



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 16 February 2017

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 16 February 2017

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

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[Notices of motions given.]

Bills

SPORTING VENUES AUTHORITIES AMENDMENT BILL 2017

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Stuart Ayres, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (10:10): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The objective of the Sporting Venues Authorities Amendment Bill 2017 is to amend the Sporting Venues Authorities Act 2008 to give the Government full control and governance over the Stadium Australia business, currently known as ANZ Stadium, under Venues NSW following its return to government ownership in July 2016. With the Government buying back the leasehold rights for Stadium Australia in July 2016, the Government has reached the point where all major stadia are now government owned and controlled. The major stadia include ANZ Stadium, Allianz Stadium, Sydney Cricket Ground, Western Sydney Stadium at Parramatta, McDonald Jones Stadium in Newcastle, and WIN Stadium in Wollongong.

The proposed amendments to the Sporting Venues Authorities Act will consolidate the governance structures for the stadia network from three entities to two. Those amendments will improve the network-wide planning and decision-making. Many of the drivers and influences are outside the direct control of the single venue owners but are enhanced or facilitated through decisions made at the network level. Governance reform for the stadia network will be possible through approval of those amendments to the Sporting Venues Authorities Act. The proposed amendments will ensure a number of benefits and outcomes for the State, including economic benefits such as the attraction of events and associated tourism to New South Wales, enhancing the visitor economy; community and social benefits, such as amenity enhancement in areas surrounding the venues and enhancing liveability for the people of New South Wales; and enhancing sporting outcomes, such as improvements in the elite pathway for professional sport. There is no doubt our world-class athletes deserve world-class facilities and so do their fans.

The proposed amendments to the Sporting Venues Authorities Act will permit full governance of ANZ Stadium and support the realisation of the benefits of the State-owned stadia network. The proposed amendments to the Sporting Venues Authorities Act will give the Government vesting powers through Venues NSW to become a party to ANZ Stadium contracts and facilitate the efficient transfer of ANZ Stadium assets and liabilities to full government control, and ensure that Venues NSW compliance with the vesting orders is exempt from the application of section 45 of the Commonwealth Competition and Consumer Act 2010. Section 45 of the Competition and Consumer Act prohibits entering into or giving effect to a contract which has the purpose or is likely to have the effect of substantially lessening competition in the market.

Section 51 of the Competition and Consumer Act provides that the State can exclude certain activities from the operation of section 45 by way of legislative provision, such as those contained in this bill. The vesting powers will ensure that ANZ Stadium members' rights remain intact and that the ANZ Stadium operator VenuesLive negotiated contracts, including naming rights and other valuable assets, remain current. The amendments give the Government the opportunity to develop efficiencies for tenants and hirers to make the New South Wales Stadium network more attractive, more efficient and meet the current expectations of local, national and international sports and event professionals.

The proposed improved stadia governance arrangements, which the amendments will realise, will allow the Government to realise synergies across the stadia network, including improved hiring agreements; better

matching of supply and demand of sporting content and other major events to the appropriate facilities; an enhanced ability to offer a coordinated offering to attract large events; benefits from joint catering operations; benefits from joint procurement of supply rights, such as ticketing and pour-age rights; benefits from joint sponsorship opportunities; and economies of scale in operating expenses. These legislative amendments will allow Venues NSW to support and concentrate on the delivery of the new Western Sydney Stadium at Parramatta and the redevelopment of the ANZ Stadium.

Streamlined, consistent and transparent governance over the ANZ Stadium—alongside those venues currently overseen by Venues NSW, including the Western Sydney Stadium at Parramatta, the Newcastle Stadium and the Wollongong Stadium—will serve to maximise the Government's return on stadia investment, and contribute positively to the visitor economy as well as the liveability of this State for NSW residents. With these amendments, the State's major stadia precincts will be governed to maximise commercial viability, community benefit and the effective coordination of major events. I commend the Sporting Venues Authorities Amendment Bill 2017 to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2016-17

Debate resumed from 17 November 2016.

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (10:16): I have sat in this place for 13 State budgets, the good, the bad and the indifferent, but the 2016-17 budget is something else. It is not just good; it is remarkably strong for the people and businesses of New South Wales. The budget has provided a set of numbers for the ages: In the black, heading towards negligible State debt—which was achieved a short time later—yet with record spending on infrastructure and services. It was surely a milestone when general government sector net debt crossed the threshold to negative \$57 million, putting New South Wales in a cash positive position for the first time on record. If this was the United States, we would probably all be wearing baseball hats embroidered with the words "zero debt for New South Wales". For this I commence by thanking the former Premier and the current Premier, who was the then Treasurer.

Sometimes governments can present good budgets simply by being in power at the right time, at the perfect alignment of broad economic cycles. This Government has not had to rely on that old political game of smoke and mirrors. By rising from the worst-performing State economy to the nation's leader, the evidence is clear that New South Wales has been led to the front by insightful leaders. We are not the beneficiaries of a fortunate accident. Indeed, the economic numbers presented in this budget are so uniquely positive, in contemporary terms, that I found journalists confounded by how to report such overwhelming good news. It is as though they have lost the vocabulary for reporting excellence from a responsive and responsible government.

The 2016-17 budget reports a surplus of \$3.4 billion for 2015-16 and forecasts an even higher surplus of \$3.7 billion in 2016-17, with surpluses across the forward estimates. Pleasingly, since the budget announcement, the final surplus has risen to \$4.7 billion, an amazing jump of \$1.3 billion since the June forecast. This is not merely a political triumph, it is a very real bonus for all those who live and work in this great State. Even more can be achieved. The State's triple-A credit rating has been reaffirmed by both rating agencies. As the new Treasurer recently said, over the next four years this Government will invest a record \$73.2 billion in new hospitals, schools, roads, public transport and other vital infrastructure across New South Wales. Since the 2015 election, New South Wales has added more than 135,000 jobs accounting, as I understand it, for more than half the new jobs in Australia.

The 2016-17 budget delivers record investments in key services, including \$21 billion—a record investment—in health services; a record \$13.3 billion on school education services; and a record \$8.1 billion to ensure community safety. The local story for the Albury electorate is roads. The Government has listened to my concerns and is delivering more than \$48 million worth of road and bridge infrastructure across the electorate. It is addressing years of geographical discrimination and neglect. In our region we have a strong network of roads but some governments notoriously believe the job is done and finished when the bitumen sets. Rubbish roads hurt local regional businesses and impact on the safety of families. The electorate will receive \$48 million to keep the roads in good shape. I thank the former Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight for his support for the Albury electorate.

The budget will deliver a new \$5.9 million heavy vehicle rest area to be constructed on the Hume Highway, 35 kilometres north of Albury, at Mullengandra. There will be further safety improvements to the Riverina Highway 85 to 90 kilometres west of Albury. The Government will contribute \$1.575 million towards pavement maintenance and rebuilding on the Riverina Highway at Padman Drive, Albury, and planning for the

replacement Murray Bridge between Yarrawonga and Mulwala will receive half a million dollars. There will be \$1.616 million for corridor maintenance and slope repairs on the Alpine Way four kilometres east of Khancoban. Councils will receive large grants for road maintenance, such as \$2.574 million that has been allocated for the Greater Hume Shire Council.

Last year a number of road projects came to fruition, the major project being the opening of the first section of the upgrade of the Riverina Highway from East Albury to the Hume Resort. This section of road was a winding, bumpy, narrow, unsafe dog track. It is now a smooth run with dangers removed and wider verges constructed on difficult bends. Planning and surveying have taken place for the final section of the \$11 million Riverina Highway upgrade from the Hume Resort to Bethanga Bridge. Work on the final section has commenced and is scheduled to conclude by the end of June next year. It will be difficult as the terrain is steep and the geology unhelpful.

This is the sort of task that previous governments have baulked at—coming to a crashing halt and peering over the edge of the precipice—rather than getting the job done. This Government is performing those hard tasks. It has been a straightforward process with the former Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight visiting Albury and assessing the situation for himself. This has paid dividends and I thank him for his ongoing support and personal attention in his role as Minister.

Under the banner of health, the budget will deliver a continuing upgrade of regional multipurpose service [MPS] programs for Tumbarumba, Culcairn and Holbrook. I look forward to the opening of the revitalised Holbrook MPS shortly. Detailed planning is about to be finalised for Tumbarumba and the Culcairn MPS is out to tender with work to commence in coming months. This year the funding reserved for the New South Wales contribution to Albury Wodonga Health is expected to be around \$102 million. I look forward to working closely with the new Minister for Health as we press forward with several projects that are under advanced development.

I feel it is timely to bring a matter to the attention of the Minister and his staff. After more than 13 years as Albury's representative I must still confront the fundamental problem of senior public servants in Sydney who believe and act on the basis that Albury's major regional hospital is effectively part of Victoria. Last year the most recent example of Albury being left off the NSW Health map occurred when government publications promoting a new service directed residents of the Albury electorate to Wagga Wagga hospital instead of the Albury hospital. This is a living and breathing embarrassment. I cite the rebuild of three of our multipurpose services as an example of the funding that the Albury electorate has received from NSW Health. Unfortunately, for the eight-year period of the Coalition's first two terms in government, the Albury hospital has not received the planning attention that it deserves.

Mental health facilities and some practices on the New South Wales side of the border are a pale and weak cousin compared to those implemented on the other side of the border. It is recognised that the Albury electorate is far behind in this field for service delivery. This is the benefit and burden of living on a border. Our residents and businesses see what Victoria is accomplishing with mental health care and realise that both Labor and the Coalition governments have failed the residents of Albury for decades. It is time for a review of the Albury Hospital, its infrastructure needs and its delivery of services, both in general health and mental health services. I thank the former health Minister for her response to my concerns and for her enthusiasm to tackle stalled programs for the Albury Hospital and complete plans for a major upgrade of mental health facilities on the New South Wales side of the border.

Work has continued on the planned Brain and Mind Centre but at the pace of continental drift. The New South Wales and Victorian health departments have flip-flopped over the planning for this much-needed project and over selection of the site. Yes, it is important to get things right, but I have learned the lesson of trying to bring initiative into the world of health bureaucracy. Albury has been penalised for seeking to get things moving ahead of the system by funding a health project from outside the health budgets of New South Wales and Victoria. I had to watch as \$3 million in funding for urgently needed mental health facilities was lost somewhere in Victoria for more than two years. Fortunately, the money has recently been found again. Can you believe it? New South Wales had to take back the \$3 million from Victoria. That is truly bizarre.

I could write a book about the goings-on over attempts to modernise mental health services in Albury. These needs were ignored by Labor for so many years and, sadly, after six years in government, the Coalition cannot claim to have remedied this shocking situation. I know the former Minister for Health shares my frustration and has taken a personal interest in breaking through the bureaucratic barriers. It has been a game of hokey-pokey: The site and funding are put in, then out, and then back in again. I put faith in the new Minister for Health to work with me to shake it all about. I thank the Premier who, as Treasurer, visited Albury to listen firsthand to my concerns about these stalled projects. I see health as the foremost concern in the electorate. Prudent and effective funding in this area will be incredibly well received.

Last August Meat & Livestock Australia, JBS, the Western Australian Meat Marketing Co-operative Limited [WAMMCO], and Fletcher International Exports placed their major biennial conference for the sheep and lamb industries, called LambEx, in Albury rather than in Sydney's Homebush. Now everyone is glad they settled on Albury. The national expo attracted some 1,100 delegates and many more visitors to Albury, which was a terrific boost to the local economy while reminding those industries of the benefits of holding major events in the State's regions. I thank the NSW Department of Primary Industries and the Minister for Primary Industries for sponsoring and underwriting the event and for assisting with the cost of improving facilities to handle the expo.

It has been one of the great achievements of this Government to see beyond the dramatic gestures of creating new infrastructure and also to have a successful program for improving the delivery of services. I was pleased to open the Riverina-Murray office of Legal Aid New South Wales in Albury last June. Having a full-time family and criminal lawyer based in Albury, rather than having staff come from Sydney and Wagga Wagga, will allow Legal Aid to deliver services more efficiently and provide better access to legal services for clients. But it is so much more than that. By dedicating three full-time lawyers and two support staff to this office, Legal Aid is showing its strong commitment to the people of Albury and the region. This, too, has been a welcome development in Albury. It is almost two years since the Service NSW centre opened in Albury. I can report that that innovation has been well received. I highlight the youthfulness and friendliness of its concierges, ably directing people to the right spot. The facility is bright, cheerful and comfortable. What an improvement it has been on Albury's former dark and brooding motor registry bunker, reminiscent of the Mos Eisley cantina from *Star Wars*.

The 2016-17 budget received scant media coverage in the Albury electorate. The once mighty and fearsome *Border Mail* limply placed a small report on page 7 of the next day's newspaper, with no follow-up over subsequent days. Its report was further restricted in usefulness to residents and businesses by focusing on random negative comments from people who had not yet had the opportunity to read the budget papers. Television and radio coverage was light and simple. Do not get me wrong; in one sense I am not complaining about a declining and impotent media sector that is unable to present much challenging commentary. All such businesses are under staffing pressure. Yet I am worried about the decline of regional media and the challenges this presents to governments and to all members from regional seats. How do they get their valuable messages across to the residents and businesses they seek to serve?

In Albury we are dealing with significant staff losses in local media organisations, with the remaining staff stretched unrealistically to cover a huge geographical area. Stories from far away are being broadcast or published that have no relevance to those living in or near Albury. This is a further turn-off. As editors and subeditors either are retrenched or jump ship, who is left to supervise media segments and articles? That local knowledge about a community and its history is, in my opinion, disappearing fast. We are left with a race to win viewers, listeners and viewers by mere sensationalism. As we all know from our electorates, this approach leads to a gruesome elegy of negativity. We recently had programs swapped from one channel to another as part of an arrangement that is relevant to capital cities but which is confusing in my region. As we know, young people are finding little of interest in conventional media news reporting.

Social media has filled the vacuum, but only to a limited degree. This trend is presenting huge challenges to regional members of Parliament and the departments and agencies attempting to inform residents about changes in service delivery, new policies and grant opportunities. Recently the Premier, as Treasurer, came to Albury and I was pleased to introduce her to a number of business leaders, local councillors and staff. One of the purposes of the visit was to assist one council in particular with problems inherent in its applications for funding under grant schemes. A side effect of the Fit for the Future program is that some councils feel that, having been classed as fit, they can ignore the reality that they rely on borrowing instead of saving to pay for council-owned infrastructure. Deep down, there is an issue that community expectations of councils' infrastructure have moved beyond the capacity of councils to provide.

An example is the community swimming pool. Albury has two 50-metre pools, each of which is nearing the end of its useful life. To fix them will cost \$20 million according to council estimates. To replace them with something more modern and suited to more serious training and competition will cost \$40 million. From what I understand, little money has been set aside adequately over the life of the pools for the dreaded day when expensive action must be taken. In the lead-up to last September's council elections, several candidates for the Albury council said the money for its pools, in the vicinity of \$30 million to \$40 million, should come from other governments—that is, State or Federal governments. While one can ask a council why it expects State and Federal governments to bail it out with substantial grants, this is of no comfort to ratepayers, who are left high and dry.

The potential fiscal boost from a leasing of poles and wires may well assist regional communities to build more modern infrastructure when councils are simply unable to provide. But then again, is a once-off financial wave really the solution to this ongoing dilemma? Are our councils truly fit for the future? Sometimes the reality is that government grant schemes might not be the right program at the right time to meet a community's pressing

needs. I ask: How should a responsible State government fund council-owned infrastructure? The ones who will suffer from poor planning, or from poor financial resourcing at a local level, are the ordinary people of New South Wales.

Can any of us imagine what it must be like, in a part of the State that suffers fierce summer heat, to be unable to afford a public swimming pool? Albury council is considering closing one its two pools—unfortunately, the one that serves the less economically well-off part of its domain. I do not want to see this happen, yet it is what we face without some level of assistance akin to economic intervention. I appeal to the Treasurer to consider the swimming pools issue for Albury. In a broader sense, what I ask today is this: Is there a better way of ensuring that residents in regional and rural New South Wales have access to certain minimum levels and qualities of community infrastructure?

It is always a significant event in Albury when a Minister makes the effort and takes the time to visit. This is an opportunity to inform Ministers about the work going on, and the needs of constituents, along the State's southern border. Over the past year or so I have been pleased to welcome many Ministers to Albury. My thanks and appreciation go to each of them, and to the staff who accompanied them to the edge of the State. When Ministers come to Albury there is always a fringe benefit: They can see or hear about the way their policies are hitting the ground in a community that is well aware of the alternative offered 10 minutes away in Victoria. Are Ministers ahead of the game, or lagging behind? If they come to Albury they will find out.

In closing, I join in congratulating the Premier on her massively successful work when she was Treasurer. I now encourage her, as Premier, to put into play her own aims and goals for the State. I am proud to represent the people who live in the Albury electorate and to repeat my commitment to serving them and their local communities. The issues may change from year to year but my resolve remains constant to work hard on their behalf to make our region the envy of all. Through record budget allocations, we are putting in place exciting new infrastructure without ignoring necessary maintenance and improvement of existing facilities. I am proud to be working as part of the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government, and look forward with enthusiasm to putting our plans into place in Albury.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (10:34): Before I discuss what has not been delivered in my electorate, I acknowledge and recognise Wayne Phillips and his colleagues from the Australian Workers' Union [AWU] who are in the public gallery. They have played a vital role in the fight to ensure procurement. The member for Keira, the member for Wollongong and I have the utmost respect and admiration for Wayne's work and that of the union. I welcome them to the New South Wales Parliament. I am greatly disappointed at the lack of infrastructure in the electorate of Shellharbour. For the past six years the Liberal-Nationals Government has dragged its feet on the Albion Park Rail bypass. When this bypass is finally started this Government will have been in office for eight years.

Meanwhile, motorists continue to stew in traffic, day in and day out. The rail bypass is the region's missing link in terms of road infrastructure. The member for Kiama has failed to commit to a commencement date or to any form of construction. The people of the region want to see the Albion Park Rail bypass constructed. A Labor Government built the Kiama bypass, a Labor Government built the Dapto bypass and it is only a Labor Government that will continue to fight to ensure that the Albion Park Rail bypass is started this year, or at least in 2018. Why should motorists have to wait until 2019? I will continue my remarks at a later time. I again acknowledge our friends in the gallery from the AWU.

Business interrupted.

Bills

CITY OF SYDNEY AMENDMENT (RESTORING EQUAL VOTING RIGHTS) BILL 2017

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (10:44): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the City of Sydney Amendment (Restoring Equal Voting Rights) Bill 2017. This is a simple piece of legislation as it has a single purpose: to undo one of this Government's most disgraceful errors. It simply reverses the amendments that the Government rammed through this Parliament in 2014. Those amendments, second read by the then Minister for Local Government, were designed to gerrymander the City of Sydney for the Liberal Party. That was all they were about. Typically, the Government tried to pass them off as

something else, but when we strip the spin away that was all they ever were: a D-grade piece of electoral manipulation.

By intention and by design, those 2014 amendments were anti-democratic. They gave every business that pays rates in the City of Sydney two votes and made it compulsory for them to enrol and vote. Why should businesses get two votes when people, the residents who live in the local government area, get only one? This unfair weighting was never explained or justified: It simply could not be. The Government could never admit that the only reason was that it assumed businesses would vote for the Liberal Party. The amendments were designed to inflate the Liberal Party vote, defeat the incumbent lord mayor, Clover Moore, and win control of the City of Sydney for the Liberal Party. As Australia's most respected electoral commentator, Antony Green, said at the time:

The two votes idea is completely at odds with Australia's history, and with democracy as understood in most western countries.

He said the changes were "designed with malice" to "deliver ermine" for the Liberal Party. It was an appalling, distasteful spectacle, the Liberal Party pulling an electoral rort to try to make Christine Foster the Lord Mayor of Sydney. It was the Liberal Party at its worst—changing the rules to help the born-to-rule brigade win Town Hall. But every grey cloud has a silver lining, and happily this rort was a spectacular failure. The voters saw through it; it blew up in the Liberal Party's face. The widespread disgust felt by so many citizens at the reprehensible rort motivated many fair-minded people to vote for Clover Moore. The Liberal Party's unfair, malicious, antidemocratic persecution of the Lord Mayor only served to increase her majority.

The community of the City of Sydney did not want the Liberal Party manipulators, lobbyists and, yes, lurk merchants to win. The Government's cynical rort ended in yet another spectacular embarrassment. Let us draw a line and bring to an end this shameful and shambolic episode by passing this legislation. This exercise has already cost ratepayers \$12 million, which is the amount the City of Sydney has had to spend on implementing this poor law. That money could and should have been spent on libraries, parks and the many other services that the council provides to its community. Unless this bill that I bring in today is passed by this Parliament, the whole bureaucracy needed to implement the 2014 rort will remain and will still be needed. Millions more dollars would be needed to enforce this poor and antidemocratic law.

