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Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 17 November 2016

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 17 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 63 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce the receipt of the Auditor-General's Financial Audit Report, Volume Six 2016, received this day and authorised to be printed.

Announcements

ST VINCENT'S HOSPITAL GIVING TREE APPEAL 2016

The SPEAKER: I remind members about the St Vincent's Hospital Giving Tree Appeal 2016. Today, between 11.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. I will be hosting a barbecue in the Speaker's Garden in support of the St Vincent's Hospital Giving Tree Appeal. Each year St Vincent's Hospital, in support of various agencies across New South Wales, organises its Christmas gift appeal to provide children in the care of various agencies with presents on Christmas morning. This year we can all play our part to ensure that 996 children hopefully will each receive a gift.

This year gifts will be sent to 40 agencies, including Amelie House, St Vincent de Paul Redfern, Vincentian House, Gunawirra Limited, Walla Mulla Family and Community Support, and preschools and schools all around New South Wales. Those wishing to participate can collect a gift tag and attend the barbecue, with entry being a donated gift. Those who do not have a gift can bring along between \$10 and \$20 and our office will purchase gifts on their behalf. Representatives of St Vincent's Hospital will be there today and there will be a special visit from Santa. Please support the appeal. It has been very successful in the past and I hope that it will be this year and in the future. We can arrange for photographs to be taken of attendees with Santa beside the tree, or wherever they wish. Please support this worthwhile appeal.

Bills

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION AMENDMENT (DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION) BILL 2016

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Jamie Parker, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (10:14): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I appreciate the opportunity to address the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill 2016. This amendment to the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 is a commonsense and simple amendment that will protect individuals who voluntarily disclose information to the commission from criminal or civil liability in connection with that disclosure. The bill will make it easier for the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] to obtain evidence. It will give confidence to persons who provide information to the ICAC and it will bring the arrangements of the Independent Commission Against Corruption in line with other jurisdictions.

People make appointments with members of Parliament to discuss issues of concern. Public servants have come to my office to discuss their concerns around corruption issues and I, as do all members, recommend that they provide that information to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I was surprised, as I am sure many others would be, that there is not full disclosure protection for people who provide information to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Only partial protection is given to people providing information to the ICAC. I take this opportunity to speak to those issues and why this bill is important.

Over the past few days, there has been considerable discussion in this place about the structure of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, its current commissioner and the appointment of additional commissioners. The bill before the House in no way seeks to amend those proposals, even though we may want to. The intention of the bill is to strengthen the ICAC. I take the Government at its word when it says that it is interested in improving the work of the Independent Commission Against Corruption in order to expose and deal with corruption.

The provision of information to the ICAC has been discussed by the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption in its discussion paper, "Prosecutions arising from ICAC investigations: Discussion Paper: November 2014". Members will remember that the inquiry produced a discussion paper, not a report. Included in the 21 submissions made to the discussion paper, the Independent Commission Against Corruption made submission No. 8, dated August 2014, in which it recommended that the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act be amended to include a provision that protects persons from criminal, civil or disciplinary liability for the voluntary disclosure of information to the commission where the disclosure was made for the purpose of the commission's functions. Many members would find it quite remarkable that those provisions to protect disclosures were not already in place. The ICAC submission states:

A large number of complaints and information accepted by the commission each year are received directly from public officials who are not required or authorised by law to report or provide that information and in circumstances where the voluntary disclosure of that information is prohibited by a secrecy or confidentiality law. Similarly, private individuals who voluntarily provide information to the commission may be at risk of incurring civil liability because of contractual or employment undertakings into which they have entered.

Section 109 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act gives limited protection to persons providing information to the commission and then only in circumstances where the commission has exercised its power to require or obtain that information. This protection is not useful where persons have voluntarily disclosed information to the commission about corrupt conduct of which the commission is unaware and not at the time investigating.

Currently, those who provide information to the ICAC on an existing inquiry are protected by provisions in the Act. If an inquiry is not taking place, the Act does not apply and those who provide information are not protected. This amendment bill will include protection for those people. The ICAC further states in its submission:

Other Australian corruption commissions, to varying degrees, have legislative protection for voluntary provision of information for the purpose of a complaint, report or investigation. Under the Queensland Crime and Corruption Act 2001 no obligation to maintain secrecy or other restriction on the disclosure of information obtained by or furnished to a person by any act or rule of law applies to the disclosure of information to Queensland's Corruption and Crime Commission for the performance of its function.

A person who discloses information under the provision does not, only because of the disclosure, contravene a provision of an Act requiring a person to maintain confidentiality in relation to the disclosure of information; or incur any civil liability, including for defamation; or become liable to disciplinary action.

The submission from the Independent Commission Against Corruption makes it clear that there are limited protections in this State and that other jurisdictions, for example Queensland, have broader protections. This amendment bill clarifies this issue and gives full protection to people who provide information to the ICAC. It is a commonsense amendment. No-one should be concerned about the provisions in this bill. In fact, those who support the disclosure of information to the Independent Commission Against Corruption would encourage the passing of the bill. The bill will give confidence to those who wish to disclose information and will bring the legislation into line with that in other jurisdictions. The committee posed questions to those making submissions. At question (7) it asked:

Should a protection be inserted in the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 to provide that an individual voluntarily supplying information to the ICAC for the performance of its function is not subject to any penalty for having breached an Act or rule of law?

Most people would answer yes, there should be a protection for people providing information voluntarily to ICAC for the performance of its functions. The committee referred to this issue in its discussion paper at paragraph 2.80, stating:

The ICAC supported an amendment to the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act to protect people from criminal, civil or disciplinary liability if they voluntarily disclose information to the ICAC for the purpose of the commission's functions.

The committee made no recommendations in the discussion paper. It raised the issue that was posed by question (7) and discussed the responses briefly at paragraph 2.91, stating:

The committee notes that the ICAC referred to provisions in other Australian jurisdictions which give protection against self-incrimination to witnesses.

...

Protecting witnesses against self-incrimination would make it easier to obtain evidence regarding an offence. The committee notes that section 128 of the Evidence Act 1995 can be used to protect witnesses in criminal cases from self-incriminatory answers. In certain circumstances a court may grant a certificate to protect a witness from self-incrimination.

Section 128 does provide that protection in a court context but this bill deals with the Independent Commission Against Corruption. The 2014 discussion paper of the committee was silent on recommendations. From my experience, people in my electorate who have approached me to disclose information have expressed concern about providing the information to the ICAC. Those people will be protected by this bill. This is a relatively small bill containing commonsense amendments. It omits section 26, Self-incrimination, and in regard to section 109, Protection from liability, it omits sections 109 (5) and (6) and inserts instead:

- (5) A person is not subject to any criminal or civil liability for compliance, or purported compliance, with a requirement of this Act and no action, claim, demand or disciplinary action may be taken against or made of the person in relation to that compliance or purported compliance.
- (6) A person who voluntarily gives any statement of information or produces any document or thing to the Commission in good faith in connection with a complaint made to, or an investigation conducted by, the Commission about a matter that concerns or may concern corrupt conduct is not subject to any criminal or civil liability for giving the statement of information or producing the document or thing and no action, claim, demand or disciplinary action may be taken against or made of the person in relation to the statement or production.
- (7) This section has effect despite any duty of secrecy or confidentiality or any other restriction on disclosure (whether or not imposed by an Act) applicable to the relevant person.

Section 109 as amended by this bill will provide full protection from liability to people making disclosures to the ICAC. New section 109A, Self-incrimination, which is inserted after section 109, states:

- (1) This section applies where a natural person gives any statement of information or produces any document or thing to the Commission in good faith:
 - (a) in connection with a complaint made to, or an investigation conducted by, the Commission about a matter that concerns or may concern corrupt conduct, or
 - (b) pursuant to a requirement of the Commission under section 21 or 22.
- (2) If the statement, document or thing tends to incriminate the person and the person objects to the giving or production at the time, neither the fact of the requirement nor the statement, document or thing itself (if produced) may be used in any proceedings against the person (except proceedings for an offence against this Act or except as provided by section 114A (5)).
- (3) The statement, document or thing may however be used for the purposes of the complaint or investigation concerned, despite any such objection.

The bill goes on to omit the now irrelevant circumstances. This is a relatively simple amendment to the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act. The Greens believe it strengthens the opportunity for people to provide information to the ICAC without risk or concern. The parliamentary inquiry into the ICAC examined this issue but made no recommendations. I trust the committee would agree with this commonsense amendment. I thank all those who have attended my office, public servants in particular and private individuals who stand up for what they believe in. Those people are fighting and opposing corruption by saying that it is not acceptable and by not turning a blind eye. They know the conduct is wrong and they are prepared to take a stand.

The Government must provide the maximum protection for people to be able to provide such information without civil or criminal risk or risk to their employment. The amendment to this Act is important to ensure full protection for the voluntary disclosure of information to the ICAC for the purpose of the commission's function. I thank Parliamentary Counsel for its assistance in drafting the bill. I encourage the Government and Opposition to support the bill. The Premier has said that the Government will consider any sensible proposal in good faith. This bill will not make the front page of the newspaper because it relates to an obscure issue. Every member in this House would have had a constituent visit their office to provide information. It is a stressful time for those people and they fear repercussions, such as the loss of their job or harm to their reputation. The Parliament must ensure that they have no need for concern. The bill before the House provides full protection to those who supply such information.

It was brought to my attention that even the ICAC has said that we need to provide greater protection to whistleblowers or people providing information. This bill seeks to do that. I look forward to discussing this matter with the Opposition. I have discussed it briefly with the shadow Attorney General. I look forward to discussing it with the Government. I trust that they will look at this in good faith. I hope that they will support this important amendment, which provides more protection and ensures that the disclosure of information will result in no risk to those people who take a strong stand by providing information to the ICAC to oppose and uncover corrupt activity.

Debate adjourned.

TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION COMMISSION AMENDMENT (FUNDING GUARANTEE FOR TAFE) BILL 2016**Second Reading****Debate resumed from 10 November 2016.**

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (10:30): In the minute that I have left to speak in this debate I emphasise, as the Minister did passionately, that we will create One TAFE. We will harness the strength of the staff and the network and build a vocational education organisation that is the envy of other States and recognised across the globe. We are building a stronger, more efficient, sustainable TAFE in New South Wales so that we can give more people the opportunity to train, retrain and upskill. It is clear that TAFE NSW needs to be able to direct more resources into what it does best—that is, skilling people for jobs that will continue to drive the New South Wales economy. Given the rapidly changing economy and technological advancements, TAFE NSW must again adapt to become modern, flexible and agile to meet the needs of students, teaching staff and employers. On behalf of the Government, I oppose this bill.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (10:31): I speak in debate on the Technical and Further Education Commission Amendment (Funding Guarantee for TAFE) Bill 2016. The object of this bill is 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 the TAFE Commission. While The Greens in New South Wales commend Labor for its commitment to TAFE and to capping contestable funding, we believe in universal education. A fully funded public provider should be the priority for the Government. The Greens want to go further and see 100 per cent of funding for vocational education and training given to the TAFE Commission. We know that the restructuring and downsizing of TAFE NSW has not happened overnight. Decades of ever-increasing transfer of planning and administration capacity, compromising of independence and direct access to the Minister, undermining of curriculum development capacity, setting up a divisive competitive structure based on national competition policy, and downgrading teachers' support and working conditions have had a huge impact on our public provider.

The principles of free public access, social equity, contribution to citizenship and the recognition of teachers as professionals have made way for a user-pays, corporatised commodification of education in which students are consumers for financial returns and teachers are shopkeepers or training technicians delivering curriculum packages. It is the philosophy and ethos of TAFE, grounded in democratic participation and social justice, that is at stake in current debates. This Government cannot claim that the decline of TAFE under Smart and Skilled has been an unintended consequence, because exactly the same thing happened under similar policies in Victoria and Queensland. Australian Education Union [AEU] Federal TAFE Secretary Pat Forward has said that the experience of other States shows that once TAFE is privatised it is almost impossible to get it back.

The forecast for 2016-17 is that there may be 126,000 fewer students enrolled in TAFE than there were in 2012. If that forecast is accurate, up to 14,500 of that number may be students with disabilities. At the National TAFE Day event here at Parliament in June two students spoke of their experience of declining services and access to courses. TAFE student Lucy, who has two different disabilities, said she had struggled to complete her studies because additional access options had been reduced due to funding cuts. Another student, Lawrence, said he too struggled to get the learning support he needed for his dyslexia because additional support staff had lost their jobs at TAFE and, in his experience, private providers did not offer the same support.

AEU Federal TAFE Secretary Pat Forward calls vocational education and training [VET] privatisation "a disaster". She tells us that, as politicians, we need to face up to it, to guarantee funding to TAFE and to shut down the failed VET FEE-HELP scheme. We are thankful that VET-FEE-HELP is on its way out, although much time and energy was taken up by the campaign to reverse that ridiculous system. Consider the cruel irony: We had a fully funded TAFE system in New South Wales that was free for all students, then the Government introduced fees and, after huge community backlash, it agreed to VET FEE-HELP for some students. We were meant to see that as an amazing step forward. That was the big concession. Given the loss of free public access to education in this sector, guaranteeing that at least 70 per cent of VET funding goes to TAFE is the least that we can do to ensure that TAFE remains at the centre of our vocational education system.

The Greens call on the New South Wales Government to scrap the privatisation of the TAFE system and stem the flow of billions of taxpayer dollars to for-profit providers. Quality vocational education cannot be left to the open market, with a small amount of regulation on top from the Government to prevent the worst excesses. Quality vocational education needs to be a central goal for any government that wants future citizens who can think critically and adapt to rapid change. I commend the member for Londonderry on introducing this bill. I had to leave school at 15 to look after my mother, who had a brain injury. I was able to go to Seaforth TAFE to do my Higher School Certificate [HSC] in one year. We struggled financially because Mum was a single mother and had

lost her job. She never worked again. I know that under the current system, in the early days before my family situation was assessed, I would have slipped through the cracks, even with the concessions afforded to students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The red tape, the bureaucracy and the time that it takes to enrol now are impediments. My life would have been very different if I had not been able to do the HSC.

We have forgotten that this is a conversation about universal education. We have also forgotten that universal education is at the heart of a civilised country. It is at the heart of our values. We have lost that. When people talk about percentages, we have forgotten that access to free education is the birthright of all Australians. The corporate model of education will not engender creativity, innovation and lifelong learning. It is the responsibility of government in this country to provide universal education for its citizens. The choice in this debate should be between a well-funded and fully resourced public education system and other systems. Instead, we have a choice between a resource-starved public provider with a casualised teaching profession and government-funded corporate models. The Greens wholeheartedly support this bill. It is a massive improvement, but we urge the Government to go much further.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (10:38): I oppose the Technical and Further Education Commission Amendment (Funding Guarantee for TAFE) Bill 2016. TAFE is doing so much better than it was under the previous regime, under Labor. Sadly, TAFE was left to wither on the vine, which created a market for registered training organisations to come in by stealth to try to steal some of TAFE's market. The Government recognised that and since 2011 it has looked at restructuring TAFE to make it more competitive and sustainable and easier for people to go to TAFE. We are ensuring that students, whether they are young or old, have the opportunity to undertake vocational education and training to be apprentices or trainees. TAFE is now able to compete in a market that will set it up for the future, unlike other institutions in which governments have under-invested. TAFE was left like that under Labor for 16 years, which left it vulnerable and enabled registered training organisations to take some of its training market.

This Government has flipped it on its head. Instead of it being like a school-based model when students tell the school they want to do some training at TAFE, the model we have adopted is for TAFEs to seek business in the marketplace to look at what employers want TAFE to provide in programs for apprentices and trainees that they want to take on board. TAFE has to be more business focused. TAFE now goes into the marketplace to seek and develop its business in conjunction with employers right across New South Wales and its enrolments have picked up, which is fantastic. There are ways to deliver—for example, TAFE teachers now go to the premises of businesses and hold training days and programs in regional New South Wales. They are held in the meeting or crib room of a business, for example, and TAFE conducts classes with the trainees or apprentices when appropriate.

In addition, TAFE in New England has seen a significant investment. An amount of \$740,000 has been allocated to upgrade Gunnedah TAFE to make it more relevant and more competitive in today's vocational, education and training market. In the past five years Tamworth campus of TAFE has received significant investment in its plumbing and hospitality sections and the Aboriginal Learning Centre. TAFE has just launched its strategic plan for 2016-22, which identifies four goals: make New South Wales' future workforce job ready, strengthen communities across New South Wales, create a strong and innovative business with a bright future, and come together as a proud, passionate customer-focused team. It is about the needs of the students and how to deliver that program. Do they want the program delivered more flexibly? Do they want to attend an institute? Do they want it delivered in the workplace or online? TAFE has to get smart about the way it is doing business, and it is doing just that. It is going out to the marketplace and asking businesses how and when they want their training delivered and where they want it delivered.

In regions of New South Wales with TAFE institutes and campuses, for example, Tamworth and Gunnedah, courses are being offered that are suitable and unique to that particular town. Gunnedah is industrialised and TAFE is looking at what sorts of courses it can offer to keep young people in trades, electrotechnology, plumbing, welding or mechanical. Whatever courses young people in those vocational, education and training markets want to look at should be delivered to them by TAFE. TAFE is looking at and is delivering appropriate training for the needs of regional centres, the community and businesses. The new strategic plan for TAFE seeks to leverage the immense potential of TAFE to make a positive and widespread impact on the lives of individuals and communities throughout New South Wales. I do not want unscrupulous registered training organisations delivering programs and training courses out of the back of a car. They travel out west, offer a course, deliver it out of the back of a car, and promise laptops but never deliver them. A participant finishes with a certificate without the appropriate training behind it.

I am a big believer in TAFE, particularly in Tamworth and Gunnedah in my electorate, which have some of the best facilities for students and the best teachers—something that some of the travelling registered training organisations do not have. I firmly believe TAFE is the leader in upskilling and providing courses or vocational

education and training. The Opposition has referred to TAFE fees. This Government pays up to 75 per cent of the cost of gaining a qualification. For example, for a Certificate IV in Commercial Cookery, the New South Wales Government contributes more than \$11,460 per student; for a Certificate III in Carpentry and Joinery, the Government contributes more than \$12,360 per student; apprenticeship fees are capped at \$2,000 and traineeship fees are capped at \$1,000 for the entire qualification. Importantly, the Government also provides fee-free scholarships for disadvantaged or vulnerable students including: Indigenous students; students with a disability, including their dependants; young people aged 15 to 30 who are on welfare, or dependent on a person on welfare; young people in, or formerly from, out-of-home care; survivors of domestic and family violence, including their dependants; and retrenched workers in key regional industry sectors.

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

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: TAFE is giving support, such as fee-free scholarships, which is providing plenty of opportunities for participants. There was not a single fee increase in 2016 across all qualifications under Smart and Skilled. Fees for a range of foundation skills were halved. I do not know why Labor continues to trash-talk TAFE, as it did for 16 years. They do not like it. Labor underinvested in TAFE and did not value it when it was in government. This Government values TAFE and has a new strategic plan for 2016 to 2022, which is future focused and customer centric with a refreshed vision, purpose and core values to ensure the future of the State's leading education trainer-provider in the vocational education and training sector. We do not support the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Swansea will be heard in silence. Members who interject will be called to order.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (10:48): The Technical and Further Education Commission Amendment (Funding Guarantee for TAFE) Bill 2016 is one of the most important bills we have seen before us in a long time, and I proudly lend my absolute support to it. This bill makes me proud to be a Labor member of Parliament. I commend the Leader of the Opposition for leading Labor's commitment to save our TAFE. Labor believes the introduction of a TAFE funding guarantee is necessary in order to save TAFE from members opposite. The bill will provide a guaranteed minimum of 70 per cent funding for vocational education and training to one of this State's great institutions, the TAFE Commission. The bill will also cap contestable public funding for private education providers to a maximum of 30 per cent, thereby preventing this Government from shifting public funding from TAFE to the private sector. We know why this is so important. The facts are there for all to see. The Baird Liberal-Nationals Government is systematically gutting our TAFE sector with its prolonged and sustained ideological attack on public vocational education.

Let us once again put the facts on the table. The Government's so-called Smart and Skilled program has allowed it to rip \$1.7 billion from education and training since its introduction on 1 January 2015. Since this Liberal-Nationals Government took office 4,600 TAFE teachers and support staff have been axed. Course fees have skyrocketed, with many basic courses now costing up to \$4,000 a year. Some course costs have in fact increased by up to 7,000 per cent. The fees for concession holders jumped from \$104 in 2011 to \$7,280 in 2015. That is unbelievable. Courses in critical skill shortage areas were also subject to staggering fee hikes for concession holders. A Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care was listed as costing a concession holder \$4,380 in 2015 compared with \$104 in 2011. Course fees for refrigeration and air-conditioning mechanics have gone up 6,900 per cent, from \$104 in 2011 to an enormous \$7,280 in 2015. That is an increase of \$7,176. That is why my constituents in the Swansea electorate are so worried about this Government's constant and relentless attacks on TAFE.

As I have pointed out before, the electorate of Swansea is most certainly a tradie electorate. Swansea has the third-highest proportion of apprentices in New South Wales. Almost 25 per cent of people living in the Swansea electorate have trade qualifications. Unfortunately, apprentices living in the electorate are now paying between \$500 and \$1,500 extra on average for their courses as a result of the Government's Smart and Skilled program. Figures released by the department reveal cost increases of between 33 per cent and 70 per cent for trade and apprenticeship courses. Last year a certificate III bricklayer course cost students \$838 a year for three years, but under Smart and Skilled the fee has inflated to \$3,550 for a second or further qualification. That is what people pay after having already forked out \$2,960 for their first qualification. On average, apprentices in the Swansea electorate will pay \$2,000 for a course under Smart and Skilled. That is up from about \$500 a year.

It is not only members on this side of the House who hold deep concerns about the future of TAFE. A *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial published in January this year was scathing of this Government's gutting of TAFE. The headline read "Empty classrooms and empty gestures sum up TAFE's shabby treatment". What a dreadful thing for members opposite to have to read, and what an accurate assessment of the Liberal-Nationals approach the editorial provided. It read:

The state government's "Smart and Skilled" policy for vocational training is at the very least misnamed. It is actively discouraging would-be students from signing up to gain skills. Nothing smart about that, one would think.

According to the article, the reason for the 83,000 fewer enrolments since 2012 was clear. It read.

...a savage fee rise implemented under the Orwellian Smart and Skilled policy has meant students in some courses face steep increases in the price of equipping themselves for work.

They're dropping out. When governments want to discourage an activity, they raise its price.

Just to state this economic principle is to make clear the poor logic of the Baird government's approach to vocational training. With skills shortages a constant theme of government rhetoric both federal and state, why would a prudent government want to do that?

Why indeed? It would appear that the people of New South Wales were very supportive of the view of the *Sydney Morning Herald* about the Government's treatment of TAFE. In response to the editorial Minister Barilaro replied with a disastrous and weak letter defending his Government's attacks on TAFE entitled "Let's look at the facts about TAFE". The letters to the editor in response to the Minister's reply were scathing. I enjoyed reading those letters. In fact, I thought some of them were so spot on that I decided to post a few on my Facebook page. I was not surprised that the posts were received so well. I think the Premier himself would be impressed with how well one of the posts did, being the social media junkie that he is. It was from Eric from Mount Coolah and it read:

Yes Minister, Let's look at the facts.

Five years ago, a certificate III course cost \$350. Now a school leaver pays at least \$1,300 for a certificate III, and if it's a second qualification, expect to pay over \$4,000.

A diploma used to cost about \$1,200 a semester.

Now expect to cough up about \$15,000 for a diploma of nursing in today's Smart and Skilled World.

The post had more than 1,000 likes, a massive 6,000 shares and reached more than 300,000 people. I recommend that everyone take a look at the almost 100 comments on the post, most of which condemn the Government's cuts to our TAFE system. Hunter TAFE, including Belmont TAFE in my electorate, has an impressive alumni and a solid track record of skilled and successful graduates who go on to be national and world leaders in their fields. Internationally recognised winemaker Lisa McGuigan, renowned business and community leader and NRMA President Kyle Loades as well as Hunter TAFE bakery teacher and international award-winning chocolatier Dean Gibson are all amongst our local TAFE champions. Grant Walmsley from the Screaming Jets and Ben Gillies from Silverchair are proud Hunter TAFE graduates. Chef Brett Graham, who is now the head chef at the Ledbury in London that was voted one of the top 50 restaurants in the world, learnt his skills at Hunter TAFE.

I wonder if many of those renowned Novocastrians would have taken up the opportunity to study at TAFE under the current regime? Probably not, because they most likely would not have been able to afford it. My particular concern is about the future of Belmont campus. In September 2015 the *Sydney Morning Herald* revealed that Belmont campus was earmarked as one of 27 TAFE sites to be sold this financial year to raise \$63 million to fund a shortfall in the information technology budget. We all know about that saga. The document suggests 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. After the recent flogging off of Dapto TAFE and the opening of pop-up services, I fear that Belmont might be next.

I gave the Minister the opportunity to provide my community with some certainty as to the fate of Belmont campus during the most recent round of budget estimates hearings. Once again, the Minister refused to rule out selling the campus. Its sale could mean that there will be no face-to-face TAFE courses in East Lake Macquarie and no courses available to students between Newcastle and Wyong. I echo Luke Foley's recent comments about what the future of TAFE NSW could be under this Government. We do not need to look far. The New South Wales Government has refused to learn from the mistakes of its Liberal-Nationals colleagues in Victoria. The Leader of the Opposition has said:

In Victoria, TAFE is sadly no longer the dominant vocational education and training provider. Just as in NSW, the cost of training skyrocketed, following reforms, while quality plummeted.

Reserving at least 70 per cent of all public funding for vocational education and training for TAFE could keep us from falling off that cliff. It will give TAFE some certainty. Labor will always stand up for maintaining the strongest possible public education system. With this bill Labor will save our TAFE. I absolutely commend the bill to the House.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (10:58): I support the Technical and Further Education Commission Amendment (Funding Guarantee for TAFE) Bill 2016, which my esteemed colleague has introduced. This bill will go some way towards rectifying the devastating effects of the slash-and-burn approach of this Government to TAFE in New South Wales. I am here today for people such as local visual arts student, Maisie Neale, who feels that she is paying more for less and says teachers are run off their feet trying to cram a three-year

course into just one year. Maisie is the third in her family to take the visual arts course at Newcastle Art School but says she has been left wanting more. She said:

I don't think angry is the word, but I just have this fear that I'm missing out. All these amazing teachers who used to pass so much knowledge to their students have lost their jobs. Those who are left are forced to cram everything in and they don't have the time they used to have.

Miss Neale said her course was two years shorter in duration, yet more expensive, than that of her siblings. It was a three-year course; it is now a one-year course. She is paying \$4,000 more than her brother did. He paid \$12,000 for three years but she is paying \$16,000 for just one year. She said:

I can handle the price, but the fact it's so short means we're missing out.

When asked about the Government's approach to TAFE, Ms Neale said that it seemed like a "constant attack". That is what everyone feels in terms of TAFE in Newcastle because it is being decimated by those opposite. There is no greater example than those figures achieved under freedom of information—the Government Information (Public Access) Act—by the *Newcastle Herald*. I will cite them. In 2012 Hunter TAFE had 64,000 students; as of April this year, it had 24,200 students—40,000 fewer enrolments. That is 10,000 fewer enrolments per annum. If Newcastle TAFE keeps going at this rate, in two years time no-one will be there. The Government has slashed and burned its way through TAFE, cutting course options, firing dedicated staff, and hiking up fees way past what students can afford. Students have had to change career options or simply give up. There is a great fear that an entire generation of youth in the Hunter will miss out on a vital education. Where are all the aspiring plumbers, electricians, cooks and hairdressers going to go for their education? It is not just tradies who will miss out.

I was speaking with Sarah Walker in my office recently. She is a teacher who worked with men and women who want to be admitted to the fighter pilot training program at Williamtown Royal Australian Air Force base. In order to enrol in that course, applicants must finish their Higher School Certificate or tertiary preparation certificate, majoring in chemistry and physics. Because of the recent cuts, those subjects are no longer offered at TAFE and Ms Walker is no longer teaching that course because she is a victim of the 120 staff cuts. The Government does not appreciate the importance of TAFE to the people of the Hunter in training students in the trades that are vital to our region. Ms Walker was teaching aspiring students to go into the jet fighter program at Williamtown in order to defend our nation. Those people no longer have that career path, and that is devastating.

Minister Barilaro has admitted that there has been a long-term decline in short course enrolments in the State. He said that enrolments in such courses have decreased by more than 110 per cent. Unfortunately, other providers are not filling the gap. Newcastle training company Aspire has just collapsed. This is not a new subject for members on this side of the House. The shadow Minister for Skills, the member for Londonderry, visited Hunter TAFE campuses where she spoke to hospitality teachers who were worried about their jobs and about the students who have had to drop out after years of study in their chosen courses. The Government should support this bill, which will guarantee funding for TAFE. It is too good to lose but this Government is decimating TAFE. As the *Newcastle Herald* says, Hunter TAFE is being cut to the bone. It is time to save TAFE.

Under this Government 2,111 TAFE teachers and staff have lost their jobs. Many of those teachers have joined the Newcastle unemployment queues. Newcastle is enduring the highest unemployment figures in the past 10 years. Under this Government 6,800 more people are unemployed compared with the previous 12 months. By cutting funding to TAFE the Government is losing an opportunity to reduce the number of unemployed youth in this State. Young people are locked out of their chance to get a TAFE qualification. The Government awarded a \$3.3 billion contract for rail carriages to a company in South Korea because Minister Constance said it could not be done more cheaply in Australia. However Victoria has ordered 65 train sets to be manufactured in this country for \$3 billion—\$300 million less. Instead of apprenticeships being awarded by our two train manufacturers in the Hunter, South Korea will be training their own young people. TAFE would have trained those future workers but that opportunity has been lost.

