gee jumped off the sinking ship that is the Baird Government because he has given them an opportunity to send a message to Mike Baird and the failed Deputy Premier Troy Grant at the upcoming by-election that it is unacceptable for a government to neglect and to undermine our public TAFE system. Under the Baird Government, TAFE as we know it is being completely destroyed. We have seen a 22 per cent jump in course fees paid by students, and the number of apprentices and trainees plummet by 44 per cent.

We have seen \$573 million wasted on a disastrous new IT system that does not work. I am pleased that the Minister acknowledge that in this Chamber today, but when will it stop? Apparently not for another 18 months. It is bewildering what this Government will allow that to happen under its watch. I acknowledge and thank all the fabulous TAFE teachers, TAFE students and TAFE organisers for their fight to save TAFE NSW against sustained attacks. I particularly acknowledge the work of Maurie Mulheron, Pat Forward, Maxine Sharkey, Phil Chadwick, Rob Long, Kathy Nicholson and Annette Bennett. I commend this bill to the Legislative Assembly. Labor will restore TAFE and will limit contestable funding and the transfer of public money to shonky criminals in the private vocational training sector. Labor will restore confidence in our public education system, and it will support TAFE teachers to continue providing world-class quality education to our young people and job seekers at any stage in their life.

Announcements

TRIBUTE TO JOE ANDRADE

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser) (11:44): In the gallery today is the long-serving former Speaker's personal assistant Joe Andrade. Joe started work at General Motors Holden at Pagewood installing dashboards in cars and then went to the Menzies Hotel to learn silver service. To our great benefit, he then came to Parliament House and worked in the catering section and the Speaker's dining room. From catering he moved to the Legislative Assembly to work as an attendant and then became the Speaker's personal assistant. He has worked for speakers Kevin Rozzoli, John Murray, John Aquilina, George Torbay, and Shelley Hancock. Joe retired this year after 35 years of service to the Parliament, a number of Speakers, and members.

My personal recollection of Joe is an occasion when Minister Fahey banned smoking in this Parliament. The Hon. Gerry Peacocke took exception to the ban. On the last day that smoking was allowed, Gerry bought himself a cigar of huge proportion. When a division was called he lit it and came down in the lift with the cigar. Joe, as always, was standing at the door of the House. Gerry said to Joe, "Hold this." Joe stood there throughout the division with this smoking cigar of some proportion in his hand. Joe has had a tough time over the past few years. His home was burnt down, which I can relate to because my home was destroyed by fire as well. We have had a number of conversations about that.

On my behalf and on behalf of every member in this place, I thank him for his 35 years of dedicated service. Joe always had a friendly smile and was always of great assistance, especially to me in my role as Assistant Speaker. I hope that he enjoys a long and happy retirement in his new home with his wife and family. We will always think of him fondly. I will always picture him standing at the door of the House with a cigar in his hand; I am not sure whether he had a puff. Enjoy your retirement, Joe.

*Bills***TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION COMMISSION AMENDMENT (FUNDING GUARANTEE FOR TAFE) BILL 2016****Second Reading**

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (11:47): As a newly appointed Temporary Speaker, I pass on my congratulations to Joe Andrade on his retirement. His warm, fun-loving, happy and polite nature is a rarity in politics. When I was appointed, Joe was one of the first people I spent time with and it was always a pleasure to walk into the Chamber knowing he was there. Enjoy your retirement, Joe. Congratulations.

It is always difficult following the dynamic and effervescent Minister Barilaro. The Minister spoke passionately in this Chamber against the Technical and Further Education Commission Amendment (Funding Guarantee for TAFE) Bill 2016. On behalf of the Government, I reaffirm the comments made by the Minister opposing this bill. I will start by referring to background issues. In 2015, the New South Wales Government introduced a new model of funding for vocational education and training. Smart and Skilled is a demand-driven funding model. The funding follows a student and additional loadings are paid for students with a disability, students in regional areas and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Under Smart and Skilled, a limited amount of funding is contested. It is open to competition between TAFE NSW, non-government providers and not-for-profit providers to deliver qualifications up to and including certificate III and all apprenticeships and selected traineeships.

In addition to being eligible to compete for contestable funding, TAFE NSW is also awarded direct funding to deliver qualifications of certificate IV and above as well as operational funding. It was only recently that the Minister joined me at the Hunter TAFE in Gosford. He was more than willing to spend as much time with the staff and students as they wanted. That speaks volumes about his accessibility. He was happy to answer any of their concerns. A lot of those concerns were unfounded. They were based on scaremongering and misinformation from those opposite, especially on the Central Coast. I was proud to be standing by him at Hunter TAFE in Gosford. To his credit, the Minister was more than happy to be direct, honest and open about any question that was put to him. The passion he displayed earlier this morning speaks volumes about this Minister. He is hands on with this issue. He has a passion for making TAFE a strong, reliable, vibrant and sustainable entity into the future, while at the same time delivering the most efficient and direct courses for students who are enrolled at TAFE.

The TAFE NSW budget 2016-17 is \$1.82 billion out of a total skills budget of \$2.2 billion. The member for Londonderry has moved to introduce an bill to amend the Technical and Further Education Commission Act to ensure that not less than 70 per cent of funding for vocational education and training is allocated to TAFE. Obviously, as the Minister said earlier, the member for Londonderry was trying to introduce the two-page bill that was spoken about by her leader but who failed even to see it through to debate. Let us be clear, as was outlined by the Minister earlier, only 12 per cent of TAFE NSW revenue comes from the contestable market—that is the Smart and Skilled entitlement program. Contestability is Labor's policy, both State and Federal.

As the Minister pointed out, Federal Labor introduced contestability back in the 1990s under Minister Dawkins, and it was implemented progressively by successive State governments, including Labor governments. The Gillard Government sought to implement the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform from which the new smart and skills framework emerged. VET FEE-HELP is a Federal Labor policy that was designed and scoped by the Rudd-Gillard Government. NSW Labor provided greater support to private training providers than has the New South Wales Liberal Government. NSW Labor handed almost \$200 million to 500 private providers in 2010; this Government provided \$117 million to 440 non-TAFE providers last financial year. That is a significant reduction from the \$200 million provided to 500 private providers in 2010. Smart and Skilled provides a robust framework of accountability and transparency—something that never existed under Labor.

This Government is paying less money to private providers than the Labor Government did. This Government is also funding less due to the increased quality assurance requirements introduced by this Government and the significantly higher level of scrutiny on these providers. The only thing that has changed is that both TAFE and private registered training organisations [RTOs] are now accountable directly to students, under Smart and Skilled's demand-driven funding framework. While TAFE now has to compete for some of its students, so too do private training providers. Labor's funding to private providers was guaranteed; there was no need to compete with TAFE and other providers to get it. The contestable funding pool is small compared to the total skills budget of \$2.21 billion. Last financial year it was \$289 million. TAFE won \$205 million of that \$289 million, with private providers receiving \$84 million.

Labor's proposed bill puts New South Wales at risk of losing hundreds of millions of dollars of funding through the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform—an amendment introduced by the Gillard Government and to which NSW Labor contributed heavily. Labor's bill will remove opportunities for students to choose when and how they are to be trained. Labor's bill will remove the need for TAFE NSW to be accountable for the hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars it receives. Labor's bill takes money away from training more students and puts it into maintaining the expensive overheads and management of TAFE NSW. The Smart and Skilled funding model is based on a co-investment between students and the New South Wales Government. Fees under Smart and Skilled recognise that training is a shared investment with significant private benefit. Students benefit from better jobs and wages and the State benefits from a skilled workforce.

Modest fee increases also reflect a decision by this Government to fund more places for more students across more training providers. In 2016-17 the New South Wales will subsidise 550,000 places in vocational courses, which will go directly to jobs that our economy needs. Fees under Smart and Skilled offer value for students. For example, for certificate I in access to work and training, the New South Wales Government pays \$2,120 and the student pays \$220, or \$80 if students are concession eligible. With respect to a certificate II in foundations for vocational and further study, the New South Wales Government pays \$3,000 and the student pays \$320, or \$80 if they are concession eligible. With respect to a certificate III in carpentry and joinery, the New South Wales Government pays \$12,360 and the student pays \$2,000 as an apprenticeship, or \$240 if they are concession eligible. With respect to a certificate IV in commercial cookery, the New South Wales Government pays \$11,120 and the student pays \$2,340, or \$240 with the concession.

This Government's Smart and Skilled policy means that students who can afford it pay a contribution towards their training so that we can create opportunities for those who most need it. Smart and Skilled allows the New South Wales Government to offer free training for disadvantaged and vulnerable people in New South Wales, as the Minister clearly outlined. These include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with disability, who can access free training under Smart and Skilled. Young people on welfare or in social housing pay nothing up to the certificate IV. This Government has extended free training to retrenched workers in key industry sectors, young people in out-of-home care and survivors of domestic violence. The Government is working with industry and the not-for-profit sector in identifying other vulnerable groups.

Business interrupted.

Motions

RURAL FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (11:57): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that over the past week the NSW Rural Fire Service [RFS] has responded to a number of significant bushfires to protect the lives and property of others.
- (2) Notes that fires in the Shoalhaven and Penrith areas alone required the efforts of over 200 personnel and 55 appliances from both NSW RFS and Fire and Rescue NSW, coordinated by the NSW RFS.
- (3) Recognises the vital and selfless work done by the many volunteers of the NSW RFS and conveys our thanks for their outstanding efforts and along with community owes them a debt of gratitude which simply cannot be repaid.

I support this motion, which recognises the NSW Rural Fire Service [RFS] and the volunteers who are engaged in activity on behalf of the Rural Fire Service. Members will be aware that since late last week hundreds of firefighters have been battling a number of major bushfires across the State. As the lead combat agency for bush and grass fires, the RFS is coordinating the firefighting effort involving personnel and appliances from the NSW RFS, Fire and Rescue New South Wales, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and the Forestry Corporation of New South Wales. New South Wales has been well served for many years by the principles of coordinated firefighting, which ensure co-operation between firefighting agencies and other emergency services agencies while having a clear agency in charge of bush and grass firefighting operations, that is, the NSW Rural Fire Service. It is reassuring to know that, as always, our volunteers from the NSW RFS, supported by other emergency service agencies, were prepared and ready to tackle their first major challenges of the fire season.

It is worth reflecting upon and providing a snapshot of the activity that has occurred since last week. As at midday on Wednesday 9 November 2016, New South Wales Rural Fire Service crews were in attendance at a total of 52 incidents, which included 42 bush and grass fires, 15 of which were not contained. At that time a total of 121 fire appliances, 298 field personnel, 145 incident management personnel and 28 aircraft were operational. The weekend of 4 and 5 November 2016 saw the first declarations under section 44 of the Rural Fires Act 1997 by the Commissioner of the New South Wales Rural Fire Service. One of those applied to the local government areas of Cessnock, Maitland, Dungog, Port Stephens, and part of the Mid Coast. The second applied to the entire

Kempsey local government area. Those fast-moving bushfires threatened properties at various times over the weekend, with the New South Wales RFS issuing a total of seven emergency alerts via mobile telephones and landlines to warn local residents in affected areas of the potential fire impact.

I am aware there has been some property loss and damage, with one house and 19 outbuildings completely destroyed, a further eight homes damaged, and 10 facilities, such as sheds, damaged. Our thoughts are with those people who have been impacted by that fire. However, it could have been much worse had it not been for the efforts of the RFS and other firefighting agencies. The Pacific Highway was closed several times at short notice in the Karuah and South Kempsey areas for the safety of motorists and fire crews. The focus of firefighting operations remain with the fires in Cessnock, which is the Racecourse Road fire, Port Stephens, which is the Lone Pine fire, and Kempsey, which is the Ravenswood fire. I take this opportunity to reflect on the manner in which fires are fought and the use of what are referred to as very large aircraft tankers [VLATs] and larger aircraft tankers [LATs]. During the weekend the large air tanker, *Thor*, and the very large air tanker, *Southern Belle*, played an invaluable role in the firefighting effort.

Thor and *Southern Belle* can each hold 15,000 litres and 44,000 litres of water respectively, while a tanker can hold only 3,000 litres of water. The trial of the two large air tankers—which was a Government election commitment—is now in its second year. The Government has committed just over \$18 million for the two-year trial. So far over the course of the trial, the aircraft have proved to be a very effective tool for the RFS and are an important asset in our firefighting arsenal. The Government's investment in those aircraft has protected lives and property in New South Wales throughout the 2015-16 bushfire season, and no doubt will continue to do so this season. It is worth mentioning that during the 2015-16 fire season, the benefits of the New South Wales Government's decision to commence this trial were felt not only in this State but also interstate in Victoria, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania, where they were deployed to assist with firefighting in those areas last year. *Thor* also was deployed to Indonesia at the request of the Federal Government to undertake firefighting in relation to peat fires, which had burned for a number of months in Indonesia.

The entirety of the State has now entered the bushfire danger period. Members of this House will be away from Parliament during that period. Due to above-average rainfall across much of the State earlier this year, it was expected that there would be a delayed start to the bushfire season. However, there was concern that if there were a shift towards more typical summer conditions, we could see fuel availability coinciding with the peak of summer, leading to a predicted higher bushfire potential. No matter what the conditions, our emergency service agencies—in particular our more than 74,000 New South Wales RFS volunteers—remain ready and prepared to protect the communities of this State.

While aircraft and other resources provide valuable assistance in fire suppression, it is their integration with the hard work and expertise of the firefighters on the ground, along with a well-prepared community, that make the real difference. As always, crucial hazard reduction work has been undertaken by agencies across the State, as conditions permitted. This State boasts the largest, best trained and best equipped volunteer firefighting force in the world—the New South Wales Rural Fire Service. Our volunteers give selflessly to our communities, not only providing protection during emergencies, but also giving their time to ensure that the community is prepared through undertaking hazard reduction activities and community engagement activities throughout the year. We should appreciate those dedicated volunteers and support them in their valuable work.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:05): I join my Labor colleagues and the member for Epping, who moved the motion, in debate on Rural Fire Service [RFS] volunteers. The Labor Opposition supports the motion. Parts (1), (2) and (3) of the motion refer to the efforts of the RFS over the past week in responding to a significant number of bushfires across Sydney and other parts of New South Wales, particularly around Port Stephens, Cessnock and Greater Western Sydney in Penrith. The member for Epping mentioned, and others have confirmed, that the fires were excessive. There was a fire at Lone Pine in Karuah, one in South Kempsey in Ravenswood, and one in Racecourse Road, Cessnock.

The people of New South Wales live in a large State that is part of a large country. Obviously we are at the peril because of the elements, and it is no different in summer. We are now in the fire season and it is very important for our communities to understand not only their commitment but also their duty to ensure that their families are safe and that they have fire plans in place if they live in bushland areas. The Sydney metropolitan area is not immune to bushfires. One only has to look to areas in the northern part of Sydney, such as Ku-ring-gai, the Sutherland shire to the south and to the west in the Penrith and Blue Mountains region to know that Sydney is surrounded by the wonders of the natural environment. But at times people are put in danger as a result of living close to the best bushland that any country or State can have.

Part (2) of the motion refers to fires in the Shoalhaven, and I note the presence in the Chamber of the member for Shellharbour. I also acknowledge the member for Port Stephens, the member for Blue Mountains, the member for Londonderry, and the member for Wallsend, as well as all other members who are present in the

House. We all hold sacred and dear the volunteers who put their lives on the line every time a fire starts to rage, no matter where it is. The member for Epping mentioned the wonderful 70,000-plus volunteers who drop whatever they are doing—which sometimes includes their own family commitments—to fight fires and to make us safe. They are putting their lives on the line, and it is important to recognise that in this House. As the shadow Minister, I thank the wonderful RFS volunteers for their great work. I also state for the record that during the bushfire season other brigades, units and emergency services work together. I offer my thanks to the NSW Police, Fire and Rescue NSW who do their bit, and our wonderful volunteers in the State Emergency Service. They work together during disastrous events, such as fires, floods and storms, for the benefit of our community.

I now turn to part (3) of this motion, which recognises the vital and selfless work done by the volunteers. As I said, these volunteers put their lives on the line and we thank them for all they do. At the end of the motion the member acknowledges that we "owe them a debt of gratitude which simply cannot be repaid". Governments, both Labor and Liberal, would go broke if it were not for volunteers, and we all know that. These volunteers do what they do, so it is important that we as residents of New South Wales thank them. I thank the Deputy Commissioner of Rural Fire Service, Rob Rogers, for keeping us informed about the fire front during the past week. I also thank Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs, David Elliott, and his chief of staff, Jim Terrey, who opened the lines of communication. When emergency situations occur, I am sent a text or phoned so that I can communicate information to those members who are affected. At times like this, bipartisanship is paramount because at the end of the day someone's life could be at risk.

The member for Epping touched on the loss of properties, and I acknowledge that it is sad when that occurs. We always hope that property is not lost, but unfortunately that is not always the case. When this happens, families are often displaced so we need to acknowledge that many family members suffer from post-traumatic stress as a result of these events. As members of Parliament we must offer our support to families, and particularly children, who suffer as a result of these events. Often family members witness the horrors of fire damaging or even destroying their homes. On behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition, I commend the member for Epping for moving this motion. We on this side of the House support this motion wholeheartedly.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (12:12): As we move into more typical summer weather conditions, there is an increasing chance that we will see more bushfires in New South Wales, as has unfortunately been the case in the last few weeks. Our communities need to be confident that they can rely on the emergency service agencies. One thing our communities are confident about is our outstanding emergency service personnel, who go above and beyond the call of duty. The member for Fairfield made a good point that no government at any level—local, State or Federal—could afford to pay the volunteers for the work they do. If we had to pay people to deal with emergencies, the job would not get done.

We acknowledge and thank each and every volunteer who, during the worst emergencies, puts their life on the line to help our communities, or at other times gives of their family time, work time or just their time to be away from their homes when they help in emergencies. As other speakers have said, fire emergencies might be in Londonderry or the South Coast, but they might also be in Victoria or even California. These volunteers give up their time because they are selfless individuals who care about people, properties and, most importantly, the wellbeing of communities. Every member of this House acknowledges our Rural Fire Service [RFS] volunteers for the outstanding job they do. We also acknowledge other emergency services—police, ambos, retained fireys and others who give their time.

There are outstanding RFS brigades across the Macarthur zone, and I acknowledge each brigade and the captains of each brigade. I ask these captains to pass on my thanks to each of their members. I thank David Cervelli of the Austral brigade; Rick Parish of Bringelly; Mark Honor of Camden West; John Pisani of Casula; Garry Smith of Catherine Fields; Peter Rabbidge of Cobbitty—from memory Peter has been a member for almost 60 years and certainly over 50 years; Daria Hayes of Hoxton Park; David Edwards of Kemps Creek; Steve Willis of Kentlyn; Norman Walters of Leppington; Peter Sibary of Luddenham; Mario Burzynski of Lynwood Park; Chad Harris of Menangle Park; Cohn Beaver of Minto Heights; Robert Pate of Narellan; Simon Hedges of Varroville; and David Scott of Wedderburn.

I acknowledge and thank all of the hundreds, if not thousands of volunteers in my region alone. The RFS is very much in our minds now that the fire season is upon us, but RFS volunteers are on call 365 days a year, and appear at community events such as local shows and schools educating the public and our kids. They do much more than turn up during fire emergencies. I thank them all for what they contribute to our community in making it a safer place.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:16): I support the motion moved by the member for Epping to pay tribute to the NSW Rural Fire Service volunteers who have worked so hard over recent days to protect lives and properties across New South Wales. I pay tribute to these selfless men and women on behalf of

all of my colleagues in the New South Wales Opposition, the people of Port Stephens I represent in this place, and all of the communities we represent.

Last Friday we saw fires kick up across the State. One of them was named the Lone Pine fire. It started east of the Pacific Highway in Port Stephens, north of Raymond Terrace. Over the next couple of days, as the temperature increased and the winds picked up, the fire jumped the Pacific Highway and the Karuah River. The Lone Pine fire threatened the communities of Karuah, Balickera, Limeburners Creek, Medowie, and Swan Bay. It raged through more than 9,000 hectares of bushland. Firefighters battled ridiculously tough conditions of high temperatures and erratic winds, with gusts of up to 70 kilometres an hour. At one stage the fire front was 80 kilometres long and the edge of the fire spanned 120 kilometres. At the weekend I went into my backyard in Medowie and I felt like I was standing in a dryer. I could not imagine the conditions the firefighters were facing mere kilometres away as they fought the blaze.

Like all other areas, in Port Stephens and across the Hunter we have amazing local rural fire brigades with numerous volunteers. But additional support was needed over the weekend, and it was provided in great strength. We were very fortunate to have crews from as far as Sydney assisting over the weekend. We also had support from above, in the form of water-bombing airtankers *Thor* and *Southern Belle*. It was impressive to watch their fat bellies flying above us in their firefighting efforts. Together with Rural Fire Service volunteers, we had aviation crews and workers from Fire and Rescue NSW, National Parks and Wildlife, Forestry NSW and police. The Salvation Army was also assisting with provisions for the workers on the front line.

It took an enormous effort from many, many people to ultimately control the fire. It is thanks only to the hard work, courage and commitment of the hundreds of volunteer firefighters and supporting services that I am not here today paying tribute to people whose lives were lost or whose houses were destroyed. A resident, Cherie Edwards, whose house was under threat, described waking up at midnight on Sunday as "really scary". She could see the blaze roaring along the boundary of her property toward their house. But she said that at least half a dozen trucks and their personnel assisted them to protect the house. With the crews on hand the fire burned around and past her house, saving everything from harm. Cherie said:

A huge thank you to all those who assisted. Your commitment and vigilance around the clock was amazing!! Constantly returning to monitor the situation even when it appeared contained. Thank you so much! It is not the first time we have had bushfires in Port Stephens, and it will not be the last. Living in regional communities, as many of us here do, we know and accept the risks. We all have a responsibility to ensure that we are doing our part by preparing our properties and having a plan in place for when emergencies do arise. It has been a harsh beginning to the bushfire season, but it has highlighted to us all that we must be prepared. It is reassuring to know that there are people in our communities with expertise and courage who are willing to do all that they can to protect lives and properties. I thank them for their selfless service. I also recognise the volunteers' families who support their loved ones to support our communities, as they experience the burden of uncertainty every time their loved ones put their lives on the line to save the lives of others. I thank them one and all: We owe them an enormous debt.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:20): I commend the member for Epping for moving this motion about the Rural Fire Service [RFS]. As the member for Terrigal, I am fully aware of the fire dangers encompassing the Central Coast region. The RFS volunteer service does an amazing job. My electorate of Terrigal, which is on the Central Coast, has eight magnificent RFS units comprising 395 members. Like the member for Camden, I will name each of those units, because they do an outstanding job: Wameral has 62 members; Matcham, 35; Brisbane Waters, 46; Avoca, 57; Copacabana, 64; McMasters, 35; Empire Bay, 38; and Killcare, 58.

It is not only the 395 members of these units but also their extended families we must thank—the husbands, wives, boyfriends and girlfriends of all of those volunteers who watch their partners go out to protect other people's property, sometimes for days on end. The Wameral unit was deployed to the Lone Pine fire and it was also at Cessnock. These people are incredible. No sooner had they got back from Cessnock than they attended a community function, the Central Coast Kids Day Out, and a Lions function before they restaffed and headed back to Lone Pine. These people take time off work, and I must thank their employers for giving them that flexibility. They are the cream of the crop. They make an outstanding effort to keep other people in our community safe during the toughest times of the year. They go out in extreme heat and, in some cases, humidity.

I know from all the bushfire incidents we have had on the Central Coast that it is a hellish situation. The heat and pressure on homeowners is relieved to some degree when they see the RFS arrive, because they know they will be well protected by these amazing volunteers, who give it their all without question or complaint. It is only fitting that we commend the actions of all of the units across the Central Coast, and not only them but also the units from the Shoalhaven and units from further north—from one end of New South Wales to the other. We also see them travelling interstate to help in Victoria or Queensland, which also suffer devastating bushfires. These people do not give a second thought about going where they are needed and where they are called to be.

I pay tribute to the 395 RFS members in the Terrigal electorate for the fantastic job they do. We sleep better at night, especially during summer, knowing that they are there to protect us in our time of need. The arrival of the RFS truck has a calming influence, as does knowing that the guys and girls who get off the truck are there

to protect us. Again I thank the member for Epping for moving this motion. It is evident given the bipartisanship shown here that we all have the utmost respect for the Rural Fire Service in New South Wales and will continue to support it in its endeavours. The Minister visited when we contributed new radios to the Copacabana unit recently, and three new trucks have been given to Central Coast units. We will resource the RFS as best we can and ensure they have all the equipment they need to keep themselves and us safe during the torrid fire seasons.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (12:24): By leave: I appreciate the Government's generosity in allowing me to speak on this motion, and I commend the member for Epping for moving it. As the member for Londonderry, I am very proud to speak on this, particularly in reference to the horrific fires that ripped through some of our beautiful country on Friday. I will say a few words about those fires. They received much media attention, but it was horrifyingly scary for our community. On Friday, as members may be aware, a fire was started in Cranebrook. It then reached Whitegates Road in Londonderry and crossed the Northern Road heading to Llandilo and Berkshire Park.

In that time that fire was completely out of control and quickly escalated to an emergency situation. We were contacted by panicked residents who had to evacuate not only themselves but also livestock from the areas. They had to find floats for their horses. The communities of Llandilo, Berkshire Park and Londonderry are a very tight mob. They stick together, and they worked out a way to get themselves and their livestock out. At one point I was being sent pictures from inside a high school in Llandilo where the students could see the fire quickly approaching. As a local member, it was very scary to see that.

I place on the record my admiration, respect and thanks—I cannot possibly describe how thankful our community is—for the Rural Fire Service [RFS] in our area, particularly the Llandilo and Londonderry brigades, and the whole of the Cumberland zone. Brigades from different zones and different areas across Sydney came to protect us and to keep us safe. In fact, I believe the son of the member for Blue Mountains was one of those RFS firefighters who was in Llandilo fighting our fire to keep our people safe—so I thank young Tom. Some homes were destroyed; no lives were lost. As the member for Port Stephens said, I am lucky to be standing here congratulating and sending my admiration to the RFS rather than talking about members of my community who perished in this fire.

This will be the subject of court action, as we know from media coverage, and unfortunately in this case we are looking at deliberately-lit fires. There is nothing more disgraceful than people who put at risk the lives of people in our community and the lives of people who give up everything to keep our community safe. I put on the record my hope that the full weight of the law will come down on these individuals for risking our community's lives in this way. It is nothing short of absolutely disgusting. In addition to my admiration for the RFS, our police and all of our emergency services, I also put on record my admiration for our local and State media, who did so much work that afternoon letting everyone know what was happening on the ground. The media plays a very important role. There was *Penrith Press*, *The Western Weekender*, *Mt Druitt-St Marys The Standard*, the *Nepean News*, the *Western News*. I was listening to 2GB—

Mr John Sidoti: No, 2GB?

Ms PRUE CAR: Actually, I am an avid listener and well known for that. It was doing a fantastic job of making sure that people knew what was happening on the ground and what to do. I am so proud to say that our community is safe. It breaks my heart to see the charred remains after that fire. I thank the emergency services for keeping us safe and alive.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:28): By leave: I thank those opposite for granting me leave to speak today, and I thank the member for Epping for moving this motion. This is very important across regional New South Wales. As we approach the middle of November, at the start of the fire season, it is extraordinary to think that our emergency services personnel are being needed so early. Many of our zones across New South Wales have been flood-bound. The Rural Fire Service [RFS], the State Emergency Service, Fire and Rescue NSW, and the NSW Police Force have done an amazing job looking after the communities where floods have inundated and caused havoc and extraordinary damage. The Rural Fire Service has now switched to managing fires across the State.

We have heard from the member for Blue Mountains, the member for Londonderry, and the member for Port Stephens some horrific tales about the early stages of this bushfire season. We are on full alert in the north-west because we have had torrential rain for the past four or five months, and the resulting lush vegetation dries out extremely quickly. In light of that, the RFS is on standby. I thank Superintendent Allyn Purkiss, who does a fantastic job ensuring that our brigades are fully trained and ready to go at the drop of a hat. We know that when we are fleeing an emergency, emergency services personnel are running towards it, and we sincerely thank them for that. A fire broke out at Sulcor near Manilla last January and our RFS teams were tasked to assist.