Those opposite like to pretend they are representatives of parties for small government and the elimination of red tape, but there is an army of bureaucrats designed to enforce electoral rigging in the City of Sydney council. Rather than take them at their word of being small-government types who want to eliminate red tape, we should see them for what they are—evil-minded schemers. Far from reducing regulation, the 2014 changes imposed new obligations on both business and the city itself. These regulations create costs, consume resources and waste time. Unless the laws are repealed, there are also fines to consider, as directors of businesses that did not enrol and then did not vote now face fines. The Government's silence on fining businesses is deafening. Surely it is now past time for a clear statement from this Government about whether it is to pursue the enforcement of these fines against directors of businesses who did not follow the Liberal Party's script. When it comes to rorting local government, this reform is not on its own. In fact, the widespread rorting of local government is perhaps this Government's most defining initiative.

Let us understand the two votes for business rort in the wider context of this Government's interference in local government across the State. The forced mergers are being pursued under the guise of promoting municipal efficiency, but of course they also are part of the plot by the Liberal and National parties to seize control of local government. As I said on the day that dozens of mayors and hundreds of councillors who between them received the votes of millions of our fellow citizens were sacked, the forced council mergers are a disgraceful exercise in political partisanship.

On the mid North Coast a former Nationals member was plonked on the community as an administrator of the merged Gloucester, Great Lakes and Greater Taree councils, replacing the elected leadership. Democratically elected councillors were swept away with the stroke of a Premier's pen and replaced by an appointed Nationals apparatchik. Across the State citizens of 42 local government areas had their elected councillors and mayors sacked. That was supplemented by the crudest and most blatant act of boundary rigging in this country since Joh Bjelke-Petersen's notorious Queensland gerrymander in the 1970s. In the St George area—as the member for Rockdale and member for Kogarah never cease to remind me—the councils of Rockdale, Kogarah and Hurstville were prepared to enter into discussions about a genuine St George council.

But, of course, the Government rejected that proposal. Why? Because there are too many Labor voters in Rockdale. To gerrymander the area the Liberals had to exclude Rockdale, because there were too many Labor voters, and merge it with Botany, which was the eastern suburbs council with too many Labor voters. The outcome was a Liberal gerrymander in the new Georges River Council and a Liberal gerrymander in the eastern suburbs super council. We can see the pattern across Sydney—in the east, south and west. In Western Sydney the member

for Granville had to sit through a shameful exercise in which her constituents, who had been part of the city of Parramatta since 1947, were removed from that area. No-one ever made a single submission or argument to remove the citizens of Granville—

Mr Chris Patterson: Point of order: I ask you to direct the member to return to the leave of the bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is a second reading speech and members sometimes stray from the bill, but I am sure in his introduction the Leader of the Opposition will return to the leave of the bill.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: I will, Mr Deputy Speaker. Thank you for your assistance. As I was saying, this Government, which is only interested in partisan political outcomes, has repeated the pattern of deceit in the City of Sydney across this State. In the eastern, southern and western suburbs, in the city itself and across regional New South Wales, communities are angry. The only thing consistent about this Government's approach to local government is its desire to seize control of town halls across the State for its partisan political interests. That is the one thing that runs through every policy and every piece of legislation this Government initiates that affect local councils across New South Wales.

Mr John Sidoti: Your local council amalgamated in 2000 under Labor.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: Here we go: the bloke who was in the Cabinet for four hours! I acknowledge the interjection.

Mr Mark Coure: It was six hours. Leave him alone.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: That is six hours longer than you were ever in anyone's Cabinet line-up, mate. You were never at the starting gate. The member for Drummoyne interjects. In the Liberal Party discussion last week he fought the suggestion of a rollback on council mergers like it was Rorke's Drift. Never has anyone fought so hard. Everyone knows that as soon as that merger is on, he will quit to run as mayor of the super council because he reckons that is a far better job than any he will get in this place from any Premier. I thank the member for Drummoyne for the interjection.

I return to the bill I have introduced today. The reforms that local government needs are not rorts like multiple votes for corporations, but reforms that strengthen the integrity of local government and its administration. Labor says that property developers and real estate agents should not be allowed to serve as elected councillors because there are too many conflicts of interest. We need development and developers, but I cannot see how to reconcile the business of making development applications with sitting in judgement on those development applications. There is a permanent conflict of interest that Labor would remove. There should be caps on campaign expenditure in local government. How is it that the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of the Labor Party can seek the office of Premier of New South Wales with strict limits on how much we can raise and spend while in a small ward of a municipal council there are no limits? It is manifestly unfair.

These are the reforms that local government needs, not crude electoral manipulations, gerrymanders and boundary rigging. There is a round of local government elections this September. My challenge to the Premier and the new Minister for Local Government is to put the necessary reforms in place by then. This Parliament has the opportunity to legislate in this session, prior to the budget, with bipartisan support to ensure that proper spending and donation caps are in place well and truly before this year's local government elections. It is an opportunity to remove the conflicts of interest that arise when developers in the business of bringing development applications are sitting in judgement on development applications. It is the opportunity to bring in the reforms that local government needs. These are the reforms that communities desire, not crude boundary rigging like in some electoral district of southern Alabama.

Too often the Government's changes are conceived and executed in ruthless partisanship, which is what happened with the City of Sydney. The Opposition thanks the citizens of the City of Sydney for seeing through this and for sending this Government the clearest possible message by giving an emphatic thumbs down to this unforgivable and inexcusable rort. This legislation introduced by the Labor Opposition is simply to reverse and remove an outrageous rort. It has no other purpose. Its intentions are clear, simple, direct and honest: to fix a disgraceful manipulation of our electoral system in New South Wales and stop old-style ballot stuffing. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

STEEL INDUSTRY PROTECTION BILL 2016

Second Reading

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (10:55): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

What a day today is. For the first time, certainly in this Parliament and perhaps in this country's history, this legislation goes to the heart of the reason my colleagues and I sit in this place: to fight, work and advocate for the men and women who work in an industry that keeps our economy moving, and who play a strategic role in one of the most important industries not only in my region or in New South Wales but also in this country, and that is the industry of steelmaking and steel producing.

This is a community bill. For the first time in this Parliament's history, this is a bill that has the support of the entire upper House, including the crossbench of The Greens, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, the Christian Democratic Party and the Independents, and, of course, Labor. This bill has come into this place following an enormous amount of work from the men and women in the trade union movement—the Australian Workers' Union [AWU] and the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union [AMWU]—industry, the South Coast Labour Council, the Australian Steel Institute, and particular businesses who have advocated and put their neck out, such as K&R Fabrications and Leussink Engineering. To the men and women of those organisations and to the workers who have advocated for this bill, I hope today that this debate and the ongoing debate does the justice that your hard work deserves.

It also gives me great pleasure to acknowledge my shadow ministerial colleagues, the Hon. Adam Searle in the other place, and Mr Clayton Barr, the member for Cessnock, and our Labor members of Parliament, Mr Paul Scully, the member for Wollongong, and Ms Anna Watson, the member for Shellharbour, who are both tireless advocates, along with our Federal members of Parliament, Sharon Bird and Stephen Jones, for this important legislation. I acknowledge them. I acknowledge their work. I acknowledge the efforts that they have brought to this important legislation today. The time has come. The world has shifted. Things have moved on. Anyone who sits in the oldest Parliament in this country and fails to take the lessons of Brexit or Trump is missing some fundamental points. I do not believe for one second that all of the people who voted for Trump are racist bigots.

I do not believe that all of the people who voted for Pauline Hanson are necessarily racist bigots. Some of those people are in our electorates. Some of those people feel that they have been left behind. Some of those people feel that our growing economy has not included their growth and their development. This bill is the first plank to start to correct that. This bill is not about protectionism, and I will go through that later. This bill is about something very, very simple. If we, as taxpayers, invest in key strategic infrastructure projects that equate, regardless of who sits on the other side of the House or on this side, to billions of dollars worth of infrastructure, then what the men and women who have fought so hard to see this bill land here today simply is support for locally based industries that employ local workers, support for local businesses and support for local industries. That is not protectionism: That makes sense.

I will go through the details of the bill before I outline very clearly how things have fundamentally changed. The Steel Industry Protection Bill 2016 essentially asks that at least 90 per cent of the steel used in public works or infrastructure constructed by or on behalf of public authorities is manufactured in Australia. For the first time, what we are proposing is a mandate: governments will have a clear bar to work towards and maintain. All we are asking is that if a government is going to build roads, schools and hospitals of the future, the steel for those projects be sourced locally whenever that is possible.

My colleagues and I are particularly proud that this bill outlines a number of other important elements. I will go through firstly some relevant provisions in this bill to elucidate what this bill will do and what it will not do. Clause 6 of the bill outlines relevant contracts and it defines what a public authority must do and what it must not do in contracts in relation to this procurement. Clause 6 (1) states that a public authority must not enter into a relevant contract unless the contract contains a provision that requires at least 90 per cent of the steel—other than excluded steel—used in the construction of the works under the contract to be manufactured in a blast furnace or an electric arc furnace that is located in Australia.

My colleagues on this side of the House as well as those on the other side and the men and women in the gallery know that the Illawarra has a very proud history of steelmaking and that our economy is in transition. But not everyone can work in this new economy straightaway. As Wayne Phillips says, not everyone can pour coffee. The reality is that men and women in the steelworks need a future. Clause 6 (1) (a) of the bill outlines very clearly that 90 per cent of steel should be produced in Australia. Clause 6 (1) (b) is also important. It states that a public authority must not enter into a relevant contract unless the contract contains a provision that imposes a financial penalty on any party to the contract who fails to comply with the steel requirement provision. We are not just talking; we are mandating. We are not just saying we will do something; we are doing it. We are not just talking; we are legislating. We are not just thinking; we are acting.

In government we will ensure that procurement is done following the passing of this legislation, and if people want to try to get around that, there will be penalties and an advocate to crack down on them. Clause 6 (1) (b) states that a public authority must not enter into a relevant contract unless the contract contains a provision that requires any party to the contract who undertakes to construct any relevant public works on behalf

of a public authority to provide a cumulative steel usage report to the public authority before the public authority makes any progress payment or final payment under the contract. The message is clear: if public authorities are using taxpayers' money, we want them, whenever possible, to use Australian steel. We want to ensure that they continue to support one of the most important, strategic industries this country has in a dynamically changing world, a world where we see enormous shifts in power, both politically and financially. We need an ability to continue to produce steel in this country.

I highlight other clauses that my colleagues and I are happy to have had put into the bill. A NSW Steel Industry Advocate will be announced. My colleagues and I are proud to say that this advocate, to be appointed by the Governor, will be based in the Illawarra, the heart of one of the most iconic steelmaking industries in this country, if not the world. The holder of the office of advocate is required to hold that position on a full-time basis, except to the extent permitted by the Minister. The important functions of the advocate are outlined in clause 10 of the bill.

The NSW Steel Industry Advocate will be able to monitor compliance with the requirements of this bill. The advocate will monitor whether steel, other than excluded steel, required by this bill to be used in the construction of relevant public works is manufactured to the appropriate Australian standards. The advocate will conduct a review of the steel manufacturing and fabrication sector, with a particular focus on the following: the supply chain capabilities of the sector; the coordination by the sector of research, development and innovation, which is a key area that my colleague Paul Scully has talked to me about for some time; the investment in the sector of plant and equipment; and the preparation of reports in accordance with this bill.

The advocate may, in connection with the exercise of the functions of the advocate under this bill, make such inquiries and undertake such investigations as the advocate considers necessary, and the advocate may, by notice in writing, request that any person provide, or require any public authority to provide, the advocate with information, including documents, relevant to the exercise of the functions of the advocate under this bill. This is also important. The NSW Steel Industry Advocate will be required to prepare, at least once every 12 months, a report setting out a State infrastructure plan—the member for Shellharbour was influential in ensuring that that requirement became a part of the bill—that identifies future relevant public works, and the steel requirements of those works. It essentially creates certainty for the sector with a pipeline of works going forward.

The advocate is required to prepare, at least once every two years, a report on the procurement policies of the State—which my shadow ministerial colleague the member for Cessnock has spent a lot of time on researching and developing—and whether those policies adequately take into account all costs and benefits related to steel procurement, including those related to transport, insurance, maintenance, repair, the environment, employment and, most importantly for those of us from regional communities, regional development. This is an important bill, which I am proud to talk about. I want the Government to consider it and support it.

I will now outline some independent advice and I again acknowledge the trade union movement for commissioning BIS Shrapnel to prepare a detailed economic analysis to show what this type of change means for the community that I am honoured to represent and that the member for Wollongong and the member for Shellharbour also are honoured to represent. Before I go through the BIS Shrapnel information I will outline some of the work that the Australian Steel Institute has commissioned. The Australian Steel Institute, an organisation with which I met extensively in the formulation of this legislation, said that maximising local content is of high importance and that for every \$1 million of local manufacturing output gained or retained in New South Wales, six full-time jobs would be retained, \$225,000 of tax revenue would be generated, and \$64,000 in welfare benefits would be saved.

What does this mean on the ground? Unless significant change is made this generation might be the last generation to have an input into the steel industry. Significant change will mean that those men and women who contribute to our economy, whose children go to our local schools and who educate their children at wonderful universities can continue to be employed. I think of those men and women every day when I advocate for legislative change in this place. However, as shadow Treasurer I know that legislation such as this can generate huge economic benefits. No State or Federal Treasurer would laugh at a saving of \$64,000 in welfare benefits. More importantly, if we are not paying those benefits it means that people have work—something that everyone in this Chamber should support.

BIS Shrapnel—a firm that has been used by governments in the past, that many members respect and that has provided us with much information in the past—said that the proposed 90 per cent local steel content would cost the New South Wales Government. While formulating this legislation and the shadow Cabinet minute, my colleague the Hon. Adam Searle in the other place and my colleague the shadow Minister and member for Cessnock, Mr Clayton Barr and I have never said that this would be a free ride. BIS Shrapnel said there would be \$61 million to \$80 million annually in additional costs to the public sector. I place this on the record now because

I want members to be aware of the transparent way in which all parties involved in the preparation of this bill have gone about their deliberations.

What additional costs will be borne by the public sector? BIS Shrapnel estimates that a gigantic 0.2 per cent of total construction costs for public projects will be borne by the public sector, based on the assumption that the prices of locally sourced steel are 10 per cent higher than the equivalent imported product. No-one is arguing that there will be no cost to the community that I am fortunate enough to represent, but much higher costs will be incurred if we do not make these changes. Not having a steel industry is not like losing a corner shop; it means that thousands of men and women in the area that we call home will not be able to pay their mortgages and will not be able to contribute to one of the largest economies in New South Wales and one of the largest regional economies in Australia. It means that they will move away from the area, fly in and fly out, and spend weeks at a time away from their families and loved ones.

It means that the Illawarra region will become a quasi suburb of Sydney which people visit to enjoy the beach and then go home. That is not the future that my colleagues want for our great region. We want a steel industry because this country needs a steel industry. We want a steel industry in Australia as it has served this country during times of war, depression, crisis and large-scale capital works upgrades. The Labor Opposition wants men and women to have a future in one of the most strategic industries in this country—steelmaking. The Illawarra and the Hunter are proud steelmaking regions. Their residents are proud sons and daughters, parents, loved ones, friends and apprentices working in the steel industry.

The industry is now at tipping point and members and the community need to understand just how critical it is. This is not just about BlueScope steel; it is about ensuring a future for steelmaking. Last year my colleagues and I acknowledged that the Government secured payroll tax relief for BlueScope as it went through a difficult financial period. Market changes were much larger than anything that could be prepared for and the threat to the steel industry and BlueScope was real. Men and women in the gallery today worked hard and advocated on behalf of all steelworkers.

That crisis was endured but not without suffering and pain. However, it could have been much worse. Labor acknowledged and supported the workforce but stated from the outset that it appreciated what the delay in the payment of payroll tax would mean for the workforce and the industry. I have placed Labor's position on the record to avoid it being misconstrued. This bill is not about a temporary fix; it will ensure the sustainability of a strategic industry and ensure an ongoing pipeline of works. This Government must support local jobs and regional economies when it is building bridges, roads and infrastructure. That is what this bill is about.

I spoke earlier about some of the economic changes that are occurring around the world. In November last year we all watched Mr Trump's frightening rise in popularity prior to the United States presidential elections. The Treasurer of New South Wales is a supporter and strong believer in the conservative stream and Donald Trump. I hope that those who support Donald Trump believe in more than building the great wall and his ill-treatment of people of a different race or religion. Trump is starting to make fundamental economic changes to the way in which the largest economy in the world procures goods. This debate is not covering new ground; it is occurring in the United States of America and in Britain. Last year Malcolm Turnbull announced that Rem Steel Sales would be the preferred supplier of steel for a major rail project carried out by the Australian Rail Track Authority.

I know that we will hear Government members yell the word "protectionist" loud and clear. They have read their economics 101 textbook. They have drunk the Young Liberals Kool Aid. They have all said that about anyone who wants to defend local jobs. Despite the global economic shifts that have occurred in the past 12 months in particular and despite what some of our largest trading partners are doing to us, the Government wants to ignore the issue. The Government wants to continue down the old path. There is a new opportunity here to deliver real jobs and industry sustainability in the future. I find it interesting that Government members talk about protectionism when the Prime Minister announced that the rail track in South Australia will be built with steel produced in Whyalla. It is not a small project; it is 600-odd kilometres and is to be operated by the Australian Rail Track Corporation. There will be no tender process. There will be no changes. The message is, "You have got the job."

Many people contributed to my research on this bill, and I acknowledge their involvement. My research on the situation in other States provided some interesting examples. Government members may like to listen to this. The previous conservative Government in Victoria—which I think was in government for two or three minutes—also developed procurement practices that recognised the economic value through the value chain. Recent Labor governments have strengthened that via their focus on strategic projects. There are rules for 90 per cent local content in the large-scale level crossing work being undertaken by the Andrews Government. The South Australian Government is focusing on measures that recognise the economic benefit from procurement

through labour, capital investment and supply inputs via small- and medium-size enterprises in the steel value chain, as well as mandating supply to Australian standards.

We are not breaking new ground here, but it is important ground. I assume that Government members have received their brief from the Minister's office. Their huge contribution is to print that out and come into this Chamber to read it. I return briefly to issues that Government members may raise about free trade. I have heard it said that this will be the end of free trade agreements. We have obligations under existing free trade agreements. No-one disputes that. They restrict procurement policy changes on the grounds of competition. Article 15 of the Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement, which provides for government procurement preferences for production by small and medium enterprises. It should also be noted that the Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement exempts the steel industry from involvement in large areas of government procurement. I understand that that is to be reviewed soon. That would be a great opportunity for Australia to exempt our steel sector as well.

I turn to the matter of costs, not only the cost to taxpayers to implement this measure—and, as I have clearly outlined, there is a cost—but also the cost of managing whole-of-life costs. Governments of all persuasions are not managing the costs when we enter into negotiations, procurement and contracts that are outside local industries, where that is possible. That leads to missed opportunities in regional development and investment, and in jobs growth. It leads to missed opportunities for apprentices and trainees, and for small businesses and industries that rely on the sector. Those of us who have grown up with the steelworks in our community know that the steelworks at Port Kembla does not sit in isolation. It is intertwined with our economy—from the people who supply the paint and the people who supply produce for the canteens to the people who do the maintenance. Thousands upon thousands of small- to medium-size businesses rely on the continued sustainability of the steel industry that so proudly sits in the electorates that we represent.

This bill is not just about BlueScope. It is not just about the Illawarra. The Steel Industry Protection Bill 2016 is about making sure that we continue to produce steel in this country. It is also about making sure that, when we spend New South Wales taxpayers' money on large-scale infrastructure projects, we add value. This value-adding comes about in three ways. It is in local jobs, local investment and local opportunities—for young people in particular—to work in an industry that people love and have a future in. That is what we are debating today. We are not debating free trade agreements or protectionism. I am not saying that there is no cost; there is a cost involved in this legislation. We are debating whether members believe that taxpayers', when they foot the bill for large-scale infrastructure projects, should get more than a project—whether they should also get a community and workers who are supported in industry. If members truly believe that, they will support the bill.

This bill is not about protectionism; this bill is about workers. This bill is not about dollars and cents; it is about regional communities. This bill is not about big corporations; this bill is about small- to medium-size enterprises, particularly in the manufacturing and engineering sectors, which rely on a well-resourced, strong and strategic steel industry. The men and women in the New South Wales parliamentary Labor Party are proud. We are joined by our friends on the crossbenches, our friends in the other place, our friends from the trade union movement, our friends within business, and our friends in the Illawarra community. Most importantly, we stand by those thousands of men and women who will rely on this bill, now and in the future, to enable them to continue to contribute to the great economies of our region, our State and our nation.