The State budget revealed a shocking decline in TAFE enrolments, down more than 43,000 since the introduction of the Smart and Skilled program this year. There are now 80,000 fewer students enrolled in TAFE than in 2012. That is an incredible statistic. In my electorate, Hamilton campus has cancelled its entire technology course. For many people, TAFE is the only further education option available to them. Without that option people in Newcastle and in the Hunter region cannot train for the jobs that would offer them a bright future. The statistics are there: People's lives are being destroyed by lack of opportunity. The Government should support the Technical and Further Education Commission Amendment (Funding Guarantee for TAFE) Bill 2016. It provides some hope to the youth of New South Wales.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (11:03): I have two fantastic sons and two or three weeks ago I had the opportunity to take them out for a leisurely stroll around our neighbourhood for Halloween. At the ages of seven and 14, they understand that Halloween is a bit of a fun day, a bit of a scare, but it finishes that afternoon

when they get their lollies and go home. However, those opposite practise Halloween all year around because they are all about scaring people. First it was "Mediscare", when they attempted to scare sick and elderly people into thinking hospitals would be privatised and they would have to pay for public health.

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

Mr JAI ROWELL: But of course, it turned out to be a lie. Did the people listen to those opposite? They did not—they voted us back in. Those opposite think people are stupid. They prey on the elderly, they prey on the young, they prey on the mums and dads. Opposition members tell people they will have to pay for health care and they will not receive the services and treatment they need in emergency departments. It is a lie. Now it is happening again with this issue. The Opposition does not have any policies to promote or advance this State, other than to scare people. That is Labor members' mantra, their tactic. I invite the member for Campbelltown to visit our local TAFE. They do a fantastic job.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I remind the member for Campbelltown of Standing Order 54. He will resume his seat and cease interjecting.

Mr JAI ROWELL: Here we go again. Now those opposite are trying to scare people who are finishing school and want to go on to TAFE by telling them that they will not be able to do it because we are closing TAFE colleges. The Government is the best friend that TAFE and TAFE students will ever have. We support TAFE, we encourage TAFE, we want TAFE to grow and we want to ensure that students gain the knowledge they need to get a job, which is the ultimate aim of further education. Those opposite denigrate TAFE; they talk TAFE down and want to make sure colleges close. We will not let that happen.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I remind the member for Tweed Heads that members are not permitted to eat in the Chamber.

Mr JAI ROWELL: Members on this side of the House have listened to teaching staff, students and industry. We have responded to their concerns with a new student management system and a vision for One TAFE, which will see TAFE campuses freed from heavy administrative burdens. There will be reduced duplication and more funding directed to the classrooms, where it belongs. The message on the ground is clear: Teaching staff, students and industry support the Government's reforms, and those opposite do not. We have received a letter from the Teachers Federation applauding the Deputy Premier for his actions.

The member for Londonderry and her hardly-ray-of-sunshine colleagues are on a tour of fear and smear. The shadow Minister has had countless opportunities to question the Deputy Premier about TAFE. Instead, she circulates misleading media releases, instilling fear in current and prospective students by telling them that their campus will close. Those opposite would rather play political football with TAFE NSW than watch it thrive. They claim that the Government has cut TAFE funding in half when we are investing \$1.82 million in TAFE—a \$100 million increase on last year.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Londonderry will come to order.

Mr JAI ROWELL: The Government has increased TAFE funding by \$100 million and those opposite claim that we have halved the funding. Again, lies, lies, lies.

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

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: It is unparliamentary to call another member a liar.

Mr JAI ROWELL: I did not call anyone a liar.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: The member for Wollondilly accused Opposition members of lying. If he has an argument with the member for Londonderry he should raise the matter by way of substantive motion.

Mr JAI ROWELL: I did not call her a liar.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Wollondilly did not call the member for Londonderry a liar. There is no point of order.

Mr JAI ROWELL: As of 9 October 2016, TAFE NSW has had 501,689 enrolments since January this year. In October 2015 the shadow Minister for Skills campaigned outside her own TAFE campus at Kingswood, saying she "held grave concerns for its future". But the member's "grave concerns" had no substance because right behind her—and she was backing away and hiding it because she did not want the real story to get out—more than 200 workers and numerous cranes were busy constructing a \$27 million state-of-the-art nursing and allied health training centre on that very campus. A \$27 million facility was being built but she claimed that the college

was closing and everything was terrible. Who in this House would like to see a \$27 million facility built in their electorate?

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

Mr JAI ROWELL: I know that every Government member would. Those opposite should be grateful that is happening. Labor's fear-and-smear campaign regarding TAFE NSW is unrelenting and shameful. Labor is hurting the very people it claims to represent. It is inexcusable. The member for Wallsend talks constantly about Glendale campus in her electorate. Fortunately, I am able to set the record straight and put any concerns caused by those opposite to rest. Glendale TAFE has experienced strong growth in enrolments. Year to date data show total enrolments at Glendale campus have increased by 17.9 per cent compared with year end 2015—this includes a 10.6 per cent increase in commencing enrolments. Enrolments at Glendale campus have increased across all levels—bachelor level courses; diploma courses, which increased by 22 per cent; certificate III courses; and statements of attainment.

Glendale campus has had strong enrolments in pre-vocational and part qualifications, providing opportunities for further enrolments in higher level awards in fantastic courses such as Aged Care Introduction; Identify and Respond to Children and Young People; Leadership in the Aged Care Industry; and Workplace Health and Safety in Child Care. The Certificate II in Electrotechnology (Career Start) has been an area of significant growth over the past two years. Commencing enrolments in the offering increased by 67.2 per cent—and those opposite say that everything in TAFE is going. This offering is a recognised career pathway for the electrotechnology industry, with many students going on to obtain apprenticeships and to enrol in the Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician course.

Glendale is a shining example of what is happening across the State. As at 2 October this year, TAFE NSW has had 492,034 enrolments since the start of the year, 331,073 commencing enrolments and 160,961 continuing enrolments—a 25 per cent, or 66,008, increase in commencing enrolments compared with this time last year. I am not sure what those opposite think a TAFE campus is, but the facts speak for themselves. The New South Wales Government recognises the importance of providing quality vocational education and training for young people in this State. The Government is working hard to ensure that students across the State have an excellent chance of accessing training through their local vocational training provider.

This year alone, the Government has frozen student fees for accessing government-subsidised training under Smart and Skilled at 2015 levels, providing confidence and certainty for students; has capped fees for traineeships at \$1,000, meaning that more than 85 per cent of traineeships qualifications on the NSW Skills List are cheaper for students this year than they were last year, with an average saving of \$1,128; has more than halved student fees for seven foundation skills qualifications; and has capped fees for apprenticeships at \$2,000. *[Extension of time]*

The New South Wales Government makes free training available to those most in need. I grew up in Department of Housing accommodation and I know how those scholarships are doing fantastic things for local communities—something those opposite do not know about. We are the best friends that TAFE and the most vulnerable people in this State will ever have. Indigenous people, people with a disability and dependants of people on a disability support pension do not pay a cent for any of the 740 qualifications on the NSW Skills List. Young people aged between 15 and 30 years who are on welfare, or who are dependants of a person on welfare, do not pay a cent for any qualification on the NSW Skills List up to a certificate IV. Workers affected by some large-scale industry restructures are offered free training so they can reskill into a new career pathway. We have heard all morning from those opposite that all these things do not happen. But there it is in black and white: These things are happening on the ground.

The New South Wales Government is committed to growing TAFE presence in regional and remote New South Wales. The Government is investing heavily in improving course delivery and content so that, regardless of where a student lives, they can expect the same high-quality, industry-related course content. The Government is supporting, investing in and growing a strong TAFE of the future. I know that Labor members who follow me in this debate will continue to talk TAFE down because they do not have good listening skills—maybe they can go and do a course in that. I suggest that each and every Opposition member visit their local TAFE to see the students and the fantastic things that are happening on those campuses and to ask the staff whether things are better now than they were a couple of years ago.

Enrolments are increasing, fees are being capped and our young people are achieving great outcomes. All those who attend TAFE in New South Wales gain fantastic qualifications. More jobs are being created in New South Wales because we are investing in TAFE, year after year. New South Wales has the best

unemployment record in the country because the Government supports TAFE. We always have and we always will. I encourage those opposite to do the same.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (11:19): I support the Technical and Further Education Commission Amendment (Funding Guarantee for TAFE) Bill 2016, which will commence the process of restoring TAFE after this Government's disastrous Smart and Skilled reforms that have seen TAFE enrolments drop across the State. This will guarantee that at least 70 per cent of vocational training funding in New South Wales will go to TAFE. TAFE can then continue the great work it has done for more than a century, meeting the needs of employers and employees across New South Wales who can adapt to future training requirements as technologies change and jobs evolve.

Granville TAFE is the second-largest TAFE in New South Wales—the largest college with the exception of Ultimo. However, today it is almost a ghost town. Under this Government it has far fewer students and the students who do attend have far fewer face-to-face teaching hours despite paying significantly more than their predecessors for their education. A few months ago Granville TAFE's historic South Street and Lumley Street buildings were put out to tender. They were gutted to make way for whatever purpose was required by the purchaser. While this process is put on hold, the buildings remain empty. Ironically, they are just next to the Unique International College.

Mr GREG WARREN: I move:

That the question be now put.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): According to Standing Order 86, the question is that the motion be agreed.

The House divided.

Ayes35

Noes43

Majority.....8

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Greenwich, Mr A
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Park, Mr R
Smith, Ms T
Watson, Ms A

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Piper, Mr G
Warren, Mr G (teller)
Zangari, Mr G

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Foley, Mr L
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Robertson, Mr J
Washington, Ms K

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
George, Mr T
Henskens, Mr A
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Roberts, Mr A
Skinner, Ms J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Ms L

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Constance, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V
Goward, Ms P
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Piccoli, Mr A
Rowell, Mr J
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Coure, Mr M
Elliott, Mr D
Gulaptis, Mr C
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Ms M
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

PAIRS

Smith, Ms K

Baird, Mr M

Motion negatived.*Motions***PRISON POPULATION AND RECIDIVISM****Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (11:30):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the number of people incarcerated in New South Wales prisons has risen by 18 per cent in the five years to 2015 having reached a record high of 12,641 in September 2016.
- (2) Notes the Government's \$237 million strategy to fund programs aimed at reducing rates of recidivism while remaining tough on serious offenders including a strengthened focus on the perpetrators of domestic violence.
- (3) Congratulates the Minister for Corrections on these initiatives and calls on the Government to continue to actively pursue strategies to reduce the percentage of citizens in detention with a particular emphasis on juveniles, Indigenous persons and persons on remand.

I thank the House for the opportunity to raise and debate this motion, as it is an important matter. I note that the member for Lakemba wanted to discuss matters relating to the maintenance of public schools, which is also an important matter. This is an issue that has been too little debated in this House. I acknowledge the good work that has been done by the Minister for Corrections and the Attorney General, but I do not want this debate to focus on congratulating the Government. Although I acknowledge the good work that has been done by the Government, more needs to be done to provide a fair and just New South Wales with a better outcome for all.

New South Wales jails hold more inmates now than ever before. Today more than 12,500 people are incarcerated. Of those, about one-quarter are Indigenous Australians and 3,600 are on remand. It is a sad reality that almost half of the prisoners will reoffend upon release and return to jail, at great financial and social cost to our community. Incarceration is not the silver bullet that the community wishes it was to rehabilitate offenders. Clearly we need to do more. The purpose of the motion is to acknowledge what the Government is doing to reverse the trends and call on the Government to actively pursue further strategies to reduce prison populations, particularly among juveniles, Indigenous people and those on remand.

I thank the Parliament for allowing the motion to be reordered and debated. It is a reflection of the importance of this issue and the Government's genuine desire to take action, to seek a better result for law-abiding citizens and to rehabilitate those who find their way to the wrong side of the tracks. I take heart from the conversations I have had with the Minister for Corrections and the Attorney General. There is no doubt that the community wants the Government to be tough on crime. The community expects tough punishments for those who commit violent and heinous crimes, crimes against children and those who engage in domestic violence. You do those crimes and you rightly do the time. Further effort is required to ensure offenders find ways and opportunities to salvage themselves from cycles of crime and to rehabilitate into good and decent members of the community.

I acknowledge that rising prison populations are partly a consequence of better policing methods and more intense policing. There is little to suggest that it is the result of longer sentences handed down by the courts. The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research reports that the prison population swelled by 18 per cent between 2013 and 2015. It grew further this year, reaching the current record high of 12,641 in September. In 2013, between 200 and 250 new prisoners entered our jails each month. That number is now above 300 per month. Much of that growth is due to a sharp rise in the number of people being charged with offences remaining on remand. Some of those people are held on remand for 12 months before their case is heard. That is a huge cost to the community.

Most of those on remand are sentenced to prison, but some are not. Those who are released are likely to be damaged for life. In recent years the number of people jailed for the following offences has risen significantly: stalking and intimidation, negligent driving, criminal intent, obtain benefit by deception, possess prohibited weapons and breach of community order. No crime is a victimless crime. Though occurring more often, these crimes are not regarded as being at the high end of the criminality scale. Last year the average cost of keeping one prisoner in open custody was \$164.29 per day. That is below the national average but equates to \$60,000 per year.

The most concerning figures relate to the high representation of Indigenous men and women in our jails. Between September 2014 and March 2015 the number of Indigenous people in jail rose by 8.6 per cent. Of the total prison population, almost one in four are Indigenous. Currently, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are imprisoned at a rate 13 times higher than non-Indigenous people. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders make up 2 per cent of Australia's population but 27 per cent of the prison population. Indigenous juveniles are 24 times more likely to be in detention than are non-Indigenous juveniles. Among Indigenous offenders, the rates of public order offences, acts intended to cause injury and justice procedures are rising.

In that same period, the number of juveniles in custody increased by 23 per cent, with the number of Indigenous juveniles in custody increasing by 34.2 per cent. The number of juveniles held on remand rose 72 per cent in the same period. Many of these issues are being targeted by a range of new programs aimed at arresting these trends. The youth justice conference and community services programs and the Youth on Track program are chipping away at recidivism and reforming many young people who have headed off the rails. In some cases, police and educators are identifying young people at risk of offending and intervening before things get out of hand.

For Indigenous people, notable programs include the Cannabis Cautioning Scheme, where police assist offenders by focusing on education rather than on punishment. There is also the Statewide Community and Court Liaison Service, which, among other things, works on mental health issues. There is a court-based drug diversion program and a Forum Sentencing program, which refer eligible defendants into treatment. The Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project at Bourke is focused on lowering crime rates and pioneering new ways of doing business to assist and support Aboriginal youths and their families. These are the types of programs that have the potential to keep people out of jail. With these measures in place, hopefully more people will be rehabilitated than incarcerated and fewer people will drift towards a life of crime. It will keep our community safer and lower the cost and burden of law enforcement.

This is not about going soft on offenders; that is not the intention of this motion. The community expects our lawmakers and courts to get tough on violent offenders. There is no question that the gauntlet should continue to be thrown down to those who commit serious offences, including domestic violence. There are programs that salvage people from a life of crime. Many offenders could live a productive life if they received the right intervention at the right time. That is the intent of this motion. If people do not reoffend and first-time offenders are rehabilitated, if we reverse the over-representation of Indigenous people and juveniles in our jails and reduce the length of stay of people on remand and limit their exposure to the criminal element, we will have a safer and more just community.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (11:38): I commend the member for Lake Macquarie for bringing the House's attention to the subject matter of this motion. While it is an issue that involves incarceration, reoffending and detention rates—all matters of importance—these matters have to be viewed in the right context. That context is that a primary element of the social contract between a government and its citizenry is that the system of criminal justice and punishment must keep the community safe from criminals who are likely to commit acts of violence against people and property. That includes crimes such as sexual assault and domestic or other forms of violence.

In that context, the Government has announced an important initiative to reduce reoffending rates. Offenders who pose the greatest risk of reoffending will be targeted in a new \$237 million plan, managed by Corrective Services NSW, to reduce reoffending. The new plan will provide more rehabilitation programs and enhance supervision to priority offenders. It will place particular emphasis on the critical period before and after prisoners are released from custody. In a New South Wales first, a specific focus will be placed on offenders serving less than six months who currently do not participate in programs to address reoffending. The four-year plan is aimed at reducing the annual rate of adult reoffending by 5 per cent by 2019. This is the biggest financial investment in rehabilitation in the history of Corrective Services NSW. We will put in place the best case management system in the world to support offenders to adopt pro-social lifestyles and make a positive contribution to the community.

The plan reflects the Government's priority to make the community safer by reducing reoffending. Reoffending incurs significant costs, both financially and socially, and the community has a legitimate expectation that the Government will tackle this issue head on. We currently run a range of successful behaviour change programs that target violent sexual offending, drug-related crime and property crime. This new program will augment the existing programs. When all the initiatives are in place, we expect to be providing each year new or enhanced interventions for more than 42,000 offenders in order to reduce their risk of reoffending. The implementation plan will create around 345 jobs. It also includes more than \$10 million in funding for external providers and individuals to deliver programs and post-release support. The plan will increase the number of offenders completing evidence-based programs and participating in case management. The expansion of existing

programs will include \$20 million to build 10 high-intensity rehabilitation facilities to treat annually an additional 1,200 offenders serving short sentences of six months or less.

A new early intervention scheme is to be delivered by the non-government sector to target high-risk offenders. Participants will benefit from a one-on-one intervention prior to the court process and sentencing, as well as specific programs targeting their criminal behaviour and tendencies. There will be enhanced supervision at all stages of the sentence for high-risk offenders who are subject to community-based orders and imprisonment. New methods employed by highly skilled staff will improve the chance of offenders living law-abiding lives when released from prison or when they are no longer under supervision in the community. Greater reintegration outcomes will be achieved by identifying an offender's needs upon their entry to prison and immediately planning for their exit.

Correctional Services NSW will build on the existing Community Corrections supervision model to significantly improve behaviour change in offenders who are not in custody. All offender case managers will be trained to use the most effective techniques, and we will put in a place a quality framework to ensure the integrity of this proven approach. We are also going to establish dedicated teams of case management specialists in correctional centres who will undertake whole-of-sentence case planning for sentenced prisoners and employ the same best-practice methods used in the community. Quite a few challenges lie ahead of us. The plan is being implemented at a time of an unprecedented increase in inmate numbers. The \$3.8 billion prison bed expansion program will assist by boosting capacity across the State, with an initial 2,800 additional beds to meet the current demand.

The New South Wales Government also has a strong commitment to addressing juvenile reoffending. The latest reoffending data from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research shows that 37.9 per cent of young offenders will go on to commit another crime within two years of their release. Many factors are involved in a young person's offending behaviour: alcohol, drugs, family life, school, peer groups. The nature of the Juvenile Justice client group increases the risk of contact with the criminal justice system: their lack of maturity, propensity to take risks and susceptibility to peer influence, as well as intellectual disability, mental illness and victimisation. Juvenile Justice supports a justice reinvestment model in New South Wales and is involved in the justice reinvestment trial in Bourke. Juvenile Justice is represented on the working group, which focuses on eight- to 18-year-olds.

The Youth on Track early intervention scheme provides family-based intervention and support to young people who are at risk of long-term involvement in the criminal justice system. The aim of the scheme is to divert young people from becoming further entrenched in the justice system by addressing the underlying factors of their offending behaviour and by working with their families. Youth on Track provides New South Wales police and schools with an opportunity to refer young people whom they consider to be at risk of offending to a support service without the requirement to obtain a court order. Since its commencement in 2013, almost 300 young people and their families have participated in Youth on Track. The results have been promising. More than half—53 per cent—reduced their offending risk factors; 88 per cent of participants reduced or stabilised formal contacts with police; and positive changes were seen in family functioning and school engagement. Just over 40 per cent of those who participated in Youth on Track were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

Due to the promising results, the New South Wales Government this year announced funding of \$14.48 million over three years for the program to continue in the current three sites of Blacktown, mid-North Coast and the Hunter and to expand to three new sites: the Central West, New England, and the Coffs-Clarence region. While the overall number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention has decreased from a daily average of 204 in 2009-10 to 158 in 2015-16, the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in custody continues. To maintain connections with family and country, young people, where possible, are held in custody close to their home.

Aboriginal young people in custody also have access to local elders and community members who visit centres to run cultural programs and provide mentoring to young offenders. Juvenile Justice centres are implementing Aboriginal consultative committees that will include elders and representatives of local community groups. I commend Minister Elliott for implementing and administering these programs. They are entirely consistent with core Liberal values. Liberals believe in the great capacity of the individual. These programs seek to bring out the better part of the character of criminals so that they may be better citizens in the future and not come before the courts again.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (11:45): I commend the member for Lake Macquarie for bringing this motion to Parliament today. As he noted, we do not talk about this topic enough. I also acknowledge the Government and the Minister for Corrections for their investment in programs that aim to reduce rates of recidivism. The historic prison population of 12,641, the growing incarceration rate of already over-represented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the number of reoffending women and people on remand are

shameful statistics that must be addressed. In New South Wales, 68 per cent of prisoners reoffend because imprisonment does little to deter future offending. Indeed, it can increase the rate of reoffending. Research has identified no link between high incarceration rates and reduced crime.

Mental illness, drug and alcohol problems, disadvantage, poverty, poor education, and trauma such as sexual assault are higher among prisoners. Prisoners are more likely to have higher levels of cognitive impairment. Prisons are overcrowded and risk human rights breaches. Rehabilitation and education are limited. Many prisoners who have a mental illness do not receive treatment. Their behaviour often results in solitary confinement, which can cause symptoms to worsen. Although half of prisoners face drug and alcohol charges, prison drug programs are limited and inadequate. Drug use should be treated as a health issue. People with problems should not be sent to prison but encouraged to get help. I am working with Labor, Liberal and Greens colleagues on a more evidence-based approach to drugs. Drug courts have been shown to work, and we now have three, but more rehabilitation programs are needed to ensure that they are effective.

The United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders, known as the Bangkok Rules, encourage alternatives to imprisoning women. Female prisoners have often experienced sexual, physical and psychological abuse but only two of the seven women's prisons in New South Wales offer professional programs to address sexual assault. Standard procedures like strip searches can be particularly traumatic for women prisoners who have experienced sexual abuse. Searches of women should be restricted. Alternative methods should be used to prevent contraband entering the prison. Almost three-quarters of women in prison are mothers. Sixty-two per cent are the sole caregiver, and most children of prisoners are aged under six. Mothers and children must have regular contact, but the remoteness of women's prisons prevents this. The loss of family contact punishes women beyond the punishment of being sentenced. It has enduring effects on children, including putting them at risk of going into State care.

Specialist services are needed to help children of prisoners. I understand that there are few police protocols for arresting someone with dependent children, and some prisons control family visits as a form of discipline. Prisoners are less likely to be employed before imprisonment or to have organised a job on release. Those on remand have no access to programs. Lack of employment is a strong predictor of recidivism, but there is little support. Instead of receiving incentives to participate in education, prisoners earn more from working. This undermines their future. Homelessness and mental health problems are linked to offending and reoffending. The Government must increase the social housing stock and provide post-release supported accommodation. Tough bail laws and mandatory sentencing laws remove the consideration of individual circumstances and result in higher incarceration rates without deterring crime.

Our remand population is appallingly high and includes many people who will be found innocent or will not receive a prison sentence. Bail laws based on risks that an accused will not appear in court, harm a witness or reoffend should be restored with presumption against bail removed. Governments must partner with non-government and business sectors. We should help prisoners establish new skills in prison that provide them with opportunities to treat drug problems and mental illness and move away from a prison career on release. We must expand and resource prevention, early intervention, diversion and rehabilitation programs. I commend the motion and I hope to see more work to reduce incarceration.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (11:49): This Government is too busy playing catch-up and is reactionary to its mistakes. This Government has thought of a number of ingenious ways to save money.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Is the member speaking to the motion before the House?

Mr GUY ZANGARI: Absolutely, I am speaking to the motion moved by the member for Lake Macquarie. I foreshadow that I will move an amendment to paragraph (3) of the motion. This Government has thought of a number of ingenious ways to save money. It created a huge mess and has been scrambling ever since to correct its errors. The funding provided by the Government to early intervention programs, rehabilitation and the reduction of recidivism is a drop in the ocean compared with what it is throwing at the corrections system to play catch-up as a result of its many mistakes. On the one hand the Government allocated \$237 million towards recidivism strategies and, on the other hand, it allocated \$3.4 billion for the construction of additional jails. It is evident where its funding priority lies.

The Government is setting itself up for inevitable failure because it knows it has been squeezing the corrections system dry. Since coming to office, the Government's method has been to trim as much as it possibly can wherever it can and spread the remaining resources as thinly as possible. Corrections has been treated no differently from any other portfolio. Overcrowding has been an issue for a long time. Why? It is because the Government decided in 2012 that it would be great to shut down four prisons. It is still trying to catch up with that mistake. Now the Government wants to focus on reducing reoffending, but it is sacking prison educators—one of the cornerstones for reducing recidivism in New South Wales.

What early intervention programs has the Minister announced to prevent first-time offenders from entering the corrections system? How much emphasis has the Government placed on stopping the cycle, as opposed to throwing money at housing an ever-increasing prison population? For years, the Government and this Minister have been out of touch; they care only about the bottom dollar. They have ignored the real issues time and time again. This Government cares more about the rhetoric and the spin than about real outcomes for real people. The Minister is setting Corrections up to fail once more. He does not have total control of his portfolio. The Minister was told that of the \$3.8 billion that the Government was spending, \$2.4 million was for infrastructure, but he did not know what the remaining \$1.4 million was for.

The Minister needs to be proactive rather than reactive. He needs to go back to the source and ensure that he and his Government implement early intervention programs so that children at risk do not enter into a life cycle of crime. It is a sad state of affairs when this State spends more money on incarcerating people than on programs, schools and education. One needs only to look at the earlier debate in this House on the Technical and Further Education Commission Amendment (Funding Guarantee for TAFE) Bill 2016, which was introduced by the member for Londonderry and is opposed by the Government. The member for Londonderry, the member for Upper Hunter and Labor members representing Western Sydney electorates know that the Government has come up with the bright-spark idea to build not a pop-up restaurant but a pop-up prison. It wants to build dormitory-style infrastructure in a flood-prone area in Western Sydney in which it will cram maximum security inmates. The Government has not conducted any community consultation on this proposal. I move:

That the motion be amended by leaving out paragraph (3) with a view to inserting instead:

"(3) Condemns the Government's sacking of corrections teachers and its mismanagement of corrections since 2011."

I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for moving this motion but the Opposition believes it is important to amend paragraph (3) as I have stated.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (11:55): Graham West would hang his head in shame if he heard the speech of the member for Fairfield, given the way the Labor Party treated his inquiry into the juvenile justice system and the Noetic report, which recommended significant changes to the way in which juvenile offenders are treated. He was treated abominably. I congratulate Mr West on the work he is now doing in his role with the St Vincent's de Paul Society.

Mr David Harris: That was Eric Roozendaal's fault.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I acknowledge the interjection that it was the fault of Eric Roozendaal. I commend the member for Lake Macquarie for moving this motion. The rates of recidivism have been a longstanding issue in this State. They have been about the same for the past 15 years, at approximately 40 per cent to 42 per cent. It is intransigent around that figure. There is clearly a need for something to be done to reduce that figure, as South Australia and other jurisdictions have done. In New South Wales we need to do things differently in order to address the issue. The member for Ku-ring-gai, who spoke earlier, said that he perceives the juvenile justice system and in many respects the corrections system as universities of crime. Prisoners have not been receiving sufficient training about how to live their lives on their release from jail, particularly with a view to not reoffending. It is important to note that the Minister is introducing a number of programs at a cost of \$237 million specifically directed at reducing reoffending rates.

The member for Fairfield criticised the Government, stating that it was making changes to the delivery of education programs in jails. He said that the cornerstone of reducing offending is the continuation of the current education programs. His comments beg the question: Where is the evidence? There is not one iota of evidence that the education programs as they are currently delivered have had a marked reduction on reoffending. Something new needs to be done. That is why the delivery of additional programs specifically addressing reoffending patterns is the most revolutionary approach to reducing this number. I have confidence in the ability of Commissioner of Corrective Services Peter Severin. His background means he knows how to deliver these sorts of programs. I commend the Minister for doing what he is doing. As a Government we need to reduce reoffending rates.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (12:02): I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for bringing this motion to the Chamber. As the shadow Minister for Corrections outlined, the motion gives us an opportunity to talk about the Government's deplorable mismanagement of this portfolio. I support everything the shadow Minister said about this Government's deplorable history on corrections. Today I will talk about a particular plan that the Government has to try to fix this mess of its own creation. The shadow Minister spoke about it briefly but I will address it in a bit more detail. I am speaking about the rapid-build, maximum security pop-up prison in the suburb of Emu Plains in the electorate adjacent to mine. To say it is a facing a wall of opposition from the community is understatement of the highest order.

Mr Damien Tudehope: Point of order: The member for Londonderry is not addressing the motion, which is about recidivism. The location of prison facilities does not relate to recidivism. She should be directed to return to the leave of the motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Londonderry will return to the leave of the motion and the amendment.

Ms PRUE CAR: The way in which inmates are housed in jail affects recidivism rates. The Government's proposed maximum security pop-up prison in Emu Plains will put prisoners—

Mr Ray Williams: Point of order: Mr Deputy Speaker, you upheld the previous point of order. The member for Londonderry is canvassing your ruling. I ask you to bring the member back to the leave of the motion and if she will not I ask you to sit her down.

Mr Clayton Barr: To the point of order: The member is making the point that the way in which prisoners are housed in prison has an enormous bearing on recidivism rates. The way that prisoners are treated in prison relates directly to recidivism.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member's time has expired.

Mr Clayton Barr: I seek leave to make a contribution.

Leave not granted.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (12:04): In reply: I thank Government and Opposition members for the robust debate. Their interest shows that it was appropriate to have a discussion about this very important matter in the House. I thank the member for Ku-ring-gai, the member for Epping, the member for Sydney, the member for Fairfield and the member for Londonderry for their contributions. I acknowledge that other Opposition members would have liked to contribute to this debate. I thank them for their interest. Clearly, this is an emotional issue. There are many ways in which the motion could have been broadened to include other matters that members have indicated they wish to talk about. I note the intention of the proffered amendment. Through this motion I am trying to generate a discussion. I appreciate that there are differences of opinion but as a collective we must focus on how we can change the culture of the provision of corrective services and prevent people from becoming trapped in our revolving door prison system.