I rang to find out what was happening and was told that they were packing food to take to the fire front. They needed a hand, so my son and I went to the RFS headquarters to help load the food. When that was done, we jumped into our car and drove to Manilla to distribute it to the firefighters battling the grassfire. We know first-hand how important it is to help out, and we are always ready to do so. While we support our volunteers, we must resource them properly, and we have been doing that in the New England north-west. The Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. David Elliott, was recently in Tamworth to hand over a number of tankers—one for Bendemeer and one for Manilla. In late 2014, Tamworth RFS took delivery of another two tankers, and the Loomberah and Watsons Creek brigades also took delivery of new units.

The member for Northern Tablelands also welcomed a tanker at Warialda. We must continue to invest in our RFS volunteers and provide the resources they need. They require the very best equipment when they go towards the fire front, not only to fight the fire but also to protect themselves. They are putting themselves at significant risk, and as they protect us they also protect our communities, livestock and homes. They put themselves in extreme danger, so we must ensure that we continue to invest to give them the resources they need. I place on record my sincere thanks to all volunteers. They have my support, and they always will. I wish them a safe summer during which hopefully they will have minimal firefighting activity.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (12:32): By leave: I commend the member for Epping for moving this motion, which is extremely timely. It is important that members thank those in our community who keep us safe. The Blue Mountains is a unique World Heritage area, but it is also one of the most bushfire-prone areas in the world. The district is home to just over 75,000 people, who live in and around 27 towns and villages across the mountains. I pay tribute to Blue Mountains Rural Fire Service Superintendent David Jones, every brigade and every member in the Blue Mountains, including our group officers, Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers and Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons. I also thank the NSW Fire and Rescue, the NSW Ambulance, and the State Emergency Service personnel, who in recent times have all been on call and alert.

Problems began in the Blue Mountains on Thursday 3 November when the wind whipped up in the Megalong Valley Reserve while a hazard reduction burn was being carried out. My son put on his "yellows" and headed out to join his brigade in fighting the fire. The very next day, 4 November, he went to help out at Llandilo, Londonderry and Cranebrook. My community has just commemorated the third anniversary of the 2013 bushfire disaster, when families suffered the loss of nearly 200 homes at Winmalee, Yellow Rock, Springwood, and Mount Victoria. Many people lost much-loved pets, and many other animals also suffered. My community is still on the journey to recovery. I thank our emergency services personnel, and particularly the Rural Fire Service personnel. They have my deepest respect and I thank them for their service. Hopefully the coming fire season is not terrible and people come home after putting their lives on the line. Thank you Rural Fire Service.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:35): By leave: I thank and pay tribute to the Rural Fire Service [RFS] in the electorate of Myall Lakes. I ask Superintendent Jim Blackmore of the Gloucester- Great Lakes Command, and Cam Baker of the Manning Command to convey to their brigades and members my thanks and the thanks of the New South Wales Parliament and their local communities. During the past few weeks they have fought fires throughout the district—in Nahiack, Forster and Wootton. They have also travelled to Cudal, Lone Pine, Hastings, Ellenborough, Diamond Beach, and Borland other areas to help in times of need. Members of the RFS are willing to put their lives on the line to help their communities. It is not only them that we should thank; we should also thank their families, who support them and allow them to spend time away from home to help out in other districts. We should also thank the employers who give their staff time off to help.

Many people do not realise that fighting fires is not the only thing that the RFS does. It also provides assistance at motor vehicle accidents and structure fires. In my area, personnel also travel to islands to fight fires. The service also provides education and attends community events. Over the past few years, we have seen significant improvements in facilities, training and resources. Members of the RFS are dedicated, but they need our support. I am pleased that the Government has been able to provide that support by supplying upgraded premises, trucks, gear and equipment. Recently a serious motor vehicle accident occurred late at night in my electorate. It involved a number of vehicles and several people were injured. NSW Ambulance called on the local RFS to provide as many first aiders as possible to assist until more paramedics could arrive to attend to the injured and a helicopter could remove them. The Tuncurry brigade volunteers stepped up to help. I again thank all those volunteers. We really appreciate the work they do. As I said, it is fire season—we are not heading into it; we are already in it. Because we have had a good season there will be some drying off and I am sure there will a number of fires to battle in the next few months.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): The member for Upper Hunter seeks the call. Is leave granted to permit the member to speak in the debate?

Ms Sonia Hornery: Only because it is Michael.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (12:41): By leave: I thank the member for Wallsend for her very kind words.

Ms Prue Car: There is a lot of love in this Chamber today.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Do not worry. I think Sonia is probably one of the best—if not the best—Opposition member in this House. She is very, very good. I say that to her constituents as well. I commend the member for Epping for moving this motion. The NSW Rural Fire Service [RFS] is an important institution across New South Wales, but particularly in my electorate of Upper Hunter. As a member of the Dartbrook Rural Fire Brigade, I can attest to the level of work, training and commitment that goes into being an RFS member and protecting one's community.

I will touch on a number of aspects of the Upper Hunter electorate. There are 25 RFS units in my electorate, which covers approximately 27,642 square kilometres and has 330 towns, villages and localities. It is the fifth largest electorate in New South Wales. These RFS units and members do a fantastic job, as the member for Myall Lakes said, sometimes at all hours of the day and night. They drop everything to ensure that community safety is absolutely paramount. Not only that, the member for Tamworth mentioned earlier that the Government must continue to invest in the equipment and services that the RFS units require.

Recently Minister David Elliott visited Scotts Flat and presented a grant for further equipment. In a few weeks the Minister will be back in the Upper Hunter allocating funds for further equipment. I recently had the pleasure of attending the Cassilis RFS unit's 90-year anniversary with the wonderful Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service, Shane Fitzsimmons. It is a sign of the commissioner's great commitment that he travels to small villages such as Cassilis to attend important events. It is wonderful to see. He drove up from Sydney that day and returned to Sydney that night—it was a very long day. The commissioner shows absolute commitment to the RFS units and volunteers throughout New South Wales, and particularly those in my electorate of Upper Hunter.

On the topic of volunteering, I am not sure whether members are aware that in 2010 Australians spent an estimated 6.1 billion hours volunteering, which equated to \$25.4 billion in economic value. We cannot underestimate the value of volunteerism in Australia and in New South Wales—I certainly appreciate it in my electorate of Upper Hunter. As someone who has volunteered effectively all his life—my father was a volunteer with the St John Ambulance—I appreciate the value of volunteerism. I appreciate the value of being a volunteer and of helping out in one's community. I congratulate all RFS volunteers in particular.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (12:43): In reply: There is no doubt that adversity brings out the best in the human condition. The incidents members have spoken of today adequately reflect the great importance placed on the volunteers of the Rural Fire Service and the manner in which they respond. All the descriptions of the work engaged in by the volunteer Rural Fire Service illustrate that when the people of New South Wales are faced with adversity, the volunteers act in a manner that is a great tribute to humanity. I thank each of the members who has spoken on this motion—the member for Fairfield, the member for Camden, the member for Port Stephens, the member for Terrigal, the member for Londonderry, the member for Tamworth, the member for Blue Mountains, the member for Myall Lakes and the member for Upper Hunter. Each of them unequivocally paid tribute to the Rural Fire Service units in their electorates. It astounds me that someone has given 60 years of volunteer service to the Rural Fire Service. That person is a true New South Wales hero.

I highlight the other work done by the volunteer Rural Fire Service that members have spoken about. The Assist Infirm, Disabled and Elderly Residents—AIDER—program aims to support some of the more vulnerable and at-risk community members. As part of that program the Rural Fire Service attends the homes of people who require support and assists them with cleaning their gutters, thinning vegetation around homes, removing leaf and tree debris, trimming branches that are close to home and so on. Again, that work is done by volunteers. I am told that as at July 2016 volunteers had completed 188 jobs, and they hope to have 940 jobs completed by the end of 2017. They are inspirational people. The NSW Rural Fire Service is also engaged in a number of other initiatives. One is to encourage more people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to engage with the Rural Fire Service. That is a challenge and it is an opportunity to get more people from those communities involved in volunteering. There is also a push by the RFS to encourage more female participation in the service. Currently women constitute only 22 per cent of volunteer membership. There is a program to encourage more women to be involved.

Other members have said that we should acknowledge not only the volunteers but also those who support them and enable them to contribute to the community—their families. Our sincere appreciation extends to the family support network of our volunteers. Another group that supports the Rural Fire Service is employers. The NSW Rural Fire Service Supportive Employer Program recognises the vital contribution that employers make. We will continue to support volunteers as well as those in the community who support volunteers. The volunteers

of the NSW Rural Fire Service do extraordinary things to protect and improve their communities year round, often in the most arduous and challenging conditions. The Government recognises the value of their contribution and remains committed to providing the best possible support to underpin their efforts. I thank all members of this House for joining me in expressing our admiration and gratitude for the exemplary contribution made by the NSW Rural Fire Service members to the welfare of this State and its people. I encourage everyone to prepare, act, survive.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

REGISTERED NURSES IN AGED-CARE FACILITIES

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (12:48): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the many benefits of having registered nurses in aged-care premises at all times.
- (2) Notes that the Legislative Council committee inquiry into registered nurses in aged-care premises argued in favour of registered nurses being on duty at all times.
- (3) Notes that this decision will have a significant impact on thousands of residents of aged-care facilities in Wallsend.
- (4) Distances itself from the Premier's decision to drop the rule requiring registered nurses in aged-care premises 24 hours every day, leaving an unregulated workforce to make clinical decisions about complex care and medication management. Wallsend places a high priority on the residents of the Wallsend Aged Care Facility. When a surprise attempt was made to privatise the facility, the entire community rallied against it wholeheartedly and together we stopped the irrational sell-off. We are proud of our aged-care facility because we care about the wellbeing and treatment of the elderly in our community. Our community's reaction to the decision to scrap the rule requiring registered nurses [RNs] to be present at aged-care facilities around the clock has generated anger, disgust and frustration. The decision will guarantee lower standards at the cost of residents' lives. A local constituent told me:

If the time ever comes when I have to put my parents into an aged care facility, I'd want them to have the best care possible, and that has to include onsite health care professionals.

Currently New South Wales is envied for its gold standard protections for aged-care residents. It is the only State in the country to mandate the employment of on-site registered nurses, for which New South Wales can be proud. Allied in their quest for quality elderly health care, 13 organisations, including NCOSS, Carers NSW, the Nurses and Midwives' Association and Cancer Council, wrote in an open letter:

The Minister's decision removes protective legislation that has been in place for over 25 years in NSW ... Removing the requirement for there to be at least one Registered Nurse on duty in residential aged care facilities will lead to a drop in the standard of care received by residents, an increase in unnecessary presentations to emergency departments and the potential loss of life. It also means that unregulated and unlicensed care workers will be managing complex medications and complex care needs.

In order to remove the requirement for on-site RNs, the Minister will need to amend the Public Health Act 2010 to remove section 104, or repeal regulation 95 (a) of the Public Health Regulation 2012. The health Minister has insisted that retaining the requirement would lead to a duplication of regulation because the Federal Government has assumed control of the aged-care sector. Why is the Minister reinforcing a bad decision by the Turnbull Government, which will leave elderly care residents vulnerable and exposed? Retaining the requirement for RNs in aged-care facilities is not duplicating a regulation, it is strengthening one; it is essential care for the State's elderly.

In order to rebuild public confidence in the Baird Government—which is needed—especially in regional areas, the Minister must heed the warnings of community sector groups and the broader community. The Baird Government will refuse to retain RNs in New South Wales aged-care facilities and remove section 104 and regulation 95 (a) at its peril. Having RNs in residential aged-care facilities means that elderly members of our community and their families have peace of mind. Ellis Blaikie of the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association was spot on when she said:

The only benefit of removing the 24/7 registered nurse requirement is increased profits for nursing homes, but it comes at a high price to elderly residents and their families.

Without an on-site registered nurse, elderly residents will be sent to already overcrowded emergency departments to access nursing care. This will result in delayed treatment and additional strain on our hospitals, which they might not be able to absorb—and that is certainly the case at John Hunter Hospital. It is inexplicable that the Baird Government has punted to the Federal Government responsibility for ensuring care. The fact that it was a decision taken in direct contravention to the report generated by an inquiry in the other place makes it more incongruous.

Aged care is an issue close to the heart of many. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics data, almost 20 per cent of Wallsend residents are aged over 65 compared with a State average of 14 per cent. That shows how much of an impact this decision will have on our community. As our population ages in Wallsend and across New

South Wales, it is imperative that we cement protections for elderly people, including retaining the requirement for aged-care facilities to employ RNs at all times. Elderly members of the Wallsend community have contributed to New South Wales all their lives at all levels. We owe them much more than we can repay. Retaining RNs in our aged-care facilities is a matter of decency and a basic human right.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:55): I have worked as a registered nurse in public hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, nursing homes and community centres and wish to contribute to debate on this motion. Again, Labor has got it wrong. Those opposite are fearmongering and misleading the public. The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that residents of aged-care facilities in New South Wales continue to receive safe and appropriate care, including high-quality care as provided by registered nurses. Under the Aged Care Act 1997, the Commonwealth Government is responsible for residential aged care in Australia. Changes to the aged-care legislation that commenced on 1 July 2014 removed the distinction between high and low care in residential aged facilities, and made inoperable the provisions under the New South Wales Public Health Act 2010 that required a registered nurse to be on duty at all times where high-care service is delivered.

Removal of this distinction aims to ensure that residents can access the level of care they need based on an assessment of their care needs rather than being limited by a designated level of care. In mid 2014 the New South Wales Ministry of Health commenced a broader review of the requirement and established the NSW Health Aged Care Steering Committee as a consultative forum to consult with key stakeholders, including nursing, medical groups, aged-care service providers and the Commonwealth regulators. In addition, in July 2015 the Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3 commenced an inquiry into aged care in New South Wales. The report from this inquiry was tabled on 29 October 2015.

In a response to the commencement of the inquiry of the Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3, the Government recognises that the most effective way to address concerns raised during the inquiry is to improve the accreditation standards applied by the Commonwealth to residential aged care. It is important to note that the New South Wales Government is in line with every other State and Territory when it comes to registered nurses in aged-care facilities. This is not New South Wales going it alone. Registered nurses are still in some high-care facilities as they were before and those premises that are not high care and did not have registered nurses do not need registered nurses now.

The New South Wales Government took the concerns raised during the parliamentary inquiry to the Commonwealth through the Health Council of the Council of Australian Governments [COAG]. The Government notes the work being done by the Commonwealth to develop a single, quality framework for aged care. We look forward to an update at the next COAG meeting. As the Commonwealth is the manager of the national aged-care system, recommendations of the inquiry will be referred to the Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care for consideration. Those recommendations relate to enhancing support and assistance for registered nurses in rural and remote areas, addressing wage disparity between the public hospital and aged-care sectors, new models of residential care and minimum staffing ratios.

There are many dimensions to the care of aged people, and the care provided by registered nurses is only one part. Some people in aged-care facilities may require help from a physiotherapist to aid in increasing their mobility. Those who have dementia may need diversional therapists. Someone who needs help walking or showering may require an accomplished assistant in nursing. A multifaceted approach with different healthcare professionals working together is required to get the best outcomes for the person in the service. We must remember that no one profession owns the ability to care for our most vulnerable. The decision to staff any service that provides health care must be flexible to meet the needs of the client. These decisions need to be clinical, not political.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (12:59): I acknowledge the motion we are debating today and support the contribution of the member for Wallsend in raising this important issue. Currently, section 104 (1) (a) of the Public Health Act 2010 requires a registered nurse to be on duty in all our nursing homes at all times. General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3 in the other place published a report on registered nurses in New South Wales nursing homes on 27 October 2015—just over a year ago. Recommendation 7 of that report specifically called on the State Government to retain the requirement in section 104 (1) (a) of the Public Health Act 2010 for registered nurses to be on duty in nursing homes at all times.

Recommendation 8 indicated that the New South Wales Government should allow nursing homes to apply for an exemption from section 104 (1) (a) of the Public Health Act 2010 on a case-by-case basis, and that exemptions only be granted where the facility can demonstrate that it can still provide a high level of quality care. The central feature of this debate is the concept of "high level quality care". The Ministry of Health provided a submission to the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing in 2012, which has been quoted in the report. It asserted:

Under the Aged Care Act 1997 and the NSW Public Health Act 2000, high level care residents currently require care to be provided by a Registered Nurse. NSW Health believes it will be critical to continue these existing regulatory requirements to ensure care quality.

The Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association reflected the ministry's view by suggesting:

This is to provide a safeguard in terms of staffing for all residents; one which is currently not mandated by federal legislation governing standards and staffing in residential aged care. The NSW Government's decision regarding the requirement under section 104 of the Public Health Act 2010 should be based on the safety and care needs of residents.

The State Government's response to the Legislative Council report recommendations—in particular recommendations 7 and 8, which I have referred to—is disappointing. The Government has declined to accept the recommendations on the basis that:

... aged care facilities are regulated under a national system, operating under Commonwealth legislation. Retention and expansion of the NSW legislation will duplicate regulatory processes ...

Quite frankly, this is a cop-out from a government and a party which once asserted the primacy of States' rights in the Australian Federation. As the Legislative Council committee inquiry concluded, right across the board the majority of stakeholders support the retention of registered nurses in this State's aged-care facilities. The only stakeholders that do not are some of the aged-care providers and members opposite. At a time when Australia and New South Wales faces an ageing population, why would anyone wish to place more pressure on the emergency departments of our local hospitals? We should be preventing such pressure on our hospital systems, not adding to it. Abolishing the need for mandated care by a registered nurse on call at all times in our aged-care facilities will add to the pressure on our health system. New South Wales leads the way in the Australian Federation on this aspect of care for our elderly. We should not be watering down our standards of quality high care in this State for our aged-care citizens in order to save a buck for aged-care providers or kowtow to the Commonwealth. I support the member for Wallsend's motion and thank her for bringing it to the attention of the House today.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (13:03): There are many dimensions to the care of aged people, and the care provided by registered nurses is only one part. The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that residents of aged-care facilities in New South Wales continue to receive safe and appropriate care, including high quality care as provided by registered nurses. Aged-care facilities are regulated under a national system operating under Commonwealth legislation. The requirements for appropriate staffing levels will continue to be administered by the Federal Government, as they are for every State and Territory.

Changes to the aged-care legislation that commenced on 1 July 2014 removed the distinction between high and low care in residential aged-care facilities and made inoperable the provisions under the New South Wales Public Health Act 2010 that required a registered nurse to be on duty at all times where high-care service is delivered. This was to ensure residents were able to remain in a facility as their dependency increased, rather than having to move. As a result, New South Wales legislation that required a registered nurse to be on duty at all times where high care service is delivered became inactive. A recent parliamentary inquiry and Ministry of Health inquiry examined the policy and operational issues in relation these changes. It is important to note that the New South Wales Government is in line with every other State and Territory when it comes to registered nurses in aged-care facilities.

The Australian Aged Care Quality Agency monitors residential aged-care facilities and investigates potential breaches of standards. Decisions on aged care need to be clinical, not political. Some in aged-care facilities may require help from a physiotherapist to aid in increasing their mobility. Those who have dementia may need diversional therapists. Someone who needs help walking or showering may require an accomplished Assistant in Nursing. A multifaceted approach of different health professionals working together is required to get the best outcomes for the person in the service. We must remember that no one profession owns the ability to care for our most vulnerable. We disregard this fact at the peril of the aged who trust others with their care. The decision to staff any service that provides health care must be a flexible one to meet the needs of the client.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (13:06): I thank my colleague the good member for Wallsend for bringing this motion before this place. It is absolutely imperative that this Government finally acts on the recommendations of its own upper House inquiry into the role of registered nurses in New South Wales nursing homes. For the benefit of members in this place, I will record in *Hansard* the key recommendation of the upper House inquiry. Recommendation 7 states:

That the New South Wales Government retain the requirement in section 104 (1) (a) of the Public Health Act 2010 for registered nurses to be on duty in nursing homes at all times, and to amend the definition of 'nursing home' under the Act.

A change to the definition of "nursing home" is needed in order to harmonise legislation in the State of New South Wales with Commonwealth legislation in this area. Sadly, the Minister has been completely inactive and unresponsive to the calls from aged-care residents, activists and the nursing profession for legislative action in

this space. Whilst the Minister for Health has put in place interim arrangements to see the industry through until the end of this year, we need to know what future action is proposed and then we need to see the Government deliver on it. The hardworking, dedicated nurses deserve the security and assurance that only the Minister can provide with the legislative change proposed by the upper House inquiry. Moreover, the residents and patients of aged-care facilities and nursing homes deserve that protection and assurance too.

We have a responsibility to ensure the needs of residents and patients are not lost in the race towards profitability, as we know will happen if private operators are not compelled by legislation to provide the highest level of care through the rostering of permanent, around-the-clock registered nurses. Without registered nurses, many more aged-care residents would be sent to hospital emergency departments, placing even more stress on our already overstretched health system and causing unnecessary distress to patients and their families. Registered nurses oversee multiple medications, including assessing any side effects, and they provide support and supervision to the entire valued nursing team—our wonderful Enrolled Nurses and our Assistants in Nursing.

In calling for action from the Government, I place on record my gratitude to activists such as Jocelyn Hoffman, Shirley Ross-Shuley, Annette Peters, Louise Stammers, Peter Buckney, and Peter Lammiman. These Blue Mountains nursing warriors do the hard work of caring for our elderly friends and families. They do tough physical work and they have medical and professional expertise that is among the very best in the industry. In their spare time, they work hard, alongside people like John Farry and Rita Martin at the Nurses and Midwives Association, to improve their conditions at work and to ensure quality care for their patients.

John Farry has been doing excellent advocacy work at the Nurses and Midwives Association [NMA], but he and his colleagues are being stonewalled by this Government at every turn while at the same time being forced to listen to the mealy-mouthed lip service from the Minister. For example, from 2014 the NMA and other stakeholders had been meeting regularly to discuss the future of registered nurses [RNs] in aged-care facilities and in nursing homes as well as any relevant legislative change that would improve patient outcomes. This was known as the Aged Care Steering Committee. In 2016 the steering committee put forward a report that contained a number of recommendations regarding the future role of RNs.

The NMA has attempted to gain access to the final report but has been blocked at every turn by the Baird Government. In March 2016 the association lodged a Government Information (Public Access) [GIPA] Act application, which is still being delayed. This is obstructive and maliciously uncooperative behaviour from the Baird Government and it should stop playing games on this issue. Let us support registered nurses in our aged-care facilities 24/7 for the sake of safety and quality of care for our teams of healthcare workers. It is the dignified thing to do.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (13:10): At the outset, I acknowledge the outstanding nurses who work in aged-care facilities and in hospitals. They do an incredible job and they deserve our full support and respect. I will point out, though, why the Labor Party is so enthusiastic about imposing the blunt instrument of ratios on the aged-care sector. It is simply because the Labor Party wants donations from the Nurses and Midwives Association [NMA].

Ms Trish Doyle: Rubbish.

Mr MATT KEAN: That is exactly what this motion is all about. This motion is about Labor looking after its mates in the Nurses and Midwives Association. There is no greater champion of vested interests than the Labor Party. Labor is looking after its mates in the union movement. Where is Labor's concern for more ancillary staff in nursing homes? Members have not heard about that today. Where is Labor's call for more support staff in nursing homes? Members have not heard Labor sticking up for them. Why is that? It is because ancillary staff and support staff are not members of the Nurses and Midwives Association. Let us call this motion what it actually is. Labor members are looking after their mates in the union. Labor is not looking after other workers who are not represented by the union. Labor is looking after its mates in the union movement. That is what this motion is all about.

Let me tell the House about the impact that Labor's policy will have on a community such as mine, Hornsby. It will result in the closure of nursing homes in communities such as mine. For example, a great nursing home that does wonderful work in Hornsby is Christophorus House. I received a letter from the chief executive officer of Christophorus House that refers to the impact on Christophorus House, a facility that provides great care and has done so for more than 40 years in the Hornsby community.

Ms Anna Watson: Of course, it wants to save money. They are saving a few dollars.

Mr MATT KEAN: I acknowledge the interjection made by the member for Shellharbour. Previously there was a distinction between low-care and high-care facilities. That distinction is no longer applicable. Christophorus House was a low-care facility that did not need the same level of staffing as a high-care facility,

but it now will be tarred with the same high-care brush. This one-size-fits-all approach that is being delivered by the Labor Party is designed to do exactly one thing: empower its mates in the union movement and increase donations from the Nurses and Midwives Association. Christophorus House has provided outstanding care for residents in the Hornsby shire for decades.

The one-size-fits-all policy will mean that it will have to change its operational model, which will be cost prohibitive. It will result in the closure of that facility in my community. Who will be most adversely affected by that? It will be those who are most vulnerable, those for whom the Opposition claims to care, the residents who live in nursing homes. They will be worse off. Where will they go? Residents of aged-care facilities will be forced to turn to big providers. Who will be the winners in this? It will be not only the unions but also big business. That is what Labor is all about: looking after the unions and looking after big business. The implications for Christophorus House are clear under that model. Christophorus House will lose ancillary and support staff.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: Front-line nurses will lose their jobs. The unions are not interested in them.

Mr MATT KEAN: I acknowledge the interjection made by the member for Myall Lakes, who suggests that front-line nurses will lose their job. I am not sure about that.

Mr Stephen Bromhead: If the facility closes, the jobs are gone.

Mr MATT KEAN: There will be jobs lost, and no group is more interested in seeing jobs lost than the Labor Party, provided they are not the jobs of members of the union movement. That is what this motion is all about. I participate in this debate to support nursing homes in my community such as Christophorus House, which previously was a low-care facility. That is no longer the case. The Labor Party wants the staff ratios for high-care facilities applied to low-care facilities such as Christophorus House. If Labor is serious about having registered nurses in aged-care premises, it should advocate for reversion to the former model of low-care and high-care facilities and then introduce ratios into high-care facilities while taking into account the needs of low-care facilities.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (13:14): By leave: I support the motion moved by my colleague the member for Wallsend, whom I congratulate on bringing this issue, which is close to my heart, to the attention of the House. My colleague the member for Blue Mountains drew the attention of the House to this subject on an earlier occasion, and I thank her for doing so. The member for Hornsby suggests that the Labor Opposition has moved this motion at the behest of its mates in the union, the Nurses and Midwives Association [NMA]. If it is the registered nurses who are looking after our elderly and most vulnerable citizens, I will support them every time, whether or not they are union members. Is it the contention of the member for Hornsby that the Liberal Party will reduce the number of nurses and 24-hour help because nurses are unionists? Is he suggesting that Labor supports nurses because they are union members? Is he attacking them because they are union members? We know that the Liberal Party does not care too much about union members, but that is not part of the Labor tradition. We support nurses.

I support the motion moved by my colleague the member for Wallsend and the Nurses and Midwives Association in their efforts to ensure that a registered nurse will be on duty 24/7 in all aged-care facilities. The upper House committee inquiry into this issue found that shifts led by a registered nurse often reduced unnecessary hospitalisations and increased the quality of clinical care at residential aged-care facilities. At a time when, objectively, there is intense pressure on our hospitals' emergency rooms and departments, as legislators should we not be doing all we can to support our hardworking nurses, doctors and staff? Having a registered nurse at aged-care facilities has the double benefit of providing our elderly Australians with the best care possible and reduces the pressure on our hospital system. Important day-to-day responsibilities, such as the administering of medication, should be in the hands of a trained nurse. Some medications are very strong. If a patient is given the wrong dosage, that would have lethal consequences. Over the years, we have seen incidences of that reported in newspaper articles.

It would also take a registered nurse to see the subtle signs of when someone is sick. Many of the residents in nursing homes have dementia and are unable to communicate how they are feeling. A registered nurse would be well trained to look for those signs. I previously informed the House of Des from Bonnyrigg Heights in my electorate of Cabramatta and his late wife, Irene. The importance of this issue compels me to restate their circumstances on the public record. In Irene's later years she had to move into a not-for-profit nursing home. Des said that on two occasions Irene would have died if not for the registered nurse on duty. She once had a bladder infection that was not picked up by any other staff. On another occasion she had a fall that resulted in trauma to her head. Des said that on that occasion ambulance paramedics were too busy to attend to Irene's bleeding head and the registered nurse was told to manage the problem, and she did. Paramedics arrived three hours later to transport her to hospital where Irene received seven stitches.