I am very proud. I am very proud of my Labor colleagues—local members and colleagues within the shadow Cabinet. I am very proud of the men and women of the trade union movement, who have, for a long time, advocated change. I am grateful for the partnership they created with businesses in the electorate. Those partnerships stood up and challenged the status quo. They made sure that politicians like me spent time reading, reviewing, thinking, deliberating and changing. I thank wholeheartedly those people who have been with us on this journey from the beginning—the workers who took time out to contact me and my colleagues to contribute and to make sure that we understood just how important this issue is.

This is a community bill for a community. I am proud to have introduced it today. I encourage Government members to look beyond the rhetoric and ideology—to look beyond what they think is right—and to look at this bill for what it is. This bill is about ensuring that this country has, in the future, a steel industry that we can be proud of. As a country, we should continue to produce steel. With respect to taxpayers' projects, we must continue to make sure that we get more than a bridge, a road or a piece of rail infrastructure; we must also get jobs, growth in great regional economies, opportunities for apprentices and workers, and growing investment in a great industry. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (11:29): I will enunciate the very clear position that this Government supports the New South Wales steel industry, but because this bill is not in the best interests of New South Wales the Government will oppose it. Having read the bill and listened to the speech of the member for Keira, who is in the Chamber, and the speeches delivered in the Legislative Council I am struck by the way

that this bill would become completely unworkable in practice and that its justification by members in both the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council reflects their lack of comprehension of the real world.

I come to this debate with a father whose first job in Newcastle in 1952 was in the Commonwealth Steel Works. I come to this House as somebody whose oldest brother had his first job after school in the BHP Newcastle steelworks. I come to this House as somebody whose best friend from high school had his first job in the BHP Newcastle steelworks. So I bring to this place some knowledge about why the steel industry in Australia and manufacturing in general have been struggling. I welcome the opportunity through this bill to shed light on some of those issues.

This bill is an interesting political joint venture between The Greens and the Australian Labor Party. It was introduced in the Legislative Council and the second reading speech was delivered by David Shoebridge in the Legislative Council. My parents told me that I should be very careful of whom I make friends with in life. An interesting political joint venture is behind this bill. We all know that The Greens party is racked with factionalism. On the one hand The Greens have the Trotskyist faction and on the other hand they have a much more extreme Left faction. We all know that a communist in a koala suit hugging a tree is just as much a communist regardless of whether they are wearing the koala suit.

I am pretty sure that David Shoebridge never had a brother who was blowing soot out of his nose for six months after he stopped working in the steelworks. I am a little curious as to how a so-called environmentalist party could promote this bill. What has happened to the Australian Labor Party? What happened to the free market Labor Party that, under the Hawke and Keating Government, floated the dollar, deregulated the financial markets, privatised Qantas, Telstra and other government instrumentalities, ended protectionism and believed in competition? They believed in competition because they knew that the best way to help working people was to give them a job, and not to prop up failing industries.

Who opposite in this Chamber has any real life experience of the steel industry? We know that none of the former political staffers and union officials, who never have worked on the tools, has any knowledge of how a steelworks operates. Is it the member for Rockdale, who is a businessman? Or is it the member for Heffron, who is a barrister? I do not think so. The only experience the member for Maitland has of a steelworks is driving past the shutdown BHP steelworks in Newcastle. Is it the Leader of the Opposition, who grew up on the North Shore at St Ives and went to a private school in Ku-ring-gai? Or is it the member for Keira, the property baron, the Prince of Potts Point, the land baron?

One can only imagine how he put together his speech last night. He was in his Potts Point pad in a silk dressing-gown, on the balcony looking out over the sparkling Sydney Harbour thinking to himself, "I feel so concerned about the steelworkers of the Illawarra. I don't think they are ever going to be able to afford an apartment in the eastern suburbs, like me." This sort of hypocrisy is what the modern Labor Party is about. It reminds me of what Kim Beazley senior said about the modern Labor Party, about those opposite, when he retired from the Australian Parliament:

When I joined the Labor Party it contained the cream of the working-class; now it contains the dregs of the middle-class.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: The member should return to the leave of the bill.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: If the member for Campbelltown wishes to contribute to the debate on this bill, he will have an opportunity to do so. There is no point of order.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: When the Prince of Potts Point—

Mr Jamie Parker: How does this relate to the bill?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I will get to that in a minute. The Prince of Potts Point pretends, when speaking on this bill, that he is in touch with the working class, but he does not have any real knowledge about why the steel industry is facing challenges. If those opposite really understood these challenges, they would not support this bill, which includes an Industry Advocate, steel usage reports, mandatory contractual provisions, and Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] reports and oversight. However, it will do nothing to help the Australian steel industry—not a jot—and I will explain why. There are three important components to steelmaking: There is capital, there is labour and there is energy in the form of coking coal and iron ore. We should talk a little about those components.

The industrial practices in steelworks, such as the Newcastle Steelworks, were so bad that prior to the closure of the Newcastle Steelworks 6,000 workers were making more steel more cheaply with the same blast furnaces and machinery than 20,000 workers made under the restrictive union practices that were forced on management. Management spent so much money on expensive labour that the necessary investment in capital to keep the steelworks competitive was never made. I will give an example: My friends from school, when they

started working in the steelworks, were assigned to the dog watch. On the night shift they did nothing but play cards while being paid double time. Most left after a year because of the boredom; they wanted a real job.

When the car industry recently announced its shutdown, it came to light that production line workers had conditions that included \$150,000 minimum pay before overtime and 10 weeks holiday per annum. Does anybody think that the workers in Detroit, Japan or Germany get anything like those conditions and that pay? The reason manufacturing almost ceased anywhere in Australia during my lifetime is not that governments do not support them but that excessive union demands killed jobs. The union movement and the Labor Party are all about short-term gain but long-term industrial pain. What about the coalmining and iron ore that are so important to the steel industry?

Is it not The Greens that oppose mining? Is it not The Greens that want to impose a carbon tax, which would be an additional cost to steelmaking? The hypocrisy of Labor and The Greens—who are the cause of, not the solution to, the problems in the Australian steel industry—is incredible. I ask this question: Why is the useless symbolism of this bill occupying the time of this Parliament? I have undertaken a review of the electoral disclosures by the union movement. It is clear that it gave more than \$3 million in donations to the Australian Labor Party [ALP] for the 2015 election, including hundreds of thousands of dollars from unions that employ steelworkers.

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. Donations have nothing to do with the bill we are discussing. We are talking about the steel industry in the Illawarra.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: There is no point of order. This is a wideranging second reading debate and the member is speaking about steelworkers in Newcastle. The member has the call.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: This bill is an example of the influence over the ALP that those union donations command. The unions are getting pay back for their donations to the Labor Party. Straight and simple, it is political payback to the union movement to force these members to support this ridiculous bill.

Mr David Harris: I think they are going to use your speech in ads.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: No-one would ever use anything you said in an ad. I grant Labor members that the protection of Australian jobs is a noble cause, but this bill is not the way to achieve it. The ideological battle in Australia between protectionism and free trade is one of the oldest political debates in this country, but it is clear that this Government is the best thing that New South Wales businesses have going for them. The Government is investing a record \$73 billion in a historic infrastructure program. As a result, the Government is the largest single buyer of steel in Australia. The biggest help the Government can give to the Australian steel industry is to facilitate a healthy demand for its product. The Government purchased more than \$33 billion in construction goods and services over the past four years. Of that, 70 per cent, or roughly \$23.5 billion worth, was purchased from New South Wales suppliers.

With regard to the Government's infrastructure program, for example, the M4 widening and the Gerringong and Berry bypasses use a majority of Australian steel. The majority of steel used on the M4 widening was locally sourced. Significant quantities of Australian steel are also being used on the Sydney Metro Northwest, the Wynyard Walk and the Barangaroo Ferry Hub. The New South Wales Government has also engaged in other measures to support the local steel industry, such as \$60 million in payroll tax relief to BlueScope Steel to help maintain its steelmaking capacity in Port Kembla. It is clear that this Government is supporting the Australian steel industry. In addition, the infrastructure program has included the Infrastructure Skills Legacy Program, which involves training of workers.

The reason that the Government does not support this bill is because it would have some critical results for the New South Wales economy. Firstly, it would increase the cost of infrastructure for taxpayers and it would delay the delivery of infrastructure due to red tape. It is in breach of Australian free trade agreements and the potential for retaliatory actions by our trading partners is immense. Without going into more detail on those matters, because the speakers following me will, I turn to a critique of the particular provisions of the bill and why it is so undesirable for this House to pass it. This piece of legislation is clearly the product of somebody who knows nothing about commercial law or construction contracts. I say that with some expertise in the matter: I once had a case against David Shoebridge when he was still a barrister.

The first important thing to note is that there are two steel manufacturers in Australia—a company subject to a deed of company arrangement in South Australia, and a steelworks in the Illawarra. The two steel mills in South Australia and the Illawarra make different steel products. Clause 6 of this bill will give them a monopoly over 90 per cent of the steel in New South Wales infrastructure projects without any constraint on them charging whatever price they want. Contractors can be exempt if the steel price is 20 per cent above the fluctuating world steel price, according to Mr Shoebridge's second reading speech, but how will that work in the real world? The

world steel price changes regularly, but infrastructure contracts are written years before construction begins and take many years to actually perform. This bill requires contractors to price jobs and enter into long-term contracts, using some sort of crystal ball to see what the world and local steel price will be many years into the future.

I look forward to hearing why the New South Wales taxpayer should not have new schools, new hospitals, new roads or new public transport because of the need to prop up the jobs of South Australian steelworkers. The reason is that steelworkers have a national union worried only about its workers and not about the best interests of New South Wales taxpayers. It should be noted that in the infamous recent shutdown of the South Australian electricity system, great damage was done to the South Australian steelworks. How could any responsible New South Wales member of Parliament make our future infrastructure dependent on the chaotic South Australian electricity market, which has been completely ruined by its 15-year Labor Government?

The second point to note is that if a type of steel can be manufactured in Australia, there is an obligation under this bill to use the Australian steel—even if the producer cannot supply it for, say, 10 years because of other contractual commitments. There is no time constraint on when the Australian steel has to be available. New South Wales infrastructure projects required by this legislation to use Australian steel mills will always go to the back of the line because other non-government orders will get preference. They do not need to worry about the New South Wales Government orders; there will be legislation requiring them to use Australian steel.

This bill will put New South Wales last and not first in the line of steel supply. This bill, if passed, not only would make New South Wales infrastructure more expensive but also would delay the completion of infrastructure projects for years. The financial penalty provision in clause 6 (1) (b) of the bill is uncertain in its operation because the measure of the quantity of steel under clause 6 (2) is not defined, so the penalty cannot be calculated. Only the amount of money, not the quantity or the measure of the quantity, is to be prescribed. In Mr Shoebridge's second reading speech on this provision he talked about tonnes, but there is nothing in the bill that specifies a measure of tonnes. The legislation does not match the second reading speech.

Not only is this provision of the bill meaningless, but it also forces private infrastructure contracts to include a penalty provision when the High Court of Australia has found such provisions to be unenforceable. This bill has been put together by legal pygmies. The content of the duty of audit under clause 6 (1) (d) is not defined. It is completely meaningless. The audit could be conducted under this legislation by a boy scout in an hour to comply with the legislation—that is how ridiculously drafted this piece of proposed legislation is. Clause 7 (2) of the bill shows the draftsman has no commercial experience. Contractors to government under clause 7 (2) will be starved of cash flow while waiting for the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] to provide reports. This will mean small contractors will be disadvantaged—they would not have the cash flow to be able to work on government contracts—and the bigger companies will be able to load the price to take account of the delay.

The bill also contains clause 7 (3). The cumulative steel report has to specify the origins of any steel under the contract. Well, I have news for those opposite: There is no DNA test for steel. Contractors will be forced to undertake extensive investigations as to the origin of every nut and bolt on an infrastructure project in New South Wales. Any report as to the origin of the steel will be hearsay in any event, but according to this bill a hearsay report by IPART on the origin of the steel is a worthy piece of red tape to be put in legislation in this Parliament.

The bill also proposes in clauses 8 to 11 the establishment of a NSW Steel Industry Advocate. No remuneration for the advocate is set. No guidelines for remuneration are set. No qualifications for such a person are specified. No budget is specified. In five years the advocate could do one report and satisfy the requirements of clause 10 (1) (c)—another easy sinecure for some unionist. The advocate has no power to reinforce any requests under clause 10 (3) of the bill. No budget for the staff of the advocate is specified under clause 12. Again, this is an example of how unworkable, how un-thought-through and how superficial this bill is. This is as poorly drafted a piece of proposed legislation as will ever come before this House. It is a cynical piece of disingenuous politics which will do nothing to help the people of New South Wales have better infrastructure or do anything to help the steel industry.

It is instructive that in the Legislative Council second reading speech on the bill David Shoebridge said he had consulted with the labour movement, workers in the Illawarra and the community. Significantly, there was nothing about actual consultation with the owners and operators of the steelworks in the Illawarra, and yet those owners are the ones who make decisions about where they deploy their capital. Labor and the unions are making the same mistakes that led to the Newcastle steelworks and most of the manufacturing industry in Australia closing down. They ought to be working collaboratively with the owners of the businesses to change work practices and to plan for greater efficiency and productivity. They ought to be following the fundamental principles that were advanced by the Hawke-Keating Government instead of the retrograde protectionism and hollow gesture in this bill.

When Labor increased subsidies to the car industry, what happened? Ford and General Motors took the money from the Government and closed down anyway. All this will do is stop infrastructure from being built in New South Wales. It will push back the strong economy of New South Wales just when this State is eating into the backlog of infrastructure caused by 16 years of inactivity by those opposite. I urge the House to reject this bill. It is the product of the union lurk merchants that fund those people on the Labor benches and therefore control the Labor Party and The Greens.

Business interrupted.

Motions

WESTERN SYDNEY INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (11:55): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises the importance of Western Sydney for the New South Wales economy.
- (2) Acknowledges the strong growth rate in jobs across Western Sydney.
- (3) Notes the record levels of investment in infrastructure and services in Western Sydney.

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

Mr MARK TAYLOR: It is a pleasure to be in the Chamber today in the first few days of this Parliament for 2017. It has been a pleasure to be in the Chamber over the past few days with the Premier, who went to Western Sydney early this year, visiting areas such as Penrith with the member for Riverstone, the member for Castle Hill and me, inspecting the development taking place at the Cudgegong railway station and the construction of the Sydney Metro Northwest—a station that will have more than 1,000 car parking spaces, a bus interchange and trains that will provide rapid transport to the city for the great people of north-western Sydney and Western Sydney every four minutes during peak hours.

It has also been a pleasure to be in the Chamber over the past few days with the new Treasurer, the good member for Hawkesbury, who understands the area of Hawkesbury and who understands the need for jobs, the need for a good local economy and the need for good services and infrastructure in this great city. In the House yesterday I spoke about how proud I am to represent the electorate of Seven Hills and to be part of this Government that continues to deliver for the people of Western Sydney. Western Sydney is the powerhouse of the New South Wales economy and in its own right is the third largest economy in Australia.

As I mentioned yesterday, infrastructure delivery facilitates growth, and the New South Wales Government is getting on with the job of delivering roads, motorways and railways, building homes, providing for schools and building hospitals where they are most needed. Land for more than 95,000 new homes has been rezoned in the Western Sydney growth areas, making it possible for people to live near the jobs they need and desire and to live near the employment hubs of the great area. We should celebrate the announcement made yesterday by the Minister for Planning of a milestone achievement of 33,000 annual housing completions in Greater Sydney—what a fantastic step in the right direction—and, of course, that included areas of Western Sydney such as Blacktown, Parramatta and Camden.

We all know that housing affordability is an issue that permeates throughout our city and our State—in fact, it permeates throughout the world. The rezonings and increased housing supply that we are seeing across New South Wales are commendable. Only yesterday the Government announced that the very capable Glenn Stevens, the former governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia, will be advising on further steps to tackle this important issue of housing affordability. This Government has set a benchmark of delivering 50,000 housing approvals each year; that is almost double the 28,500 new homes built between 2008 and 2011, before we came to government. The Greater Sydney Commission, through A Plan for Growing Sydney and district plans, will assist the Government in providing the setting needed to create jobs, infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the current and future population of Western Sydney.

The Federal and New South Wales governments are working in partnership with local governments to develop the Western Sydney City Deal, which will deliver more than 100,000 jobs. It is exciting to note that unemployment is decreasing in Western Sydney, a region that was socioeconomically disadvantaged and in need of jobs. This Government will continue to strive to ensure that the people of Western Sydney have an equal opportunity to participate in this great State. This already is being exhibited in Penrith, Baulkham Hills, the Hawkesbury, the outer south-west, and Parramatta where unemployment rates are below the national average. In 2015-16, employment in Western Sydney grew by 1.5 per cent. It is clear that the people of Western Sydney care about improving transport, which is why such vital transport projects are getting underway across the west, such

as the Sydney Metro Northwest, the Sydney Metro West and Parramatta Light Rail which was highlighted by my colleague from Parramatta.

We understand the need for improved roads, motorways and public transport. This integrated transport solution is critical for the growing area of Western Sydney. This Government is improving not only rail infrastructure but also investing \$1.53 billion over three years in the More Trains, More Services program to help ease congestion on our railways for Western Sydney commuters. This will mean the introduction of an additional four express services from Parramatta to the Sydney central business district during the morning and afternoon peak hours. Those services will be in operation this year. This \$1.5 billion investment will improve network reliability so that 20 trains per hour can operate on the western line during busiest times and commuters will have access to a service every three minutes. Since 2011 more than 8,700 extra weekly transport services have been added in New South Wales. These are the types of services that this Government is providing. This Government is doing great things for Western Sydney.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:02): I am delighted to speak against the motion moved by the member for Seven Hills. I welcome this motion because it provides me with an opportunity to talk about the important economic engine of New South Wales and the Sydney metropolitan area, which is known as Western Sydney. I agree with the first paragraph of the motion, which recognises the importance of Western Sydney for the New South Wales economy. However, the second paragraph acknowledges the strong growth rate in jobs across Western Sydney, and the third paragraph notes the record levels of investment in infrastructure and services in Western Sydney, but they are not consistent with the facts, which is why Opposition members will not support the motion.

Western Sydney, the engine room of growth, will provide jobs not only for people in Western Sydney and south-west Sydney but also for people in New South Wales and, indeed, all of Sydney. When Opposition members talk about Western Sydney they are talking about Penrith, Blacktown, Mount Druitt and Campbelltown as well as many other areas. I am fearful that Government members are of the view that Western Sydney does not stretch beyond the Anzac Bridge or Parramatta. We need a holistic approach to ensure connectivity between local people and local jobs. This Government refers often to job creation in Western Sydney but that is not supported by the facts.

In March 2011 when the Government was elected the unemployment rate in outer south-western Sydney—which covers Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly, amongst other areas—was 4.5 per cent. The most recent data from December 2016 shows that the unemployment rate has increased to 5.5 per cent, which is inconsistent with paragraphs (2) and (3) of the motion moved by the member for Seven Hills. Unemployment rates for young people in outer south-western Sydney are even worse. In March 2011 youth unemployment was 7.8 per cent but that figure is now 13.2 per cent—so more than 1,000 additional young people are unemployed under this Government.

Across all of Western Sydney we have a huge jobs deficit of about 250,000. That means 250,000 people in Western Sydney are either unemployed or are forced to travel great distances out of the region to get to work every day, which is not consistent with community expectations. If people have to travel outside their regions it will cause road congestion and put pressure on other resources and facilities. The Government should focus on creating jobs out of the central business district [CBD] in major Western Sydney regional cities such as my electorate of Campbelltown and Penrith, Liverpool and Blacktown. As I have said, this will reduce congestion on major motorways as people will not need to sit in their cars for three or more hours a day to get to and from work.

I take issue with the third paragraph of this motion which claims that there are record levels of investment in infrastructure and services in Western Sydney. I have a news flash for the Government that it will not like: Western Sydney extends beyond Anzac Bridge and it does not end at Parramatta. The Government may beat its chest about various infrastructure projects but people in outer western metropolitan areas such as Campbelltown, Penrith, Blacktown and Liverpool are getting nowhere near the infrastructure investment that they need. There is a serious shortfall in the building of infrastructure. The \$4.7 billion stamp duty revenue is not this Government's money; it is provided by those hardworking men and women in this State who pay stamp duty on new homes that are being built in Western Sydney. They are not getting the return that they need and deserve. The members representing the electorates of Camden and Wollondilly know that because they travel on the same congested roads on which I travel.

This Government is not providing the solutions that we need. For example, in the electorate of the member for Seven Hills the community is screaming out for an upgrade to Prospect Highway to give them better access to the M4. It has been left to the members representing the electorates of Blacktown, Mount Druitt and Londonderry to take up the fight and to advocate for that infrastructure. The same can be said about the Raby Road and Hume Highway junction in my electorate of Campbelltown. I have repeatedly requested the Government to address that junction but my requests have fallen on deaf ears. The Government refers to the benefits of

WestConnex through the widening of the M4 and M5 motorways, but if residents are stuck on congested roads WestConnex will provide little relief. Grandstanding photo opportunities do not fix the problems on our roads. Government members get out their shovels and cameras and turn a bit of sod but that does not provide the infrastructure that is needed in Western Sydney.