I acknowledge the Government in this motion, but that does not mean the Government and the Minister necessarily have everything right. There are certainly some initiatives for which we could criticise them. I hope that the Government has learnt from earlier decisions about the operation of some jails and the closure of others. The member for Epping made reference to Graham West, with whom I served this in place. I saw him as a genuine and very committed member of the Labor Party who sought to make some significant changes to corrections but was greatly frustrated. I acknowledge that members of the Opposition recognise that frustration. I imagine they also have a high regard for Graham West and what he tried to achieve.

The member for Ku-ring-gai represented the intentions of the Minister for Corrective Services quite well. The Minister gave a very good answer to a recent question on notice from me. It somewhat surprised me to learn the intentions of the Government and the depth of its understanding about how to do good things in this area. The reason for this motion was to ensure that those intentions were on the record. Although I am congratulating the Minister because I think there are some things on which he and his department deserve to be congratulated, the most important part of the motion, which I hope the Minister and Government recognise, is my call for the Government to actively pursue strategies to reduce the percentage of citizens in detention with a particular emphasis on juveniles, Indigenous persons and persons on remand. That is the crux of the motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The original question was that the motion as moved by the member for Lake Macquarie be agreed to, to which the member for Fairfield has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes34
Noes47
Majority.....13

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J

AYES

Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Parker, Mr J
Warren, Mr G (teller)
Zangari, Mr G

Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Robertson, Mr J
Washington, Ms K

Foley, Mr L
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Park, Mr R
Smith, Ms T
Watson, Ms A

NOES

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

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Constance, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V
Goward, Ms P
Hazzard, Mr B
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Ms M
Piccoli, Mr A
Roberts, Mr A
Skinner, Ms J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Ms L

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Coure, Mr M
Elliott, Mr D
Greenwich, Mr A
Henskens, Mr A
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Piper, Mr G
Rowell, Mr J
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

PAIRS

Smith, Ms K

Baird, Mr M

Amendment negatived

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

The House divided.

Ayes50
Noes31
Majority.....19

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Evans, Mr L
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Kean, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Pavey, Ms M
Piccoli, Mr A
Roberts, Mr A

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Constance, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V
Goward, Ms P
Hazzard, Mr B
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Marshall, Mr A
Parker, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Piper, Mr G
Rowell, Mr J

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Coure, Mr M
Elliott, Mr D
Greenwich, Mr A
Henskens, Mr A
Johnsen, Mr M
Leong, Ms J
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J

AYES

Skinner, Ms J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

Smith, Ms T
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Ms L

Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Warren, Mr G (teller)
Zangari, Mr G

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

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Foley, Mr L
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Robertson, Mr J
Watson, Ms A

PAIRS

Baird, Mr M

Smith, Ms K

Motion agreed to.**GLENDALE TAFE****Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (12:25):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the Government's funding cuts to the TAFE system.
- (2) Notes that Glendale TAFE currently offers a very successful electrotechnology course, where students are required to wear protective equipment.
- (3) Calls on the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business, to ensure that trade courses continue at Glendale TAFE, and to ensure that requisite protective equipment is provided without significant financial cost to students.

Earlier this year, an opinion piece I wrote appeared in the *Newcastle Herald*. In it I detailed the damage done to Glendale TAFE, the foremost provider of vocational education in my electorate, by the Baird Government's botched Smart and Skilled policy. I outlined how staff, students and teachers have been undermined by the Premier's savage funding cuts and job losses, buried beneath skyrocketing fees and—to add insult to injury—burdened by the unworkable SALM/EBS information technology system, causing unnecessary administrative difficulty. I also referred to one staff member who complained of job losses in that "full time positions have gone from 7 to 3", and an evaporation of certificate II courses. The staff member added:

Mainly due to the fact that people are required to do "job ready" courses by employment agencies, which [means] Certificate III courses. This is an issue for many as their skills are not at Certificate III level—setting people up to fail."

Now students are skipping foundation levels to appease the Government's regulations, undermining their skill base and preparedness for their chosen industry. This is a major issue for electrotechnology courses, in particular, because the certificate III course for electrotechnology is an apprenticeship course, and if a school leaver or someone retraining is looking to begin their career in the electrotechnology sector they need a certificate II qualification. Disturbingly, the cost of an electrotechnology qualification is \$1,010, on top of expenses related to work experience and safety equipment, and more than \$1,200 for a second qualification—an extraordinary price for a young person surviving on a part-time job, on a Newstart allowance or on a Youth Allowance.

To my surprise, I saw in the *Newcastle Herald* that the Minister for Skills, or his bureaucrat, had written an op-ed in reply. How flattering to me. Yet, when confronted with the cuts about face-to-face teaching hours, the Minister argued that modern TAFE students want to do their learning at a computer screen. The Minister's rationale ignores low socio-economic students who do not have access to computers, and those who require

face-to-face teaching to learn—and many do. Figures shown in the article suggested a significant decline in TAFE enrolments. The Minister scoffed but did not provide year-on-year figures for Glendale TAFE. Students and staff warned that they were finding it difficult to manage ongoing enrolments. The Minister assured us that procedures were in place to deal with that but chose not to elaborate on those procedures or whether they are actually working. The Minister claims that the Government is investing almost \$2 billion in TAFE, an increase of \$122 million on the previous year. We cannot see this investment so where is the money going? Where are the new campuses? Where is the new infrastructure? Why are TAFEs still haemorrhaging staff?

This is not investment; it is barely upkeep. If the operational costs of TAFE are increasing the Government is failing by its own primary metric. The Minister insisted that the Government is not selling off TAFE campuses but promised that unused assets would be divested and the funds ploughed back into TAFE, which is all well and good, but how will TAFEs expand if sections of their campuses have been sold off? I know there have been sell-offs at Glendale TAFE as well. I remind the Minister that TAFE needs staff, students and infrastructure to function. The Minister promised that new student enrolments were up 27 per cent compared with 2015, but 2015 was not a banner year for TAFE NSW. A realistic comparison would be the 2011 enrolment figures before the Government launched Smart and Skilled.

According to the Minister, it is not the cut-and-burn, privatise-at-any-cost Baird Government that is threatening the future of TAFE in New South Wales, it is me. I am happy to be amongst activists, students, staff, community members and the shadow Minister who have stood up to this Government's radical anti-TAFE agenda. It is not damaging; it is democracy to raise legitimate concerns about the way that the Baird Government has been mismanaging vocational education in New South Wales and at Glendale TAFE. People like me are not threatening TAFE's future; we are protecting it. I call upon the Baird Government, as I did in my opinion piece, to take the lead from TAFE staff and students: Listen to staff and students. The Baird Government must restore funding and staffing levels because our young people deserve a better future.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (12:32): I speak on the motion moved by the member for Wallsend. I feel a little *deja vu* because I remember speaking about Glendale TAFE only a few weeks ago. I believe in the TAFE system. I am a former TAFE student. I tried university but did not last; I could not cope and was not cut out for it, unlike a number of my colleagues. However, I found TAFE and it helped me. I undertook a five-year course in hospitality management and loved it; I was cut out for it. I then became a part-time TAFE teacher in hospitality management for 10 hours a week over a couple of years. Therefore, I have the utmost respect for TAFE.

Universities and private providers are not for everybody. TAFE is a fantastic provider, not just for apprenticeships and trades but for any number of courses. TAFE is an outstanding pathway and a wonderful provider. The member for Wallsend knows I have enormous respect for her—I am not patronising when I say that—but, although it is not her intent, each time this matter is raised it damages the TAFE brand. No member wants to see that happen. It is not accurate to say that the Government does not care and is cutting funding. For the record, the Government is not cutting funds to TAFE NSW. We are investing more in vocational education and training and TAFE, with \$2.2 billion being invested in vocational education and training, and TAFE NSW receiving \$1.82 billion of the total VET budget. That figure of \$1.82 billion in the 2016-17 budget for TAFE NSW is significantly higher than last year's spending.

The TAFE model we inherited from Labor was bleeding. Those within the institution will acknowledge that it was not sustainable. Although TAFE has been a wonderful provider, it was floundering and could not survive. In order for it to survive the Government had to ensure best practice. The model introduced in the past few years will ensure that this wonderful institution succeeds. We do not need Labor members hindering this modernisation or trying to stop the TAFE brand being treated with respect and considered world's best practice. We must all work together to ensure that TAFE continues and thrives.

I turn to how the Government is securing its future. New South Wales has the strongest economy in Australia and the highest jobs growth. They are out-and-out facts; they are the statistics. The CommSec State of the States report found that New South Wales has gone from number eight to number one in the country. To continue that economic advantage we must strengthen our skills base by providing world's best practice vocational education and training options that connect students with jobs. TAFE is one of our major mainstream providers of education and hence a pathway to jobs. TAFE needs to adapt, as it has been doing for the past 130 years.

The Government is trying to modernise TAFE. All members must understand that the young adults leaving our schools are savvy and have choices. They can choose from universities and private institutions or to have a gap year. We must ensure that the great institution of TAFE is modernised and appeals to the younger generation coming out of school. We believe the best way to do that is to continue to inject record funding in TAFE so it does not flounder as it did under Labor. In this way TAFE will provide the best possible pathway to

future jobs for those leaving school. The Government will oppose the motion but I urge all members to get behind TAFE and support this wonderful institution.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (12:39): It will come as no surprise to members to learn that I lend my full support to the motion. The member for Wallsend is representing her community's concerns for Glendale TAFE. The member for Camden commented that the member for Wallsend has raised the issue of Glendale TAFE in this place many times. That is an example of a member of Parliament who is in touch with her community. Her community values TAFE as a public vocational education provider, and she raises their concerns in the House. I take my hat off to the member for Wallsend.

Before I provide context to the issue of Glendale TAFE, I will debunk the misnomer that members of the community and Opposition members are raising concerns about the Government's cruel attack on TAFE by talking TAFE down. I assure the people of New South Wales that nothing could be further from the truth. Labor supports TAFE. Opposition members want to see a future for our kids and for TAFE. This is about the lack democracy within the Baird Government. No surprises there; the Baird Government does not believe in democracy. This Government is the most anti-democratic government in the history of New South Wales. It is once again attacking anyone who dares to question its agenda.

But the Labor Opposition will stand in this place each day and question the Government's agenda on TAFE. The figures show that there have been 126,000 fewer enrolments since 2012. Some 5,200 teachers and support staff have been sacked. Yet the Government dares to attack the Opposition for raising the subject. As the shadow Minister, I will take any opportunity to support TAFE teachers. TAFE teachers teach TAFE students and we need TAFE students to graduate from our TAFE colleges with skills to contribute to the community and the workforce. It is disgraceful that the Government has sacked 5,200 TAFE teachers and support staff. The cost of courses has gone through the roof. Many TAFE campuses have suffered death by a thousand cuts, resulting in closure.

Yesterday the Deputy Premier spoke in this House about connected learning centres—effectively, they are shopfronts. When the Deputy Premier opened a connected learning centre in Dapto he said that it was good because it had free wi-fi; but so does McDonald's. We need TAFE colleges staffed by TAFE teachers teaching our TAFE students. This Government is doing nothing but taking an axe to TAFE and claiming that anyone who mentions its disgraceful treatment of TAFE is attacking TAFE. Labor wants to see TAFE rescued. It is apt that this motion is being debated today following the Government's opposition to a bill to rescue TAFE in New South Wales. The new Nationals Deputy Premier has rolled over in his second day on the job to do as Premier Mike Baird says. The Premier said, "Vote against the bill to save TAFE", and he did so. At every opportunity the Opposition will talk about Glendale TAFE and every other TAFE in New South Wales that is being attacked by the Government. A Labor Government will rescue a TAFE system that has been decimated by the Liberal-Nationals Government.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:43): I speak in opposition to the motion moved by the member for Wallsend. The member for Camden acknowledged the member for Wallsend as a passionate leader in her community who does a good job. I support the comments of the member for Camden concerning the mistruths and scare tactics employed by the member for Londonderry. Her recent contribution was a repetition of the comments she made less than an hour ago in this Chamber. The reality is that this Government is reshaping TAFE. The Minister explained how exciting the reshaping of TAFE is going to be.

When I was campaigning in the Terrigal electorate for election to this place I met a number of TAFE teachers. While doorknocking I met a husband and wife who were TAFE teachers. Given the scare tactics employed by those opposite, I was concerned about the reception that I would receive. But I was surprised. They said, "Yes, we heard the information but the reality is that we have been teaching in TAFE for 30-odd years and we know that it is a lumbering beast that is not delivering efficiently". That was the response from teachers on the ground. My parents are teachers. It is an honourable profession. It is evident to me that even TAFE teachers realise that TAFE must modernise and operate more efficiently to provide the best possible courses for students who do not want to go to university. The member for Camden is a proud graduate of TAFE.

The motion is not about Glendale TAFE; it is an opportunity for the member for Londonderry to spread fear about the destruction of TAFE. The Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician at the Glendale campus that is noted in the motion costs \$13,300 to deliver. The Government funds more than \$11,000 of that TAFE course on behalf of the student. A student enrolling this year will pay exactly the same fee as last year. The motion claims that students studying electrotechnology have an added cost burden for safety equipment. That is not true. Apprentices studying at the Glendale campus, or any other training provider around the State, do not pay for the requisite personal protective equipment [PPE], the host employer does. This is law in New South Wales under WorkCover. Employers are responsible for providing PPE equipment and cannot pass costs on to employees.

Those opposite claim to care for apprentices and trainees but fail to mention that the Federal Labor Government cut funding and created the sharp decline in attendance at those courses. Labor cut employer incentives for apprenticeships and traineeships by \$1.2 billion between 2011 and 2013. To put that into perspective, in 2010 there were nearly 30,000 apprentices and trainees in New South Wales. By 2013 the number had plummeted by 20 per cent due to the actions of the Federal Labor Government. This Government has fixed the mess that the Federal Labor Government created and it is encouraging people back into trade courses at TAFE. The Government is investing more than \$173 million to increase training options for employers to support tens of thousands of apprentices and trainees. It is a record the Government is proud of. I oppose the motion.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (12:47): I support the motion moved by the member for Wallsend that congratulates Glendale TAFE for providing good-quality vocational education to students at an affordable price and calls on the Government to ensure that this continues. Glendale TAFE has been indispensable in delivering high-quality vocational education to thousands of people in the Hunter. In my electorate of Charlestown an increasing number of people are equipping themselves with trade qualifications, and it is TAFE that is enabling them to do so. Between 2006 and 2011 there was a jump of almost 20 per cent in the number of people in Charlestown with a trade qualification, with more than 4,800 people employed as technicians or tradespeople. Many of them work in the field of electrotechnology, and many studied at Glendale TAFE for their qualification. But Glendale TAFE, like others, is struggling to retain its status as a leading place of education and training due to the loss of funding, cutbacks to courses and staffing levels, and the increased costs associated with studying there.

The introduction of the new vocational education and training regime, Smart and Skilled—otherwise known as "dumb and dumber"—has given a leg up to private education providers. Some \$1.7 billion has been cut from education and training, and 5,200 TAFE teachers and support staff have been sacked. There have been 126,000 fewer enrolments since 2012. Student fees have increased dramatically, with some basis courses costing up to \$12,000 a year. Twenty-seven TAFE sites have been flagged for sale or closure. Aaron McGrady is a Hunter Sports High School student in my electorate. He was interviewed last year by Jill Emberson on 1233 ABC Newcastle as part of her fabulous *Meet the Mob* radio program. Aaron McGrady was born in the Toomelah Indigenous community near Boggabilla. He told Jill Emberson:

I was seven or eight when I moved here ... [we] just came up here for a better education and better opportunities.

I go back every two week [school] holidays, and every time something happens down there like a funeral or a wedding.

Aaron plays for Lakes United rugby league club but told Jill that he does not see a long-term career in league for himself. That is why he took the initiative to do an electrotechnology course at TAFE. The course goes for two years and, if Aaron gets an electrician's apprenticeship, takes six months off his apprenticeship. Aaron is funding his own study. He is not employed. The Government says that employers provide protective clothing for students. If students are not employed, there is no employer to provide that protective clothing. That is what this motion is about. Let us consider what Aaron is likely to have to pay. A first qualification is \$1,010. That is in addition to other expenses related to the work experience that Aaron is required to undertake to complete the course successfully, plus equipment and safety gear. For a young person in a part-time job or receiving Newstart or Youth Allowance payments, it is too expensive.

Why is the Government set on making it harder for students to become skilled? Glendale TAFE provides the people of the Hunter with options and opportunities. It provides school leavers with a range of career paths to pursue. It provides people of all ages with the opportunity to reskill, gain new qualifications and follow a new path of employment. I stand with the member for Wallsend in calling on the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business to ease the financial burden facing students by ensuring that the requisite protective equipment and trade courses at Glendale TAFE are provided without significant financial burden on students.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (12:51): I oppose the motion, but I reiterate my respect for the member for Wallsend. She is genuinely trying to promote Glendale TAFE, although I do not necessarily agree with paragraph (1) of her motion. Unlike the member for Wallsend, who is legitimately trying to talk up TAFE in her area, her colleagues have spent the past hour talking down TAFE. They are trying to encourage people not to enrol in TAFE. It is like the "Mediscare" campaign. The people of New South Wales and Australia failed to buy into those lies during the election campaign.

Ms Jodie Harrison: You just do not like hearing the facts.

Mr JAI ROWELL: Let us talk about the facts. The Opposition says that the investment in TAFE has been halved. In fact, TAFE has received a more than \$100 million increase in funding since last year. So has it been reduced by half or increased by \$100 million? There is a big difference. Opposition members continue to talk down TAFE. The member for Londonderry misled the House. She said that the Government had just voted

down her bill; the Government did not vote down any bill. We wanted to continue the discussion about TAFE but the Opposition moved a gag motion to stop debate.

Mr Adam Crouch: They shut their own bill down.

Mr JAI ROWELL: Yes. We are happy to talk about TAFE forever and a day, because TAFE has never had a better friend than this Government. TAFE students have never had a better friend than this Government. I will talk about some of the facts. The New South Wales Government is investing more in vocational education and training [VET] and TAFE, not less. The Government has invested \$2.2 billion in vocational education and training. TAFE NSW received \$1.82 billion of the total VET budget. This Government is making a significant investment in ensuring that free training is available to more disadvantaged groups than Labor ever did. There are 200,000 places, up to certificate IV level, for young people on welfare and in out-of-home care. There are full-fee exemptions for students with a disability and for Aboriginal students. Around 3,500 young people have taken up our free pre-apprenticeship and pre-traineeship places. There are 25,000 scholarships for anyone choosing to take up a science, technology, engineering or maths related qualification. These are all good things.

The New South Wales Government recognises the importance of providing quality vocational education and training for young people in this State. This year alone we have frozen student fees at last year's levels for government-subsidised training under Smart and Skilled, providing confidence and certainty for students. We have capped fees for traineeships at \$1,000. That means that more than 85 per cent of traineeship qualifications for occupations listed on the NSW Skills List are cheaper for students than they were in 2015. The average saving is \$1,128. The Government has more than halved student fees for seven foundation skills qualifications and has capped fees for apprenticeships at \$2,000. That is all great news. We want to expand TAFE and the number of enrolments. We are seeing more enrolments in TAFE this year. This is fantastic news. I do not understand why Opposition members, except the member for Wallsend, want to talk down TAFE and scare students into not enrolling in TAFE. The big problem for Labor members is that the Labor Party has no policies whatsoever. They lack a leader; they lack discipline; they lack anything. All they want to do, because they want to be heard, is to go out and scare people. I oppose the motion.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:55): In reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Camden, Londonderry, Terrigal, Charlestown and Wollondilly for their contributions to the debate. I am pleased that the member for Camden had the opportunity to share his good memories about the TAFE he attended and the training he received. I wonder whether he would have had the same experience under Smart and Skilled. I am afraid not. He talked a lot about the importance of the TAFE brand. The Opposition wants to do all it can to reinvigorate TAFE, but Smart and Skilled is not the brand to do that. It is unfortunate that the Government touts it as such. I agree with the member for Londonderry that our community highly values TAFE, as do members on this side of the House. We want to invest in the future of TAFE. We want to make sure that TAFE is accessible and affordable. We decry the sacking of 5,200 TAFE teachers, support staff and associated workers.

The member for Terrigal spoke about the reshaping and modernisation of TAFE by the Baird-Barilaro Government. For a course such as electrotechnology, learning via computer is not feasible. It does not provide the style of training that students need. Teachers and students are what makes good learning. I say that after 18 years of teaching, beginning with my first teaching job at Walgett. Students need teachers who are in the classroom and can teach well. We keep being given figures comparing last year to this one. Last year was not a banner year for TAFE. It was also not a banner year for Smart and Skilled. Let us examine the comparisons between 2011 and 2016, then we will see the real cost of the Government's programs.

The member for Charlestown spoke exceptionally well. I particularly enjoyed her reference to the real-life example of Aaron, who attends Hunter Sports High School in Gateshead. That is a tough school with great students and great teachers. It is not the richest area. The member spoke about the cost of Aaron's course: \$1,010, which he had to pay for. He does not have an employer, so his equipment is not paid for. He had to pay for expenses and equipment. That is the experience of many young people in the Hunter and in New South Wales more broadly. Electrotechnology is a highly valued course and a very logical one for students in the Hunter to undertake. I thank the member for Wollondilly for his positive comments. I agree with him that TAFE is valuable. The issue is affordability and accessibility for all. The one area where I disagree with the member for Wollondilly is Smart and Skilled. Smart and Skilled is not a friend of TAFE.

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

The House divided.

Ayes	35
Noes	46
Majority.....	11

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
 Mihailuk, Ms T
 Parker, Mr J
 Smith, Ms T
 Watson, Ms A

Atalla, Mr E
 Catley, Ms Y
 Daley, Mr M
 Finn, Ms J
 Harrison, Ms J
 Hornery, Ms S
 Leong, Ms J
 McKay, Ms J
 Minns, Mr C
 Piper, Mr G
 Warren, Mr G (teller)
 Zangari, Mr G

Barr, Mr C
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Dib, Mr J
 Greenwich, Mr A
 Haylen, Ms J
 Kamper, Mr S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Mehan, Mr D
 Park, Mr R
 Robertson, Mr J
 Washington, Ms K

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
 Baird, Mr M
 Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
 Coure, Mr M
 Elliott, Mr D
 Goward, Ms P
 Henskens, Mr A
 Johnsen, Mr M
 Maguire, Mr D
 Patterson, Mr C (teller)
 Petinos, Ms E
 Roberts, Mr A
 Skinner, Ms J
 Taylor, Mr M
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Ms L

Aplin, Mr G
 Barilaro, Mr J
 Conolly, Mr K
 Crouch, Mr A
 Evans, Mr L
 Gulaptis, Mr C
 Hodgkinson, Ms K
 Kean, Mr M
 Marshall, Mr A
 Pavey, Ms M
 Piccoli, Mr A
 Rowell, Mr J
 Speakman, Mr M
 Toole, Mr P
 Ward, Mr G

Ayres, Mr S
 Berejiklian, Ms G
 Constance, Mr A
 Dominello, Mr V
 George, Mr T
 Hazzard, Mr B
 Humphries, Mr K
 Lee, Dr G
 O'Dea, Mr J
 Perrottet, Mr D
 Provest, Mr G
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Stokes, Mr R
 Tudehope, Mr D
 Williams, Mr R

PAIRS

Foley, Mr L
 Smith, Ms K

Fraser, Mr A
 Grant, Mr T

Motion negatived.

*Bills***ROCK FISHING SAFETY BILL 2016****Returned**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the abovementioned bill with an amendment. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council amendment be set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION BILL 2016**LOCAL LAND SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL 2016****Second Reading**

[Deferred division]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): The question before the House on Wednesday 16 November 2016 was that these bills be now read a second time. The House will now proceed with the deferred division on the question: That these bills be now read a second time.

The House divided.

Ayes47
 Noes36
 Majority.....11

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
 Baird, Mr M
 Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
 Coure, Mr M
 Elliott, Mr D
 Goward, Ms P
 Hazzard, Mr B
 Humphries, Mr K
 Lee, Dr G
 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
 Conolly, Mr K
 Crouch, Mr A
 Evans, Mr L
 Grant, Mr T
 Henskens, Mr A
 Johnsen, Mr M
 Maguire, Mr D
 Patterson, Mr C (teller)
 Petinos, Ms E
 Roberts, Mr A
 Skinner, Ms J
 Taylor, Mr M
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Ms L

Ayres, Mr S
 Berejiklian, Ms G
 Constance, Mr A
 Dominello, Mr V
 George, Mr T
 Gulaptis, Mr C
 Hodgkinson, Ms K
 Kean, Mr M
 Marshall, Mr A
 Pavey, Ms M
 Piccoli, Mr A
 Rowell, Mr J
 Speakman, Mr M
 Toole, Mr P
 Ward, Mr G

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Car, Ms P
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Doyle, Ms T
 Greenwich, Mr A
 Haylen, Ms J
 Kamper, Mr S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Mehan, Mr D
 Park, Mr R
 Robertson, Mr J
 Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E
 Catley, Ms Y
 Daley, Mr M
 Finn, Ms J
 Harris, Mr D
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Lalich, Mr N (teller)
 McDermott, Dr H
 Mihailuk, Ms T
 Parker, Mr J
 Smith, Ms T
 Watson, Ms A

Barr, Mr C
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Dib, Mr J
 Foley, Mr L
 Harrison, Ms J
 Hornery, Ms S
 Leong, Ms J
 McKay, Ms J
 Minns, Mr C
 Piper, Mr G
 Warren, Mr G (teller)
 Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Gibbons, Ms M

Smith, Ms K

Motion agreed to.**Third Reading**

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: On behalf of Mr Anthony Roberts: I move:

That these bills be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.**ROCK FISHING SAFETY BILL 2016****Consideration in Detail****Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendment.**

Schedule of amendment referred to in message of 17 November 2016

No. 1 **SFF No. 1 [c2016-130A]**

Page 2, clause 4 (3), lines 38–40. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

- (3) The Secretary of the Department of Justice is to cause the following to be published on the www.watersafety.nsw.gov.au website and any other website that the Secretary considers appropriate:
- (a) each declared area, and
 - (b) a description and map that identify the high risk rock fishing locations within the declared area.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (13:12): I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendment.

The Government has accepted the amendment moved in the other place by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. The amendment will require that a map is produced of a declared area where life jackets will be required. This map will then be published on the New South Wales Government water safety website. This amendment will make it easier for rock fishers to understand where a declared area is. It is particularly important, noting that many rock fishers do not speak English. I commend the bill with the amendment to the House.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:13): I speak on behalf of the Labor Opposition in my capacity as shadow Minister. I note the comments by Minister Elliott regarding the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party amendment made in the Legislative Council. The amendment reads:

- (3) The Secretary of the Department of Justice is to cause the following to be published on the www.watersafety.nsw.gov.au website and any other website that the Secretary considers appropriate:
- (a) each declared area, and
 - (b) a description and map that identify the high risk rock fishing locations within the declared area.

The Opposition will not oppose the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party amendment.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): The question is that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party amendment No. 1 on sheet C2016-130A be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2016-17

Debate resumed from 10 November 2016.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (13:14): I think this is the third instalment of my contribution to this debate. I have lost count. On the last occasion I was talking about the growth in my electorate and our need for particular infrastructure. I congratulated the Government on some of the roadworks in the Wyong electorate but drew attention to the fact that we are still waiting for the lifts at Tuggerah railway station for which money was allocated in 2010. Somehow that money has disappeared. A couple of promises were made at the 2015 election. One of them was to upgrade Toukley and Wyong ambulance stations at a cost of \$9 million. It is now two years since the election. Two budgets have passed and no mention has been made of those upgrades. People who have been to those stations will know that they are quite old. The Toukley station is unique in the fact that the community raised the funds to build it. Again, I commend my community for its history of fundraising. They do not just sit back, whinge and ask for stuff; they get together as a community to raise money and get things done.

For example, we need a palliative care hospice. The group calling for the construction of a hospice, to be known as Elsie's Retreat, is not just calling on the State and Federal governments for money; they are fundraising. Lions Club member Oana McBride, who was behind the original push for the hospice, recently attended a club in the northern part of the old Wyong shire to receive a cheque for \$2,400. The group has hosted a community ball and next year local television station NBN and local radio stations will support a telethon to raise more money. The community understands the importance of the facility. Whilst they need some government assistance, they are happy to get out and raise some of the funds themselves. Unfortunately, some communities are not like that; they expect government to do everything. As I said, in my electorate that is certainly not the case.

The next significant election promise made was the \$200 million upgrade of Wyong Hospital. It was part of the \$1 billion worth of promises for the Central Coast that both parties made during the campaign. Both parties committed to the \$200 million upgrade, but my community is dismayed that under Minister for Health Jillian Skinner the Government is proposing that we get our upgrade by privatising the hospital. The plan apparently is that a private operator will undertake the upgrade and then run the hospital for a period of anywhere between 20 and 40 years. My community is upset about this because back in 1956 the Wyong community got together and

raised money to build that hospital. They raised funds for a number of years and the hospital finally opened in 1980.

As I have told the House before, apart from the usual raffles, balls and other fundraising activities, workers in the power stations and in the mines had a levy placed on their wages and the money went towards purchasing the land and building the original hospital. Mr Harry Moore, a former member for Wyong—after whom the local road Harry Moore Drive was named—as a member of the Opposition negotiated with the then Government to get the hospital facility approved and built. That shows what happens through bipartisanship, community fundraising and the Government coming to the party. It was done through community consultation and the community was involved in the decision. The present situation is different. Without any warning whatsoever, a facility that has deep-seated community ownership— *[Extension of time]*

Without any consultation, the community was told that the hospital would be privatised. It has hurt my community and the community's objections have crossed party lines. Last Friday I took part in the Northlakes Toukley Rotary Charity Golf Day 2016, which is held to raise money for the Ronald McDonald room at Gosford Hospital. Many business people are involved in the charity golf day. I was playing as a member of the Jobs Australia team, a local employment provider in the area. Some businesspeople approached me to voice their concerns about the Government's plan. These people, who usually vote Liberal, were very concerned that there had been no consultation. However, their main concern was that our community, on a regular basis, raises money for Wyong Hospital. They are concerned that equipment and facilities the community has provided to the hospital over the years will be handed over to a private operator.