The evidence is right here for the Baird Government to see. The Government now needs to listen and do the right thing to ensure the safety, care and wellbeing of our most vulnerable community members. I do not hold fast to the idea of high care and low care. Where does low care finish and high care begin? If I was in a nursing home and was assessed at the top end of low care, the knowledge that a registered nurse was on duty 24 hours a day would be of comfort to me and my family. In contrast, if I were in a low-care facility where there is no registered nurse they might say, "He is a low-care patient so we will not worry about him. Until he is in the high-care level he does not need a nurse." I commend the motion to the House.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (13:18): In reply: I thank the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Shellharbour, the member for Drummoyne, the member for Blue Mountains, the member for Hornsby and the member for Cabramatta for their contributions to debate on my motion. The speeches of the member for Myall Lakes and the member for Drummoyne appear to have been written by the same bureaucrat in the Department of Health. Unfortunately, their contributions downgraded the role of nurses in New South Wales hospitals and did not enter into the spirit of the debate. The member for Myall Lakes commented that patient care is only one part of the job of a registered nurse [RN]. I believe residents of aged-care facilities would agree that nurses are the linchpin of our healthcare facilities.

The member for Shellharbour was correct in saying that we should not water down standards in our aged-care facilities. The member for Blue Mountains has had experience in this field and validated the important outcomes of the upper House inquiry into registered nurses in New South Wales nursing homes. She expressed her concern about the quality of health care being downgraded if the rules are changed. The member for Cabramatta also spoke eloquently about the impact of reducing the quality of care in aged-care facilities on our hospital system. Members on this side of the Chamber are worried because our emergency departments are already overburdened. It would be unfortunate if more patients were sent to emergency departments from our aged-care facilities, where they are currently being looked after very well.

I was somewhat disappointed in the statements made by the member for Hornsby in his contribution to the debate, because he seemed to be arguing rather than talking about nurses. In fact, his contribution was political, which speakers on this side of the House avoided in their contributions. The member talked about unions as opposed to the quality of care in our aged-care facilities. This motion is not about unions but about making sure that people in New South Wales aged-care facilities get the best level of care and standards possible. As I said in my contribution, New South Wales has the gold standard in the quality of care in our aged-care facilities, and we on this side of the Chamber want to make sure that standard is maintained. The member also talked about a for-profit aged-care facility that may have to close because of the requirement for employing registered nurses. I find it astounding that this facility would complain about paying a registered nurse a few dollars an hour more than it pays other caregivers to ensure it maintains a good quality of care for its residents. Shame on that facility.

I mentioned the Wallsend aged-care facility that is still run by the State and offers the best quality of care in New South Wales. That is why residents of Wallsend fought so hard to keep the facility open, not because it was a beautiful facility but because residents are well looked after at the facility. Residents told me they love the staff, particularly the nurses, at the facility where the nurse-to-patient ratio is second to none. We on this side of the Chamber have shown our commitment to the level of care given in our aged-care facilities. I urge members on both sides of the Chamber to support this motion.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes34
Noes47
Majority..... 13

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McDermott, Dr H
Minns, Mr C
Piper, Mr G
Warren, Mr G (teller)

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
Mehan, Mr D
Park, Mr R
Robertson, Mr J
Washington, Ms K

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Greenwich, Mr A
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
Mihailuk, Ms T
Parker, Mr J
Smith, Ms T
Watson, Ms A

AYES

Zangari, Mr G

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
 Baird, Mr M
 Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
 Constance, Mr A
 Dominello, Mr V
 Fraser, Mr A
 Grant, Mr T
 Henskens, Mr A
 Johnsen, Mr M
 O'Dea, Mr J
 Perrottet, Mr D
 Provest, Mr G
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Stokes, Mr R
 Tudehope, Mr D
 Williams, Mr R

Aplin, Mr G
 Barilaro, Mr J
 Brookes, Mr G
 Coure, Mr M (teller)
 Elliott, Mr D
 George, Mr T
 Gulaptis, Mr C
 Hodgkinson, Ms K
 Kean, Mr M
 Patterson, Mr C
 Petinos, Ms E
 Roberts, Mr A
 Skinner, Ms J
 Taylor, Mr M
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Ms L

Ayres, Mr S
 Berejiklian, Ms G
 Conolly, Mr K
 Crouch, Mr A
 Evans, Mr L
 Goward, Ms P
 Hazzard, Mr B
 Humphries, Mr K
 Maguire, Mr D
 Pavey, Ms M
 Piccoli, Mr A
 Rowell, Mr J
 Speakman, Mr M
 Toole, Mr P
 Ward, Mr G

PAIRS

Foley, Mr L
 McKay, Ms J
 Smith, Ms K

Davies, Ms T
 Gibbons, Ms M
 Lee, Dr G

Motion negatived.

ROAD FATALITIES

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (13:29): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that at noon on 5 May 2016, all Australians were asked to "Remember the 1200@1200", and pause for a minute's silence to honour the 1,209 people who were killed on our roads last year, including 348 people in New South Wales, as part of National Road Safety Week 2016.
- (2) Recognises the important work of Safer Australian Roads and Highways [SARAH] Inc. to promote initiatives that will bring about improved road safety and to support those affected by road tragedy, which started as a result of the Hume Highway crash of 15 February 2012 that tragically took the lives of Sarah Frazer and Geoffrey Clark.
- (3) Supports the road safety campaigns of SARAH Inc. and National Road Safety Week, and urges all Australians to think about their driving and the responsibility we all share on the roads.
- (4) Reflects on the 1,209 who lost their lives on Australia's roads last year and expresses its condolences to all the family and friends whose lives have been changed forever by the loss of those dear to them.

This motion is neither political nor controversial; it is an important and serious issue for the communities represented by every member in this Chamber.

Business interrupted.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I would like to extend a very warm welcome to Mr Joe Andrade to the gallery today. I could say a lot about Joe today, but I have a lot of welcomes to extend so I will restrict my comments to the fact that this morning Joe received his Parliamentary Service Award for 35 years of dedicated service to the Parliament. Joe has retired, though we are used to seeing him here in the Chamber assisting me and other members. Joe has

seen many Premiers and governments come and go, and five Speakers—four of whom have come and gone, and one is still here. I thank Joe for his assistance and I am sure we will see him in the New Year.

I extend a very warm welcome to the students and their teachers from Stella Maris College, Manly, guests of the Premier, the Minister for Western Sydney and member for Manly. I welcome Miss Philippa Grimshaw, a year 8 student from Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School, guest of the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations and member for Willoughby.

I acknowledge Antonia Chacon, who is a fourth-year speech pathology student at the University of Sydney and is being mentored by the Minister for Health through the university's Faculty of Health mentoring program. Antonia is a guest of the Minister for Health and member for North Shore. I welcome Noelene Barrell, who received her 25-year Parliamentary Service Award today, and her colleague Lisa Nagle, guests of the Minister for Family and Community Services and member for Wakehurst. Noelene has 25 years of service in the Wakehurst electorate office. That deserves a really big medal! The member for Wakehurst is on record as agreeing with my comments.

I welcome to the Chamber His Excellency Mr Pier Francesco Zazo, who is the Ambassador of Italy to Australia; the Hon. Vincenzo Amendola, who is the Italian Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; Senator Francesco Giacobbe of the Italian Committee for Finance; Mr Arturo Arcano, the Consul General of Italy in Sydney; and Dr Fabiana De Luca, the Deputy Head of Mr Amendola's office, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport, Roads, Industry, Resources and Energy and member for Drummoyne.

I welcome members of the Grandviews Ladies Probus Club and the Riverwood Ladies Probus Club, guests of the member for Oatley. I welcome Julie Moore, who received her 25-year Parliamentary Service Award for working in the Wallsend electoral office. She is accompanied by her father, John Moore, and they are guests of the member for Wallsend. I welcome the students and their teacher from Woonona High School, guests of the member for Keira. I acknowledge the students and teachers from St Mary's High School Gateshead, guests of the member for Charlestown. I welcome to the Chamber the students and their teacher from Santa Sabina College, guests of the member for Strathfield. I welcome the students and teacher in the gallery from AH&B College. We welcome you to the Chamber. I also welcome Simon Herd and Tracey Deal, principals of Medowie Christian School, guests of the member for Port Stephens.

Question Time

LAND AND PROPERTY INFORMATION

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:24): I direct my question to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. What does the Minister have to say to the more than 200 families whose most valuable asset—their family home—is now at risk because of the bungled administration of Land and Property Information?

Ms Kate Washington: This is a Conservative spring.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (14:25): Yes. It is great to be a member of a government that has made New South Wales great again. This is taking off all over the world. Of course, imitation is the greatest form of flattery. While the United States might have a president who wants to make America great again, we have a Premier who has made New South Wales great again—#Imwithhim.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Bankstown will come to order. The member for Londonderry will cease interjecting or she will be directed to leave the Chamber. I remind the member for Kogarah that he is on two calls to order. I remind the member for Londonderry that she is on one call to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Land and Property Information and Roads and Maritime Services are reviewing the issues raised about the Central Register of Restrictions [CRR]. I have ordered an independent investigation into the matter, and that investigation is ongoing. The Government is taking this situation seriously, and it has acted quickly and decisively to resolve it. On 27 October, I was made aware that information held by the CRR had not been completely updated between June 2016 and October 2016 because of an administrative error. The CRR provides prospective purchasers with an option to search for information about potential and actual government or authority interest in a parcel of land. I have been advised that an estimated 309 inquiries relating to 205 unique properties may have received an incorrect response during this period. That is concerning for people who have recently purchased property in the affected areas.

The Government's first priority has been to ensure that affected residents are provided with current information and the support they require. From the outset, the Government's priority has been to contact everyone

affected by this mistake and to assure them that it is doing everything it can to resolve the issue. As a result, I took a number of actions to begin the process of rectifying the situation. Customer Service Commissioner Mike Pratt was immediately contacted and commenced work to ensure that residents who may be affected by the error are personally informed and are provided with the assistance they need. As of last Wednesday, doorknocking teams under the direction of the commissioner began visiting residents whose properties are affected. These teams have also been encouraging residents living in affected properties to contact their conveyancers or representatives as we work with them to resolve any issues arising from this error. I have personally contacted a number of residents by phone, and I am writing to everyone identified to communicate the Government's apologies.

These steps are in addition to the following urgent actions that are being undertaken. All solicitors and conveyancers who have conducted CRR searches in the relevant period are being contacted and being asked to contact their clients urgently. A team from the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation, Land and Property Information, and Roads and Maritime Services has been working with the Customer Service Commissioner to verify the data collected since June 2016 to identify affected properties and individuals. A dedicated online resource has been established on the Land and Property Information website containing further details and frequently asked questions.

I have also instructed the Secretary of the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation to conduct an immediate independent investigation into the issue, and that is now underway. The terms of reference for the independent investigation include a review of practices, seeking to determine the cause of the incident and the actions needed to prevent it from happening again. I want to assure people that we are making every effort to ensure that those affected are personally visited and assisted. We will continue to work to resolve any issues arising from this error on a case-by-case basis.

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (14:29): My question is addressed to the Premier. How has the Government made New South Wales great again?

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (14:29): I thank the member for his question. He is an incredible member for Drummoyne. He is known as George Clooney in his electorate. He is someone who has all types of style. They love him. He is like a movie star. I also acknowledge Joe Andrade and his 35 years of service—Joe, well done—and Noelene, 25 years. No-one should have to put up with what you put up with, Noelene—25 years of Brad. Thank you for your service to Brad and the community. It is great to have the girls from Stella Maris in question time. Please do not tell your parents about this.

It is great to have a great school here watching this great question time in this great State. It is a great State and we on this side are certainly getting on with the job of keeping New South Wales great. We are very proud of what is happening. Those in the Opposition are very proud of it. They love the fact that we are spending \$73 billion on infrastructure across New South Wales. They are delighted with that. They are delighted that we are transforming the State. They are delighted that there are cranes in the sky and there are jobs on the ground right across New South Wales. Quite simply, it is a beautiful thing that is happening here in New South Wales.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I did hear the new President-Elect of the United States of America last night.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: He said what he was going to do: "We are going to fix our inner cities, rebuild highways, bridges, tunnels, airports, schools and hospitals and create millions of jobs for our people to work." I can tell the President-Elect it is a great thing to do that because that is exactly what we have done in New South Wales. We are proud but we want to make it even greater. We want to get even more things done in this State. The good news is we are. Earlier this week I was out there with the planning Minister at the fish markets. Everyone in this great city and this great State knows that we need a new fish market. The good news is under this Government it is actually underway.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bankstown will cease interjecting or she will be removed from the Chamber. The member for Port Stephens will come to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is a tourism icon for this great city. Everyone was saying, "This is great. It is finally happening." But the member for Maroubra—you know how miserable he can be—got up and was complaining. He did not want to see any change down there. He is fighting desperately to keep the car park in place and the concrete batching plant in place. He loves that. He wants that right next to the harbour. He wants to

leave it completely unchanged whereas we have the view that having an iconic new city fish market might be a great thing to do for the people of New South Wales.

Our very busy planning Minister was ensuring we are going to have a great Parramatta Road. We are going to make it even better. All of those opposite are very excited about it. They want to see renewal along Parramatta Road. They want to see a vibrant corridor, new housing, jobs, community and green spaces. That is what we are very keen to deliver and that is exactly what we and this planning Minister are delivering.

I know those on that side of the House are against WestConnex—they seem to be against that for some reason. We think removing 50,000 vehicles a day and 10,000 trucks is a good thing for local communities. We think that is a good thing to do. That is why we are proud to be doing it. Again the roads Minister today in another announcement—the trifecta of big announcements this week—announced that we are going to be improving the design of the link between the M4 and M5 including increased lane capacity. I hear the shadow roads Minister talk about it. Can anyone remember how those in Labor went with the M5? They said, "We are going to build it." And what happened on day one?

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: They went down to the M5 and they sat there. That is exactly what they did. On day one it was full before they started. Well, not under this Government. We on this side are building the capacity for the future—that is what we are doing. That is what good infrastructure is and that is why we are proud to be doing it. I remind the House that members of this Government want to do even more. We have more opportunities to take this great city and this great State forward and we are determined to do it, which is why I was so disappointed in the shadow Treasurer. We all know Labor's Illawarra jobs action plan. It was a little ripper. It was an absolute beauty. The hokey-pokey capital of the world—there it is. There is more hokey-pokey in this jobs action plan than in a Ben & Jerry's store. *[Extension of time]*

I fear for the people of New South Wales if those on the other side ever take the Treasury benches because as members will remember in this jobs action plan they spoke about steel. We are the steel industry's best friend—friend of the workers and friend of the steel industry—and doing everything we possibly can. They are saying in this jobs action plan they are going to do more for steel. We remember that just before those opposite went out of government they awarded a contract for WIN Stadium in the Illawarra to China. That is what they did. They are the friends of steel until it matters. In terms of the infrastructure, because of the unbelievable result with the Ausgrid lease led by this great Treasurer, we are in a position to do more. The shadow Treasurer came out and said that he is absolutely upset because he does not think we are going to have enough money. Have we heard that before? We are "not going to have enough". He should know because he put out a press release and he has done all the work. I will tell members what it said.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: With two days to the election we are wondering what your candidate has to say.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

Mr Michael Daley: Where is your candidate? Where is your jobs action plan?

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: There are five words that should set off every alarm in your house: "analysis by the Labor Opposition". There cannot be scarier words on the planet. According to Ryan Park we are not going to get enough money and apparently there are cost blowouts on projects. They have said WestConnex—you are wrong; Parramatta light rail—you are wrong; Sydney Metro—you are wrong; inner city—you are wrong.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting. I call the member for Bankstown to order for the third time. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The good news for the people of New South Wales on the action we are taking is that not only have we made New South Wales great; we are going to make it even greater.

The SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the member for Rockdale to ask his question, I welcome the member for Kogarah back to the Chamber. A couple of days ago we congratulated him on the birth of his third son. I noticed that he was yawning a couple of minutes ago, and we know why. Congratulations. Three sons—that is lovely.

LAND AND PROPERTY INFORMATION

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (14:37): My question is directed to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. Will he confirm that as of today, two weeks since he became aware of the Land and

Property Information bungle, fewer than half the families that were given incorrect information have been visited by his Government's representatives?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (14:38): Not only are we making New South Wales great again, we are making property great again. I can say this: We have made New South Wales so great that people from across this country are flooding into New South Wales. We are going to build a wall on that Victorian border to keep those Victorians out and Dan Andrews is going to pay for it. That will be novel because he is actually going to pay for something he is actually going to build—first time ever.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. I know the Minister's views align with those of Donald Trump but this is actually quite serious. It is about all those families who have been impacted by the bungle by the Minister's department.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The last people on this earth who should be questioning us on managing property—

Mr John Robertson: On earth?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: On earth. It is the New South Wales Labor Party. I am not surprised that those opposite get a little excited when it comes to Land and Property Information. Their eyes light up and blood rushes to their heads. They know that they should not ask questions but they cannot help themselves. When real estate agents talk about property, they talk about "Location, location, location." When the Labor Party talks about property, we say, "Dodgy, dodgy, dodgy."

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! If this is not a point of order but a debating point I will place the member for Maroubra on a call to order.

Mr Michael Daley: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister is making disrespectful comments.

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

Mr Michael Daley: This is about families and their homes, but the Minister thinks it is a big joke.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is not a debate or a screaming match. The Minister will return to the leave of the question.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: As I said in my first answer, this Government acted decisively when it was notified about the issue relating to Land and Property Information.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Once we identified the properties that were affected, we immediately sent out teams to personally visit every person and every landowner.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: In circumstances where that information is available to Land and Property Information, that is what we have done. We have already instigated an independent investigation to determine how this error occurred. Those opposite should be careful about making assertions as to how the error occurred. The shadow Minister for Finance, Services and Property made a number of statements on Tuesday about how the error occurred. We immediately instigated an independent investigation. That investigation is underway. Let us wait to see what that investigation comes back with. In the meantime, the Government acted immediately to resolve the error to ensure that it does not occur again and so those landowners and home owners who have been affected by this error could be notified. As I have said, I have contacted a number of people and spoken to them about the error. We will work through the issues to ensure that they get the care and support they need as we resolve this matter.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (14:42): My question is addressed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. How is the Government tackling domestic violence perpetrators like never before?

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Medical Research, Assistant Minister for Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (14:42): I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question. I know that, as a former police prosecutor, he saw firsthand the devastating effects that domestic violence has on families and on our communities, as did our Deputy Premier, the Minister for Justice and Police Troy Grant, who is also a former police officer. Everyone knows, except those opposite, that to better help and support victims, we must put the perpetrator clearly in the centre of the frame.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting and come to order. They do not know what the Minister is about to say.

Mr John Robertson: She is inciting us.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Blacktown incites me every day.

Ms PRU GOWARD: We are doing this while we continue to invest a record amount of money for victims. The 2016-17 budget doubles the investment in specialist domestic violence initiatives to more than \$300 million over four years. This is in addition to the hundreds of millions of dollars the Government spends each year through mainstream services in justice, police, health, child protection, social housing and homelessness services. If we want to reduce domestic violence for women, men and children, we must target the perpetrators of that violence—and we must do it like we have never done before. Our crime statistics show that more than one in five domestic violence offenders will be convicted of another domestic violence offence within two years. We must change that so the violence stops and victims are safe. And that is what we are doing.

The budget invests \$22 million over four years to roll out police high-risk offender teams. Those teams will target serious recidivist offenders and investigate serious domestic and family violence crimes, as the police do for other serious crimes such as gang crimes. The first team commenced in the Central Metropolitan Region in August. In the first three months the team has averaged six to seven arrests per month. The police are also leading the way with another terrific initiative that targets offenders like never before through domestic violence suspect management plans. I heard firsthand how those initiatives were working for domestic violence crimes victims in Brixton in the United Kingdom, and that is why we have introduced them here. Since the statewide rollout in February this year, police have put 642 domestic violence offenders on plans. Half of those suspects on plans—321—have been arrested and charged. Of those, 240 have been refused bail. That is an incredible result for victim safety. It is all thanks to the great work of our frontline police, but also of our leadership from the top—the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Commissioner of Police and Assistant Commissioner Mick Fuller.

The message to perpetrators is clear: There is no place to hide, the police will track you down and they will get you. Changing the attitudes and behaviours of perpetrators is also an essential part of this approach, so the New South Wales Government has invested \$15 million over four years in community-based perpetrator interventions that are led by non-government organisations. Since they started this year, more than 130 perpetrators have attended one of those programs. This funding is in addition to the \$237 million investment that Minister Elliott announced to reduce the rate of reoffending. As the Minister told the House yesterday, this investment will focus on high-risk offenders and persistent repeat domestic violence offenders within the criminal justice system. We are also spending almost \$20 million over two years on a range of behaviour change interventions. Let us turn to the record of the Opposition. I remind the House that in 2011 the Auditor-General said:

The response to domestic and family violence remains fragmented ...

Organisations do not have a strategy for working together ... There is no shared understanding between organisations of each others roles ...

That was the record of the Labor Party when it was in government.

Mr John Robertson: You're a disgrace.

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

Ms PRU GOWARD: That was Labor's record when it was in government. [Extension of time]

Mr John Robertson: She's politicising.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Blacktown is politicising the issue by shouting and interjecting. I call the member for Blacktown to order for the first time.

Ms PRU GOWARD: What is more alarming is what those opposite said about the record of this Government and its position on perpetrators. The shadow Minister, the member for Maitland, said that the Government was too focused on perpetrators—too focused! That was after 16 years of no focus by the Opposition on perpetrators.

The SPEAKER: Order! I place the member for Londonderry on three calls to order. If she continues to interject she will be removed from the Chamber. This is her final warning.

Ms PRU GOWARD: On 19 May the shadow Minister told the *Newcastle Herald*:

The Baird Government is failing to properly support domestic violence victims because it is too focused on the perpetrators. They should tell that to the 240 victims of the offenders who have been put behind bars. At that point, the Opposition lost all credibility on domestic violence and it still has no credible policies in this area.

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

Ms PRU GOWARD: Members on this side of the House will never, ever apologise for getting tough and targeting those criminals. That is what they are: criminals. That is why this Government is leading the nation in tackling domestic violence, and that is why we are investing record amounts of money in supporting victims. This Government will continue to target perpetrators like we never have before.

LAND AND PROPERTY INFORMATION

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (14:50): My question is directed to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. Will he confirm that he made 70 Land and Property Information staff redundant this year, and can he advise how many were in the section responsible for validating information supplied by Roads and Maritime Services to the Central Register of Restrictions?

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (14:50:0): As I said in my answer to the last question, we are currently conducting an independent investigation in relation to how the errors occurred. In addition, I can say that, of the 143 property transactions prior to last week, there are only two remaining to be doorknocked, which will be completed today. So, out of 143, 141 have been completed. Land and Property Information [LPI] has contacted all solicitors and conveyancers. There is significant data analysis work going on. We continue to determine the ongoing approach of doorknocking as registrations continue to be received by Land and Property Information. The independent investigation, as I said, has commenced. Unlike Labor, we are not going to jump to conclusions. We have conducted this independent investigation. Once that has been completed we will take that on board and make the additional changes that are required.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has concluded his answer.

TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (14:51): My question is addressed to the Minister for Trade and Investment. How has the Government driven the growth of trade and investment in New South Wales over the past 12 months?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Sport) (14:52): I thank the member for Davidson for his question. He is doing an outstanding job as the Parliamentary Secretary in this portfolio. He understands just how important it is for New South Wales to have the capacity to interact in a global economy. It is good to see so many young students in the gallery today.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lakemba will come to order. As a former teacher, he is not setting a very good example.

Mr STUART AYRES: The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade says that one in five jobs in Australia is connected with international trade and investment. In an increasingly globally connected world, young people will obviously see more and more of those job opportunities. The New South Wales Government, particularly our NSW Trade and Investment team, is working with businesses in New South Wales and across the globe to create international opportunities. We are seeing those job opportunities and investment opportunities across a vast array of sectors. The United States fintech leader OnDeck has decided to make Sydney its home base, creating new opportunities for people involved in financial services and technology jobs.

Korean bank Shinhan Bank, one of northern Asia's largest infrastructure-supporting banks, is setting up in Sydney so that it can take full advantage of the new infrastructure opportunities that have been generated by

our large-scale infrastructure agenda, and also support the fantastic Korean population who live in Sydney. That shows, once again, how the diversity and diaspora of the international community in Sydney continues to drive our local community. We are also bringing more high-skilled technology jobs to Sydney. Another example is the billion-dollar company Qualtrics, which has also set up here. It does data analytics and online surveys and is one of the fastest-growing companies in the United States. That company has decided to make Sydney home, bringing 70 new jobs into this economy.

We on this side of the House understand how important it is to continue to create those opportunities. I am talking about not just the technology sector but also taking full advantage of things like the new free trade agreements. I saw a great example of that just last week when I was out in the Orange community, talking to Peter Mortimer, a local vigneron. Peter Mortimer has run a vineyard for a number of years, and he has just set up his first international trade deal. That opportunity was created by the free trade agreement with China. He has just sold his first container load of wine—1,100 cases from his vineyard—to China. That has generated more sales for his local business than he would make in an entire year through his cellar door. He reinvested the revenue from the sale and employed more local people in his vineyard. He is also employing local people to work with restaurants in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane so that he can get his product out into the community. That is the sort of opportunity that free trade agreements create.

There are opportunities across the globe that will deliver jobs in local communities. Whilst plenty of people around the world at the moment are questioning the benefits of free trade, it is important that every member in this Chamber understands the value that the international economy brings to their communities. It is our obligation to talk to people in our communities. In Mount Druitt Nova Spring Water is selling water from Australia into markets across northern Asia. It is the first time this company has been able to sell into those markets. The company employs a number of people in its factory, many of whom are doing disability support work. It is often the only work they get to do. The company has decided to have a very strong social focus and is now engaging on the international stage. Another example of a great Australian company is Beloka Water from the Southern Highlands. All members should be familiar with that company as the water is available in the cafeteria. That company has also been able to sell its water overseas.

Manufacturing has not been excluded from our attention. Recently I was on the Central Coast with the member for Terrigal. We talked to RR Taylor, a fantastic manufacturing company that has come up with a medical device to clean medical equipment. The company is now installing that medical disposal equipment across Sri Lanka. That is another fantastic example of a successful New South Wales based business. Over the past 12 months the NSW Trade and Investment team has generated more than \$1.3 billion in direct investment in New South Wales. [*Extension of time*]

Our team has generated that direct investment. Eight hundred new jobs have been directly attributed to that investment of \$1.3 billion. This is attributable not only to the work that is being done by the team in New South Wales, but also to the conditions that the entire Government is establishing. New South Wales has the strongest-performing Government in the country, and that is generating opportunities around the world. People want to park their capital in this State because they know it is safe. They know that this State has a strong triple-A credit rating. They know that this State has strong, stable leadership. It has a clear agenda for generating jobs and it is a great place to invest. That investment leads to jobs in every one of our communities.

That was recognised recently in the Premier's NSW Export Awards. I take this opportunity to recognise Blackmores, the NSW Exporter of the Year. Blackmores is creating jobs and opening up new markets across north Asia, particularly with its medical products. There has been nothing but positive news when it comes to international engagement. The Government is generating jobs and supporting businesses in regional New South Wales—in the Illawarra, on the Central Coast and in Western Sydney. The Government is supporting technology, agriculture and rural products. That is what good governments do, and that is the focus of the NSW Trade and Investment team. That is what happens when you have good-quality leadership and a growing economy.