The Government says that the Badgerys Creek airport will be its magic wand and with just one wave of that wand all the problems in Western Sydney—infrastructure and jobs—will disappear. We know that that is not the case. Actions speak louder than words. We hear a lot of talk from those opposite but we are simply not seeing any action. There is no better example of this than the Government's inaction on a rail line for the new airport. Labor recognises that a north-south rail line connecting the western line of St Marys to the southern line near Campbelltown via Badgerys Creek airport will create enormous economic benefits for all of Western Sydney and provide the connectivity we need to create jobs and provide economic growth. [*Time expired.*]

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (12:09): This important motion moved by the member for Seven Hills recognises the Government's investment and job creation in Western Sydney. Only a couple of Labor members who represent Western Sydney are in the Chamber. We heard a diatribe from the member for Campbelltown. I ask the member to explain to his constituents and to all the people of Western Sydney why he is against WestConnex and wants to condemn them to sit in traffic for hours each day. I note that the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight is in the Chamber. The Minister cares about infrastructure.

Members representing the electorates of Epping, Riverstone, Wollondilly and Holsworthy are present to indicate their support for Western Sydney. We will adopt the member for Oatley because he tries to be everybody's friend. There has never been a greater time for Western Sydney. I congratulate the Greater Sydney Commission on planning for Sydney's growth over the next 50 years. Sydney will become the eastern city and Parramatta the central city—with a new airport. The polycentric planning of greater Sydney is important for the future. The Liberal-Nationals Government is focused on delivering infrastructure and jobs. I will use Parramatta as an exemplar of that investment.

Mr Mark Taylor: Gateway to Western Sydney.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I acknowledge the interjection by the member for Seven Hills. It is the gateway to Western Sydney—or, as I call it, the capital or the eastern suburbs of Western Sydney. It is a fantastic place. My electorate exemplifies the Government's commitment to Western Sydney. The Department of Education head office will move 1,800 staff to Parramatta. It has leased 63,000 square metres of office space in Parramatta Square for a further 4,000 employees. This is a decade of decentralisation. Over the next three to four years close to 10,000 jobs will be decentralised to Western Sydney, and to Parramatta in particular. Nearly \$1 billion will be spent to upgrade the Westmead Hospital, which is the biggest upgrade in Australia.

A new 30,000-seat international boutique stadium will be constructed. The first vertical public high schools and primary schools will be built to cater for 2,000 high schoolchildren and 1,000 primary schoolchildren. The new O'Connell Street school will cater for another 1,000 children. This Government is proud of its commitment to and support for Western Sydney. The Liberal Party is the party of the workers. The Government has committed \$1.6 billion for 24 train sets, which will provide a train from Parramatta to the central business district every four minutes during peak hour. The member for Blacktown laughs. I challenge him to visit the metro site that will benefit his electorate. The member does not even know it exists. I commend the member for Seven Hills on this initiative and commend the motion to the House.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown) (13:12): A new year and a new Premier, but sadly not a new approach regarding self-congratulatory Government motions in the Chamber. I will talk about the things that are not happening or that are overdue in Western Sydney. I will start with the M4 motorway. The residents of Western Sydney have paid for that road but the Government wants them to pay for it again. Tolls are to be reintroduced. The new Premier says that we might have a toll-free period for a month. That is tokenistic rubbish. It is a marketing exercise. If the Government were serious about looking after Western Sydney it would not say, "You have paid once and you can pay again." That is one area of deficiency.

A second area is the Prospect Highway upgrade, which is the missing link for commuters travelling out of Blacktown and onto the M4. That road is long overdue for expansion. All we ever see in the budget is planning money; there is never money for construction. Construction on that highway is long overdue to improve access to Blacktown. I could talk about so much that is missing. Something that people in the electorate of Blacktown hold dear is an upgrade to Doonside railway station to allow easy access.

Mr Kevin Conolly: Ignore the \$700 million for the hospital. You do not want to know about that.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The member for Blacktown will be heard in silence.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I note the laughter from Government members when I mention Doonside railway station. It is reflective of the complete disregard the Government has for providing easy access for people with disabilities. Doonside railway station is long overdue for an upgrade that will allow people with disabilities to better access places such as the Westmead Hospital and existing services in Blacktown. They are denied that because there has been no easy access upgrade. Mums with prams are denied access to our rail system because there has been no easy access upgrade. People want to access services and cannot. They are just three examples of why the Government should not have moved this motion. It is consuming the time allocated for debate in this House. The Government is congratulating itself.

So much more needs to be done in Western Sydney that is not being done under this Government. Six years in, so much is underdone in Western Sydney. I note the earlier interjection from the member for Riverstone about Blacktown Hospital. I am glad he raised that. We have a lovely shiny new building called Blacktown Hospital. What is missing in that lovely new shiny building is staff. What we do not have, and what we are denied in the Blacktown Hospital, is sufficient staff. I love the way that Government members protest. They doth protesteth too much. The fact is that the Blacktown Hospital is understaffed. Beds are not operational because there are not enough nursing staff available. Beds cannot be accessed because there are not enough medical staff. Despite what Government members say about how wonderfully the Government is doing, I can tell the House that the people of Blacktown are still missing out under this Government. The Government might say that Western Sydney is number one, but its actions show how poorly it represents the area.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (12:17): It is obvious that Western Sydney is number one. It does not matter what the member for Blacktown says. It is not just about Parramatta, as the member for Campbelltown claimed. The member for Campbelltown should know that because Ministers have been to visit him in his electorate. He has seen the work that we have been doing there. He has seen what the Liberal-Nationals Government has achieved in his area, and he should be grateful for it. He has met with Ministers. The local paper has published photographs of him standing next to them, showing what we are achieving for his area.

In Holsworthy, Camden, Wollondilly, Campbelltown and Macquarie Fields we are delivering the jobs, infrastructure and services that people need. The 40,000 workers who commute between Bankstown and the central business district will have faster travel times and easier access to stations when the Bankstown line is upgraded to Sydney Metro standards. We cannot wait for that. It will be brilliant for our area. Investigations into stretching it out to Liverpool are underway. That will make it even better. South-western Sydney residents are finally seeing real action and real opportunities for the future, in contrast to the inaction and complacency that they experienced under Labor during the 16 years that it was in government.

Mr Edmond Atalla: Oh, the old faithful. You have been there for six years.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: Yes, and look at the changes we have made. I ask those opposite whether they like driving on the widened M5, which is an awesome road that has made it much quicker to get into the city. That has resulted in another tick for this Government. This Government is constructing the \$1.2 billion M12, which will provide direct airport access and is looking to upgrade Bringelly Road to a minimum of four lanes between the Northern Road and Camden Valley Way. This Government has proven its ability to improve roads with the upgrade of Heathcote Road in my electorate. That project—a \$19 million project—widened the road and made it much safer. It was a 60-year-old structure that was incredibly unsafe, but which has been made better. The Government is also looking at further upgrades to the Heathcote Road.

The Government is spending \$6.6 million on traffic improvements on the Hume Highway at Bigge Street, Liverpool, to help ease traffic congestion and is spending \$650,000 on traffic lights at the Hume Highway and Reilly Street intersection in Liverpool. But this is not just about cars; it is also about people who want to use bicycles. This Government is constructing a cycleway on Newbridge Road. The Government is concerned about jobs. The areas of Liverpool and Campbelltown-Macarthur are looking at establishing education precincts and the University of Wollongong will be making more investments in our area. Western Sydney University campus is opening up in the area this year as well. Investing in Western Sydney is about smart jobs and generating business investment.

Through the Jobs Action Plan, in the 12 months to November 2016, employment in south-western Sydney increased by 23,600 jobs—that is a 15.5 per cent rise. That is a huge number of people who are no longer on those big, busy roads because they can work closer to home, making it far easier for them. The Jobs Action Plan had approximately 6,380 applications just in the Liverpool local government area for the period between 1 July 2011 and 30 November 2016. Businesses in the area tell us what a difference that makes; it is huge. That is replicated—not just in Liverpool but all across Western Sydney. At the end of 2015 the Government announced that some divisions of the Department of Family and Community Services would relocate to Liverpool from 2017. We will take jobs out of Sydney and move investment to Western Sydney. People will appreciate working closer

to home and not sitting in traffic jams as they have been doing. I know that they will be grateful for the change and investment taking place. [*Time expired.*]

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:22): On this side of the House, we do not need to pass a tokenistic motion in support of Western Sydney because we do not just pay lip-service to Western Sydney. We live and breathe it every day. Of course we should recognise the importance of Western Sydney, but how dare those opposite try to claim credit for supporting Western Sydney when all they do is kick us in the guts. What an absolute joke it is to pretend that the Liberal Party is supporting jobs in Western Sydney when unemployment in Blacktown stands at 6.1 per cent, and unemployment among our young people is approaching crisis levels, with one in 10 young people unable to find a job.

Everything this Government does provides one level of service for its own backyard and a second-class service for those of us in Western Sydney. Only a Government run out of the North Shore could think that it is helping us out by reintroducing tolls on roads we have already paid for. How can the Premier think she is doing us a favour by offering us a temporary toll reduction on the M4 when we should not have to pay a toll at all? Those opposite can talk all they want about infrastructure spending, but I dare any of those opposite to stand in front of our crumbling hospitals and schools.

Mr Kevin Conolly: Are you talking about Blacktown?

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: The member for Blacktown has advised that the Government has constructed buildings without supplying the services. The school maintenance backlog will not just hurt future generations, who will be left to foot the bill to rebuild the thousands of neglected schools across Sydney; it is hurting our children right now. They are forced to learn in substandard facilities. During the recent heatwave when I visited schools I saw students fainting during assembly because of the lack of air-conditioning. It is one thing to get up in this place and talk about record investment in infrastructure, but I would dare any of those opposite to come to the Mount Druitt Hospital and tell the people why their services have been cut.

Families in Mount Druitt and Western Sydney are already struggling to get by, and to expect us to pay even more for the privilege of sitting in traffic jams is an absolute insult. Those opposite should hang their heads in shame for their neglect of Western Sydney and the millions of residents they have left behind. All the Liberal Party has to offer is a Government for the North Shore by the North Shore. Out in Western Sydney we will not put up with it. Western Sydney may have flirted with the Liberal Party, but I can tell those members that we have now woken up to you. I am so proud to represent Mount Druitt in this place on behalf of the Labor Party because I know that Labor will never deliver empty promises to our voters and expect them to be thankful for it.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: If further members are seeking to speak to the motion they will need the leave of the House to do so.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (12:26): By leave: It gives me great pleasure to support the motion moved by the member for Seven Hills supporting the Government's initiatives surrounding growth in Western Sydney. One of the most pleasing aspects of the appointment of the Berejiklian Cabinet was the recognition of the importance of the WestConnex project. In recognising that importance, the Premier gave responsibility for WestConnex to the Minister for Western Sydney, the member for Penrith. That is a fundamentally sound and appropriate decision that recognises the importance of the delivery of projects for the people of Western Sydney. The great noise that is made in opposition to the delivery of WestConnex is generally made by the lefties of the inner west who epitomise the not-in-my-backyard philosophy of whinging opponents, which is also epitomised by members opposite.

Let us be quite clear: The WestConnex project delivers for the people of Western Sydney. It is an important project because it says to the families who live in Western Sydney that the drive time to return to their families of an evening is an important component of government policymaking. It is important that governments relieve congestion and that relief has significant benefits to families. Growth in Western Sydney is a hallmark of policymaking by this Government. The infrastructure support of that growth is also something that is recognised by the Government. One should not ignore the district plans that have been prepared by the Greater Sydney Commission for the purposes of delivery of the amenity and lifestyle of western growth communities. In preparing the Draft West Central District Plan the District Commissioner observed:

The West Central District is one of the most dynamic and rapidly growing regions in Australia. This District plays a pivotal role in Greater Sydney's future as an economic and employment powerhouse, a core hub for transport and services and the home of vibrant and diverse centres and communities. It will be at the core of Greater Sydney's 'Central City'.

The District Commissioner goes on to say:

Over the next 20 years, the West Central District's population growth will see the District—as the fastest growing location in Greater Sydney and Australia—leading the transformation of Greater Sydney and the national economy from industrial to innovation technologies and techniques. The Government's vision is that Western Sydney will be a place of energy, diversity and

change. All members of this place welcome the manner in which this Government is delivering for the people Western Sydney. In that regard, I make an observation in relation to the delivery of rail infrastructure for the projected airport at Badgerys Creek. The Sydney Metro Northwest is fundamentally the first part in the delivery of a rail transport system for the new Sydney airport. This should be recognised as part of the planning and should be embraced. This is not an incidental project, but it is one the Leader of the Opposition has said he would not support. In the planning of infrastructure for Western Sydney, the development of the Sydney Metro Northwest is part of that plan. The failure of those opposite to recognise that fact is condemning the people of Western Sydney and the future of Western Sydney to a transport nightmare. I commend the member for Seven Hills for this motion. Western Sydney is the future of this State.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:30): By leave: On behalf of The Greens I contribute to the debate on this motion by addressing some of the furphies in contributions to this debate when it comes to investment in infrastructure in Western Sydney. It is true that money is being spent in Western Sydney. It is true that this Government is spending \$16.8 billion on a 33-kilometre motorway that it purports is in the interests of Western Sydney, but when we look more closely at whether or not this infrastructure is what the people of Western Sydney need and whether or not it is in the best interests of the people of Western Sydney to have to spend \$16.8 billion on a 33-kilometre motorway without investment in public transport—members of The Nationals hearing this fact may want to look at this plan closely to see if it is the best use of our roads budget—perhaps some of the newspaper headlines sum up the feelings of the residents of Western Sydney.

On 29 January the *Sydney Morning Herald* headline was "Public transport in Sydney's south west continues to lag behind". On 7 February the headline was "Longer, more crowded train journeys for commuters from parts of Sydney's south". On 21 January the *Sydney Morning Herald* headline was "Why is Sydney's urban sprawl making us sick: Committee of Sydney report reveals". That article is about a recent Committee of Sydney report that was supposed to investigate the economics of Western Sydney but which actually turned into a health report because of the damning findings that were made. The findings were that health inequities were being entrenched in the people of Western Sydney because of the failure of this Government to invest more in walkable town centres, expanding rail networks, cycle-to-work programs and park-and-ride facilities. The report states that the people who live in Western Sydney are twice as likely as others to die from cardiovascular diseases like heart failure and strokes. This data is from Health Statistics New South Wales. If you overlay a geographical map of the rates of diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease with a map of low-density areas and areas with poor public transport access, they are almost identical in our Greater Sydney area.

This Government is investing in road infrastructure that will not only land the people of Western Sydney with expensive tolls and the people of the State with a huge bill for a \$16.8 billion motorway but also contribute to the poor health outcomes of people living in Western Sydney because of a failure to invest in rail infrastructure. It is not just the proud inner-city, inner-west lefties, who drink lattes and chardonnay, and who apparently have issues with roads raising these concerns. I can tell members that I am a proud inner-city lefty; I wear that badge with pride. It is not just me saying this. Interestingly, on 7 February, which happens to be my partner's birthday, the Mayor of Penrith John Thain wrote:

But those who live in the "traditionally more affordable" areas on the outskirts of metropolitan Sydney are already paying a heavy price ...

He went on to discuss the need for the Government to invest in more connected rail networks and other public transport. The mayor of Penrith and we inner-city lefties agree that this Government has failed the people of Western Sydney by investing in polluting tollways. [*Time expired.*]

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (12:34): By leave: This Government has made an incredible investment in Western Sydney, and particularly outer Western Sydney. The member for Campbelltown said that our areas have been neglected. I have news for that member and other members of the Opposition: We have spent billions of dollars in the Macarthur-Wollondilly region. We went to the 2011 election promising a \$40 million upgrade of Campbelltown Hospital. We were a good Opposition. I suggest members opposite try doing some work at some point. They have been in opposition for six years and do not have one policy. All we have heard from them is whingeing, moaning and groaning.

We spoke to the doctors, nurses and support staff at the hospital, who told us they needed a lot more. Following our election commitment we delivered a \$134 million upgrade of Campbelltown Hospital, which now has increased emergency services, a cardiac catheterisation laboratory to test for a range of conditions, more beds and more doctors, nurses and support staff. We then went to the 2015 election and said we would further increase that funding by \$300 million. In my electorate of Wollondilly we are upgrading Bowral hospital to the tune of \$50 million as an initial investment in improving health services in that region.

Labor members spoke about how bad the roads are. In my electorate we have spent more than \$20 million on Appin Road—something members opposite failed to do in 16 years in office. We have invested \$52 million in Picton Road. Before we came to office there were many deaths on that road. Now that the upgrade has been

delivered the safety on the road is excellent. We have also installed new traffic lights at the corner of the Hume Highway and Picton Road. The list of road upgrades goes on right across Wollondilly and Macarthur.

I note that the member for Macquarie Fields is the next speaker in this debate. He might try to talk about Appin Road. Along with the roads Minister we sat down with the mayors of Campbelltown, Wollongong and Wollondilly and asked how we could improve safety along that road. The then Minister commissioned the Centre for Road Safety to do the important work needed on that road such as fixing pinch points and completing resurfacing work that had not been done for many years. We are carrying out the work that the centre has suggested to the letter.

We are not politicians making up numbers or putting out glossy brochures. We are doing the work that the experts are telling us to do, and it is saving lives. There is certainly more work to be done and we are doing it, but the amount of investment in my region is second to none. When I became the member for Wollondilly my electorate had one of the largest populations in Australia without sewerage connections in their towns. We have delivered sewerage connections to the people of Bargo, Buxton, Wilton and Douglas Park and we are commencing planning works at Yanderra.

Labor members will say that they did some work at Appin. It is true that before the 2011 election they announced that they would deliver sewerage connections at Appin, and they commenced some work. However, when we came to office we realised they had underfunded the program to the tune of something like \$45 million. It was nothing more than a shovel-ready project for a brochure; Labor had no plan for delivering it. Even though it was not our election commitment we delivered those connections for the people of Appin. This Government is about delivering more services and infrastructure for my electorate of Wollondilly and the people of New South Wales. We will not be lectured by members opposite about a lack of investment. Under them nothing was happening except for their mates getting all the perks and lurks. We are getting on with the job of governing.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (12:39): By leave: The motion moved by the member for Seven Hills crystallises what is wrong and rotten in this Liberal Government. This motion is thick with spin, full of lip-service and, as is always the case with this Government, light on action and even lighter on facts. It started so promisingly, as all terms do, after the 2015 election, but over time the truth came out, as it always does. When this Government was elected, the then Premier, Mr Baird, adopted for himself the title of Minister for Western Sydney—not that we saw him much. It is a fair way from The Corso to Macquarie Fields.

The new Premier pretends to be interested in Western Sydney and pretends it is a priority, but in reality it is not. She has dropped the ministership and portfolio from her own responsibilities, but this was not enough. I scrolled down the new list of Ministers and their seniority, looking for the Minister for Western Sydney, until eventually I found it at number 17. It had gone from number one—albeit with lip-service—to number 17 on the list. In the previous, leaner Cabinet of 20 Ministers, it would have been third from the bottom. That says a lot.

For those who live there, Western Sydney is far more than a ministerial portfolio and a place on the map. It is our home and, indeed, it is our future. For the Liberal Government to move this motion at the same time as dropping the ministerial position to number 17 flies in the face of reality for many of my constituents. These are the same constituents who cannot find work despite their best efforts in training; who want to enrol in TAFE but cannot afford the fees, have had their courses cut or their local TAFE close; whose children sit in non-air-conditioned classrooms when it is more than 40 degrees outside; and who are struggling with housing affordability and paying their rent. The list goes on and on.

Rather than moving grandiose motions such as the one before us, I challenge the Government to stop the spin and listen to the people of Western Sydney. The new Premier only listens to property developers, professional lobbyists working for groups with vested interests and her favourite, Mr Photios from PremierState. It seems these are the only people she listens to, not the people of Western Sydney. Is it any wonder that disillusionment with politics is so high? Is it any wonder that the community at large is so disengaged from the political process when the Government says Western Sydney is important while dropping it down to number 17?

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (12:43): In reply: I thank members on both sides of the House for their contributions. I thank the member for Campbelltown for his attempt at geography lessons regarding Western Sydney. I thank the member for Parramatta for telling us about the movement of government departments and how it will greatly increase employment in his area. I thank the member for Blacktown, who danced around a few issues before thanking the Government for the shiny new hospital in Blacktown. He claimed that it was empty, but I am sure that if he cuts himself shaving his new beard he will be happy to have a shiny new hospital. I thank the member for Holsworthy, who told us about the community in the south-west of Sydney getting those things that it needs and deserves. She talked about the Bankstown line, Bringelly Road and the education campuses heading there—all services, facilities and infrastructure provided by this Government.