Those people—one of whom is a member of the Liberal Party—said that they would not fundraise for a private operator because the aim of a private operator is to make a profit. They indicated that they raise money for organisations that need it but they would not fundraise for the hospital if it became a private operation. The hospital auxiliary, Rotary and Lions clubs and other groups will not continue to raise money for equipment for the hospital if it becomes a private operation. They believe the Wyong Hospital should remain a publicly run hospital. I have tried to avoid rhetoric on this issue. I have been very careful to say to people that our hospital is not being sold. That is not the issue. The issue is that a private operator will run the hospital and will take over the facilities.

A couple of weeks ago I asked senior staff at Wyong Hospital whether the hospital runs at a profit. Members will not be surprised to hear that the answer was no, it does not run at a profit. The community is also concerned as to how a private operator will make money out of the hospital. That is a genuine concern. Yesterday at a community consultation meeting at the hospital, people asked that question but were not given an answer. They were told, "It will be right, don't worry about it." My community is smarter than that. They do not sit back and wait; they get off their behinds and have a go. They want to be consulted and to be part of the discussion. They do not want to be left out of decisions on major facilities in which they have made a great investment.

Wyong Hospital is the largest employer in my electorate. It is not unusual to find a family—wife, husband and children—working at the hospital. Some people have worked at the hospital for more than 30 years and take pride in the facility. Most people in the community have an association with the hospital, either as a patient, a worker or a fundraiser. Its tentacles reach across the whole community. At the moment the community is feeling left out of the discussion, and people are not happy about that. We will continue to campaign. We have a petition with 20,000 signatures and 2,500 people were present at the first meeting to discuss this issue. The campaign will continue. Almost 100 people came to Parliament last Thursday to hear the debate. We will continue to fight to get answers so that people know what is happening to—not the Government's hospital—the people's hospital. There are people alive today who contributed to getting the hospital off the ground. The Government needs to heed the community's views.

In my private member's statement yesterday afternoon, I congratulated Mr Scot MacDonald, the Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast and Hunter, on addressing the people last Thursday, following the debate on the petition. He promised them that he would take their concerns to the Minister. We will wait to hear what the Minister has to say in response. At the moment, the Minister does not seem to want to respond. In a radio interview I congratulated Mr MacDonald on talking to the people. All people want is to be listened to. They do not care about party politics; they just want to be heard. At the moment, they do not feel they are being heard.

This budget provided some surprises for my electorate. Some were unpleasant, such as the hospital; others were welcome, such as the road upgrade at Chittaway and Tuggerah. We are dismayed that planning money only was allocated for the road through Wyong. As I mentioned in my contribution a week or so ago, another \$1.5 million has been allocated, which brings it to \$14 million being spent on planning this road. The road is 2.5 kilometres long. When we consider how much money has been spent on planning, we can imagine how many times the plans have been changed. People just want it to happen. I welcome the Government's \$1 million towards planning the link road.

The other burning issue in my electorate is that of a high school in the Warnervale area. I spoke earlier about the number of houses being built in the Warnervale region. There are a significant number of housing estates to be built there. The high school at Wadalba has 1,200 students at the moment, Gorokan just under 1,000, and Wyong about 850. With the approval of the precinct 7A rezoning, the housing estates are about to be built. We are not asking the Government to build a new high school tomorrow. As a former principal, I know that building a new high school, from planning to construction, takes about five years. All we ask is for a commitment to start planning for a high school in the area so as to ensure that there will be proper educational facilities to cater for this growth in population. The Government has an opportunity to partner with Central Coast Council, which is planning a technology learning hub at Warnervale, and be part of an exciting development comprising a TAFE, a university and possibly a high school. It would be the first of its kind in the State.

At Ourimbah there is a similar site that comprises a community college, a TAFE and a university. It is a result of a unique partnership between Hunter TAFE, the University of Newcastle and Central Coast Community College. Central Coast Council has allocated land for the technology learning hub. The incorporation of a high school in the infrastructure would provide a pathway-type education for students. These are the sorts of initiatives we are asking the Government to look at. At the last election, Labor committed to providing \$40 million to construct a high school. The community is asking for the same commitment from the Government. The children of the residents who first started campaigning for a high school in the area are now in year 12. I hope the children who are enrolling in kindergarten today do not go through to year 12 without attending a high school in their area. Approximately 5,000 to 6,000 people will be moving into the area in the next 10 years. That is significant population growth. The boundary of the electorate will have to be redrawn because of the growth occurring in the area.

The Central Coast plan, which has just been released, unfortunately did not mention the high school. The local community group that is campaigning for the school has again raised it in newspapers and last week on local radio. The Warnervale town centre—which relates to Woolworths, not the Government—is another facility the people want to see finalised. They also want a commitment to the North Warnervale railway station. Sometimes we get close. When I was previously the member for Wyong, the plans had been done and the brochures printed. After the election, all the brochures were pulped because the money had gone. We were close. We asked the Government to ensure that the infrastructure is available as people move into the area. A railway station interchange, town centre and high school are all part of the infrastructure that is needed to cater for that growth. As I said, there were a few good things for my electorate in this year's budget. I look forward to next year's budget providing more. I have given the Government my Christmas list of what it should include in its next budget.

Debate adjourned.

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I extend a very warm welcome to my guests, the ladies in the front row of the gallery. They are supporters and scientists of the Children's Medical Research Institute, who are accompanied by their most passionate advocate, the former member for Strathfield, the Hon. Virginia Judge. We had a wonderful time today. I learned a lot and you are welcome to come back any time. I hope you enjoy question time.

I also welcome Christine Harvey, Diana Morrison and Virginia Parsons from St Vincent's Hospital, who helped organise the St Vincent's Giving Tree Gift Appeal today. I thank members and staff who supported the appeal—my staff, in particular, who organised the event. The children will be very grateful. I acknowledge and welcome Isabella Vacaflores from North Sydney Girls High School who is doing work experience at the Parliament, a guest of the Treasurer, Minister for Industrial Relations and member for Willoughby. What a wonderful school and what wonderful students come out of North Sydney Girls High School.

I also welcome students and teachers from North Haven Public School, guests of the Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Assistant Minister for Education and member for Port Macquarie. I welcome Joe Bissett and congratulate him on recently completing the Higher School Certificate, a guest of the Minister for Planning and member for Pittwater.

I also welcome to the gallery today members of the Lions Club of Nowra, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast and member for Kiama. I also welcome Chuck DeVore, a former three-term Republican assemblyman from California, a guest of the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones from the other place. I welcome Mayor Lara Symkowiak, Councillor Rob Mills, Councillor Michael Morrison and General Manager Ron Moore, all of Camden Council, guests of the Government Whip and member for Camden.

I also welcome representatives from the CanRevive Cancer Foundation: Vice Chairman Peter Sinn, President Ella Lee and Vice President Eric Yeung, guests of the member for Oatley. I welcome Mayor Jim Simmons and Ashley Lindsay of Clarence Valley Council, and Peter Gordon, Daniel Spears and Warren Campbell, who are representatives from the Maclean Chamber of Commerce, guests of the member for Clarence.

I also welcome Christina Daley, the wife of the member for Maroubra, and their children Olivia and Austin, guests of the member for Maroubra. I acknowledge and welcome Ameena Barhoum, a year 10 student from Strathfield Girls High School, who is doing work experience at the Parliament, a guest of the member for Strathfield. I also welcome students and their teacher from Meadowbank TAFE to the Chamber today.

Bills

CROWN LAND MANAGEMENT BILL 2016

LAND ACQUISITION (JUST TERMS COMPENSATION) AMENDMENT BILL 2016

REGULATORY AND OTHER LEGISLATION (AMENDMENTS AND REPEALS) BILL 2016

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION BILL 2016

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (SHARK MANAGEMENT TRIALS) BILL 2016

Assent

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

Governor

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER: I report the receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor:

T. F. BATHURST
Lieutenant-Governor

Government House
Sydney, 17 November 2016

The Honourable Thomas Frederick Bathurst, AC, Lieutenant-Governor of the State of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that, consequent on the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC, (Ret'd), being absent from the State, he has assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

Question Time

SHELLHARBOUR HOSPITAL

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:23): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister listen to the 27 doctors across the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District who have written an open letter, published today in the *Illawarra Mercury*, stating their opposition to her plan to privatise services at Shellharbour Hospital and abandon her hospital privatisation policy?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (14:23): I do not know if anyone noticed but the attendant just handed me a document and it happens to be a letter to the editor of the *Illawarra Mercury* written by Clinical Professor Denis King, OAM, Chair of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District Board, in which he answers every single one of those concerns. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to read some of the letter on to the record. It says:

The article's opening statement is incorrect in suggesting the Local Health District (LHD) has imposed a "gag order" on doctors.

Any clinician has the right to express their personal views—

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

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister remains relevant to the question. The member for Keira will resume his seat.

Mr Ryan Park: We are interested in her opinion, not an attack on doctors.

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

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: I cannot think of anything more relevant than another very senior experienced doctor, who the member knows is the board chair down there, answering the questions.

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

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: The letter goes on:

It is disappointing that some misconceptions remain about this project, despite the fact that our CE has conducted eight staff forums, specifically about this proposal - mainly at Shellharbour, Port Kembla and Kiama Hospital staff. The CE has also outlined the proposal as part of her regular general updates at open staff meetings at Wollongong, Shellharbour and Shoalhaven Hospitals and organised five drop-in information sessions where representatives of the LHD and Health Infrastructure were available in the foyer of various hospitals, for up to six hours at a time, to answer questions and provide information about this proposal.

This is typical of the campaign being led by Labor, which is a disinformation campaign to scare people. They are straight-out lies.

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

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: Professor King goes on to say:

That the proposal is to provide more services and more complex services than are currently available at Shellharbour, and significantly more than would have been provided with the original proposed \$250 million redevelopment, with a significant greater capital cost. As a result, the proposal envisages a significant increase in employment in all workforce groups when compared to the current Shellharbour workforce.

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

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: One would think Labor members would want to know the answer to this but they do not want it. The letter continues:

That public patients will be treated in exactly the same way as at present—

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

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: The member does not want to know about this. It continues:

—that is, treatment will be provided free of charge and access will be solely on the basis of clinical need.

That the contract will mandate strict and enforceable service and quality standards. A breach of the contract may result in immediate reversion of the facility to the public sector.

That the public and shared components of the development will revert to public ownership at a time to be specified in the contract.

It will come back to public ownership.

There will be an option to continue the arrangement if it is mutually beneficial and the LHD agrees.

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

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: It continues:

The private component will also revert to public ownership at a time to be specified in the contract, but later than the public and shared components.

I will hand up this document so that everyone has a chance to read the truth, not just about this project but about all our partnership proposals.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (14:28): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier explain to the House how the Government's record \$73.3 billion infrastructure spend is benefiting regional New South Wales?

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:29): I thank the member for Myall Lakes for his question. He is a champion for regional New South Wales. There has been wonderful investment in that part of the world including the signature Pacific Highway Bulahdelah bypass at a cost of \$368 million. That upgrade will provide safer roads for his community. The Pacific Highway upgrade is important to so many members. The member's electorate has received \$10 million to upgrade Manning Hospital and Taree TAFE. The member has achieved these significant investments by championing his electorate and regional New South Wales.

When this Government came to office and opened the books the debt and deficit was obvious, as was the lack of investment in regional New South Wales. There was a backlog of work to be done to make our communities safer, to make the economy stronger and to grow jobs in regional New South Wales. The Government developed projects such as Bridges for the Bush and Fixing Country Roads, and we built hospitals,

schools and highways. Those opposite did not have a formula for progress; they only produced glossy brochures. The Opposition would struggle to build a sandcastle on Old Bar Beach.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Christmas has come early for regional communities in New South Wales. I have Santa's list.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is difficult to hear the Minister. Members will cease interjecting. I remind members that some of them are on calls to order from earlier in the day. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the third time.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Before I update the House about the presents to be found under the Christmas tree this year, I have to go back six years to a Labor Government. The economy was failing and New South Wales had the highest unemployment rate. Those opposite left the State with debt and deficit. There were budget blowouts, the introduction of 10 new taxes that ripped money out of small business owners and the hospitals were abandoned. In Sydney the transport system was a shambles. When the Opposition attempted to fix the timetable all it did was change the definition of "late". They changed the rules rather than fixed the issues.

Following the election of the Coalition Government in 2011 an average of \$4 billion has been spent on roads, maritime and freight projects across regional New South Wales. That is an increase of 67 per cent on regional roads and infrastructure than was spent by the Opposition when it was in office. It is important to regional communities. For decades the Opposition left regional New South Wales behind. There will be an investment of \$300 million towards Bridges for the Bush to improve freight connectivity that will move produce to the port and the plate.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Towns such as Boorowa, Gundagai, Carrathool, Gunnedah and Tabulam have benefited from the Bridges for the Bush program. The Great Western Highway received \$20 million to improve the road around Kelso. Those opposite did nothing about the Bells Line of Road, but this Government and the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight in the other place delivered \$43 million to improve the corridor and \$5 million to reserve the corridor as an expressway. The Government is planning for the future, not just today. The Coalition understands it must leave this State in a better situation.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Clerk to stop the clock until members come to order. I call the member for Keira to order for the second time.

[Extension of time]

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Over the past month many members have trekked out to Orange. If they drove they would see the clear investment in roads and infrastructure to make communities safer. Those opposite did not drive but flew in because they want to bypass regional New South Wales. They took off from Sydney and flew in to Orange. I am sure it was shocking for them to see the \$1.5 million investment by this Government in the Orange airport. Connectivity is the key to supporting regional communities.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting or they will be removed from the Chamber. All members who have been called to order are now deemed to be on three calls to order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Fixing Country Roads is another fantastic program introduced by the Coalition Government and advocated by the Nationals. There has been \$100 million invested in 140 projects to ensure communities in regional New South Wales have safe roads so the school bus can get to school safely and families can travel locally. Local roads are just as important as the freeways. It is a fantastic investment. Hundreds of millions of dollars are available to fix country roads as part of Rebuilding NSW. There has been a commitment of \$500 million to the Newell Highway upgrade, which will cut down travel time and increase road safety. Fixing Country Rail has received \$400 million. It is about connectivity through road, rail and airports. The Government is connecting regional New South Wales to the city. Why? Because we want to live in regional New South Wales. Some of the best cities in the State are in regional New South Wales, but they need to be connected for business and for our children. It is about the future of regional New South Wales.

CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:36): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Will the Minister inform the House if his agency has engaged John "Jock" Murray, the former director-general of the NSW Department of Transport, to conduct a review—

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

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: It is what happens when you lose by-elections. I will continue—of the Sydney Central Business District and South East Light Rail project? If so, will the Minister release his report?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:37): I thank the member for Maroubra for his interest in light rail. He spent most of the year telling everybody that the trees would be removed from Moore Park, but they are still there. The member has been to see me and asked to have it extended to Maroubra. The member wants me to use value capture to pay for it. I am perplexed. There are two views being presented by those opposite. The member for Maroubra wants it extended to Maroubra while the Leader of Opposition's only interest in public transport is the night ride bus.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: The question was specifically about a review by Jock Murray and whether the Minister would release the report, not about the CBD and South East Light Rail broadly.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is entitled to make introductory comments. I will hear further from the Minister.

Ms Jodi McKay: Say 30 seconds or so?

The SPEAKER: Order! That is for me to judge.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: There are two different views. I have not had one question on transport this year from the shadow Minister for Transport. I ask the shadow Minister to tell me when she asked a question. I ask the shadow Minister to give me the date. I am intrigued to know.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Keira for the final time.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Guess what this Government does? It builds infrastructure. Guess what it also does? It does assurance reports on infrastructure.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am very happy to confirm that Jock did the assurance report. There is nothing new in that. In closing, I wish everyone a happy Christmas. I am interested to know what Labor Party members will get up to over the Christmas break. Are they going on a hunting safari to shoot a few elephants? I wish them well. Have a lovely Christmas. I will see members next year.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

STATE ECONOMY

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (14:41): My question is addressed to the Treasurer. How has the New South Wales economy performed in 2016, and how has the New South Wales Government delivered strong financial results for the people of this State?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Cessnock to order for the first time. If members continue to interject they will be removed from the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (14:41): I thank the member for Hornsby for his question and for his hard work as the Parliamentary Secretary for Treasury. Unaccustomed as I am to gloating, I inform the House that the Government received the latest jobs figures two hours ago, hot off the press. I confirm that we are the party for the workers. New South Wales has the lowest unemployment rate in Australia, at 4.9 per cent. Not only is that the lowest rate in the nation but Victoria had the second lowest rate at 5.7 per cent, so we are way ahead. I am also very pleased to say that in the 12 months to October full-time job numbers were up. There were 23,000 new jobs. Compared to the rest of Australia that is fantastic. The rest of Australia created 18,000 full-time jobs. In New South Wales we created more than 23,000 full-time jobs. That is not just in Sydney but all across the regions. We have created tens of thousands of jobs in the past 12 months, including in the regions. We are very pleased to say that since the last election we have created more than 135,000 jobs for the great people of this State.

Mr Brad Hazzard: How many?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We have created more than 135,000 extra jobs. I know this is an issue that Opposition members often ask us about, so I am very pleased to announce that New South Wales also has the lowest rate of youth unemployment. Youth unemployment is an issue that is very close to our hearts. We know we are the party of the worker. We are the party for jobs. Under Labor, New South Wales had the highest unemployment rate. New South Wales had the lowest rate of job creation.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: These jobs figures are very fresh. They are only two hours old. They cap a cracker of a year for the New South Wales budget and economy. We have had a very good year economically. Look at our budget position. For the first time in the State's history we have no net debt. The general government sector has no net debt. In the 2011-12 financial year net debt was \$14 billion.

Mr Brad Hazzard: How much?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It was \$14 billion. Now there is no net debt. We have surpluses as far as the eye can see. There is record spending on infrastructure and services. That is what this Government's budget has delivered. Because it is Christmas, I thank the unions for their investment in Ausgrid. Because the unions invested in Ausgrid, this State now has—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockdale will remove himself from the Chamber for one hour.

[Interruption]

The member for Rockdale may stay if he remains silent.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We are a government that listens. We thank the trade unions for their investment in Ausgrid, which resulted in gross proceeds to the State of more than \$16 billion. Let us look at some of the economic indicators. New South Wales continues to be number one in CommSec *State of the States* reports. We are the strongest growing State. We have the highest level of business investment. We have the highest retail trade. We are the only State that consistently has more optimists than pessimists.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Except on that side of the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Exactly. I wish there were more optimists on the Opposition benches. They are not happy. I do not want to be mean, because it is Christmas, but I ask any member to put up their hand if an Opposition member has said bad things to them about Mr Foley. Be honest.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order: My point of order goes to relevance. The question was about unemployment. I would like to know more about the unemployment rate of The Nationals candidates.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We know that that is a sore point for the Leader of the Opposition.
[Extension of time]

We have the highest retail trade figures. We have smashed the record for housing approvals—more than 75,000 in the past 12 months. I thank the Minister for Planning and all Government members who have contributed to that. We are delivering more than 1,000 every week in this State. Unfortunately, the Opposition has not had a very good year when it comes to economic matters. I know the family of the member for Maroubra are in the gallery. We believe that the member for Maroubra should be the shadow Treasurer. Bring him back. He is numerate and he reads the budget papers. I am pleased to say that in front of his family.

Mr Luke Foley: I have a new plan for shadow Treasurer: you.

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the Leader of the Opposition paying members to laugh at unfunny jokes? The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: That is very funny. The Leader of the Opposition should stick to practising questions. The Opposition have had a cracker of a year.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira is on his final warning.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The shadow Treasurer is still getting his head around the budget papers. Labor launched a policy to use local steel, when in government they built the WIN Stadium using steel from China. Then the Opposition coined a new phrase: "foundation capital". I looked high and low to find out what foundation capital meant. We know what foundation capital means to Opposition members; it means spending money they do not have on projects they will never build. Christmas can be a stressful time for people. In all seriousness I say that our citizens can go into the Christmas period knowing that their jobs are secure and that we are building the services and infrastructure that this State needs, unlike members opposite.

CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:48): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Is the Minister or his department in receipt of any correspondence from the Spanish infrastructure

firm Acciona requesting additional funds to meet the project deadlines for the completion of the CBD and South East Light Rail project?

The SPEAKER: Order! It was a serious question. Government members will come to order. They do not need to comment or interject.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:49): The only people having a siesta are those opposite, and it has gone on all year. They should go down to the east and see what is going on. The member for Maroubra will talk about all this great infrastructure being built. They will see the cut and cover tunnel and the stabling yards being built. I particularly pay tribute to the member for Coogee for all his advocacy in relation to it. The Labor Party is now asking questions about the contractor. The member for Strathfield should look at what is going on in this city—\$73 billion is being spent across the State and the \$2.1 billion light rail project is being built in the heart of the central business district [CBD], designed to remove hundreds of buses from CBD streets. Guess what? The Labor Party has worked out it is being built by the Spanish. Yes, a contract is in place. We expect it to be delivered to budget on time and we are going to continue to see great infrastructure built across this State. Happy Christmas, member for Strathfield.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is answering a question from a Labor member and his answer is relevant to the question. Members do not listen, they interject throughout the whole of question time and then take points of order regarding relevance. There is no point of order.

OPEN AND TRANSPARENT GOVERNMENT

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (14:50): My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. How is the Government utilising the tools of open and transparent governance for the betterment of the people of this State?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. I will give no more second chances, such as the one I gave the member for Rockdale. If members continue to behave in an unparliamentary manner they will be removed from the Chamber. Members will show respect for the Chamber and for themselves.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (14:51): What a great year it has been for the Baird-Barilaro Government, and just look at some of the reforms that it has already passed: bills dealing with the Independent Commission Against Corruption, biodiversity and rock fishing in just one week. Imagine how big next year will be. I shout out to my ministerial colleague Minister Dominello; we have had a massive year in the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation. Recently we were rated the number one department not just in this State or in the nation but in the whole world.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members who are holding up funny little photographs will put them away. Such behaviour is unparliamentary and not permitted. I know that Opposition members have their instructions, but they will abide by my ruling or be removed from the Chamber.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The member for Cessnock has been frustrating me all year with his numerous Government Information (Public Access) Act [GIPAA] requests that I have had to deal with. Being an open and transparent Government—and I can say my ministerial colleagues know exactly the importance of being an open and transparent Government—we have been releasing plenty of information to our good friends in the Labor Party. I have decided that I want to get in on this whole GIPAA thing, and being Christmas and in the spirit of the season, I have decided to GIPAA Santa Claus and he did not disappoint. I have a lot of information here, a lot of which has been redacted because it is commercial in confidence. I can tell the House that some interesting information has come through in a number of letters back and forth. The first letter from Santa Claus to the member for Prospect states:

Dear member for Prospect

As you know thanks to Baird, Grant—

Sorry, I redact that—

Barilaro Government retail spending has gone through the roof.

Mrs Claus and I were hoping that you would be available to be Santa at Prospect Mall this year because my elves have told me that you are really good at pretending to be something that you are not.

Kind regards

Santa

PS I know the bells on my sleigh are shiny please don't steal them.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: This Minister pretends to be a serious character.

The SPEAKER: Order! Many things have been said this week that were not funny. There have also been personal attacks on members in this Chamber. The member for Maroubra will not lecture me. I will hear the member's point of order. The member for Prospect will come to order.

Mr Michael Daley: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. At least if the Minister is going to have a crack at someone at this time of the year, make it funny like Minister Roberts, because that was as flat as a tack, mate.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra did not explain his point of order very well.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The next one:

Dear Santa

I can't wait until Christmas this year. I want to be Deputy Premier right now.

Kind regards

Giovanni

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question. What is the member's point of order? She did not hear the question because she was not listening.

Ms Jodi McKay: It is relevance. The Minister was not asked about Santa Claus. He was asked about openness and transparency. You may think that is about Santa Claus but it is not.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Open and transparent GIPAA applications. The next:

Dear Opposition Leader

I'm just confirming you actually requested to renew your subscription to Spectator, Quadrant and the IPA this year. Happy to do this, just how does this fit with your leadership of the left faction? Oh that's right, you're the man of principle.

Yours sincerely

Santa

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is making a joke. It may not be funny; I accept that.

Mr Paul Lynch: I think the Minister is now in breach of Standing Order 59: tedious repetition. It is the third or fourth time he has talked about Santa Claus. It is getting tedious and it is certainly repetitive.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will listen further to the Minister's answer and then rule on the point of order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The next:

Dear Santa

I don't believe in you and I don't want any presents. Go away.

Member for Liverpool.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister may continue.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I have one from the Premier, "Dear Santa"—No, I will leave this until after the reshuffle. [*Extension of time*]

This one is for you, Madam Speaker:

Dear Madam Speaker

Please stop interrupting coalition members when they are on their feet. Especially Minister Perrottet, he's very popular in these parts.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: The Minister is misleading the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have granted the Minister a two-minute extension. He will get no more than that.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The next:

Dear Santa

Please can I have a pickaxe and the member for Auburn's home address.

Kind regards

Noreen

The next:

Dear Santa

I don't need a present just some advice.

How do I get through 2017 actually doing less work than what I did in 2016.

Michael Daley

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not true. The member's family is in the gallery.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I do not know how this ended up, this one is to Mrs Claus:

Dar Mrs Claus

I know you must be disappointed about Hillary but don't worry we smashed through the glass ceiling here in NSW thanks to my loo coup. Just a reminder please tell your husband he shouldn't visit the bathrooms on level 2.

Thanks Jenny

And please no presents for Ray Williams this year.

I have one from Steve Kamper:

Please help me I have made a massive mistake.

Everyone knows I'm a hard right winger but I have filled out the wrong form now I'm an MP in the wrong party and all my developer mates want to know what's going on.

The next:

Dear Santa

I really want the Government to ban safe schools for Christmas but I think the Government is going cold on this whole banning thing. Any advice?

Damien Francis Tudehope

Chair of the ICAC Committee

The last one is:

Dear Santa

I would like: a beaker, a portable stove, flasks of multiple sizes, ketamine, ephedrine, methlemen, a portable pill press. Please do not deliver directly to my residential address, I will have someone meet your elves near the Summer Hill car park after 1.00 a.m.

Party hard this Christmas

JoJo and the Haylens

PROFESSOR DENIS KING

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:58): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. I refer to her answer to my earlier question where she quoted Denis King in defence of her hospital privatisation policy. Would that be the same Denis King who personally donated \$3,000 to her election campaign last year?

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER (North Shore—Minister for Health) (14:59): I thank the member for the opportunity to speak further on this matter.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has the call.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: Professor King was engaged by the Labor Government when it was in office, so at least it had some sense. I will quote the Leader of the Opposition in relation to the engagement of the private sector to partner with us to deliver on hospitals. In his budget reply speech on 25 June 2015 he said:

Unlike the ideologues to our left, I do not believe that public is always good and private is always bad. For me, what matters is what works. I meant what I said on the day I was elected the Leader of the Labor Party in New South Wales: I will champion an enterprising private sector and an essential public sector in this State.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume her seat. What is the member's point of order?

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The question is about whether the person is the same Denis King who donated to her campaign.

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

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: The Leader of the Opposition went on to say:

The responsibility of government is to ensure that services are delivered. The private and the not-for-profit sectors should play a significant role in the delivery of our public services.

Hear, hear! I thank all the champions of our public service. I particularly acknowledge the Children's Medical Research Institute staff who are in the public gallery.

Ms Jodi McKay: They've gone.

Ms JILLIAN SKINNER: If they have gone then I acknowledge them in their absence. The Children's Medical Research Institute is a marvellous organisation that has the support of people like Denis King and me to deliver wonderful care for the people of New South Wales.

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

COUNTRY EDUCATION SERVICES

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (15:01): My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. How is the Government delivering education services for students in country New South Wales and related matters?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI (Murray—Minister for Education) (15:02): Today is a great day and an anniversary of sorts for me. It is now 365 days since the Opposition last asked me a question about education. The Education portfolio represents one-quarter of the budget and employs 100,000 people. The Opposition has not asked a question about it for 365 days. As I have said many times when Government members have asked me questions about education, we have done a fantastic job building schools, supporting staff, signing up to Gonski and supporting kids in remote parts of New South Wales. Every Aboriginal student in New South Wales now attracts funding. That did not happen under members opposite; it happened under us.

As I have said before, we will contrast our record with Labor's record at the next election. Our record of long-term leasing over Labor's record of long-term leasing at Circular Quay will provide a fair comparison. I will concede that Labor did build infrastructure when it was in Government. It spent \$1.9 billion building the desalination plant. Today is a special day because I have the one glass of water the plant has produced. This glass of water I am holding is what they got for \$1.9 billion. The plant needs to be turned up a little bit though; the water is a bit salty.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: Like everyone in this House, I am interested in education. My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. The Minister is speaking about the desalination plant.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question. The member for Lakemba missed his chance to ask a question. He will resume his seat.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: The Labor Government could have spent money on schools but spent it on other things instead. Labor members made other choices. We have made lots of very difficult choices that we accept have upset a few people. We acknowledge the by-election result in Orange, but I can say one thing: We will not be a do-nothing Government. We had 16 years of a do-nothing government under members opposite and now we have had six years of a do-nothing Opposition. They have said nothing to suggest that they will be anything other than a do-nothing government if they are elected.

What did members opposite say during the Orange by-election and what in fact have they been saying for the past six years? They said, "We will do nothing. We will do nothing controversial. We will not upset anybody." There they were arm in arm with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. Labor members have said that they will not do council amalgamations. What, like the one in Deniliquin? We have two councils in that area, Deniliquin and Conargo. The two council chambers literally back on to each other. Two general managers sit 50 metres apart from each other, each on a salary of about \$250,000. There are also other duplications. Those offices are 50 metres apart yet members opposite tell us not to amalgamate councils.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: My point of order is again relevance under Standing Order 129. What does this have to do with education?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question. The member for Lakemba will resume his seat.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: Their attitude is the same on everything. They will not sell Hurlstone Agricultural High School. Okay. So they will not build a new school in the Hawkesbury or spend \$20 million on the existing school at Glenfield. They will not fix up those special schools.

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

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: They will not spend any money at William Stimson Public School. Members opposite want to build all the things that we are going to build without making any of the difficult decisions. We are not going to be a do-nothing Government. Being in government gets tough from time to time, but we are not going to be a do-nothing Government. Members opposite have to tell people what they are going to do and not just what they are not going to do.