COMPULSORY PROPERTY ACQUISITION PROCESS

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:58): My question is directed to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. Is it acceptable that families have been given only 21 days to accept offers for their homes and properties by Transport for NSW before the offers are withdrawn?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease arguing across the Chamber. The Minister for Finance, Services and Property has the call.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (14:59): When it comes to matters of land acquisition, the Government has made changes that were passed by Parliament today. Those changes have made a substantial difference to home owners across the State. We talk

about the amendments that have been made, but I have said it before and I will say it again that it is always a Liberal-Nationals Government that makes improvements to the land acquisition process. The system that the Labor Opposition seeks to criticise is a system that was good enough for the Carr Government, the Iemma Government, the Rees Government and the Keneally Government. It has taken the Baird-Grant Government to review the process and make substantial changes to improve the land acquisition process for home owners and landowners across the State. It is important to note that, as we have said, the Government can do better. And that is exactly what the Government is doing. In the past the Liberal-Nationals Coalition has said it is not acceptable that home owners are informed that their homes will be acquired by receiving a letter in the mail. This Government has said it will ensure that that process never recurs.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: By providing a period of six months to ensure a strong negotiation period is available, the Government will give greater certainty to home owners, who no doubt are going through a very difficult time in the circumstances. The Government's reforms not only provide greater certainty for home owners but also increase financial compensation that is available to compensate for the inconvenience that occurs as a result of homes being acquired. In my view, New South Wales now has the most generous land acquisition process in the nation.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The question relates specifically to the 21-day period. Is it acceptable or is it not acceptable?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has been, and remains, entirely relevant to the question. The member for Strathfield will resume his seat. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the third time.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: My answer is completely relevant. I am informing the House that one of the significant changes this Government has made to the land acquisition process is to provide a set period of six months to allow home owners to reach a decision in relation to the price and settlement of their property—a proposal that the Labor Opposition never sought to introduce when it was in government. Labor Opposition members have a hide to come into this House and use their constituents as pawns in their political games while this Government is building the infrastructure of the twenty-first century. This Government is building the harbour bridges that need to be constructed to ensure that the working people of New South Wales have access to the services and infrastructure they need. The Government will not stand for being questioned by Labor about the land acquisition process—a process that this Government has improved substantially—that ensures from the moment there is a knock on the door to the moment a home owner is settled into a new home, they will have the care and support they need during that difficult time. This Government has revolutionised the process of land acquisition.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled that the Minister has been relevant throughout his entire answer. What is the member's point of order?

Mr Clayton Barr: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. If the Minister could refer specifically to the 21-day period that would be great.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point or order. The Minister remains relevant to the question. The member for Strathfield will come to order. She has received her last warning.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We on the conservative side of politics are proud to be the only parties that have made substantial reforms to the land acquisition process. The process is now fairer and provides care and support to people during a difficult time. At the same time, the Government is balancing that with building infrastructure that the State desperately needs. As I said earlier, that was never an issue for Labor because Labor did not build any infrastructure. In 16 years, Labor built half a rail line. Labor has opposed everything this Government does and every infrastructure project this Government builds. Labor opposed WestConnex and NorthConnex. This Government is proud of its record. This Government is also proud of New South Wales having the most fair and caring land acquisition process in the country.

WASTE MANAGEMENT, LITTER AND RECYCLING

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:04): My question is addressed to the Minister for the Environment. How is the Government delivering on the Premier's anti-litter priority and transforming a waste and recycling centre?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) (15:04): I thank the member for Oatley for that question. I observe that in our

mutual 5½ years as members of this House, the member for Oatley always has demonstrated a keen interest in environmental matters. He has a particularly voracious appetite for reading environmental literature.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bankstown will come to order. I remind her that she is on three calls to order. This is her final warning. This is not a joke. It was a serious question and it is a serious answer. Opposition members will come to order.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: The member for Oatley has also been one of the strongest advocates in the New South Wales Government for a container deposit scheme. The New South Wales Government is committed to transforming the way we think about and manage waste in this State. With the population to approach 10 million in the next 20 years, the New South Wales Government is determined to protect the environment and the community from the associated increase in waste generation. The Government has committed more than \$802 million over nine years to two stages of Waste Less, Recycle More to divert 75 per cent of waste away from landfill, to reduce litter and to combat illegal dumping. The Government is transforming waste and recycling by funding business recycling, market development, management of problem wastes, new waste infrastructure and local programs to tackle illegal dumping and litter.

Recently I was delighted to announce a four-year \$337 million extension of Waste Less, Recycle More, which will fund new and upgraded waste recycling infrastructure, local government waste and resource recovery programs, litter prevention and enforcement, and the Environment Protection Authority's Illegal Dumping Prevention and Enforcement Program and provide more funding for the Heads of Asbestos Coordinating Authorities. The program has already funded more than 822 projects across New South Wales, and those projects are expected to process more than 2.2 million tonnes of waste as well as create 845 jobs. That investment has been great news for the environment. It will deliver significant energy, water and greenhouse gas benefits, such as water savings equivalent to 5,400 Olympic-size pools each year by 2021 and greenhouse gas savings of 2.21 million tonnes.

The Premier's personal priority is to reduce the volume of litter in New South Wales by 40 per cent by 2020. The latest National Litter Index figures show that New South Wales is almost halfway to meeting that target. In 2015-16 litter volume decreased by 12 per cent and has decreased by 19 per cent over two years. The Government announced that Parliament has passed legislation to implement the largest anti-litter initiative that New South Wales has ever seen: the Container Deposit Scheme. Drink containers constitute 49 per cent of the volume of litter in New South Wales. Drink containers that will be eligible for the 10¢ refund under the Container Deposit Scheme constitute 43 per cent of the volume of litter in New South Wales.

From mid-2017 people will be able to return eligible drink containers to convenience collection depots or reverse vending machines for a 10¢ refund. The scheme will provide a financial incentive for people to do the right thing and recycle their drink containers, thereby significantly reducing the estimated 160 million drink containers that end up in New South Wales streets, waterways, rivers, parks and beaches every year. It is not surprising that it is the Liberals and The Nationals that have introduced the largest-ever litter reduction program in New South Wales because it is consistent with the extraordinary achievements of this Government in the environment space since the most recent State election.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members who are not interested in the answer may leave the Chamber. The member for Lakemba and the member for Bankstown may leave the Chamber if they are not interested in the environment.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: We have released our clean air plan for New South Wales, the first whole-of-government plan for clean air in New South Wales. We have led the Commonwealth and the States to the toughest particulate controls in the world, arguably. On biodiversity conservation, we have created a 120-square kilometre flora reserve on the far South Coast, home to the last 50 or 60 koalas in that region. We have committed \$240 million to private land conservation and \$70 million thereafter. We have committed \$100 million to species-specific programs in our Saving our Species. We have committed \$40 million to re-wilding remote national parks where species are locally extinct, and we have announced zero net emissions by 2050. Last week we announced a draft plan on energy efficiency that was described by the chief executive officer of the Energy Efficiency Council, Luke Menzel, as "the best in its class and a template for action that other governments around Australia should study closely". [*Extension of time*]

This package will save \$18 billion on energy bills for households and businesses by 2050. On all fronts this Government is making extraordinary strides on the environment. It is no surprise because it was the Liberals and The Nationals that brought in the National Parks and Wildlife Service. It was the Liberals and The Nationals that introduced an independent Environmental Protection Authority and recreated the authority after it had been gutted by those opposite when they were in government. Now we will continue our strong record on environmental delivery for the people of New South Wales.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (15:10): My question is directed to the Premier. Premier, considering the proposal to impose two additional commissioners on the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] is not supported by the ICAC, former commissioner Ipp or the McClintock-Gleeson review, will you roll out this change and let the ICAC get on with its anti-corruption work without political interference?

Mr Brad Hazzard: It is a bipartisan committee and it has made recommendations.

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:11): The Minister makes an important point. I thank the member for his question. As all members know, this Government stands for a strong Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC]. That has been our position since we came to government and it will remain our position. In relation to the exercise of the powers, which are very significant and bring huge responsibility, the bipartisan parliamentary committee has authority and responsibility for the ICAC. The committee is ably led by the member for Epping and the deputy chair of the committee is the member for Liverpool.

Mr Paul Lynch: Sorry, not guilty.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The member for Liverpool is a member of the committee.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Bankstown that she will be removed from the Chamber if she continues to interject.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: In the context of the challenges as presented by the Inspector of the ICAC and others, the committee has been rightly asked to consider the operations of the ICAC and make recommendations. I am pleased that the committee is taking a bipartisan approach and that there has been unanimous agreement on the recommendations. The Government continues to consider those recommendations. We remain determined to have a strong ICAC. We have zero tolerance for corruption, and that has always been our position. This is a matter of principle. I have to say on matters of principle on the last sitting day of this week that Labor is pretty spectacular in having no principle whatsoever. On a day I get a question—

Ms Tanya Mihailuk: You just praised them for being bipartisan.

The SPEAKER: Order! I gave the member for Bankstown a final warning. I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Bankstown under Standing Order 249.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: On the day I get a question from The Greens, I marvel that in a couple of days one corner of the Labor Party will do a preference deal with The Greens and another corner of the Labor Party will do a preference deal with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party.

Ms Kate Washington: At least we are putting up a candidate.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Leader of the Opposition loves standing for nothing.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: When a leader only talks in the corners, he will find that eventually he will run out of corners. He will find himself in the middle of the room and then he will find out what all his members stand for. They all stand for absolutely nothing.

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

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: I take my point of order under Standing Order 129, relevance. Madam Speaker, I think you would agree with me that the Premier's answer does not have anything to do with ICAC.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I doubt constituents of the Blue Mountains and Summer Hill will be delighted that the Labor Party is doing preference deals with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. Ultimately, members on this side of the Chamber stand for what we believe in. We continue to support ICAC. We will always stand for a strong ICAC. We are considering the committee's recommendations. Obviously, we will have more to say once we have considered the report.

REGIONAL JOBS NOW PROGRAM

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (15:15): My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. How will the Government's Regional Jobs Now initiative drive jobs growth and strengthen regional economies?

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that many of them are on three calls to order. If members continue to interject they will be removed from the Chamber for the remainder of the day.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (15:16): I thank the member for Clarence for his strong advocacy on behalf of regional New South Wales and his electorate by supporting the small businesses and medium enterprises underpinning jobs growth in regional New South Wales. The member represents a region based on the North Coast and the mid North Coast where there has been significant jobs growth. In fact, 17,900 jobs have been created in the region over the past 12 months, the strongest jobs growth in regional New South Wales. These are part of the 70,000-odd new jobs in regional New South Wales that have been created under this Government, which supports the small businesses in the regions. This Government is focused on jobs growth in regional New South Wales. It is our priority to partner with industry and business to promote sectors in all parts of regional New South Wales because we know that everybody in regional New South Wales values their jobs as an important part of supporting healthy regional communities.

Every member on this side of the Chamber is passionate about regional New South Wales and promoting job opportunities in regional New South Wales. That is why regional jobs growth is the focus of this Government. Earlier this year, under Jobs for NSW, we announced \$314,000 for the Casino rail freight terminal project, which will deliver 38 jobs. This initiative is about partnering with businesses and industry to make sure that we build enabling infrastructure and encourage the private sector to match investment and so grow jobs. The project is supporting the agricultural sector, manufacturers and wholesalers in that region. The freight terminal will be the first of its kind in northern New South Wales.

On Monday I was in Orange to announce the Regional Jobs Now program, which is the regional component of Jobs for NSW. Last year the Premier announced \$190 million for a Jobs for NSW partnership with the private sector, headed by eminent businessman David Thodey, formerly with Telstra and IBM. This Government is using private sector expertise in partnership with government agencies to create 150,000 jobs in New South Wales. A minimum of 30 per cent of funding for Jobs for NSW was allocated to regional New South Wales. That is why we announced the Regional Jobs Now program, which includes a suite of tools to support businesses in growing their operations. Many small businesses find that access to finance is the key, so we have developed a suite of tools to help them. These tools include supporting new and emerging businesses and start-ups with seed funding or Gazelle Loan Guarantees.

We will also offer Regional Solutions, which follows the traditional way of offering grants to support rapidly growing businesses that employ 10 or more people. It is a veritable suite of tools to support businesses. Businesses do not want a handout, they want a hand up. This Government is determined to work with regional businesses and regional industries. For that, we need to make sure that infrastructure in regional New South Wales is enabling infrastructure in a strong economy.

In Orange we also announced the regional development framework, which reaffirms our commitment to regional New South Wales. The regional development framework puts into practice further growth opportunities so regional New South Wales will continue not only to grow but also to thrive through improved regional structures that facilitate regional development. We are building the evidence base for investment in regional development and attracting investment and co-investment, but most importantly we are building the regional workforce capacity. That is the key to a strong region. We know the importance of regional New South Wales, and that is why we have created over 70,000 jobs in our time in Government.

While on this side of the House we accept that regional New South Wales is important to the economy across the board, those opposite have just realised—maybe because of a by-election in Orange—where regional New South Wales is. It was great to see the conga line of shadow Ministers on their way to Orange. We welcome that, because those opposite were helping our visitor economy. The conga line started with the Leader of the Opposition, who fulfilled his childhood dream of seeing the Parkes dish. I congratulate him. On his way to Orange, the member for Keira did a lap of Mount Panorama. He really enjoyed that. The member for Maitland took a detour visit to the Western Plains Zoo. What did the member for Maroubra do? He turned up to the Union Bank. He was a bit confused. He thought it was a union bank, but it is actually a nice little cafe where he enjoyed some great fine dining. *[Extension of time]*

I think I spotted the member for Wyong at Lake Canobolas, reflecting on why he was dropped as the shadow Minister for Skills and shadow Minister for Small Business. When the member for Wyong eventually got to Orange, what did he do? He did the typical Labor thing and started a scare campaign. He boasted to the media about Orange hospital, "When Labor was in Government we built the Orange hospital."

Mr David Harris: We did.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: They did. Congratulations to Labor for building one regional hospital. Well done. Our Minister for Health is being accused of vandalism in regional New South Wales because we are building hospitals everywhere. There is a litter of hospitals. In Parkes, Forbes, Dubbo, Tamworth, Wagga Wagga and Lismore hospitals are being built by this Government and this great Minister. We look forward to investing in regional New South Wales. I have to make sure I talk about the shadow Minister for Skills. Off to Orange she went. She had plenty of time to organise a luncheon and invite local TAFE teachers and staff to it, but nobody turned up. Nobody turned up because the TAFE teachers at Orange are sick and tired of those opposite using TAFE as a political football. The member knows that Labor has used it as a political football. The TAFE staff are saying, "We are here busy teaching these kids, investing in skills training so our kids can get jobs in the future." If the shadow Minister comes to Orange on Saturday I will be there and we will do lunch together. How does that sound? I am happy to have lunch with the member. We all know Labor's track record in regional New South Wales. This Government is not just about supporting regional New South Wales, we are about turbocharging regional New South Wales for the future.

Committees

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Membership

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That:

- (1) David Robert Harris be appointed to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development in place of Noreen Hay, resigned.
- (2) Paul Gerard Lynch be appointed to the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee in place of Noreen Hay, resigned.

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended:

- (1) On Tuesday 15 November 2016, to provide for the following routine of business after the motion accorded priority:
 - (a) Government business;
 - (b) committee reports—take note debates for a period of up to 30 minutes;
 - (c) matter of public importance;
 - (d) community recognition statements—for a period of up to 30 minutes; and
 - (e) private members' statements, after which the House shall adjourn without motion moved.
- (2) On Thursday 17 November 2016 to:
 - (a) provide for the following routine of business after the placing and disposal of business:
 - (i) the moving and consideration of the motion "That the House take note of Christmas felicitations";
 - (ii) at 4.30 p.m., Business of the House—petitions;
 - (iii) further consideration of the motion "That the House take note of Christmas felicitations" (if not concluded);
 - (iv) private members' statements; and
 - (v) the House to adjourn without motion moved.
 - (b) provide for the following speaking time limits on Christmas felicitations:
 - (i) Premier—10 minutes;
 - (ii) Leader of the Opposition—10 minutes;
 - (iii) Deputy Premier—10 minutes;

- (iv) Deputy Leader of the Opposition—10 minutes;
 - (v) Leader of the House—five minutes;
 - (vi) member for Camden—five minutes;
 - (vii) member for Cabramatta—five minutes;
 - (viii) member for Oatley—five minutes;
 - (ix) member for Campbelltown—five minutes;
 - (x) member for Myall Lakes—five minutes;
 - (xi) up to five other Government members—five minutes each;
 - (xii) up to five other Opposition members—five minutes each; and
 - (xiii) up to three crossbench members—five minutes each.
- (c) provide that from the commencement of Christmas felicitations, until the rising of the House, no divisions be conducted or quorums be called.

Motion agreed to.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

Powerhouse Museum

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**.

National School of Art

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

Surry Hills Light Rail Station

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

Social Housing

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

Inner-City Social Housing

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

Pet Shops

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

Plastic Bags Ban

Petition calling on the Government to introduce legislation to ban single-use lightweight plastic bags at retail points of sale in New South Wales to reduce waste and environmental degradation, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

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

Lisarow Station Easy Access

Petition requesting the prioritisation of the construction of disability access and lifts at Lisarow Station, received from **Mr David Mehan**.

Elizabeth Bay Marina Ferry Service

Petition requesting the inclusion of a new ferry service as part of the Elizabeth Bay marina upgrade, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Report: Workplace Arrangements in the Point to Point Transport Industry

Debate resumed from 20 October 2016.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:28): I say from the outset that the Opposition does not support the recommendations in this report. The Opposition moved amendments to the report, but of course they were defeated by a committee stacked with Government members. It could be said that there was an agenda from the outset.

Mr David Elliott: What a ridiculous thing to say.

Ms JODI McKAY: Will you be quiet and let me finish?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield should direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms JODI McKAY: Mr Deputy Speaker, please tell the Minister to cease interjecting and to let me finish.

Mr David Elliott: I am simply saving you from humiliating yourself.

Ms JODI McKAY: The Minister does a pretty good job of humiliating himself. By asking the Committee on Transport and Infrastructure to conduct this inquiry into the workplace arrangements in the point to point transport industry, the Minister was able to separate himself from what will be a significant and controversial change in the taxi industry. He has now been given the green light to undermine labour standards in the industry. Chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act deals with the taxi industry and was the focus of this inquiry. The inquiry was, among other things, tasked with examining the effectiveness of existing arrangements for driver remuneration and conditions, competitiveness across the industry, customer service, and safety. The Opposition's objective was to see the current arrangements strengthened, not weakened. It has been supportive of genuine reform in the point to point industry, but it believes the recommendations in this report are retrograde.

It is worth noting that the report contains only three recommendations. Recommendations 2 and 3 say very little, if anything, but the Opposition objects to recommendation 1. It suggests that the Government give consideration to amending section 307 of the Industrial Relations Act 1996 to remove contracts of bailment from chapter 6, thereby taking those contracts out of the jurisdiction of the Industrial Relations Commission. This recommendation gives the Government the green light to make changes to the point to point industry which will undermine the working conditions of taxi drivers in this State, and which will offer no protection to drivers involved in ridesharing businesses such as Uber.

There is now no minimum driver remuneration standard for ridesharing businesses such as Uber. However, instead of bringing Uber into line with the current industry arrangements, this report removes protections altogether. If these recommendations are accepted—the Opposition acknowledges that they will be—there will be no mechanism to ensure that drivers can get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. Ironically, this report's recommendations come at time when employment conditions are being improved for drivers in the point to point transport industry in the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom employment tribunal found that Uber drivers are workers rather than self-employed contractors. It found that any driver who has the app switched on, is within the territory in which he or she is authorised to work, and is able and willing to accept assignments, for so long as those conditions are satisfied, working for Uber under a "worker" contract.

The Opposition supports the reform of the point to point transport industry, and it said as much in the House during debate on the Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Bill 2016. It also agrees that the taxi industry has been too heavily regulated. However, it does not support this report, which recommends the

abolition of bailment arrangements, because it will impact on taxi drivers across this State. I thank the committee members for their efforts in this inquiry. Despite the fact that the Opposition does not agree with the recommendations, it is a good committee and Opposition members have enjoyed working with the other members. I also thank the committee staff. This inquiry was done hurriedly, and it certainly was not anticipated. In fact, the committee was in the middle of another inquiry at the time it was given this reference. As I said, the Opposition opposes the recommendations in this report.

Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (15:33): I point out to the member for Strathfield that the committee was not stacked; there were only five of us. We worked under the leadership and guidance of the member for Ku-ring-gai. The committee was tasked by the Minister for Transport to inquire into the changing transport economy and workplace. The technology that has created Uber has been a great disrupter. The purpose of the inquiry was to provide equity and fairness for the entire hire car industry workforce. Regardless of whether it is a hire car driver, a taxi driver, or an Uber driver, they must be treated fairly. People driving taxis are not being treated fairly because different sets of rules and arrangements have emerged as a result of the market disruption created by Uber.

The Government has taken on that challenge and is working through it with pioneering legislation in this country. The committee did great work. It was clear and concise, and it was not constrained by union hang-ups. The member for Coogee, the member for Ku-ring-gai and I approached this issue with open minds given the current economy. The taxi industry was established in 1909 and the world has moved very quickly and furiously since then. The committee has made three sensible recommendations for the Government to consider that will take the industry forward. Recommendation 1 states:

The Committee recommends that the NSW Government gives consideration to amending section 307 of the Industrial Relations Act 1996 (NSW) to remove contracts of bailment from Chapter 6 and thereby taking those contracts out of the jurisdiction of the Industrial Relations Commission.

Contracts of bailment were included in the jurisdiction of the Industrial Relations Commission in 1970 by the then Labor Government. If the recommendation were accepted by the Government, it would align the arrangements in New South Wales with those in the rest of the country. That is a sensible proposition that will take us to where we need to be, and it will give taxi drivers and the industry the flexibility they need, given the competition they now face. Recommendation 2 states:

The Committee recommends that the Point to Point Transport Commissioner provide information to all drivers, as part of the driver authorisation process, on the services offered by the NSW Small Business Commissioner. The Committee recommends that the Point to Point Transport Commissioner provide information to all drivers, as part of the driver authorisation process, on the services offered by the NSW Small Business Commissioner.

Taxi drivers are lessees; they are not employees of the taxi licence owner. In fact, they are small businesses. If there is unfairness and inequity between the licence owner and a driver, the Small Business Commissioner is the appropriate authority to address it. Recommendation 3 states:

The Committee recommends that the Point to Point Transport Commissioner work with the NSW Centre for Road Safety to provide information to point to point transport drivers on managing driver fatigue.

It is probably fair to say that there is more support and training in the taxi industry because so many people are involved. Taxi drivers are frequently seen gathering at airports and taxi ranks sharing their experiences. However, Uber drivers may not have access to the same level of training, guidance and information. That is why I support this sensible recommendation. I thank the committee staff for their efforts.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members would have heard the Speaker mention the parliamentary and electorate staff who were acknowledged this morning for their contributions to the Parliament. I acknowledge Debra Cole in the Hansard gallery. She was recognised this morning for her contribution to Hansard and also for the assistance that she provides to all members. Thank you, Debra. It was great to see your efforts recognised this morning.

The question is that the House take note of the report.

Report noted.

COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Report: Review of the Independent Commission Against Corruption: Consideration of the Inspector's Reports

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the House take note of the report.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (14:38): As Chair: I speak to the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] report entitled, "Review of the Independent Commission Against

Corruption: Consideration of the Inspector's Reports", which I tabled on 27 October 2016. The committee's role includes reviewing and reporting on the ICAC and the ICAC inspectorate's functions, structures and procedures, and recommending any desirable changes. This report is a result of the committee's review of two recent reports of the ICAC Inspector, the Hon. David Levine.

The main theme that arose from our review was the ICAC's use of its extraordinary powers. The committee strongly supports a robust anti-corruption agency in New South Wales, and the ICAC's extraordinary powers are necessary to carry out its important work. However, if the public is to have confidence in the ICAC, these powers must be exercised appropriately. For this reason we made recommendations to assist the ICAC's functioning and decision making into the future. These recommendations cover ICAC's structure and governance, procedural fairness, and the ICAC's dealings with the Director of Public Prosecutions. We also made recommendations regarding the oversight regime for the ICAC.

Regarding structure and governance, the committee noted that currently the ICAC is headed by a single person—the commissioner—and he or she is solely responsible for decision making, including decisions about the use of ICAC's formidable powers. These decisions can have serious consequences for individuals who are the subject of investigation. The committee has decided that more weight should be placed on the most significant ones. Therefore the committee recommended a restructure of the ICAC which would replace the single commissioner with a panel of three commissioners. Under this proposal, the most significant decisions of an ICAC investigation—those to proceed to a compulsory examination or public inquiry—would need majority approval of the three commissioners.

Members of the committee considered a recommendation of the inspector to abolish public hearings because they can unfairly damage reputations. However, we heard overwhelming evidence that public hearings assist the ICAC to expose corruption. They also increase the transparency and accountability of ICAC itself. In the end we considered that requiring the majority approval of the three commissioners would place appropriate weight on the decision to proceed to a public hearing with no need to abolish public hearings altogether. To further strengthen the commissioner's decision-making capacity, we also recommended the appointment of a chief executive officer to manage day-to-day operations of the ICAC, freeing up the commissioners to focus on high-level decision making.

Turning now to the ICAC's powers and procedures, a major theme that arose during the committee's inquiry was the importance of procedural fairness. In circumstances where there is limited judicial review of ICAC's findings, it is vital that public hearings are conducted with procedural fairness. Therefore, the committee has recommended that the three commissioners develop guidelines to be tabled in Parliament, setting out the procedural fairness requirements that ICAC must follow during a public hearing. The committee has also recommended changes to ensure that ICAC provides the Department of Public Prosecutions with all necessary evidence when referring a matter for the consideration of prosecution action.

I turn to the oversight of the ICAC. The Inspector of the ICAC plays an important role in overseeing the ICAC. In his report to the Premier the inspector raised concerns that there was a lack of proportion between the inspectorate's resourcing and the ICAC's formidable powers. Therefore the committee has recommended the creation of an office of inspectorates. It would consist of the ICAC inspector and the inspector of the new Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and would be supported by a single, shared administrative agency. This model would increase the overall size of the inspector's support and staff.

It is clear that the ICAC carries out a vital role investigating, exposing and preventing corruption in the New South Wales public sector and it needs strong powers. The committee's recommendations aim to ensure that these powers are exercised appropriately and fairly into the future. They also aim to ensure that, together with the committee, the inspectorate forms part of a strong accountability framework for the ICAC. In closing, I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions at a time when there is considerable public attention on the work of the ICAC and the committee. I note that this report is a bipartisan report and therefore should be welcomed by this Parliament. I also thank committee staff for their professionalism and support. The support we received from the secretariat staff can never be understated. I commend the report to the House.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (15:43): This report is a bipartisan report prepared in difficult circumstances, having considered extensive evidence, many submissions and private briefings, including from one of the main architects of ICAC from 1989. I am very grateful for their assistance. It is clear that the purpose of the commission is the same today as it was 27 years ago: to investigate and expose serious and systemic corruption in the public sector. I agree with the concept that serious corruption generally occurs in secret, conducted by persons of influence. Whilst on nearly all occasions such conduct is criminal, the prospect of obtaining admissible evidence by traditional law enforcement means is limited if not at times impossible. That was the mode of reasoning of the architects of ICAC some 27 years ago.

I come to consideration of this matter influenced by fundamental principles: I believe not just academically in the doctrine of separation of powers, the presumption of innocence and proof of guilt being required beyond reasonable doubt. These are the cornerstones of our democracy. In my view, impeding these principles with legislation is not just contrary to principle but risks bringing into disrepute the very organ of the executive government that is responsible for administering the legislation.

I accept that, because of the nature of serious corruption by the powerful as evidenced in recent years, without these extraordinary powers such conduct may not have been uncovered. Therefore, if Parliament wishes to extend the commission's investigative powers—subject, of course, to proper balance—I take no issue. The recent controversy in relation to the commission's activity, in my view, has arisen because the commission is more than an investigative body. It has a determinative function. As it embarks on its investigative and determinative functions it gives the impression to the general public that it is operating as a judicial arm of government.

It is presided over by eminent jurists or eminent members of the bar, the presiding officer sits on a bench under the State's coat of arms, counsel bow to the presiding officers and witnesses are called and cross-examined. As soon as there is an impression that the commission operates like a judicial arm with a determinative function, concepts such as procedural fairness are not an unreasonable proposition, and those arguments detract from the reputation of the commission. The general public will ultimately require the executive arm of government to act fairly. When I asked the architects of ICAC about whether Parliament envisaged procedural fairness applying to this hybrid commission, I was advised that it was considered that the bar rules would ensure that it did. It is now clear that they did not. This issue has now been resolved by clauses 96 to 100 of the Legal Profession Uniform Conduct (Barristers) Rules 2015.

I do not accept the criticism of the officials that have lawfully been administering this legislation. The criticism must be directed to Parliament. Parliament cannot empower a hybrid commission to do certain things and exercise its discretion and then complain when it does because it is reluctant to change legislation out of fear that the Parliament will be seen to be soft on corruption. No member of Parliament to my knowledge is soft on corruption. While I join in this report to achieve a bipartisan position and effect some improvements on the procedural fairness concept, I am concerned about the practical workability of what is recommended and would have preferred to approach reforms by applying principle rather than political considerations.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:48): With this report the committee aims to preserve a strong ICAC. At the same time, the committee also wants to ensure that ICAC uses its powers in an appropriate and fair manner. The committee based its review on two reports prepared by the Inspector of the ICAC. The first report deals with the ICAC's Operation Hale, involving the Crown prosecutor Margaret Cunneen and her family. The operation led to a High Court decision limiting the ICAC's jurisdiction as it was then understood. The second report is a general review of ICAC and was provided to the Premier in May 2016. The recommendations which the inspector makes in both reports form the basis of the committee's review. Both of the inspector's reports raise questions about whether ICAC has used its extensive powers unfairly or if there is a danger that it might. The committee's report addresses these issues. It makes several recommendations to ensure that stronger systems are in place to ensure ICAC continues to operate in the best public interest.