The member for Mount Druitt spoke. He was quite reluctant to say too much but finally talked about the shiny new hospital that the member for Blacktown mentioned previously. The member for Mount Druitt discussed schools but failed to mention how this Government is investing \$420 million in Western Sydney schools, providing 11 new and relocated schools and seven major school upgrades. He also failed to mention the planning of a new primary school at Jordan Springs which will commence in this term of government in line with the Government's election promise. The member for Epping succinctly outlined how important railways are to the people of the north-west and Western Sydney. He spoke about future planning for the great airport coming our way and Australia's greatest and biggest infrastructure project taking place in this country: the Sydney Metro Northwest. There was also the courageous effort by the member for Newtown to try to connect Newtown to Western Sydney. The member for Wollondilly described the massive roads upgrades that have taken place across his great electorate.

This is a government which does not just build things or deliver services for the sake of it. This is a government that actually understands that investment in infrastructure and services drives productivity. A more productive Western Sydney means more jobs, higher wages and more time with our families. What is the alternative to this? The alternative was what happened for 16 years. Labor sat on its hands for 16 years while the State had the lowest economic growth in the country. Not only was there low economic growth and a lack of productivity but Labor showed contempt for the people of Western Sydney.

The good people of Western Sydney were spending far too much time in traffic and were waiting far too long in emergency departments, in old Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA] offices, on railway stations for trains—in fact in the north-west they were sitting in paddocks waiting for a train to come which had been cancelled numerous times—and in schools with roofs to be fixed, leaks plugged and upgrades to be made. In fact, Labor was in government for far too long. That is why the Coalition Government is fixing Western Sydney, providing infrastructure and services and giving the people of Western Sydney what they deserve and need.

Motion agreed to.

GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY BAN ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:47): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the cost of the Government's advertising campaign banning greyhound racing.
- (2) Considers the spending of more than one million dollars as unnecessary, particularly to gain public support with inaccurate information.
- (3) Calls on the Deputy Premier to explain the justification of the campaign.

The decision by the former Premier in July last year to unilaterally ban greyhound racing across New South Wales with merely 12 months notice was indefensible. Three thousand jobs across New South Wales would have been lost. To make it worse, Mike Baird spent more than \$1 million defending a decision he ultimately backed away from. Facing revolt from The Nationals and tens of thousands of people signing petitions calling on him to reverse the ban, the former Premier threw his proposed changes under a bus along with more than \$1 million of taxpayers' money.

For many in my electorate the decision stripped away livelihoods without any warning and with flimsy justification. In Wallsend the closure of The Gardens racetrack would have cost the local economy \$17.69 million every year. In one way or another, 6,010 individuals are directly involved with the track. That is 6,010 people whose livelihoods would have been thrown upside down by Mike Baird's captain's call. One person impacted was local trainer Mark Watt. In 2009 he suffered a major heart attack followed by open-heart surgery. He was unable to continue employment. He became depressed until his sister gave him a greyhound. He fell in love with the dog. He trained it and raced it. He wrote:

My life is dedicated to the love I have for my dogs. I'm not asking for sympathy, I am just telling you how it is for me. My pride, my joy, my happiness and my life are these dogs.

Advertisements, which a senior bureaucrat feared would be perceived as propaganda, asked the question, "What is the real cost of greyhound racing?" For thousands of my constituents the answer to that question is simple. Greyhound racing is beyond monetary cost; it means community, it means jobs, involvement, inclusion, hobbies and lifestyles. My constituents in the industry were gratified that their voices were finally heard, but they were left wondering why they have been vilified by this Government. What makes it worse, according to the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

A rule usually reserved for public health or safety emergencies was used to expedite a \$1.6 million advertising campaign by the NSW government in support of its decision to ban greyhound racing amid an industry backlash.

To add insult to injury, a "creative brief" drafted by the strategic communications director of the Department of Justice, which was obtained and published by the *Daily Telegraph*, stated:

Take into account the intended audience [of the advertisements]. A large number of the target group potentially have low levels of literacy.

That has not been my experience, nor has it been the experience of any member of the Opposition. Unlike the description of greyhound owners given by the Department of Justice, the hundreds of people who got in touch with me and my colleagues, urging us to oppose the greyhound racing ban, are compassionate, intelligent people who were just asking for Mike Baird to listen to them. In order to silence his critics, Mike Baird invented a civil emergency so he could circumvent the rule requiring a peer review be carried out, as is required under the Government Advertising Act for campaigns that cost \$50,000 or more. Under the Act, the department's plans are supposed to undergo a peer review or cost-benefit analysis for a campaign costing more than \$1 million. This can take place retrospectively only if the campaign involves "an urgent public health or safety matter or is required in other urgent circumstances". Interestingly, when Brenton Scott, chief executive of the Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association, was interviewed by the *Guardian Australia*, he said:

I cannot recall a government ever using public funds to protest against a community like ours in this way. We have every right to be stating our position for maintaining the industry, and for the government to use public funds to come out and reinforce information which we have said is false is outlandish, outrageous and unprecedented.

We agree. It bewilders me that Mike Baird thought it was acceptable to spend \$1 million to justify an unjustifiable decision. It seems that the former Premier was operating under an illusion. I call on the Government to explain how using the public health and emergency safety exemption in the Government Advertising Act can be justified. I call on the Government to justify the condescending attitude of bureaucrats towards those involved in the greyhound racing industry and to justify how it could spend \$1 million vilifying thousands of honest, hardworking people who love their dogs and just want them to race.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (12:54): It strikes me that not many of those opposite have read the McHugh report. The Special Commission of Inquiry into the Greyhound Racing Industry in NSW found evidence of widespread live baiting, overbreeding leading to the killing of an unacceptable number of dogs, and high rates of injury on the race track. After careful consideration of those findings, the Government accepted Mr Justice McHugh's first recommendation to close down the greyhound racing industry in New South Wales from 1 July 2017.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Epping has the call.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: The timing of the public announcement of the decision to ban greyhound racing in New South Wales resulted in an urgent time frame for the rollout of a public education advertising campaign due to concerns that industry members could make impulsive decisions, potentially jeopardising the welfare of a large number of dogs and themselves prior to the shutdown of the industry. The announcement to shut down the greyhound racing created a state of uncertainty for the industry. The Government responded to the immediate concerns of the industry about its future through this campaign. The proposed changes to greyhound racing in New South Wales needed to be communicated to the greyhound industry and the broader community to ensure there was a clear understanding of why the decision was made, what assistance was available for those affected by the changes, and how other members of the community could help.

The advertising campaign had three purposes: first, to educate the public on the reasons the Government decided to shut down the industry; secondly, to explain what the Government was planning and the support options that would be available for transition; and, thirdly, to encourage the community to adopt greyhounds as pets. The campaign was developed subject to the requirements of the Government Advertising Act 2011 and current New South Wales Government advertising policy. This included campaign peer review, cost-benefit analysis and formal approval. The information provided to the public was based on the findings of Mr Justice McHugh which were the result of extensive consultations, hearings and research.

Faced with the prospect of closure, the greyhound racing industry actively presented the case that the industry could reform itself and made a number of firm commitments to the Government on how it could improve practices. It was also clear that while there was widespread concern about the treatment of greyhounds and small animals used in live baiting, sections of the community supported giving the industry a final chance to reform. The Government listened and has given the industry a chance to change. At the same time, we have said clearly to the industry that there can be no return to the status quo. Live baiting, cruelty and unnecessary wastage must end.

In October 2016 the New South Wales Government established the Greyhound Industry Reform Panel to recommend a new regime that would apply the strictest animal welfare standards in the country to the industry. The panel is chaired by former Premier Morris Iemma and includes the chief executive officer [CEO] of RSPCA

New South Wales, the CEO of Greyhound Alliance, the New South Wales Chief Veterinary Officer, and the Deputy Secretary of Economic Policy of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Subject to this report, the Greyhound Racing Prohibition Act 2016 will be repealed by July 2017 and new legislation will introduce tough new standards to be enforced.

The panel has sought input from experts from the industry and animal welfare representatives and considered the outcomes of consultations undertaken by Dr Keniry, including meetings with racing clubs across the State and nearly 3,000 written responses. The panel considered the special commission's report, which received 804 submissions and more than 151,000 pages of evidence, and previous inquiries into the industry. The panel has also taken into account the reform commitments made by the industry. Today the Government released the panel's report. The Government takes its role seriously in protecting the welfare of greyhounds. That will be our utmost priority during the reform process and it is supported by the community's continued concern that animal cruelty in the New South Wales greyhound industry must end. So for all the stories we hear about those affected in the greyhound industry, it is important that they embrace the regulations and participate actively in a new regulatory regime that will prevent cruelty to animals.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (13:00): I support the motion brought to the House by the member for Wallsend concerning the obscene cost to taxpayers of the \$1.6 million advertising campaign to demonise the greyhound racing community. The Premier's office has defended the campaign, arguing that it accounts for less than 1 per cent of the Government's annual advertising budget. But the cost to the industry is so much more in terms of the damage done to the credibility of professional breeders, owners and trainers who are dedicated to their dogs. The decision to run the campaign was a kneejerk reaction by the former Premier, who ignored the alternative courses of action recommended by the McHugh report. It was a decision made without consultation and without giving a second thought to the damage that would be caused to the livelihoods of people working in the industry.

The \$1.6 million could have been used to build the much-needed noise barrier at Flinders—the one about which the member for Kiama is confused as to whose responsibility it is. But that is a debate for another day. Mike Baird used taxpayers' money to defend his bastardisation of the community and then slugged taxpayers \$1.6 million for it. If the Government was so concerned about keeping the public informed, why did it rush through legislation to wipe out the industry in the first place? It has since, rightly, backflipped on its uninformed and shameful actions. But, as is typical of those opposite—they are quick to put in the knife but not so swift to recognise and remedy a big mistake—we are still waiting for the repeal bill to be introduced.

I congratulate those Liberal-Nationals members who had the gumption to see that legislation for what it was. They listened to their constituents and voted against the racing ban. To fast-track such an aggressive advertising campaign—the like of which is usually reserved for public health and safety emergencies—illustrates the bloody-mindedness and arbitrary decision-making of the then Premier. The advertising was publicly funded propaganda—a blatant attempt to justify shutting down an industry—and the campaign ran before a peer review was carried out. The Government Advertising Act provides for a cost-benefit analysis of advertising campaigns that are likely to cost more than \$50,000. That did not occur for this campaign that cost more than \$1 million, despite the fact that the former Premier's own bureaucrats told him the advertisements were propaganda.

Mike Baird was so desperate to shore up public support that he invented a civil emergency to justify running the advertisements. At best, the advertising campaign rolled out by the former Premier to attack the greyhound racing industry was a misuse of public money; at worst, the former Premier and his Government used public funds to demonise a community and to reinforce false and outlandish information to further their own hidden agenda. This unprecedented advertising campaign, which cost taxpayers \$1.6 million, force-fed people outrageous accusations about systematic animal cruelty, and inflated wastage numbers and live baiting. This public money would have been better utilised to enhance laws and enable the authorities to catch and prosecute those individuals who were engaging in animal cruelty. Again, I thank the member for Wallsend for bringing this motion to the House.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (13:04): In the middle of last year the McHugh report revealed a litany of abuses against animals. It raised grave concerns about animal welfare in the greyhound racing industry. As a result, Cabinet decided that the response of the Government would be to shut down the industry. It is a matter of record that I considered that to be the wrong response. I shared the Government's concerns about animal welfare, but I believed there was another way to address the issue. The genesis of the discussion was the real and alarming abuses revealed by the McHugh report. No-one believed the situation was satisfactory. Something drastic needed to be done to address those abuses.

The advertising campaign referred to in the motion was drawn straight from the findings of the McHugh report. It highlighted those findings, which were alarming and disgraceful. As I said at the time, I do not think the good people in the industry should be tarred with the deeds of the bad. There had to be a way to stamp out those

abuses, and today the report of the Greyhound Industry Reform Panel, chaired by Morris Iemma, has given Parliament a blueprint to do that. The history and the journey have been painful. The panel's recommendations provide an avenue to address and prevent animal cruelty, mistreatment and other unsavoury practices revealed by the McHugh report. That is the important issue for Parliament. There is now a blueprint for how the Government can take the necessary steps to look after the welfare of animals in New South Wales. The industry will be given the opportunity to prove that it can run itself successfully.

The 122 recommendations range broadly over the many issues canvassed during the debate. The first step is to separate the commercial entity from the regulatory body that oversees the integrity of the industry. That necessary step became glaringly obvious during the debate, and that fundamental division was clearly identified by Morris Iemma and the panel as the cornerstone for progress. The bill that the Government will introduce to repeal the ban will be based on the recommendations released today. It would have been premature to introduce legislation prior to the delivery of those recommendations, which will be made public. The Government will proceed to implement legislation to protect animals in New South Wales and to protect the good people in the industry from the misdeeds of those who caused the problems.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (13:07): I commend the member for Wallsend for bringing this matter to the House. The motion takes the Government to task over the obscene waste of money on the publicity campaign for the now abandoned decision to wipe out the greyhound racing industry in New South Wales. It goes to the heart of everything that is wrong with this Government. It is a Government focused on self-promotion rather than delivering necessary services and infrastructure for the people of this State. The greyhound racing ban publicity campaign is an example of that. The Government spends millions of dollars of hardworking taxpayers' money promoting itself. The "Tomorrow's Sydney" publicity campaign is another example of self-promotion.

The Government is spending goodness knows how much money on promoting and congratulating itself on building light rail in the eastern suburbs and central business district. Through the incompetence of some—but not all—members opposite, and particularly the new Premier in her former role as Minister for Transport, the cost of the project has blown out by a massive \$500 million. I return to the publicity campaign promoting the ban on greyhound racing that the Government then abandoned. It is disappointing—

Mr Stephen Bromhead: Point of order: My point of order goes to relevance. The motion is about the greyhound racing industry, not rail and light rail. I ask that the member return to the leave of the motion.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I ask the member for Campbelltown to return to the leave of the motion, which is the advertising campaign associated with the ban on greyhound racing.

Mr GREG WARREN: It is disappointing to see valuable taxpayer resources being used to fund that propaganda campaign. Ultimately, that is what it is. There are so many more deserving things we could have used the money for in my electorate of Campbelltown, for example, let alone across this great State. We could have spent that \$1 million on clearing the maintenance backlog at Claymore Public School, which provides educational opportunities for some of the most disadvantaged children in our State. That \$1 million could have bought more new trains so that rail commuters on the Campbelltown line did not have to swelter in sauna-like conditions.

Mr Ray Williams: Point of order: The member has already been asked to return to the leave of the motion. He is flouting the ruling. I ask that he be brought back to the leave of the motion.

Ms Anna Watson: Under what standing order?

Mr Ray Williams: My point of order goes to relevance. If the member will not return to the leave of the bill, I ask that he be directed to sit down.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I thank the member for Castle Hill.

Mr GREG WARREN: I request an extension of time, due to the interventions from Government members.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The standing orders do not provide for an extension of time during debate on notices of motions (general notices).

Mr GREG WARREN: The point is that the Government spent \$1 million promoting something that it got wrong. We could have spent that money in other areas. That is the reason my good friend the member for Wallsend moved this motion. This involves public money from hardworking taxpayers and we must be responsible and accountable.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (13:12): A sign of good government is that it admits when it is wrong and changes its path. That is exactly what this Government has done. My biggest regret in my six years in this

place was voting for the ban on the greyhound racing industry. Some of us on this side of the House were opposed to the ban on greyhound racing. However, as a Government we made a decision based on the best evidence available and based on real concerns within the industry. Government members chose to accept and support that decision. Sometimes it is hard to make tough decisions.

After the legislation was passed, I and others continued to support the greyhound racing industry and to fight for compensation, to see what we could do to help the industry survive. That is what has happened. I commend the Premier, the Cabinet and all my colleagues for coming to that decision. Making tough decisions in politics is not easy. We chose that path because it was right. Only a handful of greyhound trainers have done the wrong thing. The mum and dad greyhound trainers that I have met in my electorate are good, honest, law-abiding people. I do not support the animal cruelty that occurred in sections of the industry. That was what the Government aimed to address. I have no problem with the Government's spending on the advertising campaign because it told the industry about the Government's decision. It allowed the industry to reform itself and to put proposals to the Government. I was part of that conversation, as were many people of all political persuasions in this place.

As I said, that campaign ensured that the people who wanted to see the industry continue got their acts together and made significant recommendations to the Government. We supported those recommendations by establishing the Greyhound Industry Reform Panel chaired by former Labor Premier Morris Iemma. We certainly look forward to the continuation of the greyhound industry while ensuring that cruelty to animals does not occur. In my electorate of Wollondilly many of the greyhound owners at Appin, Pheasants Nest or Thirlmere were dismayed by the Government's original decision. After speaking with them I know that they were aware of the Government's concerns. They are not the ones who are carrying out those terrible acts of cruelty, but they now know where they stand. They now have an industry that will continue, so long as those issues are addressed. That is why Government members support the Greyhound Industry Reform Panel. I look forward to seeing that industry continue, but in a way that does not support animal cruelty.

It is absolutely appropriate for a government to inform the community about what it is doing. All sides of politics and all levels of government are criticised for making decisions without informing the community. This Government did inform the community. In this day and age we inform the community through advertising. The Government did exactly what the community expects—the Government let the community know about the Government decision. That is unlike the Labor Government many years ago, which, when it made a decision to force council amalgamations, informed communities by fax. This Government told the public that it was making a tough decision. It was not a decision that this Government wanted to make. There were so many terrible issues that the Government had to sort out but we now have a solution, and I think it is good practice.

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (13:16): In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Epping, Shellharbour, Riverstone, Campbelltown and Wollondilly. None of us—not one person on this side of the House and not one person on the Government side of the House—supports animal cruelty. That is out of the question. I welcome the member for Orange, who is in the Chamber. I am sure that he supports this side of the House on this issue. The member for Epping referred to the advertising campaign, which was good because he got to the crux of the ad campaign; but we differ from his opinion. According to the member for Epping the advertising campaign had three purposes. According to those on this side of the Chamber it did have three purposes. The first was to put out propaganda, the second was to discredit greyhound owners and greyhound-racing enthusiasts, and the third was to close the industry outright. That was the Government's purpose when it wasted \$1.6 million of taxpayers' money. That is a lot of community money to waste.

Members on this side of the Chamber have outlined many of the important projects in their electorates that that money could have been spent on. We are all desperate for funds for important projects in our electorates, but the Government spent \$1.6 million on propaganda. The member for Epping insulted me slightly when he claimed that we had not read the McHugh report. Those on this side of the Chamber were poring over the 80 recommendations, trying to get an understanding of them. We recognised that the recommendations were sensible and we supported them. We certainly read the report. The member for Shellharbour spoke eloquently. She talked about public money and how it could have been spent more wisely rather than on a propaganda campaign.

The member for Riverstone spoke sensibly but did not address the issue of how much money the Government wasted on the almost illegal advertising campaign that it pushed through at the expense of taxpayers. The member for Campbelltown spoke eloquently about the crux of the issue: the Government got it wrong. I agree with him. The member for Wollondilly almost made some very eloquent comments. He began by saying the biggest regret he had was voting with the Government to ban the greyhound bill. I am pleased that he was so honest, and I am sure if others were honest they would echo that regret. Indeed, it is very telling that Government members who opposed the bill or abstained from voting on the bill were not promoted to the ministry. Was this

their punishment for having the courage and the guts to stand up for the industry and their constituents? I have seen it happen before and I guess I will see it happen again. It is sad that the Government would do that. I also agree that only a small number of people in the industry were doing the wrong thing. If that were the case, why then did the Government invoke this ban? Why did we not catch the crooks? I urge members to support this motion.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

House divided.

Ayes31
Noes52
Majority.....21

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Dib, Mr J
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McKay, Ms J
Park, Mr R
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Donato, Mr P
Foley, Mr L
Hoenig, Mr R
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Robertson, Mr J
Washington, Ms K

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Daley, Mr M
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Hornery, Ms S
McDermott, Dr H
Minns, Mr C
Scully, Mr P
Watson, Ms A (teller)

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Greenwich, Mr A
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Pavey, Mrs M
Piccoli, Mr A
Roberts, Mr A
Smith, Ms T F
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Constance, Mr A
Davies, Ms T
Fraser, Mr A
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Lee, Dr G
Marshall, Mr A
Parker, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Piper, Mr G
Rowell, Mr J
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
George, Mr T
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Humphries, Mr K
Leong, Ms J
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

PAIRS

Kamper, Mr S
Mihailuk, Ms T

Hancock, Mrs S
Johnsen, Mr M

Motion negatived.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): 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 William Davidge accompanied by Neil Finley and Andrew Parker who are visiting from the United Kingdom. All three have served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces and are members of the Aden Veterans Association, guests of the Government Whip, and member for Camden.