What members opposite have done is deliver a Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party member to this House. Members of that party do not give a damn about education in regional New South Wales. They are not at schools in Moree and Walgett talking about Aboriginal education. They want to get rid of Howard's national gun laws. That is the deal members opposite did. [*Extension of time*]

There is a saying that if you do not stand for something you will fall for anything. The Leader of the Opposition was celebrating with the Shooters party the other night. I think he even made a big fuss about it at the press party last night. What is he celebrating? Is he celebrating AR-15 assault rifles? That is what the Shooters party want in New South Wales, and that is what the Leader of the Opposition has given them.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Clerk to stop the clock. Members will cease interjecting.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: I have got more for you.

Mr Luke Foley: You had better be quick because you won't have a job by the time we come back. My point of order is under Standing Order 73. The Minister is making personal reflections on members. If he wants to move a motion that is fine. What I am celebrating is flogging him.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: It is not without consequence that for political expediency the Leader of the Opposition has helped a Shooters party candidate be elected to the lower House. I understand that the strategy was to put The Nationals last, but I have a wife and two children of eight and six years old. We go on holidays. We might have been at Port Arthur that day.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Clerk to stop the clock. If Opposition members continue to interject aggressively I will continue to order the clock to be stopped to allow the Minister to complete his answer.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The Minister's answer is beyond the pale; it is ridiculous. The Minister should be speaking about education, not about guns and Port Arthur.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Lakemba will resume his seat. If he takes another spurious point of order he will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: You cannot get out of it so easily. You did a preference deal with people who want to get rid of the national gun laws. Have a look at their website—it is the first thing on their website. They want to get rid of the Howard gun laws. You cannot just dismiss this now.

Dr Hugh McDermott: It was your police Minister who went against the gun laws and the other States.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat. I intend to curtail this answer because of the behaviour of Opposition members. I direct the Clerk to stop the clock.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. The question related directly to education. I also ask that you advise the Minister to direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: Do you know the sound it made at Port Arthur that day? The sound it made that day at Port Arthur: bang, bang, bang! You do not get out of it that easily. You cannot dismiss it. Bang! Bang! That is the Shooters party. That is the deal you did with the Shooters party. They want to get rid of the Howard gun laws.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Prospect continues to yell he will be removed from the Chamber. The Minister has completed his answer.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES CURRICULUM

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:12): My question is directed to the Premier. Given that Deloitte, Jobs for NSW, the Council for Economic Development Australia, and Information and Communications Technology educators have all stressed the importance to the State's economy of specifically skilling up students on digital technologies, when will the Government finally catch up with all other State and Territory governments and adopt the Federal Government's digital technologies curriculum?

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:12): I thank the member for Sydney for his question. I know he has asked the education Minister similar questions. The Minister would have told the member, as I will, that it is an incredibly important issue. Looking at the challenges the State is facing, one of the most important things is how we prepare the next generation for the future. There is no doubt that in terms of the digital economy and the innovation aspects that come with it we need to ensure that our kids are best prepared.

We have done a number of things on the science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] side. The reason is that if the digital economy is going to grow at seven times the rate of the traditional economy over the next 10 years, where will it go beyond that? We need to do everything now to have within our curriculum everything possible to prepare our kids. The Minister has overseen that, and I reject the member's assertion that we are behind. In many respects, we are leading in knowledge, particularly in relation to our STEM disciplines. We have announced a number of initiatives to give more capacity to our teachers, more incentives in terms of teaching, to provide extra subjects, extra skills and a wider and broader STEM curriculum. That is incredibly important.

With Hurlstone Agricultural College, we have an unbelievable facility coming to the Hawkesbury that will make a huge contribution, not just for this city or for this State but also for country. It is something that we will look at closely. Together with the new secretary of the department, the Minister and I have done exactly that. It is not just about the challenge of STEM and innovation in the digital economy; it is also a fact that the global economy is moving from west to east. The traditional economic powerhouse of the United States and the United Kingdom/ Europe is moving to the east. By 2020, China, India and other parts of Asia will have 30 per cent of the global economy. So how are we ensuring that the next generation is prepared for that shifting economy? Language is obviously a part of that, and an understanding of how we can prepare.

The New South Wales Government will continue its commitment to provide children in this State with every opportunity. Clearly, STEM is part of that and we will see more announcements as the secretary considers those two challenges, in particular. We are proud of what our teachers and schools are providing for our children. We will continue to do everything possible to give every student in New South Wales the best opportunity for the future as the world changes.

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (15:15): My question is addressed to the Premier. After six years of making New South Wales number one, how is the Government continuing to invest in vital infrastructure and services for the people of this great State?

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:16): I commend the member for Camden not just for being the person he is or the member he is but also because he is the best Whip the world has ever seen—Devo wrote a song about him. He sits alongside the member for Wagga Wagga—I cannot forget him. The Opposition agrees that he has had an incredible year. It has been a big six years in New South Wales. The last thing I want to do is to go back and think about what was here six years ago. We can all remember how dark, desperate and desolate it was. The leadership of the former government, for 16 years, delivered the lowest number of jobs in the country, the lowest economic growth in the country and promises it could not deliver.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: New South Wales is back, baby; she is so back. New South Wales is so back in the game, and we are loving it. From an economic point of view, we heard the Treasurer say that there were more than 20,000 jobs this month alone. Everywhere one turns there are jobs—members should look under their seats; jobs are coming out everywhere. That is what the Treasurer is doing for this State. I know members love it, and so they should. We are proud of our economic growth and economic confidence. New South Wales used to be last, but we are back leading the nation.

We remember the Labor budgets. It was a terrible time. We remember the deficits. Just after we came to government there was a deficit of \$10 billion. Where are we today? We are \$8 billion in surplus. We remember the debt. It was forecast to be \$20 billion but now there is not a dollar of net debt. That is what we have under this Government. Then we look at the infrastructure miracle that is New South Wales. Everywhere one turns infrastructure is being built—cranes in the sky and tunnelling machines. There is even one under this House.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Opposition should note that, in terms of road and rail, there is more going on in New South Wales than in every other State combined. That is what is being delivered in New South Wales. It does not matter whether it is Sydney Metro, NorthConnex, WestConnex, Pacific Highway or the Princes Highway, there is infrastructure everywhere we turn. Crackers loves it—he cannot get enough of it. In fact, he is the only person in the State who does not want any infrastructure anywhere.

[Interruption]

They do not thank us. "Merry Christmas" is all they say. We are mates; let us just keep working on that. On top of that we see reform in key policy areas. We are incredibly proud of what we are doing in the disability sector with the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Opal cards—how easy is it to get on and off transport? The former Labor Government talked about something similar but all it did was talk, whereas we delivered the Opal card. The Gonski reforms under this Minister for Education are incredibly important.

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

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Service NSW under the Minister for Finance is making a difference everywhere. Even the mighty Fuel Check under the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation is making a difference, helping people work out what they pay for fuel. In relation to health under this Minister for Health—

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease shouting.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: —there is 32.9 per cent more in the budget for frontline services than when Labor was last in government.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mount Druitt will cease shouting. The member for Londonderry will cease shouting.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: As for hospitals, in this year alone we have new hospitals at Blacktown, Dubbo, Kempsey, Parkes, Lismore—I will see the Deputy Speaker up there for the opening tomorrow—and Byron Central. Education funding is 31 per cent more than in Labor's last budget, and this year we have new schools, including Anzac Park Public School, Rutherford High School, Ring Farm Public School and Brewarrina Central School. That is what has happened this year alone.

The SPEAKER: Order! Those members who are not interested in the answer may leave the Chamber.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Everywhere one turns there is good news for the people of New South Wales.
[Extension of time]

And the future is bright. A convention centre is opening soon. All the Opposition members will be down there. The Metro West has been announced and is underway. The future is bright, unless, of course, the Opposition ever gets into government. The leader of the Shooters, Fishers and Foley Party said in his inaugural speech:

Political power is a means to an end. It should never be the end in itself. I reject the empty pursuit of power. There is no honourable political future for a Labor Party that will not uphold courageously the principle from which it draws life.

I say to the Shooters, Fishers and Foley Party on the other side that it might think it can get into government but on this side we are going to fight for the people of New South Wales, we are going to fight for every community in this State, because we want to deliver for them on health, education, roads and transport. We want more jobs, we want more economic growth. If those opposite think they can get into government I can tell them that we are going to fight them every step of the way, and not just in our electorates; we are going to come after all their electorates, because the people of New South Wales deserve what this Government is doing for them.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: That is what you said you would do in Orange. How did Orange go for you, Mike? You will now have to fight us all the way up there too.

The SPEAKER: Order! The time for questions has expired.

*Documents***DEPARTMENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY****Reports**

The SPEAKER: I table the report of the Department of the Legislative Assembly for the year ended 30 June 2016.

Report printed.

DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES**Reports**

The SPEAKER: I table the report of the Department of Parliamentary Services for the year ended 30 June 2016, together with the Financial Performance Report of the Parliament of New South Wales 2015-2016.

Reports printed.

PRINTING OF PAPERS

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That the following papers be printed:

Reports for the year ended 30 June 2015 of—Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator; Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services; Workers Compensation Independent Review Office; Animal Research Review Panel; Official Community Visitors; National Environment Protection Council; Murray-Darling Basin Authority; Public Defenders; Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales; Legal Services Council (incorporating the report of the Commissioner for Uniform Legal Services Regulation); Law Society of New South Wales; Professional Standards Department of the Law Society of New South Wales; Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW; National Environment Protection Council; and Mine Subsidence Board.

Reports for 2015 of—Wild Dog Destruction Board; Technical Education Trust Funds; and Wine Grapes Marketing Board.

Reports for the year ended 30 June 2016 of—Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Agency; Combined New South Wales Health Professional Councils (Volumes One to Three); Health Care Complaints Commission; New South Wales Health Foundation; National Health Practitioner Ombudsman and Privacy Commissioner; Administrator of the National Health Funding Pool (Volume Ones and Two); Department of Family and Community Services (Volumes One to Three); Multicultural NSW; Central Coast Regional Development Corporation; Greater Sydney Commission; Hunter Development Corporation; Ministerial Development Corporation; Department of Planning and Environment; UrbanGrowth NSW; UrbanGrowth NSW Development Corporation; Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales; New South Wales Bar Association; New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal; Crown Solicitor's Office; Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions; Judicial Commission of New South Wales; Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales; Law Society of New South Wales (including the reports for the Public Purpose Fund and the Fidelity Fund) (Volumes One to Three); New South Wales Law Reform Commission; Legal Aid New South Wales; Legal Profession Admission Board; Office of the Legal Services Commissioner; NSW Trustee and Guardian (incorporating the report of the Public Guardian); Destination NSW; New South Wales Institute of Sport; Office of Sport; State Sporting Venues Authority; Sydney Olympic Park Authority; Venues NSW; NSW Architects Registration Board; Fair Trading Administration Corporation; Professional Standards Council; Rental Bond Board; Centennial and Moore Park Trust; NSW Climate Change Fund; Office of Environment and Heritage (incorporating the Heritage Council); Environment Protection Authority; New South Wales Environmental Trust; Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales; Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust; Lord Howe Island Board; Parramatta Park Trust; Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust; New South Wales Scientific Committee; Western Sydney Parklands Trust; Zoological Parks Board of New South Wales (trading as Taronga Conservation Society Australia); NSW Skills Board; Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards New South Wales; Administration of Agricultural Statutory Authorities; Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW; Coal Innovation NSW Fund; Cobar Water Board; Dams Safety Committee; Dumaresq-Barwon Border Rivers Commission; NSW Food Authority; Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development; Local Land Services; Rice Marketing Board; New South Wales Rural Assistance Authority; Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Trust; Veterinary Practitioners Board of New South Wales; Building Insurers' Guarantee Corporation (BIGCorp); Department of Finance, Services and Innovation (including the report of the NSW Procurement Board, Waste Assets Management Corporation, Registrar-General, Surveyor-General, Geographical Names Board of New South Wales, Office of the Valuer-General, and Board of Surveying and Spatial Information); Insurance and Care NSW (including the financial statements for Workers Compensation (Dust Diseases) Authority, Lifetime Care and Support Authority, NSW Self Insurance Corporation and Sporting Injuries Compensation Authority) (Volumes One and Two); Mines Subsidence Board; Property NSW (including the financial statements for Government Property NSW, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority and NSW Teacher Housing Authority); Service NSW; State Records Authority of New South Wales; NSW Government Telecommunications (Telco) Authority; Ministry of Health (incorporating the Financial Statements of Public Health Organisations under its control) (Volumes One to Four); Mental Health Commission of New South Wales; Mental Health Review Tribunal; New South Wales Institute of Psychiatry; Trustees of the Anzac Memorial Building; Fire and Rescue NSW; NSW Rural Fire Service; Serious Offenders Review Council; New South Wales State Emergency Service; State Parole Authority; New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council; Ausgrid; Delta Electricity; Endeavour Energy; Essential Energy; Forestry Corporation of New South Wales; Hunter Water Corporation; Long Service Corporation; New South Wales Treasury (incorporating the State Rail Authority Residual Holding Corporation; Lotteries Assets Ministerial Holding Corporation; Liability Management Ministerial Corporation; Electricity Assets Ministerial Holding Corporation; Ports Assets Ministerial Holding Corporation; Electricity Transmission Ministerial Holding Corporation) (Volumes One and Two); New South Wales Treasury Corporation; Port Authority of New South Wales; Restart NSW Fund; SAS Trustee Corporation; Superannuation Administration Corporation (trading as Pillar Administration); Sydney Water Corporation (trading as Sydney Water); Trustees of the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Fund; Water NSW; Department of Transport (including the report of Transport for NSW, Transport Service of New South Wales and Sydney Ferries) (Volumes One and Two);

Independent Transport Safety Regulator; NSW Trains (Volumes One and Two); Rail Corporation New South Wales (Volumes One and Two); State Transit Authority of New South Wales (Volumes One and Two); Sydney Trains (Volumes One and Two); Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator; Office of Transport Safety Investigations; Roads and Maritime Services (Volumes One and Two); Greyhound Racing NSW; Racing NSW; Harness Racing New South Wales; Art Gallery of New South Wales; Trustees of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences; Sydney Opera House Trust; Library Council of New South Wales; Australian Museum Trust; New South Wales Crime Commission; Department of Justice (including the Report of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority); NSW Police Force; Office of Local Government; Department of Premier and Cabinet; Barangaroo Delivery Authority; Natural Resources Commission; Parliamentary Counsel's Office; Infrastructure NSW; New South Wales Electoral Commission; Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal; and Public Service Commission.

Assumed Identities Report of the New South Wales Crime Commission for the year ended 30 June 2016.

Report pursuant to section 35 of the Law Enforcement and National Security (Assumed Identities) Act 2010 of the New South Wales Police Integrity Commission for the year ended 30 June 2016.

Report of the State Insurance Regulatory Authority for the period 1 September 2014 to 30 June 2016.

Consolidated Financial Report of Snowy Hydro Limited for the period 28 June 2015 to 2 July 2016.

Environment Protection Authority Regulatory Assurance Statement 2015-16.

Report on the results of an investigation pursuant to section 430 of the Local Government Act 1993 into Hurstville City Council, dated February 2016.

New South Wales State of the Environment Report 2015.

Report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled "Report under Section 49(1) of the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 for the period ending 31 December 2015", dated April 2016.

Final Report and Determination of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Review of prices for Hunter Water Corporation from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2020", dated June 2016.

Final Report and Determination of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Review of prices for Sydney Water Corporation from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2020", dated June 2016.

Final Report and Determination of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Review of prices for the Water Administration Ministerial Corporation from 1 July 2016", dated June 2016.

Final Report and Determination of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Review of prices for WaterNSW from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2020", dated June 2016.

Quarterly Report of the Emergency Services Levy Insurance Monitor for the period ended 30 June 2016.

Report of the Independent Transport Safety Regulator entitled "Implementation of the NSW Government's response to the Final Report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Waterfall Rail Accident Reporting period: April 2015—March 2016".

Report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Energy Distribution Licences Annual Compliance Report 2014-15 Report to the Minister, Energy—Annual Compliance Report", dated October 2015.

Report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "NSW Energy Savings Scheme - Compliance and Operation in 2015, Annual Report to the Minister, NSW Energy Savings Scheme", dated July 2016.

Report by the Department of Family and Community Services entitled "Child Deaths 2015 Annual Report".

Report by the Attorney General pursuant to section 42 of the Workplace Surveillance Act 2005 for 2015.

Report pursuant to section 242A of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 by the New South Wales Crime Commission for the year ended 30 June 2016.

Report pursuant to section 27ZB of the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 by the New South Wales Crime Commission for the period 1 July 2015 to 4 November 2015.

Report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled "Report under Section 242(3) of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 for the period ending 28 May 2016, Covert Search Warrants", dated August 2016.

Report of the NSW Sentencing Council entitled "Intensive correction orders: Statutory review", dated September 2016.

Report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Licence compliance under the Water Industry Competition Act 2006 (NSW), Report to the Minister, Water—Compliance Report", dated October 2016.

Report of the Statutory Review of the Contract Cleaning Industry (Portable Long Service Leave Scheme) Act 2010.

Report of the Statutory Review of the Long Service Leave Corporation Act 2010.

Report of the Public Service Commission - State of the NSW Public Sector 2006.

Report of the Public Interest Disclosures Steering Committee for 2013- 2014, dated March 2015.

Report of the Public Interest Disclosures Steering Committee for 2014-2015, dated March 2016.

Annual Report and Determination on Additional Entitlements for Members of the Parliament of New South Wales, dated 20 May 2016.

Report and Determination under section 24O of the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975 entitled "Public Service Senior Executives Annual Determination", dated 15 July 2016.

Report and Determination under section 24C of the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975 entitled "Chief and Senior Executive Service Annual Determination", dated 15 July 2016.

Reports and Determinations under section 13 of the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975 entitled: "Court and Related Officers Group Annual Determination", dated 15 July 2016; "Public Office Holders Group Annual Determination" dated 15 July 2016; and "Judges and Magistrates Group Annual Determination", dated 15 July 2016.

Report of the New South Wales Electoral Commission on the Conduct of the Charlestown State By-election on 25 October 2014.

Report of the New South Wales Electoral Commission on the Conduct of the Newcastle State By-election on 25 October 2014.

Reports and Determinations under section 14(2) of the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975 entitled "President, Mental Health Review Tribunal Determination" dated 22 February 2016; "Full-time Deputy Mental Health Commissioner Determination" dated 17 December 2015; and "Full-time or part-time member of a Board of Governors of a Corporation constituted by the Electricity Retained Interest Corporations Act 2015 Determination" dated 27 November 2015.

Report pursuant to section 35 of the Law Enforcement and National Security (Assumed Identities) Act 2010 of the Australian Crime Commission for the year ended 30 June 2016.

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That the House at its rising this day do adjourn until Tuesday 14 February 2017 at 12 noon.

We wish all members and staff a safe Christmas period.

Motion agreed to.

Committees

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS

Reports

Mr JAI ROWELL: As Chair: I table the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters entitled "Administration of the 2015 NSW Election and related matters", dated 17 November 2016. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (PAC)

Reference

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH: As Chair: I inform the House that, in accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), the Public Accounts Committee has resolved to conduct an inquiry into the management of healthcare delivery in New South Wales, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

Petitions

PETITIONS

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

Powerhouse Museum Ultimo

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

Ice Smoking Room Proposal

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

Safe Schools Coalition

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

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**.

Ferry Services

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

Social Housing

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

Inner-City Social Housing

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

Pet Shops

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

*Motions***CHRISTMAS FELICITATIONS**

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) (15:28): I move:

That the House take note of Christmas felicitations.

A lot is said and done in the bearpit but if members took any of it to heart they would be up all night. I just want to say at this time of year a genuine thank you to everyone throughout the Parliament who does such an outstanding job to keep the Parliament going. The only reason they are here is to make a difference for the people of this State. A good-functioning Parliament is critical to democracy and that cannot happen without the incredible staff who run this place. At times it may appear that we take them for granted. I want them to understand that that is not the case; every single job is critical. It helps to make this place work and enables us to keep democracy alive in this State.

I thank not only the parliamentary staff but also the Legislative Assembly attendants and those on the front desk. As everyone will attest, you can have very average days in this place and when you do, every now and then just a smile from the attendants can make an incredible difference. I have to say that that is a regular occurrence; they are always smiling and always welcoming not only to members but also to the public who come into the Parliament. I also thank our security officers. Theirs is a high-risk job. That risk was evident with the tragic events at Parramatta police station, where special constables were heroically involved, defending and protecting life. At the same time they are there for us, and we want them to know that as they go about their job we are incredibly thankful and appreciative of what they do every single day.

We also thank our cleaners who, often while we are not here, go about making sure that our offices, hallways and the Parliament are kept clean. In particular, I thank Angela, who works hardest in my office. She does an unbelievable job. I have seen her there at very strange hours. She is always working hard and always smiling. I am very proud of all the cleaners in this place. I thank Philip Freeman who, together with the catering staff, does a fantastic job. We can bring friends, family and people from our community to come and enjoy their incredible service and food. It is a real privilege, and we thank them for what they do. I thank Mai, who does an amazing job, particularly for the consuls general and the diplomats we host in my office.

I thank also the Library staff and the entire Hansard staff—apologies for all you have to do in recording the debates in this place. It is not easy, but we know how critical it is to the functioning of this great Parliament. We thank you for all the time that you put in. I thank all the members in this House. Obviously the political badge plays a role. It is an inevitable consequence of the political process, but at the core there is not a person in this House, I believe, who does not come in wanting to make their communities better and this State better. We should be incredibly proud that we have this special opportunity, and I thank all members for their contribution this year.

Madam Speaker, of course I thank you for keeping this place in order. That brings its own challenges and I know that your high school teaching background has been of unbelievable benefit in your role. We thank you for your leadership as Speaker of the House and also for your incredible generosity and kindness to every member and every staff member. It is not reported but it is well known how kind, wonderful and caring you are. So we thank you very much for that.

To the Deputy Speaker, Assistant Speaker and Temporary Speakers—I do not even know who you are, to be honest; I see you there but I do not know your titles—we thank you for undertaking your roles, which are not easy but we appreciate your support. I thank the Acting Clerk, Helen, for her leadership and for stepping up to her new role. We are not here to give marks out of 10 but, if we were, I think so far we would all agree it would be 10 out of 10. Obviously it is not an easy job but we thank you for stepping up following Ronda's retirement. I thank the Deputy Clerk and the whole team. I thank the Whips and Deputy Whips. Patto said not to go on about him but that if I had the opportunity just do so. Patto, thanks mate; you are wonderful. I thank also the Leader of the House. Having Robbo as Leader of the House is undoubtedly a gamble but he is an incredible general for the good. He has done a fantastic job and I thank him and, importantly, his team.

Lastly, I thank—I do not know whether I should—the parliamentary press galley. Someone said last night, "You didn't acknowledge us." I said, "Yeah, that was very purposeful". But I think we should. I understand that they do not necessarily see the world in the same way as we do. For some reason, they are not happy with everything the Government is doing. That is my reading of the press. But we do thank them; they are an important part of this incredible institution. I certainly think I should acknowledge, in particular, Brigid Glanville, who last night broke her wrist; she was just tired apparently. That is her story—just stick to it, Brigid. I will let her explain that.

Finally, I wish everyone a Merry Christmas. It does seem very early to be saying that. We would all agree that we could not do the job without all our staff, both Opposition staff and ministerial staff, so we thank them as well. As we come to the end of the year, it is important to remind ourselves that coming into this place is not just a job, it is not just a matter of convenience, it is not just an opportunity; it is about the most incredible privilege anyone can have. On the back of that, have a great Christmas and I look forward to seeing you all next year.

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (15:35): I join the Premier in wishing everyone who works in this building all the best for the coming festive season. Each of the 93 members of this place is assisted by a very large number of people who work in the Legislative Assembly and make our jobs much easier. I thank the Clerks and acknowledge former Clerk Ronda Miller, who retired this year after distinguished service. I congratulate the Acting Clerk, Helen Minnican, on her ascension to that role, Les Gönye, who has provided me with much advice since transferring here from the other place, and all the Clerks for the assistance they give all members of the House.

I thank the attendants, who assist members, for all you do. I thank all the staff of the Department of Parliamentary Services, whether in the Library, catering roles, maintenance, the Hansard staff—thank you—and also the special constables and members of the press gallery. All of them play an essential role that allows us to do our jobs as elected representatives. I thank all my colleagues in the State parliamentary Labor Party, all members of the shadow Cabinet and the caucus for their support and good work this year. I thank my former deputy, Linda Burney. She has gone to another place. She is on the national stage now and is doing very well there. I thank the member for Maroubra, Michael Daley, who stepped up to the deputy leadership early this year. I think we are a pretty effective team. He has continued to serve as manager of Opposition business while taking on the additional responsibilities of the deputy leadership. I thank him and his right-hand man, Dylan Parker, who provides assistance to all Labor members of the House.

I thank the Labor Whips, the member for Cabramatta, the member for Campbelltown and the former member for Wollongong, for what they have done to organise the Labor ranks in this place. But I thank particularly the person who actually does organise us, Colleen Symington. Thank you, Colleen, for your great work in assisting the 34 Labor members of this place. It is valued and appreciated. To all my staff in the Leader of the Opposition's office: Thank you for all you do. To all the Labor members of the Legislative Council: Thank you to each and every one of you for what you have done this year.

I wish the Labor team and the Premier and his team all the best for Christmas and the new year. To Government and crossbench members, happy Christmas. The staff, no matter whom they work for, assist the members of this place to carry out their responsibilities as members of Parliament. Regardless of political persuasion, I wish everyone a merry Christmas and happy new year.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (15:39): As the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier did, I begin by acknowledging the staff within this place, the Parliament of New South Wales, who support us and the debates in the House. My acknowledgement extends to the administration staff, the catering staff who fuel us with coffee, and the cleaners. I make special mention of the cleaners because my mother was a cleaner in the early 1960s after she migrated to Australia. Her job gave us the opportunity for an education and a start in life. We must respect everybody regardless of their title or role.

I make special mention of the Clerks and the Speaker's office for the work they do to support the members of this House. I thank Bec and her colleagues in the Whip's office for the work they do, for keeping us in line and for making Chris Patterson look good. The long debates in this Chamber mean time away from our loved ones. The Christmas period allows us to spend more time at home and to reconnect with loved ones. I thank my National Party ministerial colleagues and members of the National Party who worked tirelessly to turbocharge regional New South Wales. They have my gratitude and the gratitude of their communities, as they give their communities a voice in this Parliament.

Over the past 12 months, I have travelled New South Wales and seen how hard our members work to ensure their communities get a fair share of the prosperous economy of the State. I thank the Premier, Ministers and Liberal members for the support offered across the political aisle. We are a strong Coalition. Our unity makes us successful. We may not always agree on policies but our track record as a united Coalition has seen this State benefit from that very purpose. I acknowledge the members opposite. As the Premier said, each one of us who is elected to the Parliament of New South Wales is here to represent our communities and we do the best job we can for them. Regardless of our political colours, I know that all the members in this House do their best to represent their community. They sacrifice time at home with their families to represent their electorates. I extend the Christmas message to every member. I encourage you to take the opportunity to reconnect with your families and to re-energise for the debates next year. Christmas time for many Australians involves a traditional roast. As members saw in the press this week, it will be lasagne in my house. My lasagne gets more media coverage than anything else.

Mr Nick Lalich: You have to stop eating though.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I accept that advice; I will have a little less this year. Whether we eat roast lamb, lasagne, seafood or pizza, we represent the diverse communities that will celebrate Christmas this year and that make up our State. We are a diverse country with a strong migrant multicultural community. That fact is sometimes lost in debate when we talk about issues across the globe. This nation's prosperity is built on a strong migration and immigration policy. The people who have come to this nation and called it home have contributed positively to ensure that we live in a great country at a great time and in peace. That is my message for Christmas: peace.

Earlier this year my ministerial colleagues, the Premier and I supported Loaves and Fishes by serving meals to the homeless. As we are busy rushing around preparing for Christmas Day or looking for a last-minute present for family and friends, we should note that for the most disadvantaged in our community Christmas is not always a great time. If possible, we should reach out. Christmas is an opportunity to reflect on the year. Sometimes in this place in the heat of debate we may say things that we regret. I hope everybody accepts that during debate in the bearpit there is never an intent to make it personal.

When we come to the Chamber we should respect the House for its history and heritage. The debate in this House is about improving the communities that we represent. Our communities want the best people representing them and for many of us our job is about achieving on behalf of our communities. It is important to use this place for the betterment of our communities. Members sometimes lose sight of the fact that it is about the people and families of this great State. As the Minister for Small Business, I remind everybody to shop local, shop small. Support the small businesses, which rely heavily on the Christmas period for fantastic sales results.

My wife and I have been in business. We owned a small retail shop selling kitchenware and what we sold during the Christmas rush represented 50 per cent of the turnover for the year. As the Minister for Small Business, I champion the idea to shop local and shop small and to support local businesses when buying that special gift. It is not about the expense of a gift, it is about making it personal. Small businesses are connected to our family, such as the local butcher who donates sausages to the parents and citizens raffle or sponsors the local sports team. Small business underpins our local communities. Small business is everybody's business because they are relevant to our communities.

It is an end to another year and we leave with great excitement about 2017. For members, whether we are in this House or in our electorates, it is our electorate staff who hold the fort. They are the face of every member of the House. In our absence, they take the criticism and sometimes the accolades. I acknowledge the electorate staff. In closing, I leave members with my Christmas gift suggestions: to an enemy, forgiveness; to an opponent, tolerance; to a friend, your heart; to a customer, service; to all, charity; to every child, a good example; to yourself, respect. Merry Christmas.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (15:48): I begin by wishing the Deputy Speaker merry Christmas. I congratulate the Deputy Premier on his election to that office this week. That is a tremendous achievement. I say to all members of this place, from the Premier and Ministers down, that I wish them the best. The bearpit is without doubt the most rough-and-tumble political Chamber in Australia. It is probably one of the

roughest and toughest in the Western world, certainly in the Westminster tradition of parliaments. Although we play it tough, we all come into this place to represent our communities, as diverse as they are, and we acknowledge that it is a privilege to be here. I wish all members well.