The committee recommended that there be three commissioners to replace the current model in which a single commissioner makes all the decisions with a three-commissioner model. Specifically, there should be a chief commissioner and two part-time commissioners. This means that the chief commissioner will have a peer group with which to discuss important cases and decisions. It will also allow more weight to be placed on key decisions around exercising the powers of ICAC. The inspector recommended that ICAC should no longer be allowed to hold public hearings because the damage to the reputations of people who are under investigation is too great. We do not agree with this. We think public hearings are an important tool of ICAC to bring the issue of corruption to the public's attention, to draw out further information from their current inquiry and to deter future corruption. We also think that public hearings should be used only in certain circumstances and with fairness to the people under investigation. That is why we recommend that public hearings can only be held when at least two commissioners agree and ICAC must follow the rules of procedural fairness during the public inquiry and before publishing adverse findings against the person.

We were concerned by the complaints that ICAC was not affording procedural fairness to persons under investigation, particularly in public inquiries. Therefore, we made recommendations to ensure that ICAC issues and follows guidelines that incorporate procedural fairness in public inquiries. We also recommend that when ICAC makes adverse findings against a person, a fair count of their response to the finding has to be published in the report. I thank my fellow committee members. To be fair, I was on the committee for only a short time, but I found it interesting. It was probing and thought-provoking. I compliment members on both sides of the House for their input into the final findings and recommendations. Finally, I thank the parliamentary staff who were

involved in the preparation of that report and who provided precise up-to-date information. They deserve a pat on the back. They did a great job in helping the committee. I commend the report to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: While the member for Tweed is thanking staff, it is timely that I recognise in the gallery Mr Jason Rolfe, who is a member of the Tweed electorate office. Welcome.

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 28/56

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the House take note of the report.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:52): As Chair: I thank the House for the opportunity to speak in debate on the Legislation Review Committee's twenty-eighth digest for the Fifty-Sixth Parliament. I will briefly discuss the committee's comments in respect of three bills introduced into Parliament in the last sitting week. The committee first considered the Crown Land Management Bill 2016. The Crown Land Management Bill 2016 consolidates in one Act the provisions dealing with the ownership, use and management of Crown land in New South Wales. The committee made comments on issues concerning property rights, reversal of proof, orders for certain offences, denial of compensation, and ill-defined and wide powers. The committee noted that the bill enables the Minister to vest certain Crown land in local councils and government agencies. The committee noted that, once vested, the land ceases to be Crown land and may impact upon any future land claims under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1993.

The committee noted that the bill contains a number of safeguards that operate to ensure that consultation is undertaken with councils and community groups before any land is vested. Therefore, the committee made no further comments on this issue. The committee also noted that provisions in the bill reverse the onus of proof so that a person who is responsible for a vehicle, stock or structure is taken to be guilty of an offence as if they were the actual offender. The intent of the provision is to allow for action to be taken against someone, such as the owner, where there is damage to the Crown land but the actual offender is not known. There are some defences in the bill available to the affected individual. As such, the committee made no further comment on this issue.

Another issue the committee made comment on concerned the ability of a court to make a number of orders where a court finds an offence proved. Those orders can apply to a situation where a court has made an order under section 10 of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 to dismiss the charge. The committee noted that some of the orders are appropriate. However, the committee considered that others, such as requiring an offender to publicise their offence, appear to contradict the intention of the scheme established by section 10. Two final issues that the committee reported on concerned provisions which provide that the State is not liable for compensation for the enactment or operation of the Act, and provisions that provide a wide discretion to the Minister to vest Crown land in government agencies.

I turn now to the Mining Amendment (Climate Protection—No New Coal Mines) Bill 2016. This bill was introduced in the other place and concerns the prohibition on any new authorisations to prospect or mine coal under the Mining Act. The committee noted that proposed amendments provide that compensation is not payable by or on behalf of the State because of the prohibition on granting new authorisation. This applies to applicants or tenders for authorisations made but not finally determined before the commencement of the proposed section. The committee noted that the denial of compensation may run counter to the rule of law and procedural fairness. However, the committee concluded that individuals are unlikely to be affected parties under the legislation.

The final bill I wish to speak to today is the Plastic Shopping Bags (Prohibition on Supply by Retailers) Bill 2016. The object of this bill is to prohibit retailers from supplying certain plastic bags to their customers. The committee identified one issue concerning the introduction of an offence with strict liability. The committee noted that while the bill introduces an offence of strict liability, it accepted that those types of provisions are not uncommon in regulatory settings and they are aimed at ensuring that retailers comply with the new provisions. Therefore the committee made no further comment. That concludes my remarks on this digest. I thank the committee staff and members for their input. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:56): I speak on behalf of the Opposition to make a contribution to the take-note debate on the Legislation Review Digest No. 28/55, dated 8 November 2016. The committee considered six bills and commented on five. Our comments were brief except on the Crown Land Management Bill 2016. The committee made a number of comments on that bill. I am pleased to say that the Minister's representative in this House addressed most of the committee's comments when speaking to the bill earlier this week when it was passed in this place. However, he did not address the comments made concerning the impact of the bill on Aboriginal land rights. That is a concern that this House should be aware of. When the

committee makes comment on a bill, it is appropriate that the representative or the person introducing the bill to the House makes comment and acknowledges the committee's concerns and addresses them in some way. Other than that, I support the comments made by the chair. I thank my fellow committee members and the secretariat. I commend the report to the House.

Report noted.

Matter of Public Importance

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:57): I am delighted to address the House on this matter of public importance to acknowledge Remembrance Day 2016. It is a day that not only marks the signing of the armistice on 11 November 1918 in the Forest of Compiègne, but it is a day when Australians commemorate one of the most significant days in our nation's military history. Last year we marked 100 years since the Anzac forces landed on the shores of Gallipoli. Like Remembrance Day, it is a testament to the significance of our proud culture that one century later we are still honouring the sacrifice of those gallant men and women who fought in the war that was supposed to end all wars. Tomorrow, on Remembrance Day, we honour the service and sacrifice made by many of our great nation whilst also expressing our gratitude to those service men and women who put their lives on hold—and on the line—for duty to ensure that the history of the Anzacs and the renowned Anzac spirit live on in the Australian psyche for an eternity.

As a new Federation, our national spirit was born in the landings of the first Anzac troops on the Turkish coast on 25 April 1915. Australia was a new nation, and as the men who landed on the shores of Suvla Bay stamped their feet in the sand our new nation stamped its foot in the history books, carrying the pride of our great nation without fear and giving no quarter. There was, and still is today, a spirit of mateship, courage, national pride, sacrifice, good humour in times of darkness and, at times, a healthy disregard for authority. Stories of the enigmatic Simpson and his donkey and many others are testament to these values. So recognisable are these traits that, across the world, everyday Australians are still painted with the values of the Anzacs.

Since Federation, Australian military forces have been involved in numerous wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. The service men and women in each of these operations have added to the identity of what it means to be an Anzac and, above all, what it means to be an Australian. One of the most significant legacies from the Anzac story is that it offers knowledge and understanding to ever-changing and expanding communities within our nation about the wartime efforts and the sacrifices that were made for this nation.

It is true that there is a story behind the service of every veteran, ex-service man and woman. Their stories are humbling, and I listen to them with pride. I must be clear on this point: throughout our communities we are fortunate to have so many who have served our country, States and local areas in so many different and varying ways. It is well known that my electorate of Campbelltown has a high population of ex-service men and women and returned service men and women. I am delighted that the Minister is here, as he would agree that not one of those people is more or less important than another.

I take pride in the fact that so many people want to attend the Gallipoli Anzac Day dawn service year in and year out. There was a particularly high attendance for the 100-year anniversary last year. There were not enough positions available for attendees at the services at Ingleburn, Campbelltown or Martin Place. The numbers continue to expand. This stands as testament to the fact that for over 100 years the spirit, the sentiment, the contributions and the significance of the Anzacs have not left us. Rightfully, the school curriculum teaches our children about the veterans, the women who supported them and kept the domestic industries alive, the organisations that sustained troops and continue to do so, the struggles that our service people faced and continue to face, and why our national character was changed forever by that war. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them. Lest we forget. Pay homage tomorrow, as part of Remembrance Day. I thank the House.

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (16:02): Remembrance Day, 11 November, is set aside as a day to remember the sacrifice of those who have died for Australia in wars and conflicts. It was originally known as Armistice Day. On this day in 1918, the guns of the Western Front stopped after more than four years of continuous warfare. The Armistice, or end of hostilities, was actually signed in a railway carriage in a forest near Compiègne at 5.00 a.m., but it took six hours, to 11 a.m., to notify all fighting units. And so that eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the moment when hostilities ceased on the Western Front, became universally associated with the remembrance of those who had died in the war.

On the first anniversary of the armistice, two minutes silence was instituted as part of the commemorative ceremony. At the end of the Second World War the Australian and British governments changed the name to Remembrance Day as Armistice Day was no longer an appropriate title for a day that would commemorate all

those who had died or served in war. In November 1997, the then Governor-General, Sir William Deane, issued a proclamation formally declaring 11 November Remembrance Day, and urging all Australians to observe one minute's silence at 11 a.m. on 11 November each year to remember those who suffered for Australia's cause in all wars and armed conflicts.

Over the course of this last year our forces, numbering more than 3,000 people, have been engaged in a dozen theatres of war and conflict, from the Middle East to Pacific nations and Sudan. They serve with great distinction and courage, as signified by the gallantry awards presented to a number of them for their deeds in battle. World War I remains our most costly conflict, in terms of the number killed and wounded. From a population of fewer than five million, more than 300,000 Australians enlisted, of whom one in five were killed. In the trench warfare of the Western Front tens of thousands of Aussie soldiers died. At Pozieres, in one six-week period in July and August 1916, we suffered 23,000 casualties—almost the size of our entire regular Army today and almost half the entire population of Albury. During World War II, 39,000 Australian service men and women paid the ultimate price in defending Australia and preserving democracy. Following World War II Australians were called upon to participate in international operations in Korea, Malaya, Borneo and Vietnam. In these conflicts more than 77,000 Australians served with distinction and courage, and 910 lives were lost.

Only Australians aged 75 or 80 years and older would have memories of the horror of the Second World War and the enormous impact of the loss of so many young lives in such a short time. Every family would have been touched in some way by the tragedy. It is no wonder that, for older Australians, the war is a benchmark against which life today is measured. It changed the whole Australian way of life forever, just as the devastating tsunami in 2004 changed forever the lives of our Indian Ocean neighbours. Our younger generations can have no real understanding of the hardship that people endured in this country over those war years. They take for granted the peace and stability that we now enjoy and are shocked and even resentful when restrictions are imposed and their tranquil lives are disturbed by bad news. They might not see as clearly as their parents the value of sending our defence forces into dangerous parts of the world to help restore peace there. That is understandable.

Modern warfare is no longer restricted to defined theatres, it does not follow set patterns and often it takes the form of terrorism, intimidation and indiscriminate slaughter of civilians. Our forces face a hidden enemy—one who uses remote control bombs to kill and maim. Extremist causes have adopted terror tactics and it is in this context that our uniformed men and women now have to operate. On this day of remembrance we will not only remember those who have died but those who continue to serve their country and indeed the world. This Remembrance Day I will attend the City of Albury RSL Sub-Branch Albury Remembrance Day Service at St Matthew's Church, Albury, where I will lay a wreath in appreciation of the sacrifices made by our military. Members of the community are warmly invited to attend.

At the same service a few years ago, one former soldier, Donald Sidney Dennis, who fought in the 2/6th commando squadron in World War II, was quoted as saying that the day was always sad for him, but that he came to remember those he lost in the war. "Your mind goes back," he said. "It's that you left behind your good friends and comrades. You can see their faces in your memory and you wonder why you're here and they're not," he said. We pray that not only will our service men and women return safely but that they will eventually be rewarded for their efforts and sacrifice by seeing peace and stability restored to these distant countries. Lest we forget.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:07): Tomorrow marks 98 years since the Armistice which ended hostilities on the Western Front and across the battlefields of the First World War. People across this State, across this nation and across the western world will pause at 11.00 a.m. to remember the sacrifice of those who served and gave their lives in the First World War. It is hard for us today to imagine the enormity of the Great War, and the toll it took on our community in this country and across the western world. In my own electorate I am reminded of our oldest community, the suburb of Ourimbah, which at the time was a small rural community. The men there worked in the local forests to get timber for the New South Wales railways. Seventy-four men—it must have been most of the men in the town—enlisted to fight in the First World War, and 16 of those did not return; they were killed in action. That is a casualty rate of over 20 per cent—higher than the average casualty rate suffered by the Australian nation.

It was a bloody toll for that community and must have had a deep impact for those left behind and those who returned. It is a matter of public record that it took another World War and more sacrifices before the western world committed collectively to building a better world instead of engaging in disputes with other nations. It is important that tomorrow, 11 November—and in subsequent years—we commemorate at 11.00 a.m. what happened during World War I and at the end of the Great War. It is important not only to remember the sacrifices of our ancestors but also to ensure that when we as a society, and we as members of this House and representatives of the people of New South Wales, decide to engage in military conflict we do so knowing full well the horror of war and what it can cost our society. Lest we forget.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (16:10): By leave: At the outset of my modest contribution to this discussion, I thank the member for Campbelltown for drawing this matter of public importance to the attention of the House. Tomorrow is the ninety-eighth anniversary of the signing of the Armistice. As a Parliament, we should reflect on the fact that the Armistice was not the peace treaty. The Treaty of Versailles was not signed until 28 June 1919. Much has been and will be said about the length of time taken between signing the Armistice and finalising the Treaty of Versailles and how that contributed not only to World War II but also to subsequent conflicts.

Tomorrow is about us pausing as a nation. It is a time when millions of New South Welshmen and Welshwomen attend memorials to think about the sacrifice that led us along the path to peace, albeit briefly. The Government is committed to ensuring that those memories never fade. I pay tribute to the Premier on the eve of this year's Remembrance Day because of his genuine interest in and regard for veterans. Tonight the Premier will host a reception at Barangaroo for contemporary veterans whose ancestors were the original Anzacs. The reception will be for 600 veterans who served in recent conflicts in areas such as the Solomon Islands, Afghanistan, Iraq, East Timor, Bougainville and Western Sahara. The veterans will join the Premier and His Excellency the Governor at an event that will ensure that the heritage of which the veterans are custodians will not be forgotten.

Commemorating Armistice Day is not just about receptions and functions. The Premier has committed the New South Wales Government to completing the Hyde Park War Memorial's water fountain. The original 1930s design of the memorial had a water feature, but public subscriptions ceased during the Great Depression. It took Mike Baird and his commitment to our veterans community to fulfil completion of the memorial's original design. I very much look forward to its official dedication in 2018. Securing our veterans' future is a catch-cry of the New South Wales Government.

The Premier has secured that by identifying 200 public sector jobs to be considered for the 2,400 Australian Defence Force personnel who are discharged from service in New South Wales every year. We can talk about memorials as much as we like—and of course tomorrow will be an emotional day for many people—but unless veterans are given comprehensive employment opportunities, their sacrifice may well simply be forgotten. The Premier, the Deputy Premier, the people of New South Wales and I eagerly await news of whether the Invictus Games Foundation, of which Prince Harry is patron, has decided to hold the Invictus Games in New South Wales. If so, that is another way in which the people of New South Wales will be able to honour the service of our veterans and fulfil our duty of remembrance. Lest we forget.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:13): In reply: I thank the Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs, the member for Albury and my colleague the member for The Entrance for their contributions to the discussion of this matter of public importance. The Minister referred to the more contemporary elements of providing support to ex-service men and women and returned service men and women. Over a decade, more than 200 ex-service personnel have taken their lives. Clearly, that is a standard we cannot accept. We must provide support for service personnel who return from various conflicts bearing internal and external scars.

This year it is also important to remember and reflect on our proud service in theatres of conflict. It is 100 years since the Battle of the Somme, 75 years since the Siege of Tobruk, 65 years since the Battle of Châtillon, where the 3rd Battalion represented the first instalment of the Australian Regular Army since its establishment, and 50 years since the Battle of Long Tan, where young Australian servicemen ran through a rubber plantation. Without rear-echelon support from Australian, New Zealand and United States artillery fire, we probably would have lost each and every one of those men. Without doubt, it was one of the bloodiest battles of the Vietnam war and is something we must never forget. The list of historic battles and victories serves to highlight the importance of supporting Australia's returned service men and women.

It is 25 years since Australian service personnel were sent to the Gulf War. It is 15 years since Australian troops headed back to the Middle East, in Iraq and Afghanistan, and since Australian troops served in other conflicts, such as in the Solomon Islands, Bougainville and East Timor. Even during the Boxing Day tsunami, Australian service personnel provided support in the true spirit of humanity—stepping up to the plate and giving people the resources and the support they need in the face of adversity. As members of this House know, ultimately that is a fundamental, key and strong attribute of our unique and proud Australian character. Australians stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves, we speak for those who cannot speak for themselves, and we provide the muscle for the weak in their time of need. I thank all members who contributed to this discussion. I appreciate the opportunity to mark this most honourable and respected day.

*Community Recognition Statements***WINSTON HILLS QUEEN'S SCOUT AWARD CEREMONY**

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (16:16): On Saturday 5 November I had the honour of attending the Queen's Scout Award Ceremony at Winston Hills. Jake Krnel, Naomi Rowe, Jarrod Mutton, Sienna Archer and Saxon Krnel, who are all members of the 2nd Baulkham Hills Venturers, received the highest award in the scouting movement. This prestigious award reflects their hard-won achievements in adventurous activities, community involvement, leadership development and personal growth. Abseiling, hiking, climbing, camping and open water scuba diving are just some of the activities of those scouts. It was a great pleasure to hear recipient responses that reflected well-rounded, skilful young people. I am immensely proud of the contribution that the 2nd Baulkham Venturers have made to the community. I thank them for inviting me and look forward to seeing more of their achievements in the future.

LEBANESE MUSLIM ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY WELLNESS EXPO

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:17): It is always inspiring to see local community organisations taking the lead on health awareness. On 15 October I attended the Lebanese Muslim Association's Community Wellness Expo, whose aim was to raise awareness of local health services available to the community. Working with Sydney Local Health District and Breast Screen NSW, the Community Wellness Expo provided free health check-ups and screenings for all ages, covering everything from dental to mental health and physiotherapy. The day also provided advice and information, offered in a range of languages, about healthy eating and getting fit, as well as workshops with health experts and practitioners.

I congratulate organisers of the Community Health Expo and the Lebanese Muslim Association who saw a need in the community and responded to it. It is especially important that the day focused on working with culturally and linguistically diverse communities as well as with people from low socio-economic backgrounds to promote awareness about local health services available to them. Ensuring that people are taking preventative measures for their own health as well as for the health of their families and empowering people to access services available to them goes a long way to improving the overall wellbeing of people in the Lakemba electorate.

LIONS DISTRICT 201N1 CONVENTION

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:18): I inform the House that recently the Myall Lakes electorate hosted the Lions District 201N1 Convention. District 201N1 encompasses the areas of Collarenebri, Moree, Ashford and Iluka to the north, Forster-Tuncurry on the east coast, and Murrurundi. District 201N1 has 62 Lions clubs, two branch clubs, four Lioness clubs and five Leo clubs. As President of the New South Wales Parliamentary Lions Club, it was a pleasure for me to open the convention. I spoke with chairman of the Lions District 201N1, Michael Diessel, who said the convention was a huge success.

Speakers included international director Eric Carter from Auckland, author Di Morrissey and exchange student Elinor Bowman. Attendees particularly enjoyed the presentation on cataracts by the deputy director of the Lions Eye Bank, Dr Con Petsoglou. It was relevant and very engaging. The convention was hosted by the five Lions clubs of the Manning Valley. Manning River Lions Club gave a presentation on its successful Camp Memories event, which starts tomorrow, 11 November, and finishes on 13 November. The Taree Lions Club's presenter had the chance to speak about the newest festival addition to the region, the Taree TasteFest, which will be held on 14 January 2017.

HELLENIC AUSTRALIAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:19): I recognise the Hellenic Australian Lawyers Association, or HAL. The NSW Chapter of the Hellenic Australian Lawyers Association will be launched by the Honourable Chief Justice Tom Bathurst, AC, tomorrow night, in the Banco Court of the Supreme Court. Also addressing the event will be the national patron of HAL, the Honourable Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of South Australia, Chris Kourakis, and the Honourable Justice Melissa Perry of the Federal Court of Australia. Justice Perry has also agreed to be patron of the NSW Chapter of HAL. I congratulate those involved in this initiative and thank Andrew Konstantine Panna, QC, President of HAL, for his invitation to attend the event.

KINGSCLIFF TAFE DUCK INN CAFE

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (16:20): Students with a disability are learning the tricks of the hospitality trade at the Duck Inn Cafe at the Kingscliff TAFE. The 10-week program provides a genuine workplace for students with a disability to develop their work skills and experience. Access, support and disability consultant Anita Raftery said the cafe provided a chance to learn vital hospitality skills. "For some of the students, this is the first time they've participated in work experience," she said. The cafe provides a great opportunity to communicate

with customers, take orders, operate a till, and prepare and serve coffees, cakes and gourmet lunches to the TAFE campus community and friends. Ms Raftery said the program encouraged students to achieve their vocational goals. She said, "Skills students acquire within the course can enhance everyday living and provide confidence and tools for future independence." Commercial cookery teacher Vanessa Finneran said she witnessed students' confidence grow as they completed the program. Many of the group are continuing to further studies at the TAFE.

FAIRFIELD RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (16:21): On Friday 14 October 2016 I had the great pleasure of attending a 1950s and 1960s themed morning tea to raise funds for the Fairfield Relay for Life. An outstanding display of memorabilia and costumes were present at the event. The morning tea was well attended by Cancer Council NSW volunteers, community leaders and members of the Fairfield local community. I congratulate Mrs Jan Dhu for organising the incredibly successful morning tea and everyone who showed their support on the day. I also commend the Rainbow Friends group who have managed to raise approximately \$6,000 towards this year's Fairfield Relay for Life.

KEMPSEY CUP

Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (16:21): On Friday 4 November the Kempsey Akubra Cup was held, after 40 years of sponsorship by one of Kempsey's favourite companies. It was a brilliant day, with nearly 2,500 people through the gate and \$1.4 million in turnover. The race was started in 1966 and was founded by famous race caller Ken Howard. It continues on unabated. The committee deserves praise for organising such a splendid event. I acknowledge particularly John Graham for his leadership and commitment as chair of the Kempsey Turf Club. I note that the winner of the Kempsey Cup was Mr Ben Looker riding Cash Spinner for owner Mr Gary Rollings. I note that "Cash Spinner" is an appropriate name in this instance. The people of Macleay had a very good time at this tremendous race meeting.

NSW YEAR 10 NATIONAL HISTORY CHALLENGE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (16:23): Today I speak about year 10 student from Merewether High School Wilson McTaggart, who has won the 2016 NSW Year 10 Level National History Challenge. I understand that the National History Challenge encourages students to use research and inquiry-based learning to discover more about the world, Australia and its past. The theme for 2016 was "Triumph or Tragedy?" Wilson adapted the theme to the Battle of Agincourt. I recently congratulated Wilson on his win at the presentation ceremony in Parliament House. I have been informed that Merewether High School has now won this award at the Year 10 level for five years in a row. It is a testament to this proud public school in Newcastle. I also understand that Wilson is quite the achiever on the sports front. He represented New South Wales in cricket when he was 12 years old, and now applies his athletics skills to soccer. Congratulations, Wilson, you are a credit to Newcastle.

GOSFORD HOSPITAL NAME THE CRANE COMPETITION

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:23): As the ongoing construction of the redevelopment of Gosford Hospital is well underway, the winners of the Name the Crane competition have been announced. Two Central Coast students have won \$1,000 worth of books for their schools. One of the cranes towering over the hospital has officially been named "Lofty" by Abby Wesley, aged 12, from Lisarow Public School, who described the crane as "towering" over the hospital. "Lane the Caring Crane" was named by Charlotte Daniel, aged seven, from Empire Bay Public School, who described her crane as "looking over all the patients and working hard to make the hospital bigger and better". There were 300 entries, which is outstanding, and both students were officially presented with the prizes for their schools by Central Coast Local Health District and managing contractor Lendlease.

SISTER BERENICE TWOHILL 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:24): I place on the parliamentary record my congratulations on the extraordinary life of Sister Berenice Twohill whom I visited yesterday to wish a happy 100th birthday. Sister Berenice was born Mary Dymphna Twohill in Murwillumbah, the first daughter of Alexander and Eliza Twohill, and one of 11 children. She entered the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at age 17, and taught in mission houses in Papua New Guinea before being taken prisoner of war by the Japanese in Rabaul for three years and nine months. Sister Berenice endured starvation and disease, and despite little prospects of survival she turned 100 yesterday. Her story of survival in the face of unbelievable adversity is truly remarkable. Her astonishing life was celebrated yesterday at a mass attended by well over 100 people, and Sister Berenice was presented with certificates of congratulations from heads of state and governments across the world, as well as from the Speaker of the House and me. This House wishes you a very happy birthday, Sister Berenice, and may God bless you.

NSW BUSINESS CHAMBER BUSINESS AWARDS

Ms LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie—Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (16:25): The NSW Business Chamber Business Awards recognise success in the areas of business leadership, business ethics, sustainability, innovation, export and small business, and aim to help strengthen business in New South Wales. The awards reflect years of hard work by businesses that continue to set the highest standards of service excellence in the Port Macquarie-Hastings region. I especially congratulate Young Entrepreneur Stacey Morgan of Wauchope and Port Macquarie Performing Arts, Business Leader Tanya Simmons of Bennett's Steel, Fuji Xerox Business Centre Port Macquarie for Excellence in Sustainability, and Regional Business of the Year Handybin Waste Services Port Macquarie. The winners will all now represent our community at the NSW Business Chamber Business State Awards. Congratulations on this wonderful achievement.

SOORASAMHARAM FESTIVAL

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:26): Last Saturday I joined more than 5,000 people for the fantastic Soorasamharam celebrations at the Murugan temple, Westmead, along with the member for Prospect and the Federal member for Greenway, Michelle Rowland. Soorasamharam symbolises the victory of good over evil and is one of the most significant religious festivals for Tamil Hindus. This celebration is the culmination of a period of fasting after Diwali. It celebrates the victory of Lord Murugan over demons, or Asuras, through the beheading of the four Asuras, Anamughan, Panumughan, Simhamughan and Soorapadman, with Lord Murugan's sacred spear, the vel. The local celebration was spectacular and exciting, with giant figures of Lord Murugan and each of the demons held up by around 20 people each for the ritual fights, in which Lord Murugan was of course triumphant. I love being able to represent such a multicultural and multifaith community, and being invited to share festivals like Soorasamharam is a great privilege. Congratulations to all the organisers on another successful event.

REGIONAL EXPORT AWARD

ROSE-A-FAIR SHOW

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (16:27): Simon and Edward Staughton, owners and managers of the family businesses Cool Off and Dried and True, Australia's premier producers of pet food raw meats based in Howlong, have taken out the Regional Exporter Award at the Export Council of Australia NSW State Awards. Congratulations to Simon, Edward and all the employees at Cool Off on this well-deserved win. I wish them all the best in the national finals to be held on 24 November in Brisbane. Congratulations also to Sue Beardwell, Aileen Tetu, Dawn Gould and all the organisers of the annual Rose-A-Fair show, which was held last weekend at St David's Uniting Church, Albury. This is the show's twenty-third year and it is still going strong, with hundreds of exhibits including a wonderful display of roses, cake stalls, embroidery, scrumptious Devonshire teas and much more.