I also welcome students and teachers from Brigidine College, St Ives, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and Treasurer, and member for Davidson. I also welcome to the Chamber today a delegation from the Sydney Alliance.

*Announcements***ACTING CLERK ASSISTANT—TABLE**

The SPEAKER: I advise the House of the appointment of Elaine Schofield as Acting Clerk Assistant—Table. Congratulations, Elaine.

*Question Time***MEMBER FOR NORTH SHORE**

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:18): My question is directed to the Premier. I refer to recent correspondence addressed to "Dear North Shore Liberals" from the member for North Shore. Is she here? She commits to publishing—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kiama is not called "garrulous" for nothing. The Leader of the Opposition has the call and will start his question again.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: I refer to recent correspondence addressed to "Dear North Shore Liberals" from the member for North Shore where she commits to publishing "a final newsletter to all those on the electoral roll before I formally hand my resignation to the Speaker of the Parliament". What action will the Premier take to ensure no parliamentary entitlements are used for the purposes of Liberal Party electioneering for the North Shore by-election?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. The Premier has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:19): True to form, the Labor Party highlights its hypocrisy on such issues. I did not mention the previous member for Wollongong. I know the member for Shellharbour would not want me to. I note that there was a considerable period between the former member for Wollongong announcing her intention to resign and then giving her valedictory speech. I further note that she took leave for at least a month after her speech and did not resign until after that time.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: The question was about what action the Premier will take.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As usual, members opposite are full of hypocrisy.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Members opposite are out to get a media grab rather than reflect on what is reality for them. While I am on my feet, I have not had the chance to thank the member for North Shore for her more than two decades of service to this Parliament and her outstanding work in Health. I say to those opposite: stop being hypocrites.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I have finished my answer.

Mr Michael Daley: These tributes can flow when the Minister finally resigns.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. The Premier has completed her answer.

JOBS GROWTH

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (14:22): My question is addressed to the Premier. What has this Government achieved in the New South Wales labour market, including in regional New South Wales?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:22): We all know the only jobs Opposition members care about are their own. That is why they do not want to hear this information about employment. I thank the member for Albury for his question and appreciate that he, like all of us, knows the importance of jobs to our communities. We heard yesterday that unfortunately during their time in office Opposition members said that New South Wales was full. They did not want to build infrastructure or create jobs. Things are so different now.

I am very pleased to say that new jobs figures came out only a couple of hours ago and they are good news for New South Wales. Our unemployment rate is the lowest in the nation at just 5 per cent. In fact, we have had the lowest unemployment rate in the nation for 20 months consecutively. The unemployment rate for the rest of Australia is 5.9 per cent. The next best performing State after New South Wales is Tasmania at 5.6 per cent. That demonstrates how far ahead we are compared with the rest of the nation. We are very proud of that fact, because on this side of the House we are the Coalition for the workers. We are the parties that support the workers.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Bankstown to order for the first time and ask her to cease shouting. I call the member for Bankstown to order for the second time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Across Sydney—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Come and tell the Hunter train wreck—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Yes, we are getting up to the Upper Hunter.

The SPEAKER: There is too much noise in the Chamber. I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Contrary to the interjections of those opposite, this is important to families across the State. Every household cares about jobs and job security, and it is a shame that those opposite do not want to hear the great news for New South Wales. Across Greater Sydney the Government has added 87,000 new jobs—a rise of 3.5 per cent—in just 20 months. One of the things I am most proud of, about which the Deputy Premier might also have something to say, is the jobs boom in regional New South Wales, in areas outside Sydney. A huge 54,600 jobs were added in regional New South Wales in the last two years: more jobs in regional New South Wales in 20 months than Labor managed in four years. There is no doubt that our investment in infrastructure is driving this jobs growth. It is because we are building new hospitals, upgrading roads and renovating schools. In the last two years regional New South Wales has added almost three times more jobs than the rest of regional Australia combined. That is how well regional New South Wales is doing.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: The Premier is four minutes into her answer. What she has not outlined is that full-time jobs are down by 7,000.

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I know the member for Terrigal is delighted that since we came to office we have added 39,500 jobs—a rise of 31 per cent—in the Central Coast. To compare this to the record of those opposite, in their last 10 years in office they added just 2,000 jobs. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: The House will come to order. There are too many interjections.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In the last decade of the Labor Government, it added just 2,000 jobs; since we have been in office we have created nearly 40,000 jobs on the Central Coast. Earlier I noticed an interjection about the Greater Hunter region. I am very happy to talk about the Greater Hunter region. Those opposite will be interested in the fact that in the last two years we have added 31,500 jobs in the Greater Hunter, an increase of 11 per cent.

The SPEAKER: Opposition members will come to order. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The member for Keira was just on his feet. Although I know he does not want to hear this, we are even delivering in the Illawarra. Since the Government came to office we have added 23,000 jobs, an increase of 19 per cent. Let us compare that to the last four years of Labor, when it actually lost jobs in the Illawarra. Labor's record is fewer jobs; our record is 23,000 extra jobs. I say to those opposite: This Government is all about jobs, jobs, jobs. We are the party for the workers. They do not know how to invest in jobs.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: And I say to the people of New South Wales: There will be many more jobs to come under us. Hear, hear!

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

LIBERAL PARTY PREFERENCES AND ONE NATION CANDIDATES

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (14:29): My question is directed to the Premier. Given Pauline Hanson's hurtful comments about Asian ghettos and Sydney suburbs being "swamped by Asians" as reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 4 July 2016, will the Premier rule out any Liberal Party preference deals with One Nation at the next State election?

The SPEAKER: I call members to order. There is no need for interjections at this stage.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:30): I say to the member for Macquarie Fields, as I say to all members of this House: I share his interest in ensuring that we have tolerance for all members of our community. I have based my life in public office on that point. What I will be doing at the next election is ensuring that people vote one for the Liberals-Nationals.

The SPEAKER: I am surprised that people are interjecting.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I say in relation to preference deals that the Leader of the Opposition said he was not doing any preference deals with the Shooters in the seat of Orange and in fact—

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question is about what the Premier is going to do and what will be her preference deals.

The SPEAKER: The Premier remains relevant to the question she was asked. There is no point of order. The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: So even though the Leader of the Opposition said he was not getting the Shooters party preferences in Orange, I note that on Tuesday when he welcomed the new members into this place he said, "3-0," so he is taking credit for the election of the member for Orange. I say to the member for Macquarie Fields that perhaps he should ask his own leader what his intentions are. I say to the new member for Orange that he cannot trust what they do.

REGIONAL ECONOMY

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (14:32): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. How is the New South Wales Government turbocharging the regional economy and connecting jobseekers to businesses across regional New South Wales?

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier has the call. It is far too noisy in the Chamber.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:32): The member for Cootamundra is another member who recognises the value of a job in regional New South Wales because she ran her own small business and was one of the job creators in regional New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the first time. If there are further interjections, members will be placed on calls to order immediately.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I thank the member for Cootamundra. Last Friday I had the opportunity to visit her region and to go to Junee and Coolum. We saw some fantastic small businesses but most importantly we saw the Junee Licorice and Chocolate Factory, a local small business that is contributing 47 jobs to that local economy. I am sure that the member for Cootamundra understands how important those 47 jobs are to regional New South Wales.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We heard earlier from the Premier that New South Wales is Australia's regional jobs powerhouse. Regional New South Wales has created more jobs in the past two years than Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania combined. With the backdrop of what is happening nationally and in other States, this State is creating jobs and has the lowest unemployment rate. When it comes to job creation we are talking about regional New South Wales. Even if we combine all those States, they still do not create as many jobs as we do in regional New South Wales. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the latest data in relation to jobs in regional New South Wales—

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: —shows that 54,600 new jobs have been created over the past 20 months.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: It is a significant number, built off the back of this Government's investment of \$73 billion over four years right across the State on bridges, roads, rail, schools and hospitals.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Off the back of that, businesses, including small businesses, are feeling confident to employ and to again be part of the New South Wales economy.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: But we do not stop there. We recognise that our infrastructure spend over the next four years is important in leaving a legacy beyond the bricks and mortar—a legacy to train and skill the next generation of construction workers.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: It is our job, off the back of this investment over the next four years, to create the jobs and the skilled workforce for the future.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: On the Pacific Highway upgrade, 4,000 direct jobs and 12,000 indirect jobs have been created off one project, funded by both the State and Federal governments. I was recently at Lismore Base Hospital to see the hospital's stage 3B redevelopment. We know by skilling and connecting the skilling and training to the investment by the Government, each year we will have 70 new trades people and, more importantly, 14 new apprenticeships. I will update the House with a fantastic announcement. In 2014 this Government made a commitment to create 1,000 new apprenticeships in New South Wales. We now have 2,200 new apprenticeships in New South Wales in construction and right across many other sectors.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Those opposite are not interested in jobs. They are not interested in the opportunity that we are creating for people off the back of the record investment made by this Government. I can relate a great story. For the past two months Grace Gibson from Byron Bay has been employed as a mature-age first-year electrical apprentice by group training company HVTC Northern Rivers, working for contractor Electrotech Systems on the Lismore project. She said:

I love my job and I'm excited about the opportunities that will be open to me once I'm trade qualified. I always wanted to get a trade rather than a university degree as there will always be work for me.

And that is certainly right in New South Wales. She said:

I would recommend a trade to anyone who wants to keep active and fit. There is never a dull moment - every day is interesting, different and challenging so you won't get bored.

Grace is an example of the people who are benefiting from the investment by this Government in the infrastructure that has grown the construction industry, and she is an example of the people who have chosen vocational education as the pathway to get a great job, a great career and, of course, a great lifestyle. Recently I launched a new platform called Skills Portal. It is an online platform that uses jobs vacancy data to identify where regional jobs are located. We linked it with the New South Wales Government's Smart and Skilled website where job seekers can find accredited training courses to help them develop their skills. I can hear the interjections from those opposite. When question time has finished they should go back to their offices and jump onto that job portal. *[Extension of time]*

We know that those opposite lack skills and that come 2019 some of them will have to look for a new job, especially the Leader of the Opposition, while others will keep trying to take his job.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that several members are now on two calls to order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We know that the member for Maroubra is interested in the job of the Leader of the Opposition. The good news for the Leader of the Opposition is that 5,100—

Dr Hugh McDermott: He might be able to take your job.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: In 2015 the Leader of the Opposition drove all the way down to the Monaro to campaign against me. He thought he would beat me because of the 2 per cent margin. Down went the Labor train, but he stopped short; he stopped in a place called Oaks Estate which is, in fact, in the Australian Capital Territory. He never made it to the Monaro. So no-one can trust the Leader of the Opposition; he does not know regional New South Wales. I understand the frustration of the Leader of the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber. There is too much noise in the Chamber.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The Leader of the Opposition comes to Parliament every day, he buys his coffee and then he sits down with his team to think about his strategy for the day—"What are we going to talk about today?" What happens? They say, "We are the Labor Party. It is jobs, jobs, and tradies." Then they realise it is members on this side of the House who are creating jobs and providing more tradespeople. They then go back to their default setting of playing grubby politics, attacking the individual because they have nothing to offer the people of New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Maitland to order for the third time. The member for Mount Druitt will cease shouting and interjecting.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The greatest threat to New South Wales, the greatest threat to jobs and the greatest threat to the economy comes from those opposite, led by the union hack, the Leader of the Opposition. He has done nothing else; he is a union hack who has sucked off the teat of hard workers who have paid their unions fees. That is how he made his way to this place. He represents nobody in the real world. Those opposite are the greatest threat to New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order. Members who have been called to order are deemed to be on three calls to order. Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

[Interruption]

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:41): And the shameless huckster. My question is directed to the Premier.

The SPEAKER: What did you say?

Mr LUKE FOLEY: I was responding to an interjection from my local member.

The SPEAKER: I did not hear the comment.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: He should have been in Cabinet for longer than four hours.

The SPEAKER: Order! What is the member's question? Opposition members will come to order or they will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: Does the Premier stand by her statement in this place yesterday during question time that the CBD and South East Light Rail project is a \$2.1 billion project?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:41): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question and regret that he has not read page 4 of the Auditor-General's report. He demonstrated his lack of research on this issue yesterday. I will read from the executive summary on page 4 of the Auditor-General's report.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It states, "We found no evidence that the PPP contract Transport for NSW entered into will not be delivered."

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I remind the Leader of the Opposition of the update that he neglected to notice in December 2016, when it was a \$2.1 billion project with the benefit-cost ratio in place.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I say to him, "Do your homework." He does not have to believe us; believe what the Auditor-General says. The Auditor-General of New South Wales said that the project was running

on time and on budget. We know that Labor's projects were not always on time or on budget. I went through some of those yesterday, but there is a whole list of them that I forgot to mention. We know, of course, that those opposite spent \$500 million on the CBD-Rozelle metro with nothing to show for it. I should also remind the House of the dozen rail lines they promised when they were in government that they never delivered.

I will go through some of them. Those opposite promised that they would build the high-speed rail link to Newcastle and the Central Coast, and it never happened. So I am sure that they will be making a lot of promises to the Central Coast. They promised the Hurstville to Strathfield link, which was axed. They promised the high-speed rail link from Sutherland to Wollongong. They promised the Parramatta to Epping rail link. They promised the North West Rail Link, which they never delivered; the South West Rail Link, which they never delivered. What about the new harbour crossing to the CBD that they promised? What about the CBD-Rozelle metro?

Government members: Axed!

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What about the western metro?

Government members: Axed!

Mr David Harris: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will resume her seat. Members will come to order.

Mr David Harris: I draw your attention to the fact that Government members are acting as props for the Premier. They should not be calling out like that. It is obviously orchestrated.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Premier has the call. I remind members that several of them are on three calls to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: On that same theme, I ask my colleagues: What is the future of the Leader of the Opposition?

Government members: Axed.

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:44): I ask a supplementary question. I thank the Premier for her answer. In light of that answer and her reference to the \$2.1 billion project, will the Premier confirm that her Treasury has now released a document stating that the cost of the CBD light rail project is \$2.2 billion—a \$100 million increase on the figure the Premier just gave?

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. The Premier has the call and is waiting to answer the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:44): That is the Leader of the Opposition's supplementary question. If that is the best he can do, it is going to be a long two years. I say to those opposite, it is regrettable that not a single member on that side of the House has actually been involved in delivering a major project for this State. Not a single member on that side of the House knows what is involved in building a major project. I could, of course, refer to the record of the aspiring Treasurer opposite when he was Deputy Director General of Transport for NSW, but I will not. What I will do instead, given the Leader of the Opposition is going to the integrity of our ability to build infrastructure in this State, is repeat some of our infrastructure successes for him.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Port Stephens is on her final warning.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Firstly, we came to government and we built the Inner West Light Rail Extension, which those opposite failed to do—tick! We started work on the North West Rail Link, which they failed to do.

Government members: Tick!

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We delivered the Opal card.

Government members: Tick!

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We opened the Wynyard Walk.

Government members: Tick!

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield takes a point of order. The Premier will resume her seat.

Ms Jodi McKay: Madam Speaker—

Government members: Cross!

Ms Jodi McKay: I think question time is about more than playing noughts and crosses—I am not sure about those opposite. That means there is a line through it, Brad.

The SPEAKER: Order! What is the member's point of order? She will not incite rebellion on the Government side of the Chamber.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The question goes to the heart of the integrity of this Government. The Premier is right, it is about the cost of this project—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has answered the question. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.

[*Interruption*]

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. The Premier remains relevant to the question. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the second time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Those opposite are still embarrassed about yesterday and they are trying to dig themselves out of a hole, but it is not working. In the short time I have had, I have listed some of the great things we have done but I will save the rest for another occasion. I will say that those opposite are going to have to do better than they did this week because their performance was absolutely appalling.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: If the member for Maroubra intends simply to interrupt the flow of the answer, I will sit him down. The member does that all the time.

Mr Michael Daley: Definitely not, Madam Speaker. My point of order is under Standing Order 129. Why does the Premier refuse to answer a single question about the light rail?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier is being relevant to the question she was asked. That is all I can require her to do.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will finish on this point. When it comes to infrastructure—not just in Sydney but across New South Wales—there will be plenty more to come.

JOBS GROWTH

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (14:48): My question is addressed to the Treasurer and Minister For Industrial Relations. How is the Government bringing even more energy to its job creation boom for the people of New South Wales?

The SPEAKER: I remind members that many of them are on three calls to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (14:49): I thank the member for his question. The Liberal-Nationals Government excels at creating jobs. This Government understands what is needed for businesses to flourish and for jobs to grow. This Government has cut red tape and regulation, controlled government spending and balanced the budget. The Government has lowered taxes and reduced the cost of doing business. The best vehicle for social mobility is meaningful work and the opportunity it provides for individuals to fulfil their potential. These are the ideas that drive this Government and everything it does.

Since 2011 more than 320,000 new jobs have been created in New South Wales, which is more than anywhere else in Australia. As the Premier stated, New South Wales has the lowest unemployment rate in the country and that has been confirmed again today. These are great victories because this Government's victories are the workers' victories. The success of this Government is their success. The game is now up for the pretenders opposite who claim to represent workers. It is Labor's ideology that is poisonous for business, for employees and job creation. When Labor was in government New South Wales had the slowest job growth of any mainland State, the unemployment rate was consistently high and above the national average, and thousands of our fellow citizens found themselves out of work due to heavy taxing and regulatory policies.

Those opposite are not content to destroy individual jobs, they want to destroy entire industries. I will use mining as an example. The industry supports 40,000 workers and their families. They are families that Labor claims to represent. Those on this side of the House will recall when the member for Blacktown was the Opposition leader there was a secret plan to shut down the coal industry. Who was the person behind that policy?

It was not the member for Blacktown. It was the then shadow Minister for the Environment, Luke Aquinas Foley. The so-called party of the working class is sacrificing blue collar workers on the alter of fanatical green energy policy. Labor places climate ideology over reality and is advocating an energy policy styled on South Australia that will return New South Wales to the Dark Ages.

It has a religious zeal to shut down the coal industry even though it provides 85 per cent of the State's energy. What does this mean? It means no power for the families and businesses who depend on it, no power for the children in schools, no power for hospitals, and no power for businesses and services that many people rely upon. Renewable energy may well be the future, but it currently cannot provide the power that this State requires. Labor does not care about the consequences of its policies upon the workers in this State. Labor does not care about the jobs that will be lost or the expensive electricity bills that families across the State will have to pay. Labor does not care that you cannot run a business without access to reliable power. Labor may take its energy policy straight from the pages of the *Guardian* or the *Green Left Weekly*.

The SPEAKER: This is my last warning to the member for Rockdale.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Not only does Labor believe in fake news; it believes in fake energy as well. [*Extension of time*]

Luke Foley's secret new energy plan shuts down all the power plants across this great State.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order: That is a bit rich, coming from the person who turned the lights off for my wife and kids last Friday.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: That plan will connect New South Wales to the failing wind farms in South Australia by building one giant extension cord. Forget NorthConnex and WestConnex; under Labor we will have the disconnects. Under Labor it will be Lights Out Luke for the people of New South Wales. There is only one party in this place that will deliver real energy and real jobs for the people of this State. There is no better friend of the worker than the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government.

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

REGIONAL TOURISM

Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (14:55): My question is addressed to the Minister for Tourism and Major Events. How is the Government supporting the State's tourism sector to drive growth in the visitor economy, particularly in regional New South Wales?

The SPEAKER: The Minister has the call and will be heard in silence. The Clerk will start the clock at five minutes. I remind the member for Bankstown that she is on three calls to order.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (14:57): I thank the member for Lismore for asking me my first question in this place.

The SPEAKER: Members will listen to the answer without interjection.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: I look forward to joining him and Mayor Peter Petty in the Tenterfield district shortly to take in Oracles of the Bush, a terrific gathering of the best bush balladeers in this country. I am very proud to be given this opportunity to serve in the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government in a portfolio that is critical to the New South Wales economy, and particularly the rural and regional economy. I am pleased to remind the House this afternoon that New South Wales is not only number one in this country on jobs creation and all the economic indicators; it is also number one in tourism—and by a country mile. We are not just number one in one or two key tourism economic metrics; we are number one in every single measurement of tourism in this country.

The SPEAKER: This is my final warning to the member for Strathfield.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: We are ahead of all other States and Territories when it comes to international and domestic visitors, with 50 per cent and 32 per cent of the share respectively. We have 30 per cent of the total tourism annual spend in Australia—a whopping \$37 billion every year. We have more than 31 per cent of the total tourism gross State product, at \$31 billion a year. Last year this State attracted 89.6 million visitors, the highest number in the country.