I thank my trusty assistant from my electorate office, Dylan Parker, who is also my right hand in running this place as Manager of Opposition Business. When I am busy, which is always the case, behind the scenes he does all the work to coordinate our people. I thank my electorate staff, Karen Browne and Lisa Williams, who have been friends of the family for a long time. They have been with me since day one. I also thank James Evans and Kevin MacDonald from my electorate office for all their terrific help.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, and congratulate him on a terrific year. Luke will shortly hop on a plane with his family to enjoy one or two Guinneses back in the old country. He can do so content in the knowledge that he has spearheaded a terrific effort this year. The Opposition has had a great year, finishing with three by-elections. I congratulate Luke on the terrific leadership he has shown this year and the results that he has achieved for our team. I thank my shadow ministerial colleagues and all the backbenchers. I thank all the members of the Opposition. This has been our best year in six years. We finish the year on a high. Everyone in the Opposition has traversed the State from corner to corner to get our message out. That work is being recognised across the State.

I thank the Opposition Whips, the member for Cabramatta and the member for Campbelltown. I also thank the Government Whips, the member for Camden and the member for Myall Lakes, for their help and cooperation. I thank Colleen Symington from the Whip's office. She is as regular as a clock; she never lets anyone down. She is always there, always smiling, as she makes sure that everyone is where they need to be. I thank my friend the Leader of the House and member for Lane Cove. He and I are doing a tremendous job of running this place. The bearpit is a tough place and business needs to be transacted on both sides of the House. If there were not people on both sides who behaved with goodwill towards each other it would be enormously difficult to run this place. I thank him for the jousting, real and contrived. I thank the member's sidekick, Tom Payton, for the relationship that he has with my assistant, Dylan, and for their goodwill and the civilised manner with which they transact business in this place.

I thank my wife, Christina, and my children, Alison, Jake, Olivia and Austin. Christina, Olivia and Austin surprised me with a visit today. It is very nice of them to come in. It makes my day. I thank them very much. I hope my little daughter Olivia, who is 10, and who is beginning to watch politics with a keener interest than I would probably like, has enjoyed herself today. My children must have political genes in their bodies because they came home from school last Tuesday most concerned about a certain event that happened in America. My little guy Austin was very sad because his favourite food is Mexican and he was worried about how the Mexicans would get the food out if Donald Trump put up a wall. That is a true story. I hope that now it is going to be a fence they will be able to squeeze Doritos through the bars.

I thank the Clerks, Helen, Rachel, Les Gönye and Catherine Watson, for their help and expertise. They are the brains trust in this place. Politicians sometimes trash the traditions of this place, unfortunately. It is the Clerks who are the keepers of the faith. I will be happy to see them again next year sitting where they are. I thank all the staff from top to bottom: the security guards, the special constables, the dining room staff, the people in the offices and the staff of Hansard. I thank one of the cleaners in particular, Irma, who comes in every morning before I arrive and feeds my fish. When I am on holiday she keeps them alive, as does Lee Bellia and a few other people. I thank them very much.

I thank all the staff in the bunker upstairs, in the leader and deputy leader's offices. I thank Luke's new chief of staff, Chris Willis, who has done a terrific job in a short space of time. I thank Lee Bellia. There are too many of them to mention, but they are the steel rods in our backs who keep the work ticking over every day. Thank you to all of them. I thank my colleagues in the upper House, especially the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, the Hon. Adam Searle, and the deputy leader, the Hon. Walt Secord. I thank the Whip, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane, and Deputy Whip Greg Donnelly, who do a great job in making sure that Opposition members of both Houses are well connected. Finally, I thank the people of Maroubra, who have elected me to public office in one form or another for 21 years, for continuing to return me to this place. I owe everything to them.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) (15:55):

After 54 sitting days, we have come to the end of another parliamentary year. It has certainly been a momentous one, with New South Wales the number one State in the nation. Jobs, investment, infrastructure, roads, transport and hospitals—it is all happening here in New South Wales, and it is a situation that we in the Baird-Barilaro Government are very proud of. It has been a long and often busy year for many of us, as we seek to represent our electorates and communities as best we can. The cut and thrust of this place, which we affectionately call the bearpit, often pits many of us against each other, based on political and ideological lines. But I know that in most

cases it is not personal. In more cases than not we have respect for each other's stance and views, even if we do not always agree. It is in this place, the oldest Parliament in the nation, that we vent our policies and beliefs and disagreements. It is in this place that we introduce legislation and make law.

It takes many dedicated and professional people to help make all that happen. I, as Leader of the House, thank them for their great assistance. First, I offer my sincere thanks and pay tribute to Madam Speaker for the professional and efficient way in which she runs and controls this often rowdy Chamber. Her stewardship of this Parliament is a testament to her. I consider her to be one of the finest Speakers this Parliament has ever had. Additionally, I acknowledge and pay tribute to the Speaker's staff, led by Sean O'Connor and team, for the invaluable assistance they provide to the Speaker in ensuring that the House continues to run smoothly and successfully.

I thank our recently retired Clerk, Ronda Miller, and Helen Minnican, who is currently acting in the role, for all their hard work in ensuring that the procedures of the House are adhered to and the functionality of this place is maintained. They have been ably assisted by one of the most remarkable gentlemen I know, Les Gönye, Acting Deputy Clerk and Serjeant-at-Arms, who has served the Parliament tirelessly for many years. I also thank Catherine Watson. We are greatly indebted to those individuals. I thank the Clerk assistants, Manuela Sudic and Rickee Murray. Let us not forget the fantastic Table Office team, led by Rachel Simpson. What a great office. They provide much assistance in liaising between my office and all the other procedural staff in Parliament. Also part of that team are Ben Foxe, Jenny Lamont, John Hatfield, Natasha Zammit and Anju Sharma, whose assistance in preparing the business programs and papers, facilitating the written questions and answers and accepting petitions is greatly appreciated. That work does not go unnoticed.

To the other Clerks at the table, Jonathan Elliott, Elaine Schofield, Carly Maxwell, Simon Johnston, Rohan Tyler and Jason Arditi, I thank you for your contribution. I thank the team at procedural research: Jonathan Elliot, Rohan Tyler and Pauline Painter. Thanks Cheryl Samuels, our indefatigable Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms; and our wonderful Chamber support team who greet us every morning, led by Ian Delahunty, Danny Heldal, Peter Tuziak, Steve Smith, Tom Isaksen, Ian Thackeray, Chris Papadopoulos and the delightful ladies April and Lynne.

To the Hansard team, led by Scott Fuller, I thank you for the long and often unpredictable hours of your work. We are trying to fix that. I thank Simon Chalmers for his work as Director of Information Services and Neil Dammerel, who has been here for as long as I have and plus, for running Information Technology [IT]. The help of the IT team is very welcomed by all of us, even if it is just to tell us to turn our computer off and back on again. I extend my appreciation to John Gregor, Director of Finance, thank you. Thank you to Deborah Bennett, who heads up the Parliamentary Library and her team; Rob Neilson and Brett Wright of Facilities; and Executive Manager Mark Webb and Julie Langsworth and their teams for a fantastic year. Where would we be without the catering staff? I would be a lot thinner.

Mr Jai Rowell: We all would.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Exactly, as the member for Wollondilly said he would be a lot thinner. I thank Philip Freeman, who keeps us all very well fed and particularly Gary Chan from the parliamentary bar, who is much loved by all of us. To the team at the switchboard, Gina Pye, Julie Musgrave, Grace Peake, Margaret Barnes, I note and appreciate their huge contribution to the House. To the special constables who each and every day put their lives on the line to keep us safe and to protect us, I thank them for their efforts and the marvellous job that they do. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition mentioned, I too want to make special mention of a wonderful and dedicated lady, Angeliki Stathopolous, who treats my office as she would her own home, keeping it clean and tidy. I thank all the cleaning staff who do such a special and invaluable job to keep this place running. A very big thank you to the Government Whips, Chris Patterson—

Mr Chris Patterson: Hear, hear!

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: —who wholeheartedly joins me in congratulating himself, Stephen Bromhead and Mark Coure, for making sure the Government pushes through its legislation and for keeping the team together. They are well assisted, as are all the Coalition members in this place, by the Whip's staff, the beautiful Beccy Cartwright and Alex Carne. My cluster ministry colleagues John Barilaro and Niall Blair, thanks so much for your support and wise counsel. To my Parliamentary Secretaries who are also colleagues and friends, John Sidoti and Adam Marshall, thanks for your assistance and taking a load off my shoulders.

I want to make particular mention of Troy Grant, the former Deputy Premier. We all owe him a debt of gratitude for his loyalty, friendship and professionalism. He has been a stalwart to this House and his constituents. I thank my shadow and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Michael Daley. Michael is a tremendous fellow and is

someone who I believe personally should be leader of the Labor Party, but I do not get a vote. I also want to pay tribute to Mr Foley. So it is either/or, both of whom I would support.

Mr Luke Foley: We have an abundance of talent.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: There is an abundance of talent coming through there. I also thank Michael's assistant, Dylan Parker. They are both very decent blokes who have helped make my job run as smoothly as possible in this place. I must pay tribute to my own loyal staff led by chief of staff Rob Vellar, and my adviser Tom Payton who has done a remarkable job and today leaves me to go back to the Premier's office. I thank him for everything he has done. He is a highly intelligent, motivated individual who has a great future in government.

The SPEAKER: Outstanding.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Outstanding, as Madam Speaker said. I also thank Tim Potter, Andrew Lewis, Nick McDermott, Norm Lipson, Alex Fraser, Callum Fountain, Graeme Gilbert, and Ben Moylan and a special tribute goes to my personal assistant who works so tirelessly, Sue Clark. She is a remarkable lady who does so much for us and runs my life. They are all fantastic. Thanks heaps also to my electorate office staff, headed by Zorica Kaye-Smith, for their dedication. Importantly, to all members of this place and to your families, I wish you nothing but the very best of health and much happiness and prosperity next year. We all deserve a well-earned break. Take a deep breath and come back here in the new year refreshed and ready to serve the people of New South Wales. I pay tribute to one other person, Clayton Barr, who has brought one of those unfortunate things from the United States of America to this House—that is, filibustering. All of us should take a rest because undoubtedly Clayton will be writing speeches of three or four hours duration over his break.

Mr Chris Patterson: I wish he wrote them.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Yes, we are not sure. In all seriousness, I wish everyone a very well-deserved break and a very merry, happy and holy Christmas and a wonderful 2017.

The SPEAKER (16:05): With the indulgence of the House, I intend to make a few comments. I congratulate the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy on naming just about everybody who works in this Parliament. I think it is important that we do not forget anybody, and it is difficult when you start to name people to include them all. The Minister did extraordinarily well to mention everybody who works here. I know we all appreciate the efforts of everyone who works in this place. Whether it is the cleaners, the caterers, Hansard or Information and Technology, they are an extraordinary family that we are all part of.

Mr Anthony Roberts: Even Ministers?

The SPEAKER: I did not say that. As we near the end of the year in this fifty-sixth Parliament, I wish everybody a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year and a well-deserved break. We will go home for a bit of respite and a rest, and some of us will come back another year wiser. I am sure some others will not return wiser. I hope everybody has a good break and will spend time with their family and have a great Christmas.

This time of year provides us all the perfect opportunity to recognise the passion with which the members of both sides of this House have served their communities. We have had an incredibly noisy year in comparison to some past years. In some cases, that is a reflection of the passion that members bring to this Parliament and it is also a reflection of their commitment to their communities. Even though I find it sometimes very difficult to hear where the noise is coming from, I understand it comes from the passion of members. I congratulate members on both sides of the Chamber on representing their communities. It does not matter whether you are Labor, Liberal, crossbench or from The Greens, everyone is here for the same reason. On behalf of everybody in this State, I congratulate you on the wonderful representation that you give to your electorates. You all work hard. Politicians are not necessarily regarded highly in general but we should be.

I would like to pay particular attention to my staff. Some Ministers have mentioned the Speaker's staff and how well they deal with the public on a day-to-day basis, but they also deal with members of Parliament. I thank my staff in the Office of the Speaker, who are here today, not only for their support of me but also for the support they provide to all members. I thank my chief of staff Sean O'Connor, Brigid O'Bryan, Michelle Lane, Bryce O'Connor and Jane Boag. I do not thank them enough but I am always grateful for what they do. Sometimes it goes perhaps unnoticed, but I am certainly grateful for everything they do for me. They are a wonderful bunch. Sometimes we forget to acknowledge our drivers. My driver is Tony Camilleri and I am extremely grateful for his courtesy and knowledge of the city. Tony always turns up early because he knows I always turn up early. He is a fantastic driver. I thank all the drivers who help the Ministers.

Sadly, this year we farewelled one of the longest serving staff of the Parliament, Joe Andrade, after 35 years of service. He knew so much about this place. He received his award last week and we hope that we will see him sometime next year also. I also mention Chris Herbert and Stephen Smith, who assisted my office at such

short notice during the transition period following Joe's retirement. Furthermore, I congratulate Chris and his wife Deborah on the birth of their first child, Elsdon Grace Herbert. I thank the hardworking staff of my electorate office, Lynne Arnold, Adam Carney, Georgia Copley, Samantha Laxford and Matthew Allen. I thank all electorate office staff in rural and regional areas, who need to have extensive knowledge of the issues that might arise on a day-to-day basis when we are not in the office.

I thank the members of the Speaker's panel, who take over from me when I leave the chair after question time or at 10.30 each morning. I especially thank Deputy Speaker Thomas George for taking over on a few occasions this year when I was not well. I thank him for his absolute commitment to his role, the courtesy he extends to all members and his constant professionalism. I also thank Assistant Speaker Andrew Fraser, Temporary Speakers Lee Evans, Bruce Notley-Smith, Anna Watson and newer members Adam Crouch and Melinda Pavey. I thank Adam Marshall for his service on the panel and Melanie Gibbons, who recently took leave to give birth to her beautiful daughter, Audrey Freda Johns. I congratulate Melanie and Kent.

I thank the members and staff who are vital to the functioning of the Chamber, such as the always entertaining Leader of the House, Anthony Roberts. He is extremely professional in trying to get both sides to work together if at all possible. I acknowledge the great relationship between our offices. I thank Tom Payten, who I did not know was leaving. That is sad news because he is an outstanding staff member. I also thank James Flynn and Adrian Pryke. I thank Sue Clarke for the support my office has received throughout the year.

I acknowledge and thank the always cooperative Government Whip, Chris Patterson, and his staff Rebecca Cartwright and Alexandria Carne. I also thank Deputy Whip Mark Coure and The Nationals Whip Stephen Bromhead and his staff member Anthea Savage. I thank Opposition Whip Nick Lalich, Deputy Opposition Whip Greg Warren and Colleen Symington in the Opposition Whip's office. I acknowledge the service of former member for Wollongong Noreen Hay whilst she was Opposition Whip. She is dearly missed. The Government Whip and I often need to work together. I wish I could always be as cheerful as he is.

I thank former Clerk of the Legislative Assembly Ronda Miller for her years of service prior to Helen Minnican acting in the role. Today it has been recognised that Helen has received 10 out of 10 for her work so far. I thank Deputy Acting Clerk Leslie Gönye, clerk assistants Catherine Watson and Rachel Simpson, Elaine Schofield, Jonathan Elliott, Carly Maxwell and Simon Johnston, who played Santa Claus today in the Speaker's Garden. I also thank Jason Ardit, John Hatfield, Ben Foxe, Cheryl Samuels, Pauline Painter, Natasha Zammit, Rohan Tyler, Manuela Sudic, Rickee Murray and the rest of the staff of the Department of the Legislative Assembly for their patience and wonderful work. We will be having drinks at about 5 p.m. if any members would like to call in and thank them.

I thank Legislative Assembly attendants Ian Delahunty, April Lowndes, Danny Heldal, Chris Papadopoulos, Ian Thackeray, Peter Tuziak, Tom Isaksen and Lynne Vitale for the fantastic job they have done this year. Not everyone realises the enormous effort they make in this Chamber and outside it directing visitors throughout the building. I am so proud of the work they do and I thank them for it. I also thank Hansard. The comment always is that they make us sound good when we were not necessarily good at all. I thank them for their efforts. I draw to the attention of members that on Tuesday 23 August this year the House sat the latest it ever had sat under the current Government. We sat for a total of 15 hours and 47 minutes, with the House rising at 3.47 a.m. on Wednesday. Many of us returned home for only a few hours of sleep before being back here early in the morning for the next day's sitting. I thank all members, and especially the staff who also had very little sleep, for their dedication to this place.

I thank party leaders Premier Mike Baird, former Deputy Premier Troy Grant and Leader of the Opposition Luke Foley for their guidance and their cooperation with the Speaker's office. In particular I thank Caroline Hutcherson and Meaghan Skinner for facilitating that cooperation. I thank the Press Gallery and its new president, Sarah Gerathy, as well as former president Alicia Woods. I congratulate new Executive Manager Mark Webb on his stewardship of the Department of Parliamentary Services. He had some big shoes to fill after the departure of Rob Stefanic to Canberra and has done an admirable job. He also gets a 10 out of 10. I thank the cleaners and especially Carmen, who cleans the Speaker's suite each morning. She is always warm and friendly when we have a chat. All of our cleaners do a wonderful job. We hope that they are looking forward to a fantastic holiday.

I thank my counterpart in the other place, President Don Harwin, for his cooperation on the significant projects that have been completed in this place in the past few years. I think we have achieved a great deal. We are about to commence another round of extensive capital works programs and a parliamentary exhibition highlighting the work of female members of Parliament. The fantastic exhibition will look at some trailblazers and other women who have worked so hard in the Parliament over the years. I thank Commonwealth Women Parliamentarian representatives Jenny Aitchison, Pru Goward and Leslie Williams for their involvement as well as all past and present female members who have contributed their stories.

I also note that today is the last sitting day for President Harwin's chief of staff, Dr Brian Lindsay. He will be leaving the Parliament at the end of the year. Brian began with Mr President in 2003 and has always worked with my office most respectfully and cooperatively. I congratulate Brian. I realise that Christmas felicitations can begin to sound slightly repetitive, but I must emphasise the depth of my gratitude for everyone who works in this Parliament. I wish everybody the merriest Christmas and a happy New Year.

Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (16:15): As you walk through the front door of this place you first appreciate our security officers. You then enter the building and are warmly greeted by everyone at the front desk. I must single out Lynne, who is always there with a smile on her face for everyone. I thank Ian and the whole team of Legislative Assembly attendants for their work. You then make your way to your office, which is always beautifully clean. We pay tribute to all of the cleaners. I particularly thank Selma and the team responsible for my office. I acknowledge everyone who makes a contribution to making this place run smoothly. I refer to the library team and the catering staff not only in the Strangers Dining Room but also at Cafe Quorum. They always give you a welcoming greeting and we greatly appreciate the work they do throughout the Parliament.

I appreciate everything Madam Speaker said in her felicitations. She does a fantastic job. To be her deputy in this Parliament is a privilege. I thank Sean O'Connor and the team for everything they do to support not only Madam Speaker but also the Speaker's panel. I pay tribute to each and every member of the panel, especially Assistant Speaker Andrew Fraser. The Speaker acknowledged our association with the other place. I recognise President Don Harwin and acknowledge that this is Brian Lindsay's last sitting day. I compliment and thank them for the cooperation that the Speaker and I enjoy with the other place. I echo her sentiments in that regard.

I thank Acting Clerk Helen Minnican and Acting Deputy Clerk Les Gönye. I also recognise former Clerk Ronda Miller for her contribution this year. I thank all of the staff from the Clerk's office. The support and independent advice they offer everyone is greatly appreciated and I cannot thank them enough. What does one say about Hansard? They are here every day as we start work and they are still here when we finish at night. They make us all look good and we appreciate it. We thank all of the Hansard team. We also thank the Press Gallery, who do a fantastic job telling the world what is happening here. I thank the Leader of the House, Minister Anthony Roberts, and Tom Payten. I also thank the Leader of the Opposition and Colleen Symington. Between the Whips and the leaders this place runs like clockwork.

It is a real credit to the leaders of the House, the Government and the Opposition. I thank the Whips. You say no to the member for Camden at your peril. If Chris Patterson demands that something be done, it happens. That is because he has Rebecca and Alex there to back him up and they follow through with it. Mark Coure is also there. Behind me is the member for Myall Lakes, The Nationals Whip. He only knows one way forward, that is with a big heavy fist. He is well supported by Anthea and we thank her for all she does for us as part of The Nationals team. I had the honour recently of recognising Steve Bromhead at a Parliamentary Lions Club dinner and presenting him with the Melvin Jones Award, which he greatly deserved for his contribution to the Parliament and to the Lions Club. His support of charity is greatly appreciated.

As Deputy Speaker I appreciate the cooperation of the Premier's office. To Mike Baird and the team up there, to Bay Warburton and his team, thank you. I thank the Hon. John Barilaro, Fiona and the team at the Deputy Premier's office. I also must recognise Troy Grant's office. We have had great cooperation with them and I thank Alex and the team for all the work they do in making sure that we are all on board. They work closely with the Whip. To the Deputy Leader, Niall Blair and the team, I am sure we will work well with you but I have to also recognise Adrian Piccoli's contribution as Deputy Leader and that of his office. We have always appreciated their help.

I also recognise the electorate staff. As the Speaker said, the staff at the 93 electorate offices do a fantastic job. It is easy to take that for granted, but as members we all know we are only as good as the team in our office. I pay tribute to each and every one of the members' staff in the electorate offices. In my case I recognise Bronwyn Mitchell, Annie Armstrong, Josie McIntyre, Robyn Riordan and two others who worked there this year, Natalie Langley and Josie Cole. If I have missed anyone, I apologise for that. I take this opportunity to wish everyone in the Parliament, throughout my electorate and everywhere, a safe, happy and holy Christmas and I trust that we will all enjoy good health in 2017.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (16:22): I wish everybody a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. I hope all members, staff and their loved ones have a safe and merry Christmas. I thank the Premier for all he has achieved this year. The State is in a great position. It is a wonderful thing to be able to go to work and look forward to working with somebody one respects such as the Premier. It is an honour to be his Whip. I thank our Treasurer, Gladys Berejiklian, who does a great job in that role and is a wonderful friend and a tremendous support. Our former Deputy Premier, Troy Grant, is a great mate and has been very supportive. I thank him for his efforts. I look forward to working with John Barilaro in his new role. Barra is a great mate and somebody who

has been extremely supportive as a Minister and I look forward to continuing that relationship. I thank all my Nationals colleagues for their support and efforts. Together we are an effective team.

To Steve Bromhead, what started off as an annoyance has grown into a tremendous friendship. Brommie is somebody I respect—a really great guy. I cannot speak highly enough of him and I thank him for his efforts. I thank Annie, who carries the office and makes him look wonderful, for all she does for the team because she does a great job. I thank the Deputy Whip, Mark Coure, for all his efforts. Mate, leave me alone from open to close, make yourself scarce, it works really well. I thank the member for Cabramatta, Nick Lulich, and Colleen from his office, they both do an outstanding job and have my utmost respect. I thank them for the collegial relationship we have built. Together we work to achieve.

Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure and honour to work with you. I thank you for the wonderful work you do for this House, for our team and for our colleagues. Please take back to your chief of staff and your team our thanks for the great effort they have put in. To the Deputy Speaker, Thomas George, and the Assistant and Temporary Speakers, I thank them for their great work. I thank the Leader of the House, the Hon. Anthony Roberts. Robbo, you have made a great effort this year and together we do everything we can to support you, and we thank you. To the Opposition members, The Greens and the Independents I say that we might have different views but at the end of the day they work their butts off. They are here for the same reasons that we are and I thank them for their efforts. I just ask for a little less of Clayton's waffle next year; other than that, it has been a great year.

My thanks go to all the Clerks, they know who they are. I thank the table office, the bench, the Serjeant-at-Arms and Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms for their efforts. They do an outstanding job and make the place run smoothly. I thank Rebecca Cartwright, my right-hand person. Like everybody, I get flustered and do not show my thanks enough but Beccy does an outstanding job and I thank her for everything she does for the team. I thank Bay Warburton, Chief of Staff to the Premier, for his friendship and mentorship because it makes a world of difference. Nigel Blunden is a great mate and I thank him for his support and effort.

I thank all the liaison officers. A few have changed and the list might be wrong but I want to mention each of them. Some have been promoted. These people work their butts off and are a great asset to our team: Meagan Skinner, Zac Bentley, Robert Giltinan, Rachel Hayes, Kim Withers, Zac Smith, Michael Evangelidis, Jacqueline Hartley, Katrina Carlon, Clementine Julian, Ramza Martin, Emma Chapman, Daniel Hill, Keiran Byrne, David Tricca, Ben Turner, Michael Shaw, Jo Ryan, Amanda Choularton, Olivia Roth, Alexandra Springfield, Angeli Lee, Michelle Guido, Michale Cox, Tanya Raffoul, Jemima Buckman and Miranda Pade. They are all outstanding and I thank them for all their efforts.

Tom Payten from the office of the leader has helped everything to run smoothly and done a great job. Good luck to him in his move to the Premier's office. He has done a fantastic job. I thank Caroline Hutcherson from the Premier's office for her support. She has been an invaluable help, a great friend and mentor and someone I have enjoyed working with. Her support has been remarkable. I thank all those in the Legislative Assembly Chamber, Ian Delahunty and his team—April, Danny, Lynne, Chris, Steve, Peter and Tom—for their efforts. Phil in catering and the special constables have all done a great job.

Finally, I thank Debbie from my office. She has been with me from day one and I thank her for her efforts. She is the face of the team when we are not there. I thank Alex who works here and in the electorate office. She is invaluable and I thank her for her efforts. I thank Joanne Sendt and Alison Zammit for the great work they do. I thank everyone for their friendship and support. I thank my wife Vicki and kids, Amelia, Sophie, Tom and Matt, for everything they have sacrificed and for their love. I wish everybody a wonderful Christmas and I thank the House for its indulgence.

Petitions

WYONG HOSPITAL

Discussion

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:29): The petition asks this House to reject any moves towards the privatisation of the grounds or service delivery at Wyong Public Hospital. I make it clear at the outset that those on this side of the House fully support the petitioners. I also note that this is the second 10,000 signature petition on this issue in as many weeks—it is an unprecedented community response to this issue. That this number of signatures has been collected in a very short time is a clear indication of the depth of concern of the people of the Central Coast on this issue.

At this point I acknowledge those who worked so hard to put this petition together. Without their efforts, their passion for public health, their signatures and those of their neighbours, we would not be here today. That is

an important point to emphasise, because the Government had to be forced into this debate. I moved a motion to bring on the debate in this House on 19 October, but those opposite voted against it. The standing orders and the efforts of the Central Coast community have brought on this debate today. I note that the Minister for Health is absent from this debate on this important issue, which has now generated 20,000 signatures in my community.

Mr Jai Rowell: You're telling lies.

Mr DAVID MEHAN: This was an opportunity for the Minister to do more than send proxies in here to call us liars; this was an opportunity for her to come in here and address the debate and give the community who generated those signatures the courtesy of having an answer.

The community reaction to the surprise announcement made by the health Minister on 15 September regarding the privatisation of our local hospital was swift. Never before have so many people rallied around an issue so quickly and in the numbers they did on the Central Coast on Sunday 16 October when 2,000 people rallied at Morrie Breen Oval in Kanwal. It is because it is our hospital. In 1964 the Wyong and District Hospital Committee was formed and began the process of agitating for our very own hospital in Wyong Shire to service the growing northern part of the Central Coast. Community funding was the basis of our own hospital. Wyong Hospital Auxiliary and Tuggerah Lakes Hospital Auxiliary all raised funds. Local miners and power workers contributed by payroll deduction. As a result of their efforts, the State Government committed to and then delivered our hospital on 22 November 1980.

The history of privatised health in this State gives my community little faith about what is planned by this Government for Wyong Hospital. We have an example of that history: Port Macquarie Base Hospital. First, Port Macquarie Base Hospital was unaccountable; the Auditor-General found that the hospital was not being properly accounted for. The moral of the Auditor-General's report on Port Macquarie Base Hospital is that privatisation means less accountability to New South Wales taxpayers. Secondly, the Auditor-General found that the scheme involved "little risk to private sector partners". So much for the rhetoric of shifting risks to the private sector. Despite the high cost of the hospital and despite the contracts, the public sector continued to carry the can. The Auditor-General's report states, on page 408:

The majority of the risks and benefits borne by the operator are passed to the department by the service charge.

Thirdly, the privatisation of Port Macquarie Base Hospital was the sale of the century for the private sector. Again I quote the Auditor-General's report:

... in the case of Port Macquarie Base Hospital, the Government agreed to pass over the hospital and hospital land (and hospital licence) to the private sector, after the Government has paid out the financiers in 20 years' time. This inexplicable grant is additional to the significant fees paid by the Government for the private sector-provided hospital services.

And the Auditor-General's final damning finding:

The Government is, in effect, paying for the hospital twice and giving it away

At the last election, there was a bipartisan commitment to a \$200 million redevelopment upgrade of Wyong Hospital. There was no talk of privatisation then. Only this week the Premier has announced \$10 billion for the Parramatta metro, but the Government feels the need to involve the private sector to deliver a hospital on the Central Coast that the Government promised to provide. The community is generally sceptical of any plan to privatise public services; they are opposed outright to any hint of privatisation of our health services. Health care should be delivered on the basis of need, not on the basis of profit. I ask the House to note the petition and I ask the Government to withdraw the privatisation plans for Wyong Hospital.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (16:34): I thank the member for The Entrance for bringing this scare campaign, or petition, to the House today because it provides us with an opportunity to correct the record. First, I must note that in my six years in this place this is the first petition I have seen presented to the House where not a single petitioner is in the gallery, which goes to prove that the scare campaign is not working. Not only do I speak as the member for Wollondilly, I also speak as a former Assistant Minister for Health, and I know full well the good news this will bring.

In my electorate, Bowral Hospital has called for expressions of interest. Let me assure all public patients who may be listening to this discussion today that health care has been, is and will always remain free. We have spent an enormous amount of time consulting with the community to ensure that these opportunities are available to improve public health care across New South Wales. In Bowral there are two hospitals, a public hospital and a private hospital, on the same parcel of land and they have been sharing services now—as the expression of interest is inviting—for more than 20 years under both sides of politics, with this Government and the former Labor Government.

Mr David Harris: Not this model.

Mr JAI ROWELL: It was—I think it was your Government that introduced it.

Mr David Harris: No, not this model. It was a different model.