SOORASAMHARAM FESTIVAL

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:28): On Saturday 5 November I was pleased to attend Soorasamharam at the Saiva Manram—also known as the Sydney Murugan Temple, a place of worship for the Tamil people of Western Sydney—with my good friend the member for Granville, Julia Finn, and Federal member for Greenway, Michelle Rowland. Soorasamharam is a thrilling performance commemorating the defeat of the evil Asura demigods by Lord Murugan, the Hindu god of war. Of course, Lord Murugan wins in the end, restoring natural order—known as Dharma. The festival holds great significance among Hindus in India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia and Australia. Some of the most devoted followers of Soorasamharam fast for six days, commemorating the six days of the war between Murugan and the Asura. I thank the wonderful Tamil community at the Saiva Manram for hosting me for the Soorasamharam festivities and also thank the president, Mr Nadar Ketheson, and the board of the temple for organising such a wonderful event.

WAL EDWARDS, OAM, 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:29): Wal Edwards's life mottos are "service above self" and "never stop thinking of others". Admirably, that is how he has lived his life over the past 100 years, including 50 years as a member of St Ives Rotary Club. Wal was born in Hamilton, New South Wales, and moved to Sydney in 1932. After performing a variety of jobs, Wal bought a real estate agency in St Ives. He joined St Ives Rotary in 1965 and is an active member who continues to perform outstanding work for the community. Wal has five children, 15 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren. He was a carer for his previous wife for 40 years and has been married to Joan, his current wife, since 2003.

Wal has lived a life of service. He served in World War II and continues to be a grief counsellor. He is Welfare Officer at Harbord Diggers and often visits and calls sick and lonely people and World War II veterans. Among his numerous deserved awards is an Order of Australia Medal, conferred in 2014. St Ives Rotary Club and the general community have been blessed to have the experience and generosity of Wal Edwards. I wish him all the best for his 100th birthday celebration at Avondale Golf Club on 23 November, the evening after his big birthday.

Petitions

WYONG HOSPITAL

Discussion

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:30): It gives me pleasure to speak this afternoon, although I am very upset about this issue. I recognise the people in the gallery today from Wyong and the Central Coast: nurses, hospital workers and community workers who are here to show their dismay at the Government's proposed privatisation of our local community's Wyong Hospital. In a very short time, our community has collected more than 20,000 signatures. On a rally held on 16 October more than 2,000 people turned up to show their displeasure at the Baird Government's non-communication about the privatisation of our hospital.

Government members stand in this Chamber, including the member for Terrigal, and tell people there is nothing to worry about. My community is worried that there is no information and no answers to its questions. When members of my community complain, they get banned from Facebook, have their names struck off and are not listened to. I listen to my community and I will stand up in this place any time, because the people of Wyong will not be pushed around. When we get challenged, we stand up and we fight back. Our hospital is a very important piece of infrastructure. Before the election and after we announced a \$200 million upgrade of the hospital, the Liberal candidate for Wyong and the then Minister for the Central Coast went to Wyong. They turned up on a hill on a Sunday and announced that they had matched our commitment. At no time did they say there was going to be privatisation; at no time did they say it would be funded other than in the way that every other public hospital in the State is funded.

In answer to a question from the member for Terrigal in question time, the Minister for Health had the hide to say, "Oh, by the way, five regional hospitals are going to be privatised and one of them is going to be Wyong." That is not good enough. There was no community consultation and no discussion leading up to it, just "This is what you've got to cop or you're not getting anything." That is what this Government is all about, and it is just not on. I want to talk about how my constituents are being treated on this issue. Julie-Ann O'Connor wrote to the Minister:

As a patient receiving ongoing monthly treatment, for life, as an outpatient at Wyong Hospital, could you please advise if this will be delayed or incur a cost if the hospital is privatised?

What answer did she get? Nothing. The Minister has not replied. Government members say, "Just ask us for information; we'll tell you what is going on." But when people ask questions, they say, "Oh, no, we don't want to answer any questions because we don't know the answers."

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! Members will come to order. The member for Wyong has the call.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: The Minister stands in this place and says, "It's following the successful model of the Northern Beaches Hospital."

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Swansea will come to order. She will have an opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Guess what? The Northern Beaches Hospital has never had a patient. It does not open for another two years, so how does my community know that it is a successful model that will work for the benefit of the community? It has never even had a patient. It is absolutely disgraceful that the Government would say it is a successful model. It is a successful model for a Government that loves privatisation—that is what it is—but it is not about people in my community and making sure they will be treated properly. We know that everybody in the community will pay for this.

There will be an average cost per patient that the taxpayers of New South Wales will have to meet so a private entity can make a profit. Nobody is going to spend \$200 million and run a hospital for 40 years to not make any money. The Government says to the community, "Trust us, it will not cost you any more". It will. It might not cost you directly, but it will cost you indirectly. There will be segregation in the Northern Beaches hospital. There will be an intensive care unit for private patients and a separate one for public patients. In my

community I want one hospital that serves every single constituent whether they are a private or public patient. That is what my community deserves.

[Interruption from gallery]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I am aware there are strongly held opposing views on the matter being discussed. Parliamentary debate allows those opposing the matter to express themselves freely without interference. Therefore, I ask those in the gallery to refrain from clapping or distracting the debate in any way, either verbally or visually.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:36): I thank the member for Wyong for bringing this petition to the House. This debate will provide an opportunity to discuss the facts of these partnerships. I acknowledge members of the Central Coast community in the gallery who have travelled to listen to this discussion today. Since coming to office the Liberal and Nationals Government has opened more than 60 new or major hospital redevelopments worth over \$10 billion over two terms of government. These works were badly needed after years of upgrades promised by Labor but not delivered. That meant that 40 per cent of the hospitals were over 50 years old, neglected and needing replacement.

Indeed, Labor cut health capital expenditure in seven of its 16 years in government. That is not a record to be proud of. Tackling these challenges requires an innovative approach, which is why the Government is inviting established non-government hospital operators to enter into a partnership program with the Government to design, build, operate and maintain these new facilities. Labor members and union officials, led by the member for Wyong, have been responsible for running a disgraceful scare campaign. They have been spreading mistruths, such as the comment by the member for Wyong:

We also know that this is going to gift the land, buildings and equipment to a private company.

That is untrue.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I call the member for Blacktown to order for the second time. I call the member for Blacktown to order for the third time.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: The member for Swansea stated:

Residents are going to go down to the hospital and they are not going to be able to afford to get care.

That is also untrue. The biggest mistruth of all is from the member for Maitland:

Patients and medical staff will be worse off because there will be two classes of medical care—one for public patients and one for private patients.

Let me be very clear, there is not one shred of truth to these outrageous claims. With all of this misinformation and fear being spread by members opposite and their union mates, it is important to correct the record. First, your public health care is guaranteed and will remain free, accessible and fully government funded.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Second, patients will have access to better services and more choice locally. Third, the new hospital will be accountable to the Central Coast Local Health District and will need to meet the same strict access, quality and performance standards that apply to all New South Wales hospitals. Fourth, all current permanent staff will be offered a position provided an equivalent position exists. Any staff member who migrates will have a two-year employment guarantee. Fifth, an expression of interest has been conducted with hospital operators that have a proven track record in Australia.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I remind the member for Blacktown that he is on three calls to order.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Sixth, the projects are now in the evaluation stage. Seventh, the Government expects this stage to be completed in early 2017. If a partnership goes ahead the Government will retain ownership of the land that the facilities are built on. Once the contract comes to an end the buildings and equipment will revert to NSW Health operation. Ninth, under any contract entered into, hospital operators will be required to treat every public patient that presents to the hospital. As was the case with Goulburn, if the Government cannot get a better deal for patients, the new or redeveloped hospital will be delivered using traditional means, and construction will commence in this term of government, including the \$200 million for Wyong Hospital.

These are the facts. That is vastly different to the narrative, or should I say fiction, of the Opposition. This approach is about putting patients and communities first. Patients will receive high-quality, free health care in better facilities in a public hospital. This process represents an opportunity to maximise the benefits for the

community of the Government's investment, resulting in increased patient choice, expanded clinical service provision, enhanced patient outcomes and greater opportunities for staff.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I call the member for Maroubra to order for the third time.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: In short, this Government will be providing more for patients. Members opposite do a great disservice to their communities by spreading fear and deceit. This Government is getting on with the job of delivering better public hospitals and health care for our community, which is demonstrated by the development of the Gosford Hospital. Let the record reflect that Mr Foley, the Hon. Walt Secord, Mr Harris, Ms Atchison, Ms Catley, Mr Mehan, and Ms Watson oppose the provision of better health care for their communities. There can be no crawling away from the position they have taken. That is now on the record, and the community can plainly see that the Labor Party and the unions oppose them having better public health care.

I say to the community members in the gallery today that the Labor Party and the unions are not backing the interests of public hospital health care. As I said, public health care is guaranteed to remain free and accessible and fully government funded. Patients will have access to better health services, and they will be able to access them locally. A new hospital will be accountable to the local area health district, and it will be required to meet the same strict standards and levels of quality and performance that apply to all New South Wales hospitals. Finally, as I said, if the partnership goes ahead, the Government will retain ownership of the land and the facilities. Once the contract comes to an end, the buildings and equipment will revert to NSW Health.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:40): This 10,000 signature petition asks this House to reject any move by the Government to privatise the grounds and services now provided at Wyong Hospital. I proudly support the sentiments in the petition. I note that the Minister for Health is not in the Chamber. That is deplorable because people have made the effort to be here to listen to what she might have said in response to this petition. It is also disrespectful to this House because whenever the issue has been raised in this place the Minister has responded by saying that the Opposition does not have the information, and that if we were to ask for it she would provide it. The Minister had the opportunity to do that today, but she has ducked it. She has sent in the member for Terrigal, who read out a speech that was written for him. That is not good enough for this House, for this Government, or for the people of the Central Coast.

This issue is so important to the people of the Central Coast that I moved a motion on 19 October to debate the issue. However, members opposite rejected my motion. This matter is being debated today only because I have presented a 10,000 signature petition. I congratulate the people of the Central Coast, whose tremendous efforts compelled the Government to participate in this debate. I acknowledge the people in the gallery and the people of the Central Coast who have collected signatures. Their efforts, their passion for public health, and their signatures and those of their neighbours are the reason we are debating this issue today. They have continued to collect signatures; in fact, they have already collected another 10,000 signatures, which I presented to the House yesterday. That means there will be another debate about this issue.

Today we see manifest in this House the tremendous community reaction to the surprise announcement made by the Minister for Health on 15 September about our local hospital. On Sunday 16 September, the community rallied as they never have before to participate in the largest protest meeting ever seen on the Central Coast. The reason for that is clear: it is our hospital and we want it to remain so. That started in 1964, when the community agitated for its local hospital. Community funding was the basis for our hospital being built where it is today. The hospital auxiliaries of Wyong and Tuggerah made contributions. Local miners signed up for payroll deductions. Residents gave freely. Our efforts were rewarded on 22 November 1980, when the Government gave us our hospital. The community wants it to remain our hospital. The Government should listen to this petition.

Mr Gareth Ward: Mr Temporary Speaker—

Mr Nick Lalich: Point of order: Why is the member for Kiama getting up to speak? He does not even know where Wyong is.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I call the member for Cabramatta to order for the first time. The member for Kiama will be heard in silence.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:45): I begin by reflecting on the comments made by the member for The Entrance about acknowledgements. I acknowledge my friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter and Central Coast, who I note is in the gallery. I note that the shadow Minister for Health and the Leader of the Opposition are not here today. I note the intimidatory remarks that were made before this debate started. Some of them have continued throughout the debate. I come from a working-class family. I was born in Port Kembla. I would never do anything that would hurt or affect public health care in this State. I am offended by some of the statements about public health care that have scared people. Claims have been made about the dismantling of

public health care—that people will have to pay for their health care and that this is the privatisation of health care. They are lies, every single one of them. Mr Foley recently said on ABC Illawarra:

The concern is that private patients will be prioritised over public patients.

If that were the case, I would have concerns too, but nothing could be further from the truth. The Government has repeatedly stated that hospital operators will be required to treat every public patient who presents to the hospital, under any contract entered into. Priority will be assessed on clinical need, just as it is now in every hospital across this State. As my friend Mr Crouch said earlier, I feel it is important to correct the record. The facts about the proposed health partnerships are as follows. Public health care is guaranteed and will remain free, accessible and fully government funded. Patients will have access to better services and more choice locally. The new hospital will be accountable to the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District and will need to meet the same strict access, quality and performance standards that apply to all New South Wales hospitals. All current permanent staff will be offered a position, provided an equivalent position exists. Any staff member who migrates will have a two-year employment guarantee. If the Government cannot get a better deal for patients, the new or redeveloped hospital will be delivered using traditional means. Construction will commence in this term of government.

I remember that Labor cut the maternity service, and with it jobs, at Shellharbour Hospital. What we are seeing in Shellharbour is demand for a half public and half private maternity service, but not each on its own. Together we can deliver the maternity service needed for a growing community. Opposition members will be accountable to their communities for opposing this opportunity for their communities. There are significant differences between the Government's proposed partnership model and the sorts of claims we are hearing from Opposition members. I think of the collaboration between St Vincent's Hospital, a great hospital that has been part of the public health network since 1844, and the Mater Hospital. There are many opportunities across the board. What we see from members of the Opposition and from the union is an attempt to scare the community. This side of the House will stand up for better health services for our community.

Ms Yasmin Catley: I seek leave to speak.

Leave not granted.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: I put the case for the member for Swansea's request. It is fair and appropriate that both sides of this House grant leave for members to contribute to debate on an issue that is important for their local community. In that good nature I ask those opposite to reconsider their position and to allow the member for Swansea to put forward a contribution, particularly given many of her constituents have travelled so far and are present in the gallery. Regardless of people's views, they are entitled to know what their local members think. I ask those opposite to reconsider and I seek leave to allow the member for Swansea to make a contribution on this petition.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! Leave was requested and it was denied.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Mr Temporary Speaker, I again seek leave.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Is leave granted?

Leave not granted.

Mr Michael Daley: Shame, shame, shame.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! Under Standing Order 249, I direct the Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Maroubra for the remainder of the day.

[The member for Maroubra left the Chamber at 16:50 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

[Interruption from gallery]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! As members of the public seated in the gallery continue to interrupt the business of the House, I have no alternative but to have the gallery cleared.

Mr John Robertson: The member for Kiama took a photo of the gallery as well.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I thank the member for Blacktown. Member for Kiama, it has been alleged that you took a photograph of the public gallery.

Mr Gareth Ward: It is a scurrilous allegation, Mr Temporary Speaker.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): If it is so, I ask the member for Kiama to delete the photograph.

Mr Clayton Barr: The member for Maroubra just got removed for the day. Gareth takes a photo and he just gets a free ride.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Cessnock will resume his seat or remove himself from the Chamber.

Community Recognition Statements

KIAMA ELECTORATE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:53): I congratulate Hannah McInerney of Jamberoo who has recently been nominated for a volunteer award in the Australian Capital Territory/New South Wales Regional Achievement Community Awards for her tireless voluntary work with the Jamberoo Rural Fire Service, Kiama Surf Life Saving Club and the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience. Out of several hundred nominations from across the State, Hannah has been selected in the top four. The winner will be announced tomorrow night at a ceremony in Wollongong. Congratulations, Hannah, on all your great work for the community.

I also congratulate Brent Strong of Jaspers Brush who recently won the Young Achiever Award at the South Coast Tourism Awards which I was very pleased to attend on Wednesday 26 October in Albion Park. Ben is the apprenticeship chef at the Silos Restaurant in Jaspers Brush. His dedication and commitment to his craft is to be highly commended. Congratulations and well done, Brent. You are a great example of our many great apprentices on the South Coast.

Business interrupted.

Members

MEMBER FOR MAROUBRA

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:54): I seek leave to make a contribution in relation to the decision you just made to remove the member for Maroubra.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The rulings of the Chair will not be questioned.

Ms JENNY LEONG: My understanding is that the member for Maroubra was removed from this House because he took a photo of the gallery. My understanding is that the member for Kiama and potentially other members did the same. I think that if those things occur all members should be treated fairly.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I thank the member for Newtown for her comments. I witnessed the member for Maroubra taking photos and then he shot out the side door. I have removed him for the rest of the day because he was on three calls to order. I did not see anyone else take any photos because I was focusing on the gallery.

[Interruption]

I do not need any commentary from the member for Swansea. It has been a difficult afternoon and emotions are running high. We will continue with community recognition statements or we will sit here for the next 10 minutes until the time allotted for community recognition statements expires. Which option does the member prefer?

Ms Yasmin Catley: I don't mind.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): To be fair to the member for Newtown, the member for Kiama did take a photograph, which I have witnessed him delete.

Community Recognition Statements

NORAH HEAD SURFING FRATERNITY FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (16:55): I pay special recognition to the Norah Head Surfing Fraternity which recently celebrated its fortieth anniversary. The Norah Head Surfing Fraternity is an organisation that has been, and continues to be, of particular importance to our community. The group has had a long history of engaging in the community and teaching young people to surf. Its inclusive culture has made it an asset to our community as it has passed on a culture through several generations that has come to characterise the area. The surfing community at Norah Head has many legends and many talented competitive board riders.

Among those legends was Barry Magoo who until his death in 2014 was the oldest competitive surfer. A yearly charity surf competition, the Magoo Surf Charity Classic, has been held on the northern side of Norah Head at Soldiers Beach every year since 1999. It has raised a total of more than \$300,000 for cancer services on the Central Coast. I congratulate the Norah Head Surfing Fraternity on its milestone 40 years and look forward to

seeing it continue for the next 40 years and beyond, particularly because of the way it encourages young people in our area.

SADIE ARIDA, NSW YOUNG CARER AWARD RECIPIENT

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:56): I acknowledge 21-year-old Sadie Arida. Sadie is a winner in the category of the NSW Young Carer Award. Sadie has been a carer since she can remember, often completing tasks such as feeding, dressing, giving medicines and regular household chores to assist her sister, Marie. As Marie's condition progressed, her caring role became more demanding and the roles changed. As a sign of how selfless Sadie's care has been, upon receiving the award, she claimed it was better served going to her mum and dad more so than herself. I congratulate Sadie on one of her most recent achievements in landing a job as a community worker for Community Junction Inc. in Western Sydney. Sadie has such a bright future and everyone in the local Seven Hills community should be encouraged, seeing how this star of the next generation has a steely focus on what matters in life: family and civil service.

TIM'S GARDEN CENTRE "PIG"

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:57): I ask the House to acknowledge Campbelltown's most unlikely social symbol, and commentator, who sits on a milk crate watching over Campbelltown's changing identity—Pig. Pig has resided at the main intersection of Campbelltown for five years, in front of Tim's Garden Centre. Twice weekly his community billboard message is updated and uploaded to social media, spreading important information throughout Campbelltown and our region. His master, Tim, and Pig have endorsed movements such as White Ribbon Day, RUOK, Dry July and Beyond Blue, amongst others. The momentary disappearance of Pig had in excess of 60,000 hits on Facebook, 400 shares and 345 comments. The joy around the community when Pig was returned by the NSW Police Force proves that his messages of goodwill are invaluable to Campbelltown. Pig is as much a mascot for Campbelltown as he is for Tim's Garden Centre. I ask the House to join me in acknowledging Pig for bringing community awareness to the agenda and for keeping a smile on the faces of residents of Campbelltown.

JOSH FENELEY

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (16:58): For most of us mastering one sport can take a lifetime, but what about nine? When not at school, 12-year-old Josh Feneley has found his niche as one of Hornsby's rising sport stars. Josh has mild autism and a mild intellectual disability but this has been no barrier to his sporting success. This year, Josh qualified for the School Sport Australia National Swimming Championships as a multiclass swimmer and participated in the School Sport Australia National Cross Country Championships, coming first over the line by half a minute, although he was bumped down to fifth due to the physical disabilities of other competitors.

In September, Josh's mainstream team, the Hornsby Berowra Eagles under 12s, won the Australian Football League grand final against the Mosman Swans. As if this was not enough, he was shortlisted to play in the Hornsby District under 12 cricket rep team, and competed as a para-athlete at the Sydney North Regional Athletics in every event except high jump. Whilst Josh's mum, Kerry, has remarked how overwhelmed the Feneley family has been by Josh's success and talent, she urges people to have a greater understanding and appreciation of the small successes that enhance the lives of those with a disability. I am not alone in saying that I cannot wait to see where Josh's passion for sport takes him. I wish him all the best as he continues to smash personal bests in the future.

JUNIOR TRIALS MINI CYCLE CLUB

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:59): One of the great things about representing such a diverse electorate is the variety of sports available to the people in my community. The Junior Trials Mini Cycle Club has operated at Gwandalan since 1975, providing a motorbike training facility for kids. Over the years, the community has poured its heart and soul into the facility, and was devastated when it lost the clubhouse, canteen, fencing and tyres in the 2013 bushfires. However, community members rallied together and over the past few years they have rebuilt the facility. I was delighted to be invited to cut the ribbon at the official opening last weekend. It was a fitting occasion. The opening took place in time for the club to host the Mini State Championships, which of course went off with a bang. Well done to the community and the club, especially the committee that has worked so hard to rebuild the club. I am pleased the championships were such a success.

CANTEEN

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:00): I draw the attention of this House to the work carried out by CanTeen to support young people whose lives have been turned upside down by cancer. Recently I joined CanTeen Chief Executive Officer Peter Orchard and some of the young leaders involved in CanTeen for an

afternoon tea in Parliament House. CanTeen is an organisation run by and for young people to support each other when they or a loved one has cancer. I visited the CanTeen offices a few months ago because recently it moved into the electorate of Newtown. I was profoundly moved by the stories of the young people who contribute so much to the organisation. They are true leaders and an inspiration. CanTeen is led by and for young people, and offers vital practical and psychological support and, just as importantly, friendship and understanding from peers.

NATIONAL NUTRITION WEEK

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:01): On Tuesday 18 October I had the pleasure of launching National Nutrition Week in the Strangers' Dining Room. National Nutrition Week highlights the importance of good nutrition for good health. Our nation is facing an obesity epidemic. In New South Wales we are seeing more people suffering serious health problems as a result of being overweight and inactive. Sadly, the number of children who are obese and overweight is increasing and the latest data collected in New South Wales found that one in five children is now considered overweight. The Government is committed to improving the health of people in New South Wales, and tackling childhood obesity is a priority of the Premier and Minister for Health. The Government knows that obesity will have serious long-term consequences for us all. We want to ensure that people in New South Wales, particularly children, are given the opportunity to have good health and be their best. I thank Nutrition Australia, in particular Barbara Ward, for their work and for raising awareness of the importance of good nutrition for a healthy and sustainable lifestyle.

INGLEBURN VIEW CLUB

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (17:02): I congratulate my local Ingleburn VIEW Club on its fiftieth anniversary. VIEW stands for Voices, Interests and Education of Women. The women of VIEW have made and continue to make a big difference to disadvantaged children in my local community. Through their hard work and generous donations, the Ingleburn VIEW Club supports a number of local children with their education, which undoubtedly helps those kids have better futures. In partnership with the Smith Family and through their Learning for Life program, Ingleburn VIEW Club has touched many lives and has helped many aspiring disadvantaged kids achieve great things. In addition to their charitable work, the VIEW Club is also a network of friendship with social and community activities for many local women. They share their life experiences, do community work and have lots of fun. I acknowledge President Patricia Rafferty, her executive team, and all members of the VIEW Club for organising the club's fiftieth celebrations. I also acknowledge their ongoing commitment to helping our local kids achieve their aspirations and to recognise the benefits of volunteering.

SOLDIER ON

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (17:03): I was delighted to attend the opening of the Michael Fussell Reintegration Recovery Centre at Concord Hospital. The centre is located in the picturesque surrounds of Yaralla Estate at Woodbine Cottage. It is part of the Soldier On program that helps veterans overcome the impacts of their service to our country. Sadly, Michael Fussell was a casualty of the war in Afghanistan. He was killed in 2008 in a blast by an improvised explosive device. At the time, his friend John Bale searched for a way to support Michael's colleagues who had survived the blast. He discovered there was no support service for members of the defence forces and, through his determination, Soldier On was born. In its first year 200 veterans were assisted in three States. Today, it is expected that thousands will be helped via a network of similar centres around Australia. The latest addition is the Michael Fussell Reintegration Recovery Centre at Concord, which is helping veterans in their transition from service careers to civilian life. It provides a range of services such as education, employment, assistance to family, and psychological counselling.

NSW MULTICULTURAL SENIORS ASSOCIATION

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (17:04): The NSW Multicultural Seniors Association conducts activities for seniors in Cabramatta, Regents Park, Redfern, Artarmon, Burwood, Berala and Marrickville. The majority of its members are from Chinese or Sino-Russian descent and they form an active group doing activities such as ballroom dancing lessons. Groups such as this hold a very important spot in our community as they provide a common place for elderly people who have trouble speaking English to come together to communicate and do activities. They keep social isolation at bay, which has the knock-on effect of staving off mental health issues and pressure on our health system. I congratulate President Aga Ge and her committee and members on the fantastic job that the NSW Multicultural Seniors Association plays in our local community.

SHANE MORCOME, FUTURE LEADERS INDIGENOUS AWARD RECIPIENT

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:05): I inform the House that Shane Morcome of Chatham High School was recently awarded the Future Leaders Indigenous Award, which recognises Indigenous students who show leadership and academic potential. Shane Morcome is a proud young Biripi man. He represents

the school and local community in rugby league and touch football, and is a keen player who encourages and supports his team mates at all times. Shane is also a member of the Biripi dance group, Waang Djarii. The group represents the local mob at numerous events in New South Wales. Shane has also shown he can apply himself in his studies and placed first in his year 11 Aboriginal studies class. He is a good role model for other students. On top of academic and sporting achievements Shane has been an active participant in school NAIDOC celebrations. Shane will receive \$500 to go to the school to assist with his educational expenses in year 12.

LIVERPOOL AND FAIRFIELD LAW SOCIETY

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:06): I recognise the Liverpool and Fairfield Law Society, whose 2016 annual general meeting I attended on 4 November. Also present was President of the Law Society of NSW Gary Ulman and Law Society councillor Richard Harvey. I was invited to the event by the society's president, Geoff Shelton, who is also a councillor on Liverpool City Council. Having commenced practice as a solicitor in Liverpool last century, I certainly knew a number of people present at the event. On the night the executive for the Liverpool and Fairfield Law Society was elected. Andrew Lee became president and Geoff Shelton became vice-president, effectively swapping their roles. I thank the society for its invitation to the event, congratulate it on its efforts to date and wish the office bearers well for the coming year.

AVOCA BEACH AND NORTH AVOCA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUBS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:06): Last weekend at Wamberal Beach in the electorate of Terrigal more than 800 Nippers from 15 local surf clubs on the Central Coast gathered in the first junior surf sports carnival of the season. Avoca Beach Surf Life Saving Club came top of the overall point score. I congratulate the club on an outstanding win. I specifically congratulate Piper-Lily Walker, Mia Cracknell and Byron Benson who each finished with two individual gold medals. From the North Avoca Surf Life Saving Club the competitors who won two or more individual events and must be congratulated are Emma Dugan and Aymn Hamilton of Terrigal. I say well done to those outstanding young people. I hope they enjoy the new surf lifesaving season.

REDFERN ALL BLACKS

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:07): I draw the attention of the House to the achievements of the Redfern All Blacks rugby league football club. The club was officially founded in 1944 and is the oldest Aboriginal rugby league football club in the country. This year the Redfern All Blacks men's team won the trophy in the grand final of the Sydney Combined Competition and very recently also won the prestigious Koori Knockout competition for the second year in a row. The Redfern All Blacks women's team made it to the semi-final of the Sydney Metro Women's Rugby League Division 1 and were also champions at the Koori Knockout, winning the women's competition. I congratulate all of the players, team officials, volunteers and supporters who have been part of a great year.

TRIBUTE TO DILIP CHOPRA

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (17:08): Today I pay tribute to a remarkable man, the late Dilip Chopra. Dilip was a friend of mine whose dedication to politics led him to becoming heavily involved in the New South Wales Liberal Party and in 2008 to being the first Indian councillor in the Hornsby shire. Dilip was born on 25 September 1942 in Delhi, India. Growing up in Allahabad, he completed a Masters in History at the University of Allahabad before assuming a position as a certified gemologist in the family business. Dilip arrived in Australia in 1988 as a diamond merchant along with his children Vikram and Sonal, and his wife, the late Mrs Asha Chopra, where he became an integral part of the Australian-Indian dialogue in Hornsby. In 2008 Dilip was elected to Hornsby Shire Council. He also held many significant positions within the community, including Vice President of the United Indian Association, and executive member and founder of the Indian Seniors Group of Hornsby. Dilip passed on 20 October 2016 after a long battle with cancer. I pay tribute to his incredible legacy in the Hornsby community and thank him for his remarkable service and friendship.