The SPEAKER: I again remind the member for Strathfield that she is on her last warning.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: It is very important to note that one in every 14 jobs in New South Wales is in the tourism sector, and 53 per cent of those are based in rural and regional New South Wales. That again

highlights how important the sector is to the economies of all our country communities. Total tourism spending in this State has grown by 30 per cent since 2011, since this Government established Destination NSW. I am pleased to reaffirm that the Government is committed to doubling overnight visitor expenditure in New South Wales by 2020, to grow our economy and to continue to ensure that New South Wales is number one, the premier destination for tourists visiting this country. Destination NSW has a key role to play in meeting this target. Since July 2015, it has secured or retained 148 major events—54 in Sydney, 28 in Western Sydney and 66 in rural and regional New South Wales.

As a proud country-based member of Parliament and Minister in this Government I will be unashamedly focused on driving even greater growth in tourism in rural and regional areas. We need to ensure that programs are in place to support and build capacity in rural and regional centres to attract and successfully host major events and conferences and help drive more visitors and, ultimately, more dollars into country communities. The Government already has some terrific runs on the board. The \$110 million Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund has funded projects such as the \$1.5 million upgrade of Lismore airport, the \$2.1 million upgrade of Tamworth airport and \$125,000 for the Narrandera-Leeton airport in the electorate of Murray. The Government has increased the Regional Tourism Fund to roll out the destination networks—the board members are being inducted this month—and there is an extra \$4 million for the Regional Flagship Events Program.

One of the best opportunities to help grow the number of visitors and the visitor spend in rural and regional New South Wales is through conferencing. This Government has set aside \$6 million for a regional conferencing fund that I am very keen to establish as quickly as possible. This fund will support business events, industry councils, and community organisations to build the capacity of our regional centres to attract and successfully host more conferences. It is all about attracting people to regional areas, to stay more nights and inject more money into local economies. This Government is committed to supporting our tourism sector and keeping our State number one in tourism, driving more major events not only into Sydney but also right throughout rural and regional New South Wales. I look forward to working with all members of this House to make sure that that happens.

NORTH COAST SHARK MESH BARRIERS

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:01): My question is directed to the Minister for the Environment. Will the Minister intervene to protect and stop further deaths of loggerhead turtles in Ballina? They are listed under the New South Wales Threatened Species Conservation Act as endangered and are being tragically impacted by the shark-mesh net program.

The SPEAKER: I ask that interjections cease. I remind members that many of them have been called to order three times and have been given a final warning.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (15:02): As the member for Ballina would be aware, the New South Wales Government has commenced a six-month trial of shark nets to reduce the risk of shark encounters on the North Coast. The trial will complement the Government's \$16 million Shark Management Strategy and the ongoing Shark Meshing (Bather Protection) Program from Newcastle to Wollongong. The Government made that decision following a spate of shark attacks on the North Coast and calls from sections of the local community to introduce shark-meshing nets. We believe that shark nets are worth trialling. The nets, I hasten to add, are targeted at sharks, not at other marine life. Let us be clear: human life is the priority. The Government stands firmly behind that priority and we make no apologies for that. Having said that, we also want to minimise the impact on other marine life—turtles, dolphins and rays. We must, absolutely, do so. Let me explain, for the benefit of the member for Ballina and other members in the House, how the Government is doing that.

The SPEAKER: Conversations across the table should cease. The conversation between the member for Cessnock and Government frontbenchers should cease.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: The nets are checked every day—often twice a day—to free trapped marine life. The nets are not foolproof but they are effective. There are also acoustic alarms on the nets as an early warning system. In response to the question about the five loggerhead turtles caught in North Coast nets since the commencement of this trial in November, four were caught and released alive and one was caught and found deceased. At the conclusion of this trial those results will be assessed scientifically and a decision will be made about the future of the program. I am advised that the Department of Primary Industries recently released a second report into that trial and it is available for all to read on the internet.

The second month of the trial revealed that 72 animals from 11 species were caught in the mesh net, the majority of which were released alive. Those animals that were deceased had tissue samples taken so that we can retain them for analysis. There was one targeted species, a white shark, caught in the net at Sharps Beach that was

deceased and retained also for analysis. It is worth noting that the nets are required to be checked twice daily, weather or sea conditions permitting, to make sure that captured animals are released as soon as possible. During the second month all the nets were checked on average at least once a day. On a number of days the weather, swell and current conditions prevented twice-daily checking.

Shark nets are not the silver bullet and we will continue to roll out other measures as part of our \$16 million Shark Management Strategy. For example, aerial surveillance and trials of drone surveillance were undertaken across the North Coast and other regions of the coast during the school holidays in New South Wales. Aerial surveillance will continue on weekends on the North Coast and then daily during the New South Wales and Queensland Easter holidays. All the drone trials have been completed and the data is being assessed. This afternoon I spoke to the Deputy Director General of the Department of Primary Industries, Dr Geoff Allan, who is known to a number of members. He is in Ballina today for stakeholder briefings as part of the trial. I sought the assurance of Dr Allan that there was a high level of environmental protection for non-targeted marine life. I am satisfied that that is the case. I will continue to monitor the trial and its environmental impact. I thank the member for Ballina for her question and the opportunity to update the House on this important issue.

EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI (Murray) (15:07): My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. How is the Government continuing to invest in the future of education infrastructure?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (15:07): I thank the former Minister for Education for his incredible contribution to the cause of education in New South Wales. The first regional school I visited as Minister for Education, Griffith Public School, was the same regional school he first visited as Minister for Education six years ago. At Griffith Public School, led by the amazing Jude Hayman, I had the opportunity to see firsthand, as each of us do in our electorates all the time, the incredible work that our teachers, school leaders, administrators and support services provide on a daily basis to our students to give them opportunities that they would not otherwise have. The incredible impact of the role of teachers on the lives of young people has been made clear to me on my visits to schools in the past couple of weeks, particularly those in the electorate of Murray. Aside from parents, grandparents and physical caregivers, teachers above anyone else have an incredible impact on our young people, and we all owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

I will take a moment to reflect on the contribution the member for Murray has made to the cause of education in this State. He achieved so much in his time as Minister in this place. For example, he ensured that New South Wales led the nation in signing up for the Gonski funding reform with the Commonwealth Government, under which New South Wales schools stand to gain \$5 billion in new funding. He was also responsible for policy reforms like Local Schools, Local Decisions, which gives principals much greater authority in making decisions, so improving the educational performance of individual schools.

The member for Murray was also responsible for the resource allocation model, a world-leading needs-based funding model, which distributes additional funding in a fair and transparent way to the schools that need it most. He was also responsible for Quality Teaching, Successful Students, a \$224 million program to provide mentoring services and support to teachers to make sure the skills they need are constantly updated to enable them to provide the services they provide. There are so many areas where the member for Murray has made an incredible contribution to education in this State, and he should be very proud of the contribution he has made.

The member for Murray asked me a question in relation to education infrastructure. I will take a moment to reflect again on what the New South Wales Government has already done during his tenure as Minister for Education in relation to education infrastructure. In that time the Government has committed more than \$4.9 billion to school infrastructure and maintenance to ensure students have the best possible learning environments. So far 32 new or relocated public schools and 67 major upgrade projects have already been funded. The Government has delivered more than 1,500 new classrooms, providing almost 29,000 additional public school places. Since 2011 the Government has delivered 15 new schools and 38 major upgrades, providing 542 new world-class classrooms and more than 8,000 additional student places. Already there is a strong track record in relation to provision of educational infrastructure in the form of new schools, new classrooms and rejuvenated schools right across the New South Wales education system.

The challenge of keeping pace with population growth is a real one. The number of people aged 15 years or younger will increase by 23 per cent over the next 20 years to 1.8 million students across New South Wales. Over that time enrolments are projected to increase by around 200,000 students or more. To quantify that, we will need 7,200 additional classrooms over the next 15 years, the equivalent of 12 new schools or approximately 480 additional classrooms across New South Wales each and every year. To achieve this, we are going to have to provide a mix of schools to suit the level of demand and the character of local communities. That means building new schools and enhancing existing schools. [*Extension of time*]

In order to do this we have needed to facilitate, through changes to our planning regime, the opportunity to streamline the delivery of new schools as well as early childhood education centres, having recognised how important early childhood education is as an indicator of how successful people will be through their school years. In relation to tertiary education we need to recognise that the number of young people with a bachelors degree qualification is projected to increase from 40 per cent to 44 per cent over the next 10 years alone. At every level we are going to need new educational facilities.

Now I would like to open the box I have with me to demonstrate some of the schools that are currently being delivered across New South Wales. I ask the Deputy Premier to select a card from the box. The Deputy Premier has chosen Arthur Phillip High School—a great choice. That upgraded school is being built right now. The member for Parramatta is really excited about it. I invite the Minister for Health, who is delivering great hospitals across New South Wales, to choose a school out of the box. He has chosen Cammeraygal High School Senior Campus in the Premier's electorate—another great draw.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: Previous Speakers have made rulings that the use of props is disorderly.

The SPEAKER: The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat. It is sad that she does not have a sense of humour on a Thursday afternoon.

Mr ROB STOKES: Members opposite think the box is half empty. We think it is half full.

CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:15): I provide additional information to a question that the Leader of the Opposition asked me earlier in question time. Member on this side of the House have been utterly consistent in referring to the construction cost of the light rail project as \$2.1 billion. The Leader of the Opposition has stuffed up two days in a row. The figure he quoted includes the operating cost for a defined period.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: The operating costs have blown out too, as shown at page 18.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat or he will be removed from the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Today the Leader of the Opposition has demonstrated one of two things.

The SPEAKER: Members will cease interjecting.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Either he cannot tell the difference between capital and recurrent costs or he has misled the House. That is why Opposition members cannot be trusted to build anything in New South Wales.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

Pet Shops

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

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**.

Ferry Services

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

Elizabeth Bay Marina Ferry Service

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

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 opposing the sale of public housing in Millers Point, Dawes Point and The Rocks, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

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

Water Fluoridation

Petition requesting that the Government review the Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act 1957, received from **Mr Adrian Piccoli**.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Report: Sexualisation of Children and Young People

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

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:18): As Chair of the Joint Committee on Children and Young People I speak on the report I tabled on 16 November 2016 regarding the sexualisation of children and young people. The role of the committee includes examining trends and issues affecting children. We view the development of our children and young people in New South Wales as paramount, which is a view shared amongst parents, guardians, educators and carers in our communities. The committee undertook this inquiry to explore the impact of day-to-day exposure to inappropriate messaging and imagining on children and young people. The inquiry was wide-ranging in its exploration of media and communications that may lead to the early sexualisation of children and young people. While there is no single meaning of the term "sexualisation", we took the general meaning of "giving or implying a sexual character to children and young people" as well as it being broadly defined by the context in which it is often used on a case-by-case basis.

The committee found that children and young people were exposed to a range of messages and imagery in their day-to-day lives from advertising, social media, television, internet access and beyond. Children and young people are increasingly exposed to online pornography and websites that contain sexual information that is not age-appropriate. The ability of young people to easily navigate the intranet and the importance of internet-based technology in everyday life adds to the complexity of the issue. The Advocate for Children and Young People is working to improve online safety and, in particular, to prevent children and young people from being exposed to pornography. Connecting children and young people and parents to accurate, accessible, relevant information is essential.

In addition we found that further research is needed in this area to better understand other ways in which we might reduce the early sexualisation of our children and young people. For this reason, we recommend that the Advocate for Children and Young People explore opportunities for further research with a view to reducing exposure to pornography through various means, including online safety, sex and healthy relationship education. The involvement and education of parents and caregivers is also vital, as we have called for them to be consulted with regard to their child's involvement in the Safe Schools program. It is also vital that parents understand how quickly technology is changing and how children can be reached, exploited and abused.

There is ongoing concern about the use of sexual imagery in advertising and its impact on children and young people. However, the regulation of advertising, internet and television falls outside the remit of the State Government, and thus the committee made recommendations to the Attorney General to raise concerns at the Federal level. We also found that children and young people are engaging in a practice known as "sexting" and therefore creating and sharing content between themselves without, perhaps, realising the full scope and impact of their actions. Malicious sharing of images when consent is not given can lead to devastating consequences for young people but, even when consent is given, children and young people can be subject to strict child protection laws that were created to capture more deviant behaviour.

Thus, we recommend the Attorney General take action with respect to the dissemination of sexual images without consent. The committee considers that the interests of children and young people must be the primary consideration in relation to policy responses to sexualisation. While further research is needed to increase our understanding of the dynamics of sexualisation, the committee believes that the evidence supporting the negative impact of sexualisation on children and young people is both clear and strong. I thank the stakeholders who took

part in the inquiry for sharing their views, experiences and knowledge during the committee's review. They were varied and very detailed, and I thank them for that.

I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions and insights throughout the inquiry. We were capably served by the Deputy Chair, Mr Damien Tudehope; Ms Jodie Harrison, the member for Charlestown; Mr Michael Johnsen, the member for Upper Hunter; the Hon. Greg Donnelly, MLC; the Hon. Paul Green, MLC; and the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, MLC. From 15 September 2016 the Hon. Ben Franklin, MLC, served on the committee and understood exactly where the committee was heading. I also thank committee director Jason Arditi; committee managers Dr Abi Groves and Emma Matthews; researcher Jackie Linnane; and committee officer Millie Yeoh for the professionalism they applied to assisting the committee in preparing its report.

The committee comprised a mix of people with wide-ranging and strongly held values, morals and religious beliefs, which is good for an inquiry such as this. We did not make it easy for our secretariat, but its members were very professional in pulling together the information we required. I make particular mention of the Advocate for Children and Young People. We have made many recommendations and it has a lot of work ahead of it, but we believe it is best placed to provide outreach and required research and to coordinate the approach to assist children and young people in the future. We all want to see children and young people safe, and free from exploitation and exposure. I am pleased that we were able to undertake this inquiry. I thank everyone involved, from everyone who came into Parliament to give their views to the members of the committee and our secretariat.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (15:24): As a member of the Committee on Children and Young People I speak in support of the committee's recommendations. Children and young people in New South Wales are our present and our future, and their development is paramount. The committee undertook this inquiry to explore the impact that day-to-day exposure to inappropriate messaging and imagery has on children and young people. I also thank the chair and my fellow committee members for their contributions and insights throughout the inquiry and the committee staff for all their work in assisting to prepare the report. I also thank everyone who took the time to make submissions.

The committee found that children and young people are exposed to a range of messages and imagery throughout their day-to-day lives, from advertising and social media to television and internet access. In compiling this report the committee has sought to cover the major issues raised by participants in this inquiry and has in turn made 10 recommendations. I would like to address two of the topics that were raised in the inquiry. Children and young people are now using social media as a regular part of their daily lives. Media such as Snapchat and Instagram have contributed to children engaging in a practice known as "sexting", which emerged as a key theme during this inquiry. While initially it may be engaged in consensually, sexting can be damaging when intimate or sexual images are shared without the consent of the subject or subjects involved. As the committee heard, in some cases consent is not obtained before images are shared and sexts may also be posted maliciously, which has become known as revenge porn.

The committee recommended that the Attorney General introduce legislation to create specific offences of distributing or threatening to distribute an intimate image. I note that the Government is consulting on that issue at the moment but I also note that Labor introduced the Civil Remedies for Serious Invasions of Privacy Bill last year which did exactly that by making the distribution of intimate and sexually explicit images without consent a criminal offence. It is disappointing that the Government let this important bill lapse.

NSW Labor believes it is the right of every child, regardless of gender, sexuality, race or religion, to enjoy a school environment which is free of bullying and discrimination and one in which they feel comfortable, confident and safe. It is for this reason that the Safe Schools program was launched. This innovative program's aims are to reduce homophobic and transphobic behaviour and intersex prejudice and increase support for same-sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students, school staff and their families. It is all the more important that non-heterosexual students have a safe place to learn considering the results of a survey conducted by the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre that interviewed more than 1,000 young people identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer. Of the students surveyed, 64 per cent said they had been verbally abused, 18 per cent reported physical abuse and 32 per cent said they had experienced other types of homophobia and transphobia.

The committee noted that one of the main issues of contention of the Safe Schools program has been parental consent, which is why the committee has recommended that the Department of Education require schools to consult with parents prior to any implementation of the Safe Schools program and require that parents choose whether to opt in to the program. At any time parents may elect to have their children opt out of the program under the recommendation. Let me be clear: The Safe Schools program makes no attempt to promote any overtly sexual practice and, despite some misinformation circulated, contains no advice on sexuality of a prescriptive nature. The Labor Opposition will continue to provide its support to any informational and educational programs that aim to rid our schools of bullying, intimidation and discrimination of any kind. I look forward to the Government's

response to the committee's recommendation in relation to the report on the sexualisation of children and young people.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (15:28): The report on the sexualisation of children was delivered to this Parliament on 16 November 2016. It was an extensive report dealing with a significant number of aspects which are of concern to parents in relation to the manner in which there is a perception of oversexualisation of children. At the outset it should be self-evident that the sexualisation of children has a number of complex components that give concern to members of the community. The two principal areas we should identify as the motivators for having an inquiry of this nature are, first, the perception that early sexualisation of children robs them of their childhood and, secondly, it has a significant impact on the rights of parents in relation to the manner in which they seek to bring up their children.

I use this opportunity to highlight one significant component of the report, which has received a significant amount of public attention. Chapter 7 of the report deals with the Safe Schools program. It is well known in this place that I am a significant opponent of the manner in which parents' rights have been usurped through the way in which this program has been introduced into the school system. I remain opposed to the program and I call for its removal. Parents should be under no delusions as to the insidious way in which this program has been introduced into the school system.

The committee reported that the aim of the Safe Schools program is to prevent bullying in schools. That observation by the committee is a reflection of the general belief of schools in adopting the program. However, let us be quite clear as to the motivation of the authors of the program. Roz Ward, when asked about the program, confirmed that it had nothing to do with anti-bullying, telling a Safe Schools Coalition National Symposium that schools "could ignore concerns raised about the agenda". She said, "When people do complain, then school leadership can very calmly and graciously say, 'You know what? We're doing it anyway. Tough luck.'" She then went on to say, "It's not about celebrating diversity; not about stopping bullying, it's about gender and sexual diversity, about being same-sex attracted, and about being transgender, about being gay, about being lesbian, about being bisexual. Say the words—transgender, intersex. Not just be nice to everyone, everyone's great."

Parents are now raising significant concerns by virtue of their inability to access significant information as to whether schools currently identify that they have signed up for the program. Parents have a right to know what is being taught to their children, and schools have a corresponding obligation to be transparent. In the circumstances, those schools that have signed up should be prepared to identify themselves so that parents can make a decision about what is being taught to their children. Additionally, because of the concerns being raised in relation to the program, it is not good enough to say that this is purely a matter of "local schools, local decisions".

So here is a tip: The new Minister for Education should take steps immediately to give a direction to all principals that from 16 February 2017 no school in New South Wales will be registered for, or disseminate any material being promoted by, the Safe Schools Coalition. I call upon the Minister to make that direction immediately. In other respects, however, the program ignores the general concern held by the multicultural community and is inconsistent with our obligations to that community. Seventeen and a half thousand Chinese people signed a petition to this Parliament asking for the program's removal. We cannot ignore that petition. In all other respects I endorse the work of the committee and commend the secretariat for the manner in which the report has been prepared.

Report noted.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS

Report: Administration of the 2015 NSW State Election and related matters

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

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (15:33): The recent report of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters entitled, "Administration of the 2015 NSW State Election and related matters", follows on from the committee's "Final Report of the Expert Panel—Political Donations and the Government's Response". While many of the themes and issues addressed in the report are new, the committee has drawn on some of the material considered in the previous inquiry in reaching its conclusions and recommendations in this report.

Every major election presents its challenges, and the 2015 State election was no exception. The 2015 election was the first conducted following a redistribution of electorates. It took place in an enhanced regulatory environment and with the continued rollout of new technologies. Despite a different environment from the one in which the 2011 election was conducted, the skilled and dedicated staff of the commission rose to these challenges to ensure a successful election process. Although calling it a successful election process is debatable as it depends which side of the House one is on, I think, overall, all members will agree the staff did a fantastic job.

The ongoing work for this committee is essential in ensuring that our electors maintain confidence and faith in our electoral process. The committee regards its periodic review of the administration of State elections as an important opportunity to identify any shortcomings that must be addressed and the opportunities on which to capitalise. To this end, the committee makes recommendations to ensure that technological innovations in the electoral system meet community expectations of security and integrity, that the requirements placed on parties and candidates maximise accountability without being unduly burdensome, and that the electoral process remains accessible for all members of the community.

Changes in the online environment have enabled new opportunities in enrolment and voting. The committee supported the continued development of such opportunities that couple the historical right and ability to vote with the latest in technological ability and know-how. To this end, the committee recommended that the Government expand the trial of electronic roll mark-offs for electors as well as the trial of in-person electronic voting at polling centres for future elections. Meanwhile, to ensure that the existing online voting system, iVote, meets proper security and integrity standards, the committee recommended that it be subject to an audit and that its source code be released to the public.