Mr JAI ROWELL: This is an opportunity for free public health care, better facilities and state-of-the-art equipment, and more doctors, nurses and clinical staff. In fact, these five hospitals will need about 1,000 new staff. So for those opposite to say that there will be a reduction in staff is a complete and utter lie. Whether it is the emergency department, oncology or surgery, public health care will always be free. But, for some reason, those opposite still think it is Halloween; they like to scare everybody—but no-one is giving them any treats.

The redevelopment of all of these hospitals does not mean selling off any hospital, nor will it have any impact on the way public patients access their free public health care. I will just put a couple of facts on the table about what this Government has done in health over the past six years. Since coming to government we have opened new hospitals or have carried out major redevelopments on more than 60 hospitals, worth more than \$10 billion. I thank the most fantastic health Minister the State has ever had. It has been an honour working with her, particularly in my former roles as Assistant Minister for Health and Minister for Mental Health. She has done a fantastic job; she has upgraded hospitals right across this State. What those opposite could not do for 16 years we have done in six years.

Labor cut the health capital expenditure in seven of its 16 years in office. This created issues where many hospitals were badly in need of an upgrade; many hospitals were promised an upgrade but, unfortunately, we know what happens when Labor promises something: it never eventuates. Forty per cent of our hospitals were more than 50 years old, neglected and needing replacement. Labor members and union officials have been responsible for running the disgraceful scare campaign; they have been spreading mistruths, such as, "We also know that this is going to gift the land, buildings and equipment to a private hospital." That is untrue. Those opposite have no idea. They have also said, "Residents are going to go down to the hospital and they are not going to be able to afford health care."

The member for Swansea said that, but the biggest mistruth came from the member for Maitland, who said that 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. I will be very clear: This is about improving additional services in rural, regional, remote and also metropolitan hospitals. As I said, public patients have had, have and always will have free treatment and services. Labor tried this trick with the "Mediscare" campaign at the Federal election; it has been trying it with TAFE and now it is trying it with this hospital. As the empty gallery demonstrates, nobody believes Labor's lies. The Government will get on with the job it was elected to do: upgrade our hospitals and deliver world-class health facilities and health care for the people of New South Wales.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:40): This time last week I was gagged, but I am back. I am back because 10,000 more people signed our petition and gave me the opportunity to debate it again, something Government members did not want. Those 20,000 people who have signed the petition so far in the electorate of Swansea and across the Central Coast want to send a message to the Premier: Do not sell our public hospital. It is loud and it is clear. My office has been inundated with people recently, but one very important person called me—Margaret from Budgewoi. Margaret was part of the group that worked very hard to raise money in the community to build that community facility and to provide valuable life-saving equipment—funded by the community.

Margaret asked me to ask the Premier a question. She wants to know: When Premier Mike Baird sells off our hospital, is she going to get a refund? It gives me great pride to stand here today and pledge Labor's support for Wyong Hospital remaining in public hands. I am proud to be able to give a voice to the people of Swansea, along with my colleagues the member for The Entrance and the member for Wyong, and to say to the Premier and the Minister for Health: Get away from our public hospital. Just a couple of weeks ago thousands of people turned up at Morry Breen Oval. The next week thousands more turned up at both Maitland and Shellharbour. I congratulate those communities on voicing their opinions just as loudly as ours has.

It is a shame the member for Kiama has attacked so viciously the nurses and support staff for trying to tell him that they do not want the Government to privatise their hospital in Shellharbour. Every single Labor member believes our healthcare system is a universal healthcare system; it is not negotiable. Labor does not believe people deserve the health care they can afford; a credit card should not determine a person's level of care. Unlike the Premier and the Minister for Health, Labor does not support the Americanisation of our healthcare system. First, it was the Canberra Liberals' attack on Medicare, and now Macquarie Street is taking the axe to our public hospitals. I say to every person in New South Wales, not just those in the Swansea, Wyong or The Entrance electorates: If you disagree with the hospital privatisation, the choice is clear—vote Labor and kick this disastrous Government out.

Ms MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley) (16:43): I thank the member for Wyong for bringing this petition to the House. The discussion on petitions signed by more than 10,000 persons is an important initiative that the Government introduced and, out of respect to the people who have signed the petition, I will address their concerns in an honest and forthright way. I understand their concerns: Nobody wants a privatised, American-style system. But that is not what we are offering. The Government is offering what exists at the Mater Hospital in Newcastle and at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney.

[Interruption]

It is important that members opposite show me and the petitioners respect and not interject because one day in the next decade or two they may be in government and will face the many pressures we have faced with the New South Wales health system. About 20 years ago the New South Wales health system consumed about 15 per cent of the State budget; it now consumes about 30 per cent, and is growing at about 6.5 per cent a year. We need to take responsible measures and ideas to the community. We cannot tell mistruths. This is a public-private partnership that could potentially free up lots more money that could be invested in the hospital to support nurses, allied health staff and infrastructure.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: Port Macquarie was a disaster.

Ms MELINDA PAVEY: I acknowledge the interjection in relation to Port Macquarie hospital. Port Macquarie hospital was not entirely a disaster. One aspect of that contract was not fair—that is, ownership of the hospital did not return to the community at the end of the lease. That is what the Port Macquarie community was most concerned about. We are working hand in glove with the private sector and the public sector, giving full admission and priority to public patients. That is a sensible policy position. Labor will need fancy money trees that can litter money on the ground like confetti. This is a responsible way to provide the best health care into the future. That is the challenge.

As I said, 20 years ago the Health budget in this State was around 15 per cent of the State budget. It is now one-third, and growing at 6.5 per cent a year. This is an exciting initiative. I respectfully implore the petitioners not to be scared by members opposite but to get involved because we will consult with the community and deliver a better health system for the people of Wyong and the Central Coast.

Mr David Harris: I seek leave to speak to the petition signed by more than 10,000 persons.

Leave not granted.

Motions

SEASONAL FELICITATIONS

Discussion resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:47): I offer my best wishes for a safe and happy Christmas to all members of this House, regardless of their political affiliation. I wish the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Assistant Speaker and Temporary Speakers happiness for Christmas and the New Year. I thank those on my side of the House for their friendship and support of each other during the past 12 months. A divided team will never succeed and the successes that we have had this year prove that Labor is united and focused on making sure that the Government does the right thing by the people of New South Wales.

I acknowledge and thank those sitting opposite for their banter in the Chamber and their friendship outside it. Sometimes it gets a bit heated but from all my years in this place I know that that is just part of the political debate. Even though it gets a bit noisy in the Chamber, when we go outside it is different. I have not had bad words with anybody, whether members of The Nationals or Liberals. I thank members for their friendship and their understanding of our democratic system wherein we do not hold grudges.

I begin by thanking my leader, Luke Foley, and his staff, led by Chief of Staff Chris Willis and policy directors Michael Samaras and Chloe Bennett, for their tireless work in holding the Government to account. I make special mention of the unsung hero on the Labor staff, Lee Bellia, who does a fantastic job making sure that all our members are kept up to date and know what is happening in the leader's office. I am also fortunate to work closely with my colleague Michael Daley, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Manager of Opposition Business. His guidance and leadership are integral to our team. I also take this opportunity to thank his staffers Dylan Parker and James Evans for their tireless work at Parliament.

I am fortunate to have Colleen Symington continue in her role as the Whip staffer. Colleen makes my job very easy by always having everything prepared for me. She tells me when to go into the House and what to do. I thank her for her tireless work and support. Her ability to keep a positive attitude is infectious and she brings smiles to the faces of all our members with her hard work and commitment to the Labor cause and the purpose of

the Parliament. I also thank my Deputy Whip, Greg Warren, the member for Campbelltown, for his assistance throughout 2016. I acknowledge the Government Whip, and member for Camden, Chris Patterson, for his friendship. I thank Rebecca Cartwright and Alexandria Carne from the Government Whip's office for their cooperation in ensuring the House runs as smoothly as possible. Without the support of both leaders of the House this Chamber would not run as smoothly and efficiently as it does. I thank Deputy Whips Steve Bromhead and Mark Coure for their support.

I thank and acknowledge my staff in the office at Cabramatta who, along with Colleen, do a great job keeping me grounded and looking after my constituents: Donson Phetrasy, Anne McNamara, Dominic Leonello, Kevin Doan and Kenrick Cheah. To the attendants and staff at Parliament House who keep this place running like a well-oiled machine, thank you for your service to the public and to members. I thank the Clerks for letting us know whether to vote aye or nay—as I have my doubts whether members know on occasion. They are an integral part of this Parliament.

I single out Ian Delahunty, Danny Heldal, April Lowndes, Lynn Vitale and the whole team at Chamber support and front of House. There are too many to name but all are worthy of thanks and acknowledgement. They also look after the public who come to visit Australia's oldest Parliament. I thank Rachel Simpson, Anju Sharma, Natasha Zammit and John Hatfield in the Table Office, as well as the Hansard reporters. I have read some of my speeches and they seem more eloquent than I recall. But if the *Hansard* says I said it, I accept that. Thank you. Many thanks to the catering and cafeteria staff, who do a fine job every day without fail. They sometimes start before 7 a.m., work through the day and then go on to various functions and dinners at night.

A big thank you to the security staff and special constables who do a fantastic job keeping us safe whilst sometimes working overnight or around the clock. Thank you for all your efforts throughout the year. When we go home they are here making sure this place is in good shape for us to come back to the next day. Finally, I thank the cleaning and maintenance staff who keep the oldest Parliament in Australia looking as beautiful as it does. There are too many other departments to name, from the Library to the IT staff, and many more. I extend my best wishes to all at the New South Wales Parliament for a safe, happy and healthy festive season. I hope to see you all in 2017.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:53): I will take this opportunity to wish all members on both sides of the House, and their families, a happy, safe and joyful Christmas. It is a privilege and an honour to work alongside so many dedicated, passionate and motivated people. Despite our political differences, we are all here with the same purpose and that is to serve the great communities that we represent. I thank Madam Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the Assistant Speaker and Temporary Speakers for their service in ensuring that the important work of the House gets done. It is not an easy job, but your fairness and firmness is greatly appreciated. I was at one stage a Temporary Speaker.

I also thank the Clerk, Deputy Clerks and their team for upholding the standing orders and the traditions of the House. Each and every one of you deserves a well-earned and restful Christmas break. My thanks also go to the Government Whip, Chris Patterson, and his staff, Rebecca Cartwright and Alex Carne, for the great job they do and the support they have given me as Deputy Whip. Rebecca and Alex's professionalism is second to none, and Chris and I are lucky to work alongside them. I also thank the member for Myall Lakes, The Nationals Whip, for his service and assistance on the rare occasions when the member for Oatley is allowed to do a count. I thank the Opposition Whip and Deputy Whips for their service and wish them a merry and safe Christmas.

To the Premier: Thank you for your leadership, vision and friendship in 2016. I wish you and your family a wonderful and peaceful Christmas. I send my thanks to your staff, in particular Bay Warburton, Nigel Blunden, Gavin Melvin and Julian Whealing, for their support and assistance throughout a great year. I also thank the member for Dubbo for his service as Deputy Premier and his leadership. I wish him and his family all the best for 2017. I thank the Treasurer, Gladys Berejiklian, and her staff for their hard work and commitment to ensuring that New South Wales is number one again and for funding important projects in my electorate, in Sydney and across New South Wales. They are improving the lives of many in my electorate. I also thank all the Government frontbench members and their staff for their work on projects in my electorate of Oatley. I wish you and your families a joyful and peaceful Christmas.

I extend special thanks to the Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner; the Minister for Transport, Andrew Constance; my good friend the Minister for the Environment, Mark Speakman; and the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, the Hon. Duncan Gay, for their support and willingness to work with me to ensure that I continue to deliver for my community. The massive amount of infrastructure being built across our State is due to their vision and desire to provide the best possible services to the good people of New South Wales. Locally, it has been a year of achievements, with the upgrading and opening of Oatley railway station, construction starting at Narwee station, the redevelopment of St George Hospital progressing well, and the upgrading and widening of the M5 as part of WestConnex. These are big, meaningful wins for the local area.

Special Christmas wishes must go to the Leader of the House for all that he has done and to his team in assisting the Government. My warmest wishes go to the Leader of the Opposition and to my colleagues on the crossbenches. It is wonderful to be able to engage in debate with people who are committed to seeing the best for New South Wales, and I wish you a wonderful and joyful Christmas. I pay special tribute to members from across the St George area, regardless of our political differences—the member of Kogarah and the member for Rockdale—and my parliamentary colleagues from the shire. You might have won the National Rugby League premiership, but the Dragons are coming back! The member for Kogarah has a new baby, George Thomas Minns. I acknowledge my colleagues from the shire: the member for Cronulla, the member for Miranda, the member for Heathcote and the member for Holsworthy.

My sincere thanks go to the Legislative Assembly attendants, front desk staff, the IT staff and the security officers, who are always so accommodating. Parliament functions because these people make so much happen behind the scenes. I and all members are incredibly thankful and grateful for the work you do. I wish each and every one of you a happy Christmas and a healthy 2017. To the people who prepare *Hansard*, I thank each and every one of you. Have a merry Christmas. You make sense of what does and does not come out of my mouth. You do a wonderful job reflecting the lively and robust debate that takes place in this House. I thank the catering and cleaning staff who come in early and work late to ensure that we work in a clean and comfortable space and who provide us with great food and coffee—sometimes a little too much. I wish each of you a happy Christmas.

I express my thanks to the many people who will be working during the Christmas period to ensure our safety and wellbeing. I thank in particular the NSW Police Force, the Ambulance Service of NSW, the Rural Fire Service, and the doctors and nurse across our great State, including the staff at St George Hospital. It is reassuring to know that these people are at the ready if need be. I thank them for the work they have done throughout 2016 and wish them a safe, happy and holy Christmas.

I extend my thanks to the people of Oatley for their ongoing support and advice. I will never take for granted the responsibility they have given me and I will do my best every day to represent them. Those of us who sit in this House owe much to our families. Often they come second to the demands of the job. I wish the husbands, wives, partners, children and families of all the members of this Chamber and the other place the very best. We are lucky to have them in our lives and we appreciate all that they do. On a personal note, I acknowledge my wife, Adla, and our 2½-year-old son, James, for their love and the joy they bring. They are my greatest motivation and the reason I feel so strongly about making my community better, stronger and safer. I thank my staff, Flynn, Violeta, Chris, Shane and Pat, my dedicated volunteers, the branch members, and friends and supporters of Team Coure for a great 2016. Merry Christmas to them all and best wishes for a happy and healthy 2017.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (17:00): I begin by extending my best wishes for the festive season to all members, their families and their communities right across this great State. I wish everyone in this Chamber a safe festive season and look forward to their return next year. Despite the theatre of this place, cordial and at times close relationships are common across the dispatch box. Regardless of any differences in our politics, I wish everyone in this Chamber and in the other place a very merry Christmas. I acknowledge the contribution of the parliamentary support staff from the Department of Parliamentary Services. The professionalism of each and every one of them ensures that Australia's oldest Parliament continues to run smoothly. Without them it would not function. In particular, I acknowledge the Clerks, including the recently retired Ronda Miller, and staff of the Table Office. The assistance they provide to all members is crucial to this Parliament and allows us to go about our work on behalf of our communities as effectively as we can.

I thank the Hansard staff for their contribution and unwavering tolerance. I acknowledge their work with admiration. It is not something that I could do. *Hansard* is an important official record for the people of New South Wales. With a former Hansard reporter now working in my electorate office, I would be in a lot of trouble if I did not take the time to thank them for their efforts throughout the year. All members rely on Hansard staff to faithfully record their contributions. A lot of the time we hope and pray that they manage to improve the raw material we provide them with. I thank the catering staff, who ensure that we are well fed throughout the year. The catering staff deal with the lunchtime rush hour and the late-night sittings with calmness and composure. Sadly, this is not always matched by those asking for their service. I mention the facilities staff, who keep this building neat and tidy. The cleaners and maintenance workers often do their work before we arrive in the morning and after we leave each night. Their work is seamless and at times thankless, but it does not go unnoticed.

We should acknowledge those who will be spending Christmas away from their friends and family. I think especially of the service personnel deployed around the world at the moment. My thoughts also go out to those for whom Christmas will be a reminder of what they have lost. I think in particular of those who have lost loved ones in Nice, Orlando and Brussels. I also think of those who have passed away this year in my electorate of Campbelltown. We should remember that this festive season may not be easy for some. Let us think also of

those who serve in the Rural Fire Service and the State Emergency Service, and of our police, our paramedics and other health workers. I wish them a safe and, hopefully, uneventful festive season.

I acknowledge the hard work of my colleagues. I thank all members on this side of the House, who work tirelessly in representing their constituents. I thank the Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, and his staff, including Lee Bellia. I thank the entire shadow Cabinet, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Michael Daley and Dylan Parker, who works tirelessly for us, for the support and counsel they have afforded me this year. I acknowledge the Opposition Whip, Nick Lalich. I thank Colleen Symington for her tireless work. She is always there to keep us organised. She has been a wonderful support to me during my time as Deputy Whip. I thank the Leader of the House, the Premier's office, and the member for Camden and Government Whip, Chris Patterson, and his staff for their efforts. I thank The Nationals Whip, the member for Myall Lakes. I appreciate the guidance he gave me as a new Deputy Whip. I have enjoyed his counsel. Their assistance is sincerely appreciated and I thank them all.

To the people of Campbelltown I say that I am delighted and truly honoured to be their representative in this place. My loyalty to them is paramount and my only motivation. They are my priority and will remain so. Nothing will stand in the way of my commitment to them and their interests. I will never yield or waver on that point. I thank all Labor staff, particularly the staff in my office—Mitch, Karen, Isabella, Todd and Peter—and all those who have filled in throughout the year. Our staff are our backbone. Their support allows us to represent our communities. As I am sure Government members can appreciate, we in the Opposition ask a lot of our staff. They must do so much with very little. I wish all Labor staff a restful and relaxing Christmas break. I thank them for their efforts this year. I wish the Speaker and her staff the best for the festive season. I thank everyone who has worked as part of a team to contribute to the effectiveness of the Parliament. I look forward to everyone's safe return next year. I hope they enjoy spending time with family. I look forward to coming back next year to continue the very important work of this the oldest Parliament.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:06): Christmas is a special time of year. It is a time for family and friends. It is important that we, our families and our friends remain safe over Christmas and the new year. I wish the best for all members. I appreciate the support I have received from both Liberal and Labor members. There can be heated debate inside the Chamber but we are always polite to each other outside the Chamber. I thank my colleagues in The Nationals, in particular Troy Grant and his wife, Toni, and family, and Adrian Piccoli and his wife, Sonia, and family. I also mention Thomas George, who has had to leave quickly because his father, who is 95, has had another turn. I wish Thomas and Deb the very best.

I wish a merry Christmas to all staff. I will not go through the names. The Leader of the House, Anthony Roberts, named everyone in the building. I thank the Hansard staff very much for their work. I thank my staff, Anthea Savage, Gary Hoson and Matt Purcell. I also thank Megan Skinner. The member for Lismore talked about Selma, the cleaner, in the offices upstairs. I acknowledge Sir Gary, who does a fantastic job of looking after us up there. I thank the Leader of the House, Anthony Roberts, Robbo the Good, for all his support.

I turn my attention to Liberal Whip Chris Patterson. First, I acknowledge the person who really runs the Government, and that is Bec Cartwright. I thank her and Alex for all the work that they do. One would think that for the position of Whip one would source someone who can do two simple things: count and know the alphabet. That would be a good thing. Unfortunately, the Liberal Party decided not to do that. Other than that, Chris Patterson is a good bloke.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Don't knock Chris; he's good.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: He is good, but he does have that minor failing. I also thank Nick Lalich and Greg Warren. Greg Warren does an absolutely outstanding job. The counting and the other work that he does is done with military precision. I look forward to working with Greg again next year, as we count the numbers in the House. I also thank the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and Temporary Speakers. I thank the members of the Parliamentary Lions Club. This year we held two major functions. We co-hosted a function in June, where we raised just more than \$300,000 for charity. At the function in October we raised more than \$60,000 for the Royal Far West and the Australian and Chinese Parents Association of Children with Disabilities.

I thank the Myall Lakes community. It is an absolute privilege to represent the communities in Myall Lakes. At all times I endeavour to listen to their concerns and to bring those concerns to this House in the New South Wales Parliament in Macquarie Street. I thank my local Nationals members who give me guidance and advice on various local issues. In speaking of The Nationals, I also thank all the members and Ministers, including our new leader John Barilaro, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. I mention Duncan Gay, Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council. Over the past four years the total spend on roads was \$25 billion, and 17 per cent of that—\$19 billion—was spent in regional New South Wales.

I mentioned Adrian Piccoli earlier, but I should also talk about Gonski funding and the resource allocation model [RAM] or needs-based funding. In my electorate funding has increased from \$4.5 million in 2014 to \$11.5 million in 2016 and further to \$14.5 million in 2017, which is due to the absolutely fantastic work by Adrian Piccoli. The Hon. Niall Blair, the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water, just introduced the Biodiversity Conservation Bill and the Crown Land Management Bill. I also thank Leslie Williams, Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education.

Lastly, I thank my family, including my wife, Sue, and our children—Amanda and her partner, Jacob, and their child, Ruby; Nicole and her husband, Bryce, and their children, Lachlan and Hamish; Trent and his wife, Amie, and their son, Aiden; our daughter Caroline; our son Stuart, his partner, Belle, and their children, Summer, Kathryn and Luke; and our daughter Victoria, her partner, James, and their child, Olivia. I wish all the best to everyone and I wish everyone a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Medical Research, Assistant Minister for Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (17:12): I am delighted to have this opportunity to offer my felicitations to my parliamentary colleagues; the staff of the Parliament, in particular the Clerk and her office, Hansard, and the wonderful staff of the switchboard, who are always such a pleasure to deal with; the people of the Goulburn electorate and my family—my daughters and my husband, David, who is always beside me. Christmas seems to come earlier each year. I thank Kevin Conolly for my first Christmas card. I now see people buying next year's presents and table settings at the Boxing Day sales and writing out their Christmas cards while they are watching the tennis—that might be last year's of course.

Christmas is always a time of great good will, where Government and Opposition temporarily suspend battle and celebrate our friendships and what all of us in this Chamber share—the families and friends we love, the chance for a sleep in, and the chance to turn off the news and walk on the beach like everyone else. These days, Christmas at our place for David, Alice and me revolves around four red hens who think they are dogs and especially three beautiful and spirited little girls—Adelaide, Mathilda and Cecelia. We are blessed to have their excited voices and open hearts in our home at Christmas time. It has most certainly made the trials and tribulations of being a parent worthwhile. I say thank you to my beautiful Penny and her husband, Michael, for making such happiness possible.

I also thank my brilliant and loyal staff for their outstanding support this year. In the electorate office Laureen, Brook, Alicia and Sophie are four fairy godmothers who ensure the Goulburn office is a pleasure to deal with and spread fairy dust wherever they can. Nothing is too much trouble and they can always have a good laugh. I am very proud of the great service we are able to provide 50,000 citizens from Burrawang to Boorowa. May I also thank my extraordinary ministerial team. As you hoe into the chocolate-coated peanuts, I need to assure you I am grateful every day for your dedication to our Government and to the service of this ministry, for your intelligence and for your hard work. I am not sure I always deserve you but I am having you anyway. One day, when Parliament is but a memory, I may even regain the skills I have lost: the ability to choose my clothes unaided, along with my words and my diary decisions. Who knows, I might even re-learn how to drive myself through the suburbs.

As we know, Christmas is a time of thanks and of giving. Minister Perrottet has listed a number of gift requests from members opposite today but he missed our side. The Premier and Treasurer have had all their Christmases come at once with the latest economic results, so they are not asking for anything. The turkeys in this place are not asking for an early Christmas, so they will wait another six weeks. Anthony Roberts, your Christmas is cancelled because you told Father Christmas you were done with being good and related matters and he died laughing. Brad Hazzard on the other hand told Santa the truth and said he had been naughty but it was worth it. I have to say Gabrielle Upton and I are dreaming of a white Christmas, but if the white runs out we have agreed to settle for red.

Madam Speaker Shelley Hancock, I know that you have put up with a lot from us this year and if you ever wonder what happened to your Christmas spirit you can always try my liquor cabinet. It is upstairs. Cheers, Shelley. My good friend Barra, you are a very busy man these days. You need to know, like all men, that although there are 30 shopping days left until Christmas you only need to hit the Queanbeyan mall at 6 o'clock on the very last day, Christmas Eve, for all 20 presents you need to buy. Leslie, Mel, Jillian, Melinda, Gladys, Gabrielle, my friends, we have all put in a joint letter to Santa asking for a list of all the bad boys and their telephone numbers. Rob Stokes, last year you did make a mistake: You left out gluten-free biscuits and organic soy milk for the reindeer and in exchange you got solar panels. This year, why don't you try chocolates?

To those many Christians, just remember there is a reason why your children love Jesus. It is because without Jesus there is no Christmas. I am now looking forward to my office party when we all catch up with people we have not seen for 20 minutes and they hope they have still got a job the next day. I am looking forward

to Christmas Day when my family and dear friends and those little girls—who love everything they open and forget to hand out everyone else's presents—are able to gather together to share in this great celebration, this great festival and tradition of Christmas. Happy Christmas nearly everybody. Let us not forget it is "Happy birthday Jesus". He is 2,016 years old this year.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:17): As the parliamentary year comes to an end, it is fitting to recognise the many wonderful things that have occurred throughout 2016. I thank my Labor colleagues for a very successful and uplifting year. Through our persistence, we have achieved a number of great things: the overturning of the greyhound ban; the promotion of five more women to our shadow Cabinet, making it the largest representation of women on any front bench in the State's history; and the election of two new members to this House from our side, my dear friend the Hon. Sophie Cotsis in Canterbury and Paul Scully in Wollongong. Our leader, the Hon. Luke Foley, has once again inspired us to be the best local members that we can and has shown true leadership. I thank him and Michael Daley, as part of the leadership team, for acting as a great team and for inspiring us every day.

As the convenor of the New South Wales branch of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, I have been privileged to have been involved in a number of initiatives and wins for female members of Parliament and staff in the past 12 months. Our much-touted loo coup was very effective and has provided more equal services to roughly 60 per cent of women who work in this precinct. I thank all the female members of Parliament who championed this issue and the wonderful male members who supported the call. In May, the branch hosted at Parliament House a young women's leadership event called "Stepping Up".

Fifty young women from regional and metropolitan New South Wales were each nominated by their local members and attended an event, which included lunch with Madam Speaker, a Pathways to Politics panel, a presentation skills workshop conducted by NIDA, and networking drinks afterwards. It was a very successful event. We also hosted four women members of Parliament from the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. The economic and social empowerment of women in the Pacific region formed a large part of the discussion at a roundtable that the branch convened. On Tuesday we held a White Ribbon morning tea in the Speaker's Garden, which was extremely well attended. I thank all the members for attending.

Recently I attended the national steering committee meeting, which was the last for our colleague the Hon. Catherine Cusack from the other place as chair of the steering committee. This role has been taken up by the Hon. Michelle O'Byrne from Tasmania. I was elected deputy chair of the national steering committee at that meeting and I thank my colleagues for that honour. With the change in chair, the New South Wales Clerk's office has now relinquished its role as Commonwealth secretariat, but will retain the function for our New South Wales branch. I also take this opportunity to thank the Hon. Catherine Cusack for her contribution during her term as national chair.

My most important message of thanks tonight is to members of the Clerk's office, Acting Clerk Helen Minnican, Rachel Simpson and Tom Isaksen, as well as former Clerk Ronda Miller. Without their help and support in the past 12 months we would not have achieved any of the important milestones we have achieved. I also thank the Presiding Officers, Madam Speaker and Mr President. I also thank the Speaker's staff, particularly Sean O'Connor. The Chamber is often a rowdy and boisterous place, but it is also here that positive outcomes are achieved for our communities and the State as a whole. My thanks to the Deputy Speaker, Acting Speakers and the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms, who often escorts me from the Chamber. I thank the attendants, particularly Danny, Peter and April.

I also thank Samantha Brown and Julie Langsworth for their work in putting together the Women in Parliament exhibition that will be displayed in this place in early 2017, and my present and past parliamentary colleagues for their work in putting together their thoughts on being a woman parliamentarian for the book we are hoping to launch on International Women's Day and their input into the exhibition. Again I thank Madam Speaker and her staff for the work they have done to promote the exhibition. I thank the catering staff, those who work in the cafe—particularly Lubo for his coffee—and Parliamentary Library staff. I thank staff in cleaning, security, Hansard, information technology, the Table Office and human resources, who make a difference to our lives. These staff members make all the regional members feel very much at home when we are in Parliament House.

In March I was honoured to be promoted to shadow Cabinet with the portfolios of the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and Small Business. These are two portfolios I am passionate about. During the past nine months I have met with many groups throughout New South Wales—from Broken Hill, to Orange, to Goulburn to Tuncurry, to Wollongong, to Gosford, to Queanbeyan and elsewhere—to consult with communities and peak bodies in Sydney about these portfolios and gain a greater understanding of the issues impacting each sector. I thank all the people who have given their time to help improve the policies by speaking frankly and openly about their concerns.

I thank my colleagues in this place—we have had a great year. I thank the staff of the Leader of the Opposition's office, particularly Chloe Bennett, Chris Willis and Lee Bellia, as well as Julian, Mick and Megan for the early morning calls. I thank Colleen Symington, who is my favourite because she is a ray of sunshine in our lives. Of course, I thank my staff in my electorate office for their hard work over the past year. I thank my wonderful husband, Robert. We have entered a new chapter of our lives this week, and I am so pleased to have shared this journey with him. I look forward to future challenges. I also thank my children, Josh and Jess. I will miss Jess when she goes to Germany next year. Most of all I thank the community of Maitland for its help. I note that seasonal felicitations are not just about Christmas but also about acknowledging other cultures. I hope that over the summer we all take a break and share some special time with our families.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:23): On behalf of The Greens I contribute to this afternoon's Christmas felicitations. I do not propose to thank everyone who has contributed to the work of this Parliament, but suffice to say that I acknowledge the important contributions of all those who have been thanked in the contributions of other members. I will not name everyone but will say that I acknowledge all of those who have already been identified in this year's Christmas felicitations. I thank them for their important contributions to this House. I also acknowledge all those who are employed by this State and who make New South Wales and Sydney such an amazing place to live.