EMBROIDERERS' GUILD NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (17:09): I take this opportunity to congratulate the Embroiderers' Guild New South Wales on its fine work. I recently visited its headquarters in Concord West with Deputy Premier Troy Grant, who announced an injection of funding for the group of \$177,298. This will be used to fit out the interior of the new headquarters in Concord. The fit-out will include an exhibition space, teaching space, archive storage and community meeting place. The guild members worked tirelessly to obtain this funding and I congratulate them on their efforts.

*Private Members' Statements***CENTRAL COAST COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE**

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:10): The Central Coast Community Legal Centre has operated for more than 20 years in my electorate of Wyong on the Central Coast. There are vulnerable people across the length and breadth of this country. The most vulnerable members of our community are even more vulnerable when they interact with the legal system. In the noble pursuit of alleviating this grand injustice, community legal centres across the country provide free legal advice to clients who would otherwise be unable to access the legal system. The work of community legal centres such as the one in my electorate is at the heart of Australia's aspiration to be a fair society, where a person's ability to access justice is not solely defined by their means. Volunteers staff the Central Coast Community Legal Centre because they understand that it is important to devote some professional skills to help people who have found themselves in circumstances where they are unable to help themselves.

The Central Coast is a big place geographically, with limited public transport. It can be difficult for people who do not drive to get around. The community legal centre recognises this and operates regularly out of places across the coast, such as the Coast Shelter in Gosford and the Toukley Neighbourhood Centre. The centre prioritises helping those who face the most disadvantages. In 2015 some 72 per cent of its clients were living below the poverty line. For people in this financial situation there is no alternative; they simply cannot afford any kind of legal advice or representation. In 2015 the centre helped 5,794 Central Coast residents with free legal assistance. Of these cases, the largest proportion was family law problems, including child contact orders and domestic violence orders. While this invaluable work is appreciated immensely by those who access it, and by the community at large, the centre still had to turn away 1,714 people—81 per cent of whom were turned away because the centre did not have the capacity to help them. This is simply not good enough.

Australians live in a country that prides itself on equal access to institutions and on giving everyone a fair go. Too often this doctrine and self-belief can blind us to the injustices that surround us. How many of the people who were turned away were victims of domestic violence? How many were suffering insurmountable debt? How many people had to face court without someone by their side, equipped with the tools to represent them? The Central Coast is a beautiful place to live, but it is not all beaches and great weather. There are areas on the Central Coast in my electorate where intergenerational and situational disadvantage leaves many people living lives that few of us could truly pretend to envisage. It is to our collective shame that in a country as wealthy and fair minded as ours people, not just on the Central Coast but also across the State and our country, are unable to access even the most basic, equalising institution of free legal help.

Community legal centres are funded through Legal Aid NSW via a program called the Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program and also through the Federal Government via the Commonwealth Legal Services Programme. Despite indisputable evidence that the centres across Australia provide value for money and a return to the community of about \$18 for every dollar spent, the Turnbull Government has persisted with another ideologically driven policy, and has cut funding to these vital centres by 30 per cent. This has further limited what community legal centres can reasonably do. Thankfully for the communities they serve, community legal centres have found ways to cope. Despite its need for more funding and resources, the Central Coast Community Legal Centre works to use cost-effective means of helping more people each year. In 2015 alone, it ran 22 free legal education sessions. This allowed the centre to help 360 community workers learn basic legal information about issues they face daily, such as family violence, homelessness and tenancy problems.

It is innovative and cost-effective programs like this that allow community legal centres to weather some of the consequences of the Turnbull Government's heartless cuts to funding. But, despite their resilience, nothing can make up for the need for more resources to help these equalisers in our society do their work and assist those they currently turn away. I hope in the not too distant future the State and Federal governments will recognise the value that legal centres provide and not simply how much they cost to run. I again congratulate the Central Coast Community Legal Centre on providing this service for the past 20 years. As the member for Wyong, I will continue to fight and advocate for the work it does. Last week I had the privilege of opening the new volunteer centre, which is fully equipped with computers. Volunteer solicitors can now help people either via telephone or in face- to-face interviews. It also has very good Aboriginal outreach. I commend the centre for its work across the Central Coast.

ST GEORGES BASIN PUBLIC SCHOOL SECURITY FENCE

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (17:15): On 11 October 2016 the Minister for Education wrote to me to advise that St Georges Basin Public School, under the Baird-Grant Government's 2016-17 Security Initiatives Program, will have a security fence installed around its perimeter. I will inform the House why that is such good news. St Georges Basin Public School is a fairly small primary school of 420 children, from

kindergarten to year 6, located in beautiful Basin View in my electorate of South Coast. The campaign for a security fence began five years ago as a result of continued and persistent damage and vandalism to the school. One of the worst incidents was the arson attack that occurred in October 2012. Four classrooms burnt down, destroying the children's personal belongings and schoolwork, teachers' resources and equipment such as computers and smart boards. Students were displaced and forced to take their lessons in the school hall, which had been transformed into several makeshift classrooms.

The school is particularly vulnerable to acts of vandalism, with trespassers gaining access through surrounding bushland and properties without being seen. The break-ins have reached alarming numbers, with the school suffering property damage, theft and misuse. Often the students would return to school to find expletives and graffiti drawn on the buildings; the pipes to bubblers kicked in, leading to localised flooding; smashed windows and lights and broken screens; bikes stolen; the flagpole rope cut; gates pulled off their hinges; additional fire damage; alcohol bottles, cigarettes and condoms left on site; the cafeteria broken into; the sports shed broken into; guttering pipe torn off buildings; a picnic table put on the roof and then later stolen; and, incredibly, many more incidents. Further encounters with abusive trespassers walking through the grounds during the day had left the teachers and students feeling unsafe and demoralised about their beautiful little school.

In June of last year the St Georges Basin Public School suffered another particularly devastating incident when two teenagers broke in through a window, vandalising eight classrooms. Floors, computers and interactive whiteboards were damaged and covered in paint and glue, tables and chairs were upturned, and fire extinguishers were thrown across the sports field. In total, the damage bill amounted to \$50,000. Again, 120 students were displaced and forced to have their lessons in the school hall, while teachers and parents had to clean the vandalised rooms. However, the school is very fortunate to be supported by a wonderfully tight-knit community and I attend fundraisers with the parents and citizens association.

Following each major incident the community has united to fundraise for the cost of repairs, new materials and new equipment. The need for constant repairs has made raising funds for the security fence without government support incredibly difficult because such fences are extremely expensive. Understandably, the morale of the students, teachers and parents has been affected considerably over a long period. I have received numerous letters, in addition to a petition, seeking financial support to have the fence installed. One of my constituents wrote to me saying:

... each time they hear of incidents of destruction, theft or vandalism at St Georges Basin Public School it affects their ability to feel safe and at ease in their school environment. Even last week during school holidays, my son asked if we could drive past the school 'to make sure it was ok'." The Department of Education's Safety and Security Directorate has assessed and assisted the school several times but, despite my lobbying and meeting with Ministers, it seemed as though it would never happen. It gave advice on strategies to reduce vandalism. It also increased security patrols, but I always argued that security patrols cost a lot of money and that we should consider the final solution: a security fence. Some school fences are incredibly unattractive structures around schools' perimeters, but in this case—because the school is surrounded on most sides by bushland—a fence is essential. I absolutely and completely supported installation of the fence and found that it would make a huge difference to the school, the community and to morale if we could possibly do it.

I understand that there are budgets and that perhaps other schools throughout the State have greater priority than does the St Georges Basin Public School, but as far as I am concerned, as the member for South Coast, that school was my priority. When the Minister wrote to me, it was a huge surprise that came out of the blue and I was delighted. I thank the president of the parents and citizens association, Tracey Mandavy, who ran a fantastic campaign and came to see me on many occasions; a 2ST radio presenter, Chris Firth, who really got involved even though he does not necessarily have any ties to the school and who spoke very passionately many times on the radio about the cause; and the school's principal, Kathy Rembisz. I also thank the Minister for Education, who put up with me hassling him in the corridors and inviting him into the Speaker's office on other pretexts. Finally, I got my way. The school will get its fence. The scope of works is underway. Well done to the St Georges Basin Public School and the school community.

WINGHAM CENTRAL PARK EXERCISE EQUIPMENT

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:20): I seek the support of Parliament and the Government to obtain funding for the historical town of Wingham in my electorate of Myall Lakes. Wingham is a fantastic historical town that has many of its original buildings still in place. It is famous not only for its history but also for Bent On Food, which this year won tourism and small business awards. Wingham is in the centre of the Manning Valley, which is famous for being the area with the highest concentration of dairy farms in New South Wales and produces one-third of New South Wales' fresh milk. Wingham needs \$30,000 from the Government.

Wingham is an old-fashioned town with Central Park situated in the middle of its central business district [CBD]. Central Park, which is a truly important civic feature of Wingham, is where cricket is played. A long time ago rugby union was played in Central Park and that was where a representative player was injured. As a result

of that, people decided to play rugby league. The Wingham community wants to install adult exercise equipment in Central Park and needs \$30,000. I call on the Premier and Ministers to find \$30,000 so that this initiative can provide improved health and fitness to the local community. The idea is supported by research undertaken by the Wingham community and by the Wingham Rotary Club, which is very active and does good things for the community.

The idea also has been endorsed by the Wingham Chamber of Commerce, the Wingham Advancement Group and local businesses that are near Central Park. Research has shown that exercise equipment for adults is very important and that we must increase our efforts in health and fitness to avoid obesity. Many other places in New South Wales have walking trails and adult exercise equipment, and Wingham needs and wants that type of exercise equipment. The initiative aims to improve the general health and fitness of members of the Wingham community and complement already-existing facilities for community members and visitors within the focal point of the town. Businesses and individuals in Wingham have joined with the Rotary Club to donate time, funds and expertise to offset the funding that is required to complete the project.

The facility has been modelled on the very successful exercise station that already operates in Taree. The Taree Rotary Club obtained funding and the exercise station is located near the basketball stadium that is adjacent to the Taree recreation grounds and the Criterion pushbike track. The Wingham Rotary Club suggests that the equipment will benefit people of all ages in the community and add to tourist attractions located near Central Park, such as the museum, historical buildings, cafes and accommodation. Wingham Brush is famous for its bat colony in the fig trees by the river. All those tourist attractions are within a three-kilometre walk of the Wingham CBD. The project can be extended in the future to become part of the fitness track and historical walk around the township. The Wingham community calls on the Government to support that project.

I have spoken to the Rotary Club and it is now starting a petition to support me in obtaining the funds through the New South Wales Parliament. The one thing I know about this Government is that it listens—it listens to the needs of the people. Many times this Government has taken a position, listened to the community and maybe changed its position somewhat, because we are a government that cares about communities and listens to communities. Here is a project that is supported by all of Wingham and all of the Manning Valley. Hopefully, through advocacy here in the Chamber and with the petition signed by the community, we will be able to get the funding that is needed to get this very worthwhile project off the ground and up and running.

NEWCASTLE SPORTING EVENTS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (17:25): Today I call for Football Federation Australia to grant Newcastle the rights to host the Socceroos' World Cup qualifier match against Thailand in September 2017. Earlier this year Luke Foley and I called for Football Federation Australia to grant Newcastle the rights to host an upcoming Socceroos World Cup qualifier match in April 2017. With the Premier's alleged support, even though no stakeholders in Newcastle that I know of were approached or talked to, this bid was unsuccessful. Since then it has become apparent that the game in the September 2017 World Cup qualifying schedule has no set venue. I now propose that Newcastle should host the Thailand game in September 2017.

Last time we had the Opposition Leader's support, the Football Federation chief executive officer David Gallop's support and, allegedly, the Premier's support. Let us do this again, but let us do it better. I know that the Opposition Leader has already voiced his support for the next bid. Putting on big sporting events in Newcastle is something that the city is well experienced and versed in. In 2012, 2014 and 2015, Newcastle City Council received the "Recognizing the best in community leadership and festival and event partnerships around the world" award by the International Festival Events Association, and was also named as one of the top 10 cities in the world by *Lonely Planet* in 2011. Recently, the V8 Supercars Championship team recognised this when they selected Newcastle to host the new season finals in 2017. Newcastle will now replace the Homebush, Sydney, event and will host the event each year for five years. It is believed that Newcastle beat Wollongong and Gosford for the race, and that the spectacular views of Newcastle are what attracted the organisers to the city. The harbour, beaches, hills and parklands are all features that overshadowed the other contenders.

The landscape of Newcastle will now be broadcast across national and international screens for V8 lovers. I understand that the V8 Supercars Championship organisers visited Newcastle during this year's Newcastle City SuperMoto, a round of the FIM-ASIA SuperMoto Championship. The contract for this event is for the next five years. The organisers were so impressed with the ease of staging the event in terms of crowd management, features of the city and experience in these events, that it became clear that the city would be able to absorb this event into its tourism calendar with no issues.

I have no doubt that Newcastle hosting the Asian Cup's semifinal between Australia and Japan last year greatly added to the organisers' attraction to our city. The game quickly sold out and the city was able to handle the crowds that came with ease. We even had viewing outposts around the city for those who could not get into

the match. We hosted teams, crews and fans from Japan, Palestine, Oman, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Iraq. These are among the past, present and future sporting events that Newcastle has hosted and will be hosting. Major sporting organisations are choosing Newcastle as a destination for their events. Newcastle has the facilities and the backing of a large tourism and hospitality sector, and the local government areas are all experienced in and capable of handling large tourist numbers. So why hold back in offering one more event to the State's second biggest city? We have the capacity to take the overflow from Sydney and the interest from locals and tourists alike.

Earlier this year Premier Baird said he strongly supported my push for more international football matches in Newcastle. I call on the Premier to prove his words are more than hollow promises by delivering next September's Socceroos versus Thailand game to the Hunter. I do not understand why the Premier chose not to back Newcastle for the game against UAE, but I urge him to step up this time and back Newcastle for the game against Thailand. Newcastle is more than ready; it is already a destination for international sports. It is time the Premier realised that and supported our call. Let us get a World Cup qualifier to Newcastle in 2017.

BATHURST ELECTORATE SCHOOL FUNDING

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Local Government) (17:29): It gives me pleasure to speak about additional needs-based funding for schools in the Bathurst electorate from 2017. I congratulate the Minister for Education, Adrian Piccoli, on his strong advocacy for investing more resources in public schools across New South Wales. The Minister was at the forefront of New South Wales becoming the first State to sign up for the Gonski reforms. This Government is making record investment in our schools and is delivering on its commitment to provide additional funding for schools based on specific student needs. As a former school teacher, I appreciate the benefits of this funding for schools in this great State. I have spoken to teachers, parents and students in schools in my electorate and I have heard about the additional teachers being employed and the resources to help students to get the most of their learning opportunities. I note that the funding moves with students who change schools, which is of great benefit to schools in regional areas.

These extra resources go directly to our schools, allowing principals to better meet the unique needs of their students and school communities. As I said, the funding will increase employment opportunities in my electorate, where schools will employ additional teachers with the expertise to assist students who need extra support in learning areas like literacy and numeracy. In New South Wales public schools, needs-based funding is distributed under the Resource Allocation Model, which uses information about student needs to deliver resources where they are needed most, consistent with the Gonski recommendations. Schools across the Bathurst electorate will share a total of \$13,101,722 in funding from this Government, an increase of just under \$3.5 million provided in 2016. I will list the significant investment being made in public schools in my electorate that will share this funding and I will give the funding commitment for each individual school.

A total of almost \$5.7 million will be distributed to schools in the Bathurst electorate. These schools and their allocated funding are: Denison College Kelso \$1,038,357; Kelso Public School \$920,254; Denison College Bathurst \$881,023; West Bathurst Public School \$746,361; Bathurst Public School \$536,654; South Bathurst Public School \$345,502; Eglinton Public School \$326,325; Raglan Public School \$259,094; Carenne Public School \$250,949; Perthville Public School \$76,161; Wattle Flat Public School \$63,834; Meadow Flat Public School \$56,569; Sofala Public School \$50,196; Rockley Public School \$44,462; O'Connell Public School \$41,639; Hill End Public School \$33,622; and Trunkey Public School \$28,754.

Schools in the Lithgow area of my electorate will also benefit from the additional funding, with almost \$4 million to be distributed. These schools are: Lithgow High School \$1,306,272; Lithgow Public School \$755,549; Coerwull Public School \$682,321; Portland Central School \$542,404; Wallerawang Public School \$467,007; Zig Zag Public School \$168,386; Cullen Bullen Public School \$106,005; Glen Alice Public School \$39,140; and Capertee Public School \$29,567.

An extra \$1 million is being distributed to schools in the Blayney area: Blayney High School \$543,711; Blayney Public School \$361,733; Millthorpe Public School \$174,314; Lyndhurst Public School \$99,134; Neville Public School \$38,094; Mandurama Public School \$29,847; and Carcoar Public School \$29,185. In the Oberon area just under \$1 million is being distributed to: Oberon Public School \$490,826; Oberon High School \$416,201; and Black Springs Public School \$30,396. In the Kandos-Rylstone area just over \$1 million will be distributed to: Kandos High School \$426,330; Kandos Public School \$418,120; Rylstone Public School \$117,799; and Ilford Public School \$50,626. The New South Wales Government is making a significant investment in our schools, which will improve educational opportunities for students across this State.

TRIBUTE TO CARMELO "SAM" FAILLA

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (17:34): I often use my private members' statement to talk about the great facilities and projects being delivered by this Government in my electorate. Today I take the opportunity to pay respect to someone who was the heart and soul of our area, Mr Carmelo Salvatore Failla, known as Sam to many of the locals in the Drummoyne area. Sam was born in Syracuse, Sicily, Italy, on 22 June 1934. I attended his funeral last Tuesday. He was a wonderful father, a great husband and a very good grandfather to his 10 grandchildren. His children, Eddy, Frank, Marisa and Silvana, were there together with their respective spouses. It was a moving ceremony.

Sam was a great local identity who loved his fishing. I would often bump into him at the boat ramp or on the water. If there were fish in the Parramatta River, you could guarantee that Sam would be there catching them. He loved catching big jewfish and, as my father was a squid fisherman, he would often ask my father for fresh squid. Sam loved to use the squid as bait for jewfish. Sam became an icon in the local area. For a number of years he served diligently as a board member at Canada Bay Club, a great local club in my electorate.

After Sam came to Australia, for a number of years he stayed with his sister in Sydney until he was able to buy his first place in Dulwich Hill. He then moved to the inner west of Sydney to Chiswick, which is in my area, where I got to know him well. Sam first worked as a carpenter and then partnered with a real estate agent to open a real estate agency in the inner west. I had the pleasure of working for many years with his son Eddy in Drummoyne as a real estate agent. To the end, Sam was happy and chirpy. One day he rang me from his nursing home, Scalabrini Village in Drummoyne. He said, "John, there is a property on Victoria Road that we might be able to do something with. I could be interested in it." Right to the end he was energetic and had a spark for life.

Sam was a great person. His family had the misfortune of losing Sam's wife about two years ago and now the family has Sam's death to deal with. He set a good example to his family. It was nice to see his grandchildren, some of whom are now teenagers. I know that Sam has left an impact on the lives of his grandchildren. That is something they will never lose. Apart from the attributes I have just mentioned, Sam will be remembered as a great father and a very effective grandfather. His family always brought a smile to his face. A video was shown during the service and it was clear that the family members cherished family get-togethers. Not only will Sam be missed by his family, children and grandchildren but he will be sorely missed by the community. All Hallows church in Five Dock reached capacity for Sam's funeral. It was a tribute to a wonderful person who had an impact on the lives of many people in the Drummoyne electorate. On behalf of our community I give our respect to Sam. He and his family are in our prayers at this time.

MR BRIAN WAXHAM

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:39): I advise the House of the unsatisfactory treatment provided by Government to Brian Waxham, a resident of the Liverpool area. Mr Waxham was employed for many years by Public Works in his trade of carpenter. For a number of years until the termination of his employment, he performed work for the Heritage Services Group. He worked exclusively for Heritage Services during his time, although he was technically, in a bureaucratic sense, in the Construction Services Group [CSG]. In November 2015 the Government made a decision to sell and/or wind down the Construction Services Group. The sale was completed on 1 August 2016. The Heritage Services Group was, however, continuing as part of a government department. Mr Waxham sought to continue to be employed and to be part of the Heritage Services Group, which is where he had been working for years. He and others were repeatedly told that there would be no place for carpenters in the Heritage Services Group and he would not be able to continue to work with or be employed by it.

This being the emphatic advice he received, he had little option. Mr Waxham's position was declared excess and he accepted voluntary redundancy on 26 July this year in accordance with the policy for managing excess employees. As I said, he had little choice: There were to be no carpenters in the ongoing Heritage Services Group and this meant he was to be made redundant on 25 August of this year. It was thus with a degree of shock and surprise, to put it politely, that he found out just before he became redundant that there would indeed be carpenter positions within the ongoing Heritage Services. I have seen and have a copy of the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation document dated 24 August entitled "Heritage store works and heritage asset and advisory handout". Page 6 of that document provides details of the heritage store works, roofing, planning and scaffolding unit that clearly provides positions for team leader carpenter, a carpenter and an apprentice carpenter. The first and the third of those positions were still unfilled as at the date of that document.

There are some obvious issues here. Why is Public Works so willingly throwing away a long-term and valued employee? It would seem logical and more efficient for him to be retained rather than discarded. In addition to that, why were he and others consistently told there would be no place for carpenters in the new structure when there are very clearly several positions? This seems clearly inconsistent with the expressed position of Public

Works. Both the NSW Public Works transitional program, dated 5 November 2015, and the final NSW Public Works restructure management plan, dated 28 June 2016, said this: "Placement of people is a high priority and as part of the wind-down we will also look for opportunity to redeploy staff into other roles within NSW Public Works asset advisory functions, DFSI and across other agencies."

In the case of Mr Waxham, that has clearly not been adhered to. It is also frankly unbelievable that with the new structure, including the positions for carpenters, being announced on 24 August, no-one in Public Works knew as of 26 July that they would need carpenters. Despite the existence of these positions, Mr Waxham was given no chance to have one of them. This is especially galling when others from CSG were given the opportunity to move into new roles in Heritage Services. Mr Waxham was not given the full information he needed to make an informed choice. In the absence of this information he had no choice but to take redundancy. He was told there were no carpentry jobs in Public Works, and he knew if he chose redeployment there was very little prospect of obtaining a trade position in any other government department. If he had rejected redundancy and was not redeployed, he would have been retrenched with a much lower benefit. He had no choice. This process has been completely unfair for Mr Waxham. A fair result would see his redundancy rescinded and would see him employed in his trade in Heritage Services. That is what should happen.

SWANSEA ELECTORATE SERVICES

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:42): If there is a better example of the Liberal-Nationals Government's destruction of front-line government services and ideologically driven privatisation than what is occurring in the Swansea electorate, I would be very surprised. It would appear that nothing is to be spared by this Government, which is on a destructive path of choosing to play politics over providing fair and equitable access to services that are essential to my community. It all started with the Minister for Finance, Services and Property's decision to shut the Belmont Motor Registry. Despite its being pointed out that those on restricted licences cannot legally drive to Warners Bay to have their licences renewed there, and despite its being pointed out that the quickest round trip on a bus between Swansea and Warners Bay is two hours and four minutes, the Minister still went ahead and closed down the motor registry.

Even when I presented more than 11,000 signatures against the closure, the Minister refused to listen and instead actually mocked the 11,000 people who signed the petition against the closure of the motor registry by describing it as a "small-minded, backward service" and refusing to provide any replacement or easily accessible service. How insulting that was to the people of the Swansea electorate who would like to transact their government business face to face instead of online, over the phone or more than two hours away from their homes?

When it comes to ideological destruction of cultural institutions in this State, it could not get much worse than this Government's attacks on our TAFE. My community is concerned about the future of Belmont TAFE. Despite my constant questions to the Minister for Skills he refuses to rule out the sale of Belmont TAFE campus. In September 2015, the *Sydney Morning Herald* revealed that Belmont Campus was earmarked as one of the 27 TAFE sites to be sold to raise \$63 million to fund a shortfall in the information technology budget. The document suggested selling off the west side of Belmont TAFE at Lake Macquarie for \$2.96 million and replacing classes with a limited pop-up service in a leased building.

During the most recent round of budget estimates the Minister had the opportunity to provide my community with some certainty as to the fate of the Belmont campus, but just as he did the year before, the Minister refused to rule out selling the campus. If Belmont is sold off there will be no face-to-face TAFE courses in East Lake Macquarie, which will be deeply unfair for the people of the Swansea electorate. I will stand with them. Is there anything this Government will not privatise? Members of the House will recall that the Minister for Transport recently announced that the entire Hunter public transport network would be privatised.

The Minister seems determined to continue with this Government's agenda to let the private sector rip when it comes to the Hunter's transport. That includes the bus services the Swansea electorate relies on. The Minister actually has no idea how it is all going to work. It simply appears to be privatisation for privatisation's sake. It is just blatant small government ideology. When I sought clarification about job security and levels of service the Government refused to answer any of my questions. The Government has been unable to provide certainty for local transport workers about job security. It has been unable to guarantee that bus routes, including those that service Swansea, will be retained under the new private regime.

It now seems that even our sport and recreation camps are set to be privatised. Point Wolstoncroft Sport and Recreation Centre is an institution in my electorate. Generations, including me, have fantastic childhood memories of time spent at Point Wolstoncroft. It costs less than \$14 per child to operate our sport and recreation camps. Despite this, the Baird Government is happy to abandon kids from the Central Coast, Lake Macquarie and Newcastle. This decision to sell off our sport and recreation camps will severely limit access for schools,

community groups, charities and vulnerable people. It will impact the ability of the camp to run specialised services for under-represented groups. It is an absolute disgrace.

Members cannot forget that the jewel in this Government's crown of privatisation is Wyong Hospital. It is obvious that the people of the Central Coast and the Swansea electorate, represented by those in the gallery today, are completely opposed to the Government's privatising Wyong Hospital. The people of the Central Coast are angry. They have every right to feel angry about this appalling decision. Wyong Hospital was built by the community for the community and the community deserve to have its hospital kept in public hands.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (17:47): Listening to the member for Swansea this afternoon one would think that Labor has never been involved in privatisation. Who wrote the playbook on privatisations? The Labor Party. Labor privatised the lotteries and could not wait to sell the State's electricity generators—so much so they shut down the Parliament, prorogued it and flogged off the generators in the dead of the night. I refuse to be lectured by the member for Swansea about privatisation, because Labor wrote the playbook on it. I agree with the member for Swansea's position on the delivery of services and that is why the Government is acting. It should not matter who is delivering the service as long as it is delivered well and improves the quality of life for residents across the State. That is exactly what happens. St Vincent's Hospital is a perfect example of a public-private partnership that is delivering services. The Government will continue to support an agenda that delivers for communities, not unions.

GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (17:49): I draw to the attention of the House concerns put to me by my constituents in Hawkesbury about the delivery of infrastructure and important services. Thanks to the sound financial management of the Baird-Grant Government, it is fortunate to now be in a position to provide the investments in infrastructure and services that the Hawkesbury needs. Over the past few years, the Government has delivered, or it is in the process of delivering, extensive infrastructure to bust congestion, such as the new Windsor Bridge; the Pitt Town bypass and further upgrades to Old Northern Road; a new agricultural school at Richmond, which will be the largest in the Southern Hemisphere; the biggest ever financial investment in Hawkesbury schools; a \$3 million tourism investment, the largest funding boost for tourism in Hawkesbury's history; the next generation of healthcare services with a new hospital to be built at Rouse Hill; better protection for our community from floods by providing funds to raise the Warragamba Dam wall after decades of procrastination; bringing all government services under the one roof with a new Service NSW centre in Richmond; and protecting our natural environment with a new recycling centre as well as a state-of-the-art fire station, both constructed at South Windsor. These are all signs of a government that delivers.

The Government can do this because it has its finances right. That is something that the Labor Party has never figured out. If we have more money coming out of our family bank account than we have going in, we will struggle to provide for our family. The Labor Party has not worked out this foundational principle of economics. As a result, it has struggled to provide for our State and for our nation. Members opposite are like a bunch of recalcitrant teenagers who have stolen the family credit card to rack up giant bills they have no intention of paying—it is about all care and no responsibility. We cannot build anything if we have no money; we cannot fix anything if we cannot afford to pay for it; and we cannot plan for the future when we are buried under debt and deficit. We must get the fundamentals right first.