The committee also made recommendations to ease the administrative burden on candidates and parties. This included recommendations to maximise the period for candidates to prepare their election material, to remove the restriction on political parties from using subscription fees for campaign purposes, and to provide an exemption to allow a transfer of funds from political parties to endorse candidates of the same party. The committee also recommended regulatory changes regarding funding and expenditure to provide a more transparent administrative environment. This included a recommendation for the online disclosure of political donations that such donating reporting take place in real time, and that the Electoral Commissioner undertake random audits of the membership of political parties to ensure the bona fides of members.

The committee also made a series of recommendations to maximise voter accessibility. This included recommending that the Electoral Commissioner work to increase the number of fully accessible and assisted access polling places, ensuring voters recognise parties more easily by the prominent placing of party logos on the Legislative Council ballot papers and increasing the font size, and providing targeted advertising about voting options to people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. An issue that I continue to talk about in this place is requiring voter identity documents at elections, but that must be done in a way that does not prevent anybody from voting legitimately. I hope that the Government will take that issue on board and introduce relevant legislation. It is an important area that has public support.

In total, the committee made 34 recommendations covering a wide range of matters that, if adopted, should simplify matters for parties and candidates as well as making the voter experience more secure and easier. Combined with its previous report on political donations, the committee's suite of suggested changes made in 2016 will further assist in ensuring an electoral process and environment that meets the key themes of accessibility, transparency, innovation and security. I take this opportunity to thank the Electoral Commissioner and all staff for their valuable advice and guidance. I thank my fellow committee members—the committee Deputy Chair, the Hon. Robert Borsak; Adam Crouch, MP; the Hon. Ben Franklin; the Hon. Courtney Houssos; Melinda Pavey, MP; the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps; the Hon. Peter Primrose; Mark Taylor, MP; and Ms Anna Watson, MP—for their diligence and insight throughout this inquiry.

I also thank staff members Jason Ardit, Jessica Falvey, Derya Sekmen, Chris Herbert and Vedrana Trisic for their assistance and organisation throughout the inquiry and in the preparation of this report. I enjoyed my time as chair of the committee, recommending important electoral reforms to improve democracy in New South Wales. I look forward to seeing many of those changes put into law and implemented for the 2019 election. I commend the report to the House.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (15:38): I thank the Chair of the committee for his expertise in that role and for doing a wonderful job. I draw the attention of the House to my concern with the third recommendation of the report on the inquiry into the Administration of the 2015 New South Wales State Election and related matters. The report recommends that the New South Wales Government should "introduce legislation to require that voters provide proof of identity at the time of casting their vote". The issue that this recommendation was devised to solve simply does not exist. The recommendation attempts to mitigate the risk of multiple voting and impersonation to ensure electoral integrity in New South Wales. However, despite all the research, such a risk has never been established as a cause for concern. There is very little evidence to suggest that multiple voting has ever occurred on a scale that would impact electoral results and so far no evidence has been provided of instances of impersonation.

As Antony Green, the ABC's in-house election expert, puts it, "Voter ID appears to be an answer looking for a problem." The majority of multiple votes occur unintentionally. All past research has shown that the vast majority of multiple votes are as a result of clerical error or, in a minority of cases, a result of the actions of

confused elderly voters. Surely our Government has enough problems to solve without creating more. It is important to note that if legislation dealing with voter ID were introduced it would help no-one and disenfranchise entire groups in our society. Those left most vulnerable by the suggested changes to voter ID legislation and who are unfairly targeted in this recommendation would most often be those in our State's Indigenous communities, older members of our society, and culturally and linguistically diverse individuals. These groups are the ones most likely to have limited access to photo identification and may similarly not be able to access or locate their birth certificates. I hope that the chair is taking note of my comments because these are important issues that impact these particular groups.

The second part of the recommendation attempts to overcome the disadvantage that would be inherent in any relevant legislation, but by doing so simultaneously waters down the policy to a point where it no longer serves the purpose for which it was originally devised. This part of the recommendation explores possible safeguards for the new legislation but, in my opinion, they fall far too short. Our political system is based on representation and whether they have photo ID; we need to see every individual represented. The recommendation is both an unnecessary and heavy-handed way to solve what is, in my opinion, a non-issue. Every individual in New South Wales has the right to participate in the voting process. It is this right on which democracy is founded that we must protect above all else and which I believe this recommendation impinges upon.

Report noted.

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES

Report: Access to Transport for seniors and disadvantaged people in rural and regional NSW

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

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (15:43): I speak to the committee's report on access to transport for seniors and disadvantaged people in rural and regional New South Wales tabled on 19 December 2016. I was elected to the committee late last year, well after the hearings had been carried out and much of the report had been formulated. The committee considered the accessibility of public transport services, possible strategies to improve access and possible support that could be provided with the costs of private transport where public transport is either unavailable or unable to meet the needs of seniors and disadvantaged people. The 19 recommendations of the report focused on the main issues that arose during the inquiry, which included poorly coordinated and inflexible transport options that do not meet commuters' needs, and a lack of accessible transport infrastructure and service information. The committee also found affordability of transport is a significant issue for seniors and disadvantaged people in regional and rural areas.

The committee was told of many instances where local organisations have vehicles available that are not being used while people struggle to get to where they need to go. The committee was told that there are enough buses to meet demand in regional areas, but agencies must collaborate to break down government silos. The committee recommends that Transport for NSW, NSW Health and the Department of Education develop approval processes to make full use of underused transport assets such as local school buses. Transport for NSW has appointed five new area managers across New South Wales. Their role is to work with communities, identify regional transport needs, procure services and coordinate transport in their areas.

The committee recommends that the area manager positions be evaluated in two years to ensure the correct organisational structures are in place. The introduction of new bus contracts should allow for more flexible services to respond to people's needs. For example, school buses will be able to pick up and drop off passengers during the day in between school runs. Under the new contracts fixed routes and timetables can be reassessed and changed to meet local needs. This is supported by Transport for NSW implementing new technology known as the centralised trip allocation booking system. This should provide more flexibility and better coordination of transport services in rural and regional areas.

People expressed their frustration at the pace of access upgrades to transport infrastructure. The committee heard of many instances where buses and trains in rural and regional areas were not accessible for seniors or disadvantaged people. While work is being done to improve accessibility, the committee considers that a time frame on accessibility upgrades should be made publicly available and updated regularly. The committee recommends that longer ramps be made available at every rural train station to make it easier for people with disability to board trains. The committee was told that some rural areas have access to very few wheelchair accessible taxis. The wheelchair accessible taxi incentive program should help to increase the number of accessible taxis. However, the program needs to be evaluated to ensure that more accessible taxis can be made available where they are needed most.

The affordability of taxi travel for people with disability would be improved if the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme were extended to ride-sharing services such as Uber. Currently the scheme reimburses part of the cost of

taxi travel for people with disability. The committee supports the recommendation of the Point to Point Transport Taskforce to make the scheme provider neutral. To improve awareness of transport services the committee recommends that travel information continue to be published in paper form and made available in rural and regional areas in locations such as community centres and doctors' surgeries. This will make it easily available to people who cannot access online information. The report made a number of recommendations to improve subsidy and support schemes.

Driving Change is a community-driven program assisting young Aboriginal people to obtain their driver licence, fostering social inclusion and economic independence. The committee recommends that the program be extended to include more Aboriginal communities. Private transport is more expensive for people living in rural and regional areas due to greater distances and higher fuel costs. To improve transport options and affordability the committee recommends the introduction of a fuel card for people living in remote areas where public transport is not available.

The committee noted concerns about funding changes under the National Disability Insurance Scheme and My Aged Care with disability service providers unsure how the changes will affect their services. The committee has recommended that Transport for NSW, NSW Health and the Department of Family and Communities Services monitor the impact of both schemes to ensure people are not disadvantaged in accessing transport services once the changes are in place. As rural transport is an area of ongoing interest the committee has asked Transport for NSW to provide it with a progress report in two years concerning the implementation of the recommendations.

Submissions were received from a range of stakeholders including members of the public, local councils, community organisations and advocacy groups. I thank them for their contributions. The committee undertook a site visit to Armidale, Uralla and Walcha to hear firsthand from people in rural and regional New South Wales about their experiences. I thank the committee members for their bipartisan work on the inquiry and acknowledge Mr Adam Marshall, who also chaired the inquiry. I am grateful to the committee staff for their hard work on the inquiry and I commend the report to the House.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (15:49): I will make a few remarks on the report of the committee's inquiry into access to transport. I thank the member for Clarence for doing a great job in picking up the work of the committee halfway through the inquiry. I acknowledge all members of the committee and thank them very much for their site visits to the communities of Armidale, Uralla and Walcha. The information gleaned from those visits was similar to the information that came to the committee from communities across the State.

Two issues stood out for me during the inquiry. The first was the underuse of transport assets that already exist in many country communities, whether owned and operated by the government or the non-government sector. There is a need to better coordinate those assets rather than duplicate them. The potential to improve services exists if we can better coordinate resources. The second issue was a fuel card for people who live in rural and remote New South Wales where there are no public transport options, not even a taxi service or community bus. We need to recognise that those people deserve equal access to basic services that people who live in more urbanised rural communities have the benefit of every day. I thank the members of the committee. This is a comprehensive and important report. Hopefully, we will see good outcomes from the work of the committee. I commend the report to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Matter of Public Importance

OVARIAN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (15:51): I speak on this matter of public importance to raise awareness of the scourge of ovarian cancer and to inform the House that this is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. Wednesday 22 February will mark Teal Ribbon Day. People often ask what the teal ribbon stands for. It is the official international colour for ovarian cancer awareness. I encourage every person in New South Wales to purchase and wear a teal ribbon on that day to raise awareness of ovarian cancer, to show support for women and their families who are living with the disease, and to remember those who have died from it. Throughout Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month I implore everyone to take the time to familiarise themselves with the symptoms of ovarian cancer. Sadly, each year ovarian cancer is diagnosed in almost a quarter of a million women globally. It is responsible for 140,000 deaths every year. Statistics show that 45 per cent of women with ovarian cancer are likely to survive only five years. Raising awareness of ovarian cancer is very important and it is something that is never far from my mind. I know many colleagues in this place feel the same.

Ovarian Cancer Australia invites New South Wales parliamentarians to encourage women everywhere to "know ovarian cancer". With knowledge comes power, and women have the power not only to give themselves the best possible chance of beating ovarian cancer but also to change the story of the harrowing disease. In Australia four women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer every day. Unlike more common cancers, ovarian cancer poses significant challenges as the disease has been largely overlooked and, unfortunately, underfunded to this point. Each year in Australia around 1,400 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer and more than 1,000 die from the disease. Approximately 75 per cent of women with the cancer are diagnosed at an advanced stage, where the cancer has spread and is difficult to treat successfully. At the moment only 43 per cent of women with ovarian cancer will be alive five years later, but if ovarian cancer is diagnosed at an early stage women have an 80 per cent chance of being alive and well after those five years. That is what we must work towards.

More women need to be diagnosed at an early stage when ovarian cancer is very treatable. That is why everyone needs to know more about ovarian cancer and, most importantly, about its symptoms. Every woman needs to know the symptoms of ovarian cancer. Ovarian cancer can often be confused with less serious conditions and gastro-intestinal disorders. The symptoms include increased abdominal size, persistent bloating, difficulty in eating, feeling full quickly, abdominal or pelvic pain, and the need to pass urine more urgently or more frequently. Ovarian cancer is indiscriminate. Unfortunately, anybody can be diagnosed with cancer, and all women are at risk of ovarian cancer.

I said earlier that I know that members in this place have been touched by ovarian cancer. Last year I was proud to co-host a fundraiser with the Minister responsible for medical research at that time, Pru Goward. Pru was very gracious in her contribution to that event. She understands the importance of medical research in finding a cure for ovarian cancer. Not a single person who attended the morning tea that day could forget the powerful speech given by Bridgette Whelan. Bridgette was an incredibly strong, brave and inspirational woman. She was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2010. Bridgette, who was the daughter of former police Minister Paul Whelan, was a great advocate, raising awareness about ovarian cancer. It is with great sadness that I advise the House that only a few months after being our keynote speaker Bridgette passed away from that disease. Too many young women lose their lives and we really must work together to try to change that.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (15:57): Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month is held in February of each year to raise awareness of ovarian cancer and to recognise women, their families and friends affected by ovarian cancer. The last Wednesday in February is Teal Ribbon Day. Teal, as we have heard, is the international colour for ovarian cancer. Ovarian cancer is the eleventh most common cancer in women, and the sixth most common in female cancer deaths. In 2012 in New South Wales 468 new cases of ovarian cancer were diagnosed, with a projection of 572 new cases annually by 2021. Ovarian cancer will account for about 2.6 per cent of all projected cancer diagnoses in New South Wales by 2021 and 5.2 per cent of all projected cancer deaths. In New South Wales alone, one woman in 80 will develop ovarian cancer by the time she is 85, and only 40 per cent of women diagnosed will survive five years.

The gynaecological cancers that are the most common, and the most common causes of cancer deaths, are cancers of the uterus, ovary and cervix. It is a sad fact that of all the gynaecological cancers, ovarian cancer has the lowest rate of survival. While there have been great advances in reducing cervical cancer through the national screening program, and with Australian research leading to a vaccine against the human papilloma virus, no-one has yet developed a screening test for ovarian cancer. This makes it so important that we are all aware of the symptoms of ovarian cancer, which are often similar to other medical conditions. For New South Wales women diagnosed between 2005 and 2009, the five-year survival rate for ovarian cancer was 40.4 per cent—up from 35.5 per cent for women diagnosed between 1995 and 1999. We know that if the disease is not widespread at diagnosis, a woman's chance of surviving improves. Early detection is a significant factor in survival from ovarian cancer with 82 per cent of women surviving beyond five years if the disease is localised when diagnosed.

Between 2007 and 2016 the New South Wales Government, through the Cancer Institute NSW, awarded \$17 million in competitive research funding towards gynaecological research, including at least \$10 million on research for ovarian cancer. Part of the annual investment in research includes funding for Career Development and Early Career Fellowships, which are key components of the NSW Cancer Plan to increase survival rates of people with cancer by building cancer research capacity. The Cancer Council NSW services directory provides information about other services, including accommodation, legal and financial assistance, transport and home help, and counselling services. The New South Wales Government is proud to support Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, as demonstrated by its strong investment in ovarian cancer research. I encourage all members to attend the morning teal to be hosted by the Minister and the member for Swansea next Wednesday in the Jubilee Room, Parliament House, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:00): It is an honour to speak on this matter of public importance in relation to Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. In 2006 my then 28-year-old sister was diagnosed

with breast cancer. The next day, after trying for more than a year, she was given the news that should have been happy which was that she was pregnant. Luckily there is a happy ending to this story and that is that my niece will turn 10 years of age in March, and that my sister is still living healthily more than 10 years after her diagnosis of breast cancer. But for many cancer sufferers this is not the case.

I know members must be wondering why I am talking about breast cancer, when the topic is ovarian cancer month. The reason is that as a result of her youthful diagnosis of breast cancer, and family history, my sister was tested for the BRCA gene, and was found to be positive for this mutation, as was I. As members may know, this mutation is associated with an increased risk of not just breast cancer but also ovarian cancer, and a growing number of other cancers are being revealed through research such as melanoma, bowel cancer, pancreatic cancer and early onset prostate cancer. The problem with ovarian cancer is that it is a silent killer. The member for Swansea, the shadow Minister, articulately described the symptoms that are often overlooked by women. We have lost too many women to this terrible disease.

In fact, in my own family while we have had many diagnoses of breast cancer which have not resulted in deaths to this date, we have lost many of my father's aunts to ovarian cancer. There are often no signs of cancer of the ovaries until it is too late, and screening methods, as articulated by the member for Ku-ring-gai, are not as precise as, say, mammography or pap smear. In my case, in order to reduce the risk of both breast cancer and ovarian cancer, it was recommended that I undertake a risk reducing bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy, plunging me into a surgical menopause at the age of 36, while I was running a small business employing more than 25 staff and raising two young children. It was a radical and life-changing experience for me, and one that I would not wish on anyone. Even in the relatively few years since my surgery, less invasive and less impactful solutions have become available to women at heightened risk of this disease.

Ovarian Cancer Australia is the only national organisation that provides direct support to those living with ovarian cancer, both the women experiencing the disease and their loved ones, through support groups, phone support, online resources and more. It is so important that we support awareness and advocacy and research programs for ovarian cancer. I urge all members to attend the morning teal being co-hosted by the shadow Minister, and Minister, next week in this place and to dig deep to contribute to this important cause. I also encourage members to attend a local afternoon teal fundraising event in Maitland on Sunday 26 February, and other events that may be held in their own communities. It is through these activities and the important work of Ovarian Cancer Australia that we will give women the knowledge they need to fight this terrible disease.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:04): In reply: I thank the member for Ku-ring-gai for reminding us that the number of women who will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer will increase in future. It is therefore very important that we as members of this Parliament continue to advocate for funding medical research. It is only through medical research that we will be able to step over the hurdle of ovarian cancer deaths and reduce the number of women who suffer from this disease. I thank the member for Maitland very much for sharing her personal family story. We have discussed her family's story before, but I appreciate how hard it is for the member to remind us of what it is like for a family that lives with the genetic disease, BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations. We know that families experience this genetic disease, and I thank the member for Maitland for speaking about it.

Next week is Ovarian Cancer Week. Along with the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing, Tanya Davies, I will be hosting a parliamentary morning teal in the Jubilee Room. I encourage all members to come along to the morning tea as Ovarian Cancer Australia has organised some speakers for the event. The event will be raising money, which is very important because these funds will go towards medical research. My friend Carolyn Bear will attend the event. I met Carolyn during my campaign. Her daughter died of ovarian cancer at the age of 32, nine months after she was diagnosed with the disease.

Carolyn started to make and sell jewellery to raise money for ovarian cancer research. I was with Carolyn at the end of last year at an Ovarian Cancer Australia function. She and her husband raised \$120,000 for ovarian cancer research. That is a remarkable effort following the adversity of losing their daughter to an insidious disease. They have turned that loss into a positive story by becoming one of the most significant fundraisers for ovarian cancer in New South Wales. Gentlemen, bring along your wallets to the morning teal as there will be some lovely bits and bobs to purchase for your wives and daughters, nieces and whoever else you choose to give a gift to.

Ms Kate Washington: Constituents.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I do not know about advocating gifts for constituents. I ask members to make sure that they come along to the event and support Ovarian Cancer Australia. It is at times like this that I am proud to be a member of the New South Wales Parliament, because we are at our best when we come together to do good for the right reasons.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thank the member for Swansea for bringing this very important matter before the House. I am sure I speak on behalf of the Speaker in encouraging every member of this Parliament to make the effort to turn up to the morning teal, which will be held on Wednesday 22 February at 10.00 a.m.

Community Recognition Statements

WAKEBOARDING CHAMPION MAKAYLA CORNALL

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:08): I congratulate Makayla Cornall on her recent successes at the Asia and Oceania Waterski and Wakeboard Championships held at Lake Kereta in New Zealand. Makayla was a member of the Australian team competing in the junior girls division. The 16-year-old won the tricks and barefoot jumps sections and was third in the slalom. Last year Makayla was a member of the Australian team that contested the world championships held in the United States of America. Her older brother, Kye, was also in the side. Makayla is hoping to gain a place in the national side for next year's world championships. She will attend the State titles in Liverpool and the Australian titles in Perth, both of which will be held in April this year.

PLAY BABY INITIATIVE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:09): I draw the attention of the House to the wonderful work of Playgroup NSW and the launch this week of the Play Baby initiative. The Play Baby initiative gives babies an early start to learning through play and socialising, which we know is vital for early childhood development. At playgroups parents and carers get together with their babies, toddlers and preschool age children to connect, learn through play and, most importantly, have fun. Essentially, playgroup is one of the first and most important social networks for children and families.

In their first few years children develop skills that lay the foundation for life. From learning to laugh through to learning to walk, these important connections and experiences are shaped by the child's parent. Babies are never too young to start reaping the rewards of play. Playgroup provides opportunities for babies to explore, interact and play with different toys, experience new textures, colours, noises and shapes and, of course, to discover. At playgroup babies learn to interact, share and relate to other babies and adults in a safe environment. This builds confidence, develops social skills and promotes self-esteem. I congratulate Playgroup NSW and wish it every success with the Play Baby initiative.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD "DICK" MANWARRING

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (16:10): I recognise the decade of work and dedication of Richard Manwarring, or Dick as he is known locally. At this year's Shoalhaven Australia Day Awards he was highly commended for his outstanding commitment to raising funds for local cancer treatment facilities and services. Dick and his wife, Joan, witnessed the issues that cancer patients face, such as travelling for treatment, when their daughter Dianne was diagnosed with aggressive breast cancer. Unfortunately, Dianne would lose her battle with cancer; however, her death was Dick's motivation to take action.

Dick launched his Code C for Cancer benefit night in 2008, which eventually enabled the purchase of a bus to transport patients for treatment. The event has become an annual community highlight and has raised more than \$280,000 for local cancer patients. I was fortunate enough to attend Dick's last Code C