On behalf of my colleagues Jenny Leong and Tamara Smith I thank all members for their work, for their treatment of us and for their commitment to their constituents. I thank my colleagues in the upper House David Shoebridge, Jan Barham, Jeremy Buckingham, Mehreen Faruqi, Justin Field and their staff who have generously given their time to support me and my colleagues in this House. In a small party it is important to get along. I am delighted that the three of us get along so well. We are real mates who work together and have our offices together. We have a good time working in this place to serve our communities. I have been impressed by Jenny and Tamara's tenacity, skills and capacity. They are fantastic women who have made an incredible contribution to this Parliament. On behalf of the member for Newtown I thank her electorate office staff Lydia, Mithra and Cathy. On behalf of the member for Ballina I thank her electorate office staff Ria, Marcelle, Camille, Mimi. I especially thank Dan, who works in Jenny's office and supports all of us. It makes a real difference.

I acknowledge the late Dr John Kaye. In his passing we lost a brave, tireless activist and a wise and fearless mind. The community and this Parliament has lost a champion for renewable energy and public education, and one of the greatest advocates against privatisation. I also acknowledge Jan Barham, who has announced that she will resign from her position and vacate her upper House role at the end of this session. I thank Jan for her support and her contribution to Green politics and the environmental issues she has taken up. I wish Jan all the best for the future. I take this opportunity to thank the staff in my office: Adam Taylor, Lesa de Leau, Gemma Pitcher, Monika Baumann and Sharon Butt. Their commitment, intelligence and compassion are outstanding, especially when dealing with people in our community who are vulnerable or going through difficult times.

In many ways this is an incredible Parliament. It is Australia's oldest Parliament but it leads this country and the world in many areas. I extend my best wishes to everyone in this place. I also acknowledge everyone in the broader community, some of whom are doing it very tough at this time of year. I thank the Premier, his Ministers and their staff. I also thank members from both sides of the House. I have always tried to treat others with respect and on the whole I have received that respect in return. We are all working to make this State a better place. While we have different perspectives, it is important that we work collaboratively. I acknowledge my crossbench colleagues the member and Lake Macquarie and the member for Sydney. We work closely with each other and I value their counsel. It is important that we work together effectively as a crossbench. I think we achieve that.

I thank the volunteers who staff my office and support my work. They are Sandra Langtree, Derek Bolton, Parissa Zand, Matthew Thomson, Lindsay Hardingham, Ari De Bono, Claudia Zwar, Giulia Albeti, Paul Bounty, Tannielle Pierce, Jean Pierre Alexandre, Carlotta McIntosh, Patricia Johnston, Brendan Manning, Thomas Hikade, Lisa Willett, Martin Brown, Ulrike Zachmann, Gabby Levet, Cybele McNeill and Eliza James. They all have a strong commitment to supporting our local community. They stand up for the things they believe in and work very hard for us.

I conclude by thanking my family and all who support me in my electorate, including members of the Port Jackson Greens and Inner City Greens. I thank the Speaker for her contribution and support for our work in this place. I also thank Government Whip Chris Patterson and Rebecca Cartwright from his office. It is tricky managing this House but they have always treated me with respect and taken the time to hear different points of view. I thank everyone who serves this great State and works to make New South Wales and Australia a great place to live. I acknowledge everyone's great contribution. I wish everybody a very happy Christmas and all the best for the New Year. I hope we all have a very safe and happy holiday.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (17:28): I give Christmas felicitations, acknowledging of course that there are millions tuning in to this particular speech. My Christmas felicitations are second only to the Queen's Christmas message. I welcome particularly Mrs van den Broeke, who is listening in. This is a wonderful time of the year and my favourite time of the year representing an electorate that is so strong in its family ethos. I received a wonderful Christmas present this year when the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, Duncan Gay, announced plans to replace the roundabout with traffic lights at Norwest Boulevard and Lexington Drive in my electorate. Thank you very much to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, who has given me a wonderful Christmas present. It is also a good time for me to announce the winner of the much-anticipated David Elliott Christmas Card Competition. This year's winner is Florence Sulaturio from our Lady of Lourdes Primary School. Tomorrow I will be presenting her with a \$100 Toys"R"Us gift voucher just in time for Christmas. Congratulations to Florence on her wonderful contribution.

I thank our veterans community, many of whom will do it tough this year. As the Minister for Veterans Affairs, I visited a lot of sub-branches and veterans groups. Christmas is an opportunity for me to say that the message of goodwill and peace is just as pertinent today as it was in times of crisis when they served their nation. I remind the House that members of the emergency services, both volunteers and salaried workers, will be spending their Christmas holidays on standby. We should never, ever take for granted the fact that our emergency services workers do such an important job to help us live in a safe and secure environment. We should also remember those who are in prisons. The message of Christ is to always forgive and move towards a time of reconciliation. Prisoners need to be remembered at this time of the year, as do those in juvenile justice facilities, thinking about their families and hopefully planning for a return to civil society.

It is important for me to thank the Parliamentary Secretary for Corrections, Emergency Services, Veterans and the Centenary of Anzac, Daryl Maguire, whose work has been untiring over the course of the past 12 months. He has made a wonderful addition to the team. To my own staff, what can I say? Major Jim Terrie, my chief of staff, tells me what I should know. Katherine Danks, my deputy chief of staff, tells me what to say. Leigh van den Broeke, my press secretary, tells me what to say as well, but in a more polite manner. My private secretary Rachael Taylor has for over 10 years told me where to go; Tanya Raffoul has told me when to go. Sophie Rose, my policy adviser, has told me what to think; Mitchell Clout, my policy adviser, has also told me what to think but luckily he does it in a more polite fashion.

Michelle Byrne in my electorate office tells me what is going on in the community. Reena Jethi also tells me what is going on in the community, with a bias towards the Indian contingent of my electorate. Keith Topolski keeps the home fires in the electorate burning. Catherine Priestley in my parliamentary office tells me what to say about my electorate. Kim Watkins, the receptionist in my office, tells me who I am allowed to talk to. Ivan Leonard Mills and Simon Kritsotakis in my office tell me what the department is saying about me. Karl, my driver, tells me where I am supposed to be.

Christmas is a time for family. Every Christmas I am reminded that I nearly lost my wife a couple of years ago to the terrible disease of cancer. It is appropriate for me to say to those members who are here: Never, ever forget that your families are the biggest motive behind service, and never forget the fact that family is the most precious thing in your lives. To Nicole who, as the member for Hornsby knows, is the lady Elliott, and my two sons, Search and Destroy, let us hope that this Christmas season brings us closer together and is a good time for us to reflect on what we have achieved in the last year and what we plan to achieve in the next.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:33): I am glad of the opportunity to give Christmas felicitations. Christmas is a time spent relaxing with family and friends. It is also a time to show gratitude for the year that was. I appreciate this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to some special people in this place and outside it who have made 2016 the amazing year it has been, and who have made it easier to do what is sometimes a difficult, but always very worthwhile, job. I join my colleagues in placing on record the deep gratitude that Opposition members and I have for everyone who works in this building and all the work they do to keep Parliament running smoothly. The New South Wales Parliament is a workplace like no other. It takes very special people to come to work here each day given its craziness and excitement.

I thank the catering, cleaning, IT, front desk, Table Office, and all the other parliamentary staff. I thank them for keeping us and our staff connected, well fed, clean, paid, and for resourcing us so that we can do our best in representing our constituents. Some of them also help us to make sense. The Hansard team has the hardest job in this place. The ability to make sense out of what is often nonsense is amazing. I thank the attendants who work so hard behind the scenes. I particularly thank them for their sense of humour. I thank the security and police officers, who day in and day out risk their lives to ensure our safety.

I thank the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the Assistant Speakers and the Temporary Speakers who take the chair to ensure that the Parliament operates well, and that we behave well. They are not always successful, but

I am sure they do their best. I thank the Clerk and her team for the long hours they work and their patience. I also thank Ronda Miller for all her contributions as Clerk this year, and I hope she is enjoying her retirement. I thank the Whips, the Deputy Whips and their staff. I particularly thank Colleen for her guidance, her timely text messages, and her wealth of knowledge about the running of this Chamber. I also thank her for her friendship.

I acknowledge the Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, and thank him for his leadership and personal support of me during this year, which has sometimes been difficult personally. I extend this gratitude to Luke's capable and strong team in the leadership office. I thank all my Labor colleagues for their support, their hard work and their friendship. I also thank my colleagues on the other side of the House. This Chamber is often a loud and passionate place as people fight for their communities and for what we and our communities hold dear. While it can get heated, when we walk out of the Chamber we still respect each other. We do not always agree, but we all have the best intentions to make this State the best it can be.

I thank my electorate staff—Deb, Sophia, Stephanie and Alex—who listen and respond to the needs and requests of the Charlestown community. Like the offices of other members, my electorate office is often a place of last resort, visited by people who are angry and frustrated. It takes unique people to enjoy working in such an environment. I pay special tribute to Deb, who ensures the smooth running of the office and who keeps me under control. On a personal note, I thank my family. Without their love, help and support I could not do this job.

Finally, I thank the people of the Charlestown electorate. I thank them for continuing to place their trust in me. It is important never to forget that our job as members of Parliament is to represent the people who elected us. It is our duty to fight, to advocate and to work tirelessly for our constituents' aspirations, goals and rights. I assure them that I am doing that. I will continue to listen to their concerns, and I look forward to representing them in the New Year. I wish everyone a safe and happy sitting break, Christmas and New Year. I look forward to seeing everyone again next year and doing it all again. Merry Christmas to everyone.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): Very well said. We wish you a merry Christmas, too.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (17:38): First, I would like to wish everybody a happy and safe Christmas. I would also like to call out to those soldiers in our community—the police, the State Emergency Service and the firies—who will be on guard over the Christmas break. I hope they will not be needed, but I am sure they will be, unfortunately. I send good wishes to them and hope they will get through the summer break safely. It is important on these occasions that we thank our families, and I will do that first because whenever I make a speech I tend to thank my wife last. Tonight I will thank her first. My wife, Gayle, has stood by me for 25 years so I could get in this place. Through thick and thin she has always been beside me. I thank her from the bottom of my heart for being with me in all the hard times we have gone through and the times we will be going through.

In that context I also thank my staff: Nancy Meehan, Anne England, Lorraine Rodden, Andrew Castle, Jessica England and Dolores Gonzales. Without them I would be nothing. They are the back-up, they are the people who look after me and make me look good. When I come into this place they are the ones who keep the home fires burning. Often there is shock and horror and things that happen in one's electorate and one is sitting in this place unable to physically do anything. They are the people who are front and centre and usually I find out halfway through the process that tragically something has gone wrong somewhere in my electorate and they are there to pick up the pieces. I thank them from the bottom of my heart and I wish them all a very happy Christmas. Some of my staff have had a hard year and I wish them the best for the future.

I come into this place very early in the morning—I am usually here by 5.45 a.m. or 6 a.m.—I am met at the gate by security and as soon as I get through that gate I know that I am in a safe place. I park my vehicle, come upstairs and my cleaner, who is usually in my office, gives me a cheery "good morning", opens the blinds, dusts off everything and goes on her way because, obviously, she is under time constraints. It is during those few moments when the sun is coming up in the morning that I realise how hard it is for the staff here. They have to come in very early in the morning to make sure that we are able to go through the day with a clean office. I am often here at sunrise and they are already halfway through their day. It warms the cockles of my heart that somebody is so committed to looking after us and the Parliament.

This place is a special place. This is the oldest Parliament in Australia and it should be respected. We also need to respect one another. I am just going to have a quick rant. In this place I know that with the argy-bargy of daily debate we often get to the point where we have slanging matches across the Chamber. We have got to remember that we are all here for the same thing: the people in our electorates. I feel that in the Parliament we are part of a family—a very rare family. When I came into this place in 2011, I think there had been only about 2,500 members of Parliament in New South Wales. So we are a very exclusive group of people.

When we are down and when one of us is falling we should be a little bit more thoughtful. There have been times in the past when some of our colleagues on either side of the House have had hard times and we either respect it or sometimes we do not. I think when people are going through a hard time we should support them under any circumstances, whatever side of politics they come from. I thank all the staff, particularly the Hansard staff. They work behind the scenes—members see only a couple of them up in the Hansard gallery like something out of *The Muppets*; they sit up there, often with no expression on their faces. You know this is from the heart—you know I love you. They are behind the scenes and when we leave here at 4.30 in the morning, their work has not finished; they continue working and then go home and shower, shave, whatever they have to do, and come back. It is a hard time for them.

I have been a Temporary Speaker for six years and I have loved every minute of it. We must respect the work of the Clerks. They have a tough job like Hansard. Whether we are having fun or not, Hansard has to record every word we say and the Clerks have to know what we are doing. With the din in here, it is a hard task and they would be wrung out at the end of a day in the Chamber, as I am. I thank Madam Speaker and the Speakers Panel. They have been fantastic. I acknowledge Cheryl for the work she does as Serjeant-at-Arms, which is another tough job. Who would put their hand up for it?

I will not go through everybody in the House, especially since I have run out of time. I put a call out to a couple of special people. The Whip's office is supported by Rebecca Cartwright. I told Rebecca that she could make a lot more money scheduling planes at the airport. She would be much better off than being in here. Colleen does a fantastic job for the Opposition. I am sure she is thanked but their work is unrecognised. They come under enormous stress when we are lollygagging around Parliament—in our offices upstairs or having a coffee downstairs—and should be sitting in the Chamber. Without taking another four hours, I thank everybody for the 2016 season and look forward to the 2017 season. I am strapping my boots on as we speak. Merry Christmas to one and all. Have a nice break and spend time with your families.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:46): Merry Christmas and thank you to all. I will begin by honouring all those who work in and around this place. Many before me have properly and sincerely thanked Government and Opposition members and Ministers, and the leaders of various parties, Madam Speaker, Temporary Speakers, the Leader of the House, and Government and Opposition Whips. I also thank all of my colleagues. Today, when thinking about wanting to convey a Christmas message and a message of thanks, I spoke to a number of people who work quietly behind the scenes about their colleagues who make them smile.

I acknowledge those who enable this place to tick over day after day, those who make us smile, and those who work behind the scenes and are not named. They all go about their work with a positive and helpful attitude. We see our smiling Clerk team when we come into this place. To Helen and the fabulous team—Leslie, Rachel, Catherine and Carly—thank you. Sometimes when it is crazy, it is nice to look over and see a beautiful bright yellow pair of heels. Cheryl has a serious job and handles serious situations on a daily basis. I like her sense of cheekiness. I like to see smiles and eyes rolling. It grounds us all and reminds us that we are all human. Thank you.

I thank Rohan Tyler and the research and training team, and Simon Johnston from the Committees and Corporate Services teams. I thank too all our fabulous Legislative Assembly reception staff and attendants. I arrive here, the Blue Mountains bag lady, each time Parliament sits with various satchels of folders and information—whatever I might need for the week—and I appreciate the friendly smiles of April, Lynne, Danny, Peter and Chris, to name a few. Young Tom has just started; I always get the biggest grin from him. People may not know that many years ago Tom came into the office of former member for Blue Mountains Phil Koperberg and asked whether he could do work experience. He worked alongside me and showed an interesting fascination with Parliament and its workings that I never quite understood at the time. Who would have thunk it we would both be here one day? So thanks to young Tom too. Danny, I am going to single you out. You make me laugh when sometimes I might cry.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): The question is that Danny gets a pay rise.

Ms TRISH DOYLE: Aye. When I am absolutely parched and think I cannot last another minute in this place Danny appears with another jug of water and a joke—quietly; he does not disrupt proceedings. I wanted to single him out. I enjoy arriving in this place and seeing such a good human being looking after us. Danny, you are an absolute champion. Happy Christmas to you. I hope you get a good rest. You deserve it. Joe Andrade, Jodi and the family are well known to me. When I first came to this place I would often stop and ask Joe how he was going, and he would answer me in tears. I know how hard it is to rebuild. I wish him well.

I thank the Library staff, and Lisa and the Hansard team. It was the Hansard team that was first mentioned to me as the A team. I was told to make sure they always give you a nod to acknowledge your efforts. But sometimes their efforts are better than any of us can ever make, so thank you, Hansard. I thank Natasha and the

team in the Table Office; our IT team; the Building Services and maintenance team, particularly Phil Herman, who is Mr Fix-it; the special constables and the security team; Phil, Carlos and the dining room team, especially the smiling Mai and Charlotte; and our human resources team. It is the helpful and cheery people such as Pam and Cherry who make your day.

I thank our cleaners extraordinaire. I made a cup of tea for my cleaner, Lourdes, one day on level 10. I told her I would clean up and she should just have a cup of tea. She laughed to the point that tears ran down her face. I think she was having a particularly hard time. I thank Lourdes and Erma on level 10; Gary Tay, who always has a great smile; Selma on level 12; Dave, the friendly carpenter; the Cafe Quorum team, Lubo, Mark, Gavin and Andrew; Gary and the staff bar team; and our DPS clan in the west wing—there has to be a television program made about them.

Two of my favourite people in this place are Lee Bellia and Colleen Symington; I love you two. You keep us kicking over. As many have expressed in this place, thank you for your service to the State of New South Wales, the Parliament of New South Wales, and members and staff in this place. Thank you for making our work possible. At the end of the year, and in the festive spirit, I express appreciation to all public servants across the State who are delivering services—in our schools, community services, hospitals, police and emergency services, and government departments—in the Blue Mountains and across the State. Finally, I give my heartfelt thanks to my fabulous, dedicated, hardworking staff. I feel at times we are a team of brilliance. Thank you Suzie, Tom, Camille, Annie and Miles. And to my beautiful, loving boys, I will see you tomorrow. You make me proud every day. See you all next year. Merry, merry Christmas.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (17:54): In the spirit of converting this adversarial Chamber into a harmonious and joyous place, I too wish to provide Christmas felicitations to the many people who have been critical to my ability to do the job of representing the people of Lake Macquarie in this Parliament and those people who, by their nature, have made performing the role easier and often more enjoyable. I have to start with a call-out to the residents of Lake Macquarie, who by definition make my job what it is. I am very proud to serve the people and communities of Lake Macquarie and I truly hope and wish for them that they all have the best Christmas and New Year season possible.

I believe crossbench members have had a good year. I am proud to be able to sit with the members representing the electorates of Balmain, Newtown and Ballina, who are such effective representatives for their communities and their party. My Independent colleague and Speaker's pet, the member for Sydney, cannot go unmentioned. I have a good friendship with Alex and his research officer, Tammie Nardone, which certainly makes parliamentary life that much better. As a matter of fact, Alex has asked that I provide thanks and appreciation to all members and staff on his behalf. We both want to acknowledge the assistance we receive from and friendships we have with members of both the Government and the Labor Opposition. I thank them sincerely.

The parliamentary staff are fantastic in assisting the public and members. I always enjoy catching a quick conversation with Ian, Ian, Lynne, April, Danny, Chris and Peter. I would also like to recognise the assistance and advice from the Clerks, including of course the recently retired Clerk, Ronda Miller. Helen Minnican in her role as Acting Clerk, Catherine Watson, Rachel Simpson, Les Gönye and all the staff in that area are always most helpful and I thank them for that. Hansard, as most if not all members have said, deserve a special mention for the amazing job they do in making everybody sound good. It never ceases to amaze me that they can somehow derive some sense from the noise of the Chamber during the more boisterous debates, particularly in question time. Parliamentary services staff throughout the Parliament do a wonderful job as well. To those who keep the building tidy, catered and secure, thank you.

The Government has been always willing to give assistance with advice, even if not with a positive answer to a request. I appreciate the access given to me by Ministers and I thank their staff, whom I find to be invariably helpful. The Premier and former Deputy Premier, Troy Grant, have been very fair in their dealings with me. I thank them and their staff, with particular thanks to the Premier's chief of staff, Bay Warburton. The Government has inarguably, whether we like it or not, maintained a cracking pace during this year. I am sure that the Premier and Ministers along with their families will be looking forward to their Christmas break. I give particular congratulations to one man who I think will be working quite a bit over the Christmas break and that is the new Deputy Premier, John Barilaro. He will no doubt take to the job like a fish to water.

In closing I give special mention to my team who do such a fantastic job of assisting members of our community and making me look good—well, as good as they can. Dianne Sykes, my office manager of almost 10 years, continues to keep things running smoothly but of course not without the help of Belinda Harvey and my research officer of almost a year, Jason Gordon. I am also assisted by Deborah Dennis, Kelly Hoare and Madeleine Bond. They all do a fantastic job and there is no doubt I should let them know that more often. It would be remiss of me to not mention the Government Whip, the member for Camden, Chris Patterson—everybody's mate. Chris

has not changed much since we shared a thin wall on level 10. Even with the weight of office, I generally find him to still be a good bloke. Thank you for your help to me and the crossbench in general.

I also thank the staff in the Government Whip's office, including Alex Carne and Rebecca Cartwright. I thank the Speaker, Shelley Hancock, and her staff for their assistance and goodwill to the crossbench—we are possibly the most reasonable section of the Chamber so that goodwill is understandable. I place on record once again my best wishes and thanks to the Speaker's former assistant, Joe Andrade. I hope he has a wonderful retirement. Joe was a great mate to me, and every member who knew him would say the same thing.

The Christmas season is a reminder to us all of the importance of goodwill, but particularly for those who need help and support 365 days a year. None of us could do this job without the support of family. I acknowledge the support I have been given by my family, in particular my wife, Lyn. The majority of members and staff that I deal with are people of goodwill. I wish them all the best for a relaxing and enjoyable time over the Christmas and New Year period.

Mr Matt Kean: What did I do? A curmudgeon?

Mr GREG PIPER: Look it up. I wish everybody well for the Christmas season and look forward to seeing you all next year.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Local Government) (18:00): I too join the Premier and others in this House in wishing everyone who works in this building all the best for the coming festive season. I thank all of my parliamentary colleagues for another productive year of Parliament. The bearpit can be a combative place, but we are all here to serve our communities and to deliver the best outcomes for the mums, dads, families and pensioners across this State. I thank the former leader of The Nationals, Troy Grant, for being a friend and strong leader of New South Wales. The new leader, John Barilaro, and deputy leader, Niall Blair, are two incredible men; they will take The Nationals forward. Their fighting instincts and passion for the regions will ensure that The Nationals continues to deliver for regional New South Wales in 2017 and beyond. My special thanks go to our wonderful Whips, Chris Patterson and Stephen Bromhead, and their staff. I also thank the Speaker, Shelley Hancock.

I thank the staff at Hansard. I occasionally read my speeches and they make it sound so wonderful, but I do not think they sounded that good initially. I thank Tim Hurst, the chief executive officer of Local Government, and all staff at the Office of Local Government for their hard work. It has been a busy year for local government with this Government introducing the most significant changes in the history of the sector. To Jeremy Scott, the Office of Local Government, thank you. I thank Rachel McCallum and Kate Robinson for their tireless work on the Local Government Act. Many thanks to Steve Orr and Corin Moffat and the team at the Department of Premier and Cabinet who have worked hard to ensure that the 20 new merged councils are a success and will provide huge benefits to our communities. I thank John Williams, the former member for Murray-Darling and a good friend. He is now the chairperson of the Far West Initiative Advisory Committee. Thanks to Peter Achterstraat, chair of the Ministerial Advisory Group, and Jenny Gardiner, chairperson of the Local Government Grants Commission, and members.

Thanks to Graeme Kelly and Stephen Hughes of the United Services Union. I thank Local Government NSW, the Local Government Professionals Australia, the Australian Local Government Women's Association, the Institute of Public Works Engineering Association NSW and the Local Government Engineers Association. Special thanks go to my hardworking electorate staff in Bathurst who day in and day out make my life and the lives of people in Bathurst easier: Dianne Abbott, Jan Hudson, Kathleen Smith and Sue Mackay. I wish a special Christmas to my ministerial staff. It has been an incredibly busy year. I thank them for their care, support and friendship and the way they have looked after one another. Thanks to my Chief of Staff Emma Logan and Justin Mulder, a hardworking deputy. Thanks to Katrina Carlon for providing expert support and advice on all things in regional New South Wales. Thanks to Ashley Gardiner, the head of communications, and Antonia Morrow, who is about to leave to have a baby. I wish her the best of luck.

I thank Angeli Lee for her positive attitude and for always smiling; Sarah Ward, for making sure that I never missed a meeting or a division; Paul Terrett, for his hard work; and Douglas Walther, although you have been here a very short time your impact in our office has been enormous. To Steve Ellis, I thank you for always getting me home safely. I especially thank my family: my wife, Jo, my children, Rhayne, Keely and Scout, and my parents for all their love and support. Without them I could not be here today representing the Bathurst electorate and the people of New South Wales. Lastly and most importantly thanks must go to the great people of the Bathurst electorate. Those are the great people who continue to put their faith in me to represent them here in the Parliament of New South Wales.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (18:05): By the grace of God and with the support of family and friends I wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous year. It gives me great pride to be the last speaker in Parliament this year with my very good friend Matt Kean, Parliamentary Secretary—we have had a lot of fun together over the past 12 months on many projects that I talked about from last year. As many would know, on 1 January this year I had a horseriding accident that caused a stroke. This could have been a very different speech I would be giving today, or none at all. Twelve months on I am still here and thank those who genuinely cared for my family and me. And, thank goodness, I am recovering. I look forward to taking some time off with family and friends, and returning rejuvenated to continue in 2017 and working harder than ever for the people of Wollondilly and the Southern Highlands.

This year has seen other challenges come my way and they have done nothing but reaffirm my position in this place, strengthen my commitment to stand by my family and friends and to focus my intention on delivering for my community. This place does not operate by politicians alone and I take this opportunity to acknowledge a number of people. I apologise at the start if I forget anybody or any one group, but I thank everybody here. First, I thank the Whips for ensuring that the House runs smoothly. I particularly thank my good friend and parliamentary colleague the member for Camden, Chris Patterson; the Deputy Whip, Mark Coure; and their staff, Bec and Alex, who do a fantastic job. I thank The Nationals Whip, Steve Bromhead, who this year I beat into the Chamber on at least one or two occasions for community recognition statements to listen to Matt Kean say 3,000 words in 10 seconds. I thank my colleagues from all sides of this House and particularly single out Matthew Mason-Cox, Eleni Petinos, Chris Patterson, Matt Kean, President of the Legislative Council, Don Harwin, Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian and Premier Mike Baird.

Outside of members I particularly thank Peter Polous, Andrew O'Sullivan, Hilton Gibbs and Jean Newton. These two groups of people have guided me through the ups and downs of this year and have gone above and beyond what can be asked for of any friend. During some tough battles they have rolled up their sleeves to stand alongside me and be there when needed at critical moments. I believe you are all truly amazing people and I cannot thank you enough for holding me up in the key moments of this year. Loyalty is a rare commodity and they have shown it in spades.

I also thank my staff: Tracey Watkins, Pat Gibbs, David Gavin, and Liam Garman, from earlier in the year, who have been great advocates for our community and have provided much-needed assistance to my family—they have been there through thick and thin. Words cannot thank them enough for putting up with me. I thank also those who have helped in my office throughout the year: Craig Curtis, Nicholas Beavan and Pat Young. All these people service the community and are a fantastic team. They make me look good, which can be hard at times—most times, all times—but they are the people who make Wollondilly tick. I would also like to thank David Tricca, Scott Percival and Michael Shaw for their wonderful support. I also thank the entire Cabinet, parliamentary secretaries and their staff led by Premier Mike Baird, who have certainly delivered for Wollondilly this year.

I thank my friends Speaker Shelley Hancock and President Don Harwin for everything they do. I also thank Deputy Speaker Thomas George, Assistant Speaker Andrew Fraser and all the Temporary Speakers, including the member for Shellharbour, who is in the chair at the moment. I thank all the important cogs that make Parliament operate. Thank you to Hansard staff for deciphering what we say. Even today a Hansard staff member rang me to try to make my words from yesterday look and sound much better than they did after a long week. They face some interesting challenges. I thank them very much. I thank Acting Clerk Helen, and Les and the team. I will not name them all. Each of them helps us day in, day out. Without them this place would not function. I thank all the attendants, who do a fantastic job. I thank the catering staff for feeding and watering us. Maybe they should stop feeding me for a while.

I thank the cleaners, who are always here before we are. I thank the special constables, the information technology staff, the library staff and the administration staff. I thank the committee staff. They all do a wonderful job, particularly the staff of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, of which I am Chair. I thank the security and maintenance staff. I also thank the media, locally and at a State and national level, and everyone in the press gallery. They tell our stories—sometimes—and ensure that we are kept on our toes and focus on the task ahead.

I turn to the branch members, who allow me to do this job and I thank them for their support. Most importantly, I thank the people of Wollondilly and the Southern Highlands, who I love working with to achieve results for our community. Our constituents are the reason we are in this place. They trust us to share their concerns. We could not do our jobs without them. I acknowledge my friends Nicholas "National Treasurer" Jones, Jessica Jones, Jean "Boss Lady" Newton and Phil, and George "Make it Happen" Greiss and his wife, Michelle. Spending time with them is always awesome and I could not ask for truer friends. I thank my mum, Yvonne, my

dad, Ted, and my sister, Ebony, who are always there to help and inspire me to be my best. I also thank my in-laws, John and Annette, and my brother-in-law and sister-in-law, who are always there for me.

Finally, I thank those to whom I owe everything: my family. I look forward to doing nothing more than hugging them, spending time with them and reminding myself every day that without them I am nothing. To paraphrase a good friend of mine, Texas singer Brad Hines, "I am forever in their debt." My wife, Belinda, is the most amazing wife. I can never thank her enough. She is steadfast, loving and my best friend. If it is okay, I want to spend more time leaving those footprints that we promised each other when we were first married. My two wonderful sons, Will and Menzies, are growing up so fast and turning into great men. When I first entered Parliament I said that my work here will always be aimed at making the State a better place for them both. That has not changed. I am the proudest dad. I am so happy to have the best job I will ever have: to be their dad. It is an honour to watch them grow up and to spend time with them both. I wish everybody in this place and all over our great State a very merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year. God bless every one of us.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): That was a very nice finish from the member for Wollondilly. Well done. The question is that the House take note of Christmas felicitations.

Motion agreed to.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:15 until
Tuesday 14 February 2017 at 12:00.**