Members of the Labor Party personify economic incompetence. Wherever they go, they leave a mess. At the Federal level, John Howard paid off nearly \$100 billion of the Labor Government's debt and left the budget with a \$20 billion surplus. The Labor Government then delivered six budget deficits in a row, leaving an economy in ruins, a budget in the red, and debt back on the books. Our families, communities and businesses are still dealing with this painful legacy. It is no different at the State level. The outgoing Labor Government left behind another budget in the red—we were steeped in debt and there was an infrastructure backlog worth tens of billions of dollars.

Once again, a Coalition government has spent years cleaning up the mess, paying off the debt, and getting spending under control. This Government is doing the hard work so that it can provide for the community. It is important to know that the Labor Party has opposed every move that the Government has made to get things back under control, from spending restraint to public sector wage discipline and new funding models such as the lease of the poles and wires. These are not easy decisions; these are tough calls that allow the Government to make the right investments. Because they are tough decisions, it is very easy for the Labor Party to play the populist card. However, that is not leadership.

I note that some members of the Labor Party, like the Federal member for Macquarie, Susan Templeman, have been criticising the New South Wales Government for not spending enough on infrastructure and services.

She says that the Government should be spending more on schools and immediately building a third crossing over the Hawkesbury River. What she does not say is how she or her party would fund the delivery of those outcomes. In the Labor Party's world how something is funded does not seem to matter. Like every other member of the Labor Party, she has never done the hard work of implementing tough fiscal reform. She is the Lazy Susan of Australian politics. She is all spin and no responsibility. She is going around in circles and never getting anything done.

Like every other member of the Labor Party, Susan Empleman promises the world but will deliver nothing. The truth is that members of the Labor Party are not interested in problems such as congestion, infrastructure or services. They are preoccupied with their pet ideological causes and want to use taxpayers' money to fund them. We have had decades of inaction in the Hawkesbury under Labor governments that have ignored the community and failed to deliver what we need. In contrast, Liberal-Nationals governments, acting in a financially responsible way, do the hard yards of delivering infrastructure and services to ensure that Hawkesbury and all of our communities are better off.

CAMDEN ELECTORATE MELBOURNE CUP FUNCTION

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (17:54): I recently attended a Melbourne Cup function that was held to raise funds for two very deserving local community groups, Disability Macarthur and the Rotary Club of Camden. Disability Macarthur has been providing services to the community of Macarthur for the past 30 years. With 12 programs provided across five centres, the organisation has become a vital resource for many families. Its focus is not just therapeutic; clients are given the opportunity to become confident, experience new things, increase their independence and learn life skills. Disability Macarthur certainly shows its clients that with assistance and guidance they can achieve the quality of life that we all take for granted. The Rotary Club of Camden is an integral part of the Camden community. It recently held its annual Relay For Life event, which was again an outstanding success. President Matt Playford is supported by a very hardworking board that continues to receive unwavering support from the community.

The Melbourne Cup function was held at Club Menangle, the home of harness racing. On 28 October a memorial service was held at the club to commemorate the battle of Beersheba, which took place on that day in 1917. Menangle Park was used as a training ground for the Light Horsemen. Another Camden landmark with a historical connection to the Melbourne Cup is the famous "Camelot" estate at Kirkham, which has been used as a location for television shows, such as *A Place to Call Home*, and the Baz Luhrmann film *Australia*. It was built in 1888, and folklore has it that the house was financed by owner James White's horse Chester winning the Melbourne Cup in 1877. Chester is buried across the road from where I live, in the Sutton property on Kirkham Lane.

This year's Melbourne Cup function was organised by local Camden businesswoman and great friend Marina Mikulic of Symphony's on Argyle; Sarah von Wartburg of Back Galley Cafe, one of my favourite hang-outs; and my great mate Steve Wisbey of Club Menangle. Like most other Melbourne Cup functions, this was about having fun while raising funds for two local charities. As always, without very supportive sponsors the event would not have been possible. My heartfelt thanks go to gold sponsors Back Galley Cafe and Family Focus Legal. I also thank silver sponsors, SkinNotion Laser and Vein Clinic and BusySlim, and bronze sponsors, Coutts Solicitors and Cadillac Heaven. I thank all the other businesses that contributed to making the day so enjoyable: Club Menangle, Blooms the Chemist, Sarah Jay and Co, Lexus of Macarthur, Clintons Toyota, Tony Wolf and Sons, Vintage FM, Two Rocks Marketing and Communications, Upstairs at Fred's, MS Menswear, Narellan Hypoxi, Marsdens Law Group, Smarter Macarthur, Fusion Shutters and Blinds, A Day on the Water, Inner Spiratio, Nutrimetics, CK Recruitment and Mac DJ's Entertainment.

The fashion on the field award was presented by Symphony's on Argyle, Camden, and MS Menswear, Narellan. The ladies looked resplendent and the men looked dashing. I look forward to next year's event, which I think will be the third. I am sure it will be another outstanding success. I congratulate Marina, Sarah, Steve and everybody who contributed to the fantastic event. It was a sell-out, raising much-needed funds for two outstanding charities in my community, Disability Macarthur and the Rotary Club of Camden. It was a great event and a wonderful day. I thank everybody involved for their efforts. Well done on a great success. I look forward to supporting the event again next year.

CABRAMATTA HIGH SCHOOL PEACE DAY

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (17:59): On 7 November 2016 I attended the annual Cabramatta High School Peace Day celebrations. It is an event that I have attended for more than a decade as a proud local member and before that as a proud mayor. I take this opportunity to inform the House and my parliamentary colleagues of the fantastic work of Cabramatta High School staff and students. Every year as Peace Day approaches a committee consisting of students and staff begins planning for the day. It is an opportunity to raise

awareness of the issues brought forward by that year's winner of the Sydney Peace Prize. The winner of the 2016 Sydney Peace Prize is Naomi Klein, a Canadian author, social activist and filmmaker. Ms Klein is best known as the author of the books *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*; *The Shock Doctrine*; and *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate*, a *New York Times* bestseller; as well as the documentary film *The Take*, which portrays the occupied factories of Argentina. She is frequently found on lists of the world's most influential thinkers and is on the board of the climate activist group 350.org.

Cabramatta High School Peace Day is also an opportunity for the students to showcase and celebrate their cultural diversity. At the beginning of our procession into the school hall, three Chinese lions accompanied us. Along the pathway that leads to the hall were at least 40 students in the traditional clothing of their culture. It was a real celebration of multiculturalism. We were treated to a dance performance from students of Pacific Islander background, an apparent crowd favourite as the school audience cheered them on deafeningly. In previous years there have been different cultures on show, such as African dances performed by the female students accompanied by African drums played by the boys. This year there was also a spoken word/drama performance, which students and teachers scripted themselves, and a choir performance of *Love Song to the Earth*, in keeping with the theme of the importance of environmentalism and sustainability.

I congratulate Cabramatta High School's principal, Beth Godwin, who is always at the forefront of brilliant ideas and initiatives in the public education sector. She is an educator who sees the broader picture who instils in her staff and students the importance of not only academic work but all-round excellence. I also acknowledge the huge contributions of Cabramatta High School's school captains and student representative council, the environmental club, the media team, the support unit and the intensive English centre for recently arrived students. I thank all the teachers who take such pride in educating our area's future leaders as well as the administration and school support staff who keep the school running professionally every day. Finally to the students of Cabramatta High School, congratulations on another successful Peace Day. Do not forget the lessons that you learn from your teachers. Do not forget the lessons you learn from each other. Respect the environment and let it thrive for future generations.

KIAMA COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AWARDS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:02): On Thursday 27 October I was extremely pleased to host the 2016 Kiama Community Recognition Awards in front of 300 locals at the Pavilion Kiama with special guest the Hon. John Ajaka, MLC, Minister with responsibility for volunteering. This year we received 52 nominations and each of them is an outstanding credit to our local community, which is renowned for its natural beauty. But what I love most about our region is its people. Our region is truly blessed with talented and passionate local people. Volunteers do not seek recognition, but they deserve every ounce of commendation for their efforts. These awards are our community's opportunity to pay tribute to the many deserving and dedicated people from throughout the Kiama electorate.

My sincere thanks to my parliamentary colleague and good friend Minister Ajaka for his address; to the mayor of Kiama, Mark Honey, for his civic welcome; to the Kiama High School band—led by its coordinator, Louise Luke—who performed the Australian national anthem; and to my friend Aboriginal elder Aunty Joyce Donovan from Gerringong, who performed the welcome to country. I also thank all of the local residents from across the Kiama electorate who attended this wonderful community celebration to join with their families and friends in this recognition.

The nominees and winners in the various categories included that of outstanding local volunteer. The nominees included Angela Quigley of Kiama Downs; Geoff Board of Minnamurra; Greg Crofts of Kiama; Marie Dalton of Kiama; Roger Tilley of Shoalhaven Heads; Robert Stewart of Shoalhaven Heads; and David O'Meley, Julie Lane, Garry Bailey and Tony Payne from the Illawarra Light Rail Museum. The winner of the Outstanding Local Volunteer Award was Colin Rathbone of Kiama. Colin was recognised for his years of voluntary work assisting a number of organisations including Kiama Red Cross, Kiama Junior Football Club, as president of Kiama District Sports Association, Friends of Blue Haven Aged Care Facility and Friends of Vision Australia. Colin is regarded as the go-to person within these groups and is a shining example of the adage "service above self".

The nominees for the Conservation Champion Award included Bob Gane of Shoalhaven Heads, Peter Brandis of Kangaroo Valley, Jim Anderson of Kangaroo Valley, and Joe Carter of Kiama. Recognised in this category was Berry Landcare, which, with its more than 100 members, is being recognised for its conservation work across 11 sites throughout Berry, with projects such as the Berry Bush Links Program, Plant Local, and seed collection for the landscaping associated with the Berry bypass project.

The nominees in the Outstanding Young Citizen category included Kiama High School Captain Eliza Skorulis of Minnamurra. Acknowledged in this category was Joel Trist of Kiama Downs. In March 2016, Joel helped to save the life of fellow surfer Brett Connellan at Bombo Beach after the then 22-year-old was attacked

by a shark. Joel paddled 50 metres towards Brett, dragged him onto his surfboard and back to shore before tying his leg rope to Mr Connellan's thigh to stop the bleeding, which doctors and paramedics agree helped to save Brett Connellan's life before he underwent emergency surgery at St George Hospital.

The nominees for the Outstanding Small Business Award included Flour, Water, Salt in Kiama, Little Blowhole Art Bar in Kiama, Kiama Country Store in Kiama, Saltwater Cafe in Kiama, and Terragong Country House Bed and Breakfast in Jamberoo. Acknowledged in this category was the Natural Necessity Surf Shop in Gerringong. Kent Ladkin opened the surf shop in Gerringong 40 years ago in 1976. Since then it has become a local icon of our region. This business employs more than 50 people each year and attracts much-needed tourism dollars into our local economy, bringing in many visitors from interstate. Regular 2ST listeners will be familiar with the live surf reports that are broadcast across four radio stations covering the Northern Illawarra down to Eden, which also promote local events.

The nominees for Outstanding Emergency Service Volunteer Award included Con Goik of Foxground. The winner of the category was Kirra Waine of Kiama Downs. Kirra was recognised for her hard work and dedication as a volunteer with the Kiama SES unit for almost seven years. During this time, Kirra has transformed and improved the unit's operational capacity, making the office paperless by instead using iPads in the field to manage job-tasking during major floods and storms. Kirra has been involved in many events including as incident controller during the Kiama tornado and in other parts of the State, including Lismore and the Hunter region. Kirra has also been a key support to the unit's National Rescue Competition Team since 2011.

The nominees for the Junior Sports Award included Jackson Tikkeros of Kiama and Matthew Higham of Mundamia. The winner of this award was Matt Panecasio of Kiama. Matt is 20 years old and has represented New South Wales in indoor cricket with great distinction. Matt was selected in the Australian under 20s team that travelled to Port Macquarie for the prestigious Trans-Tasman match against New Zealand. The Local Sports Award winner was Amanda Reid of Werri Beach. Amanda is a Guring-Gai/Wemba Wemba Aboriginal woman who has achieved outstanding success at Paralympic level in two individual sports. She is in fact Australia's top Indigenous dual Paralympian. The pinnacle of her sporting career so far was winning a silver medal and breaking the Paralympic record in the track time trial 500 metres C1-2-3 Women's event at the Rio Paralympics in 2016. Amanda also mentors younger schoolchildren and became an advocate for victims of race discrimination and inequality. There were many great category winners. I thank all of those who participated in the awards. They all deserve recognition. I commend the Kiama Community Awards to the House.

JOHN FARRELL, MOUNT CARMEL PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (18:07): I bring to the attention of the House the remarkable work of Mr John Farrell, Principal of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Primary School, Waterloo, in my electorate of Heffron. After seven years as principal of Mount Carmel, John is moving on to a new post as principal at St Mary's and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Maroubra beginning next year. I must congratulate those schools, because our loss is their gain. With that in mind, I pay tribute to the incredible service rendered by Mr Farrell over the past seven years.

As I have said previously in this place, Mr Farrell is an inspiration, a well-respected principal and passionate advocate for addressing the needs of his students and his community--needs that he well understands. To truly appreciate his achievements, one must first appreciate the scale of the challenges that he has faced. Mount Carmel is a Catholic Primary School, where 70 per cent of the students are Indigenous and the other 30 per cent are comprised of Greek, Pacific Islander and other diverse migrant backgrounds. The majority of those students live in public housing in Redfern and Waterloo. Children in those environments have grown up seeing and experiencing things that no child should ever see. For some, English is a second language unspoken at home. Many homes have low or very low incomes some children come to school without food in their stomachs. Put simply, those children begin life without the level playing field that so many of us take for granted.

Those difficulties are loosely represented by the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage, which is a number score that outlines a level of disadvantage faced by students at a particular school. An average school is rated 1,000; Mount Carmel scored 814 in the 2015 school year. This disadvantage is not borne out in the results. When compared with other schools, John's students' results in the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy tests continue to exceed expectations and improve year on year. John Farrell, his team of educators and their students have triumphed despite adversity. However, this success is represented by more than numbers in a column or on an opaque graph on a website.

When I visit Mount Carmel school I find a vibrant school full of delightful, talented and engaged children. They are more than educated. They are nourished and inspired by teachers to dream the big dreams that their immediate circumstances would ordinarily make impossible. They have a vibrant arts and music program, which talented young children engage in with passion. Each day, students who may have come to school without

breakfast or lunch are given a free lunch. Each child is offered the sincere opportunity to learn and grow, especially those from the most difficult of backgrounds. When I attend school concerts and speech days, I can see in every face the passion and excitement instilled in them by their teachers and their principal.

It is a deeply moving experience and one that reminds me of the reasons that I became a member of this House—the devotion to a lofty ideal. That ideal is the singular power of education to make and unmake individual circumstance. Education is the great engine of uplift. It is not merely the plaything of the rich and powerful, but an inalienable human right that is the means of improvement for every person. It is this ideal that has been embodied by the service of John Farrell to his community. John is a shining light who has inspired me to take stock again of the power of education to create change. Thank you, John. Your community thanks you and I wish you all the best.

BEROWRA CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (18:11): Today I highlight a school that has been treasured by the Hornsby community for more than 30 years. For a generation, Berowra Christian Community School has been providing first-class education and happy childhood memories to all the students who have passed through its gates. In 1996, Berowra Baptist Church responded to the growing number of Christian parents in the local area who were seeking a primary school that supported the beliefs and values of a Christian education in a safe and nurturing environment. The school's founding principal, Stephen Spies, retired in 2013. He recalls the school's origins, which were mapped out in his lounge room. That meeting in his lounge room saw a few like-minded parents gather to discuss plans to develop a new school to teach traditional Christian values and beliefs. The new school originally attracted some objections in the local Berowra community, but Mr Spies and his hardworking team would not be put off their goal of creating the new school.

The school was born when 34 multi-denominational students were enrolled to be taught in the old hall and demountable classroom. Former member for Hornsby Neil Pickard, MP, marked the historic occasion on 23 March 1986 with an inspiring speech to the new students and assembled guests. The Berowra Christian Community School started to grow quickly and had 50 students enrolled by the end of the first year. Over the years the school has continued to grow and increase in size, with new enrolments and extra teaching places. The classrooms and facilities may have changed, but the school's beliefs and principles have remained the same, with a strong sense of community and local identity. This nurturing and caring environment, set in the quiet bushlands of Berowra, has been a popular choice for so many Berowra families. The school is also a founding member of the Australian Association of Christian Schools, which is an organisation established to provide advice and support to Christians on a national level.

Berowra Christian School is one of Hornsby's great success stories. In 2014 the school was recognised as one of the schools with the most significant academic gains from year 3 to year 5 within the local area, which is a clear indicator of the outstanding focus on academic excellence. Indeed, many parents at the school also comment to me about the incredible happiness and confidence that their children receive in the loving and nurturing environment. I commend the school for the unique relationship that the staff have with the local community. Since my election in 2011, I have met with a number of families who have children enrolled at the school. Those parents tell me time and again about the wonderful education on offer at Berowra Christian Community School and the strong sense of community that each family feels.

The school is well served by a very proactive parents and friends committee that helps raise money for local charities and additional teaching resources. President Lys Carugan and committee members such as Tanya Rojas-Fort, Nicola Dawkins, Sonya Elliott, Samantha Hahn, Emma Olsson, Jo Melloh, Larissa Tompsett, Catherine Heeney and David and Catherine van Akker have been instrumental in organising major fundraising events behind the scenes such as the annual fete and the biennial pet show. Their enthusiasm and passion for education is shared by the teaching body at Berowra Christian Community School. Teachers such as Jodi Dagan, Karen Shapcott, Simon Mattinson and the fabulous Gali Smuts do a fantastic job preparing their young students for high school and allowing them to learn, grow and thrive in their academic studies. I make special mention of school administration and support staff members Sue Hendrie, Jannette-Grimmond, Anita MacKay, Annabel Dodd, Jodie Hazlewood and Elizabeth Passafaro. All those ladies go above and beyond to help the students in a variety of roles.

Leading the school and managing that fantastic teaching body is its beloved principal and my good friend Mr Steven Dodd. Steve is a rare gem. He is one of the best principals I have come across and is revered for his patience and caring nature, by teaching staff, parents and children alike. When former principal Mr Stephen Spies retired after 27 years of service to the school the community knew there would be big shoes to fill. Steven Dodd has certainly managed to do that. He has continued the commitment of Berowra Christian Community School to provide a first-class education whilst working with Berowra Baptist Church Pastor Dean Moore and Associate Pastor Ted Bell to give students spiritual guidance by reinforcing the strong Christian values of love, acceptance,

forgiveness, respect and integrity. The school's thirtieth anniversary is about recognising its many fine achievements over the years, celebrating its unique place in our community and looking ahead to the future. I congratulate Berowra Christian School on delivering 30 years of outstanding education and creating our leaders of tomorrow. They have made a difference to our community and will certainly make a great difference to our country.

CABRAMATTA ELECTORATE CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (18:16): We are privileged to live in a proudly multicultural society and no area in Sydney is more proudly multicultural than my electorate of Cabramatta. With a culturally diverse community made up of people from more than 140 nations, it is only natural that certain surnames from larger ethnic groups dominate the scene. Once upon a time the Cabramatta area was dominated by people from England. In the 1950s and 1960s people began to arrive from eastern Europe, including those with a Yugoslavian background, like me. Broken down into smaller communities, those who came to Cabramatta included Serbians, Croatians, Russians, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Italians and many others.

With the passing of time and the influx of immigrants to Cabramatta following the Vietnam War, the face of south-west Sydney has changed somewhat—as have the surnames. According to data from the company Sensis, which runs the White Pages directories, the Vietnamese surname Nguyen is the most popular surname in 23 suburbs and has a high concentration in Sydney's south-west. For the record, the most common surname is Smith, which led in 98 suburbs at last count. Some forecasts expect Nguyen to overtake Smith as Sydney's most common surname within the next decade. The surname Nguyen is the thirteenth most popular surname in Sydney currently.

In Vietnam it is estimated that 40 per cent of the population have the surname Nguyen. Many events in Vietnamese history have contributed to the prominence of the name. In 1232, after usurping the Ly dynasty, Tran Thu Do forced the descendants of the Ly to change their surname to Nguyen. When Ho Quy Ly overturned the Tran dynasty he killed many of their descendants. When the Ho dynasty collapsed in 1407 many of his descendants changed their surname to Nguyen in fear of retribution. In 1592 on the collapse of the Mac dynasty their descendants changed their surname to Nguyen. When the Nguyen dynasty, who were the descendants of the Nguyen Lords, took power in 1802 some of the descendants of the Trinh Lords, who feared retribution, changed their surname to Nguyen while others fled north into China. During its rule the Nguyen Dynasty awarded many people the surname Nguyen, and many criminals changed their name to Nguyen to avoid prosecution.

As with other common surnames, people having this surname are not necessarily related. As times change it also seems that they stay the same. Nguyen is the most common surname of people of Chinese-Vietnamese descent in Cabramatta but a host of other surnames from ethnic groups are rising to prominence in Australia—such as Tran, Chen, Chan, Lee, Singh and Patel. These trends are no cause for alarm; they simply reveal the fantastic multiculturalism that Sydney has to offer.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (18:20): Today it is my pleasure to talk about an issue that is close to my heart. In my inaugural speech I spoke about Mike Powell, a young and promising member of the Northcott Young Liberals Branch. Mike was an intelligent and compassionate young man who was loved by everyone around him. Mike was only 18 when his life was cut short by suicide—our biggest killer of women under 34 and men under 44. Research shows that most suicides are preventable and it all starts with a conversation. What I want to talk about tonight started with a conversation.

What was initially a small meeting in my office between several local charities, including the Ku-ring-gai Youth Development Service, Lindfield Rotary, Hornsby Council and Ku-ring-gai Council, eventually saw more than 180 students from across the Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai local government areas coming together to destigmatise and speak openly about mental health and to create and build programs and campaigns within their school communities that promote positive mental health and wellbeing. This was the inaugural Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Youth Forum, an initiative that responded to growing concerns about youth mental health in the local area.

The forum is designed to raise awareness about mental illness amongst teenagers, helping them to identify the signs and to gain an understanding of what help is available in their local communities. The day encompasses a variety of positive and inspirational high-energy activities and includes the opportunity to hear from young people who have lived with a mental illness. The Youth Mental Health Forum has welcomed some incredible young speakers, including Nic Newling, a young man who not only experienced a mood disorder throughout high school but also lost his brother to suicide, and Jeanti Profaca, a young woman who found her purpose through speaking about her experience of mental illness.

Students also have the unique opportunity to ask questions of many professionals, including members of the NSW Ambulance Service and NSW Police Force, practicing psychologists, counsellors and general practitioners. Every year, as I sit and listen to the questions, I am reminded how incredible our young people are, and how much they love and cherish those around them. The questions range from how to help friends and loved ones to access health services, to what goes on during counselling sessions and the rights and liberties of young people to manage their own affairs.

Most importantly, the day also focuses on the creation of positive campaigns and strategies to raise awareness of the importance of mental health and resilience. During the day, accompanying teachers are able to upskill themselves in how to become staff leaders, help their students reach their potential and create incredible things within their school community. Together with their teachers, students become pioneers, with strong and capable support networks at an administrative level. The true power of the Youth Mental Health Forum lies in our young people and our local community. The Youth Mental Health Forum would not exist without the young people who are changing the face of mental health. In 2013 Cheltenham Girls' High School students, including Kimberly La, Jessalin Goh, Emma Mees and Eugenie Jung, attended the forum and established Cloud 9, the school's leading mental health group, which meets weekly to foster positivity and support for students and staff of the school.

As these girls have completed their Higher School Certificate, their legacy is nothing short of unbelievable. Throughout the school year, the girls celebrate Childhood Day, and the Year 12 Stress Rescue Packs. Their R U OK? Day initiatives have raised hundreds of dollars, and they have endless resources from ReachOut and headspace, which they distribute to their classmates. Mentoring programs and peer support are critical to helping girls to connect and be a part of an incredible supportive and loving community. This year, three years later, girls from Cheltenham Girls' High School inspired attendees with their mental health initiatives, helping other students realise how they, too, can help change their school communities.

None of this would have happened without those who worked behind the scenes to make it all possible. Because of the incredible work of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Youth Network, the Youth Mental Health Forum has helped more than 1,000 young people in our community. The Youth Network is a unique interagency group comprising more than 20 youth organisations that strive to provide better lives and futures for young people across Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai. Today I pay special tribute to several people who have worked night and day to make the Youth Mental Health Forum happen: Kym Carlson of the KYDS Youth Development Service, Bob Howe and Ian Faulks from Lindfield Rotary, Jeni Hayes, Julie Acton and Vanessa Aldridge of Mission Australia and Taldumande, Tai Luani from headspace Chatswood, Dennis Mageropoulos and Jason Guest from Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai Council, Nasrin Azizi from Settlement Services International, Trudy Wilson of Diocese of Broken Bay, Stacey Young of NSW Health and Phillip Stone of Northern Sydney Primary Health Network.

It would be remiss of me not to mention my personal staff member, Elizabeth Goh. She is an incredibly impressive and decent person. In fact, she has been a driving force. She has helped me to turn my vision of helping young people in our community deal with mental illness into a reality. She is a remarkable individual and she has a great future ahead. This year has yet again been a phenomenal year for young people. In the Youth Mental Health Forum we have celebrated through song and dance, and we have helped to forge a brighter, mentally healthy generation. Mental health remains an uphill battle but I see a very hopeful future in the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Youth Mental Health Forum.

PACIFIC HIGHWAY UPGRADE

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (18:25): Tonight I inform the House about an issue related to the Pacific Highway upgrade at Coffs Harbour. The residents of the northern beaches of Coffs Harbour are most thankful for the work that has been done by the State and Federal governments over the past four or five years. In fact, the trip from Coffs Harbour to Woolgoolga now takes a maximum of 15 minutes at 110 kilometres an hour. This magnificent piece of road goes all the way to Corindi, and it will be even better when the Corindi to Grafton upgrade is completed. I regularly travel that route. Funnily enough, I get a lot of compliments from those who used to live on the Pacific Highway and have now been bypassed, and I also get complaints about noise and water issues caused by the new highway.

Mr and Mrs Richard Smith live in a magnificent home, which Richard built, on Hearn's Lake Road, Woolgoolga. They lived in this home for many years prior to the bypass. During the construction of the bypass infrastructure had to be moved, including the waterline that services the people of Woolgoolga. Coastal Works was contracted to move that waterline, which now goes past Mr and Mrs Smith's home. Unfortunately, with the exception of the front yard, their whole property is now inundated with water. The tennis court at the back of the property, which has about half an inch of slime on top of it, is no longer useable. Engineers have inspected the property but no-one can determine whether the responsibility lies with Coastal Works and the moving of the pipe, and consequently the trench, which could be overflowing into the property. A bank has been put along the side of

the trench but the new subdivision to the north of the Smiths' place makes putting in a new easement to drain the water away impossible.

Mr and Mrs Smith's lifestyle has been absolutely ruined. Their backyard is constantly wet and we cannot work out why the drainage is not working. The water is under the house and mould is ruining the floorboards. This is placing a lot of stress on them. They have even taken to sitting on the front verandah rather than the back verandah in the afternoon to enjoy some conviviality. As it is obvious to me and to Roads and Maritime Services engineers that this problem was not in existence prior to the completion of the upgrade, the problem must have been caused by the new highway. I have written to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and I have spoken to Roads and Maritime Services. I contend that the Government should purchase the home at an unblighted price and allow these people to get on with their lives because currently we cannot resolve the issue. It would be hard to get the price that the home is worth with the water problem and the Smiths should be allowed to buy or build another place somewhere that does not have this problem.

I believe the Government could sell the home with the problems attached, and whoever buys the home could fill in the backyard or take remedial action to address the water issue. The current owners have neither the time nor the inclination to do that because their dream home basically has been ruined. I urge the Minister to give serious consideration to purchasing the home so that the current owners can get on with their lives. The problem no doubt has been caused unintentionally, but the new highway in front of their home has created a blight. They did not have the problem in the past; they have the problem now. It is incumbent upon the Government to resolve the issue. The only way to resolve the issue is to purchase the home and let these people get on with their lives.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:30 until
12:00 on Tuesday 15 November 2016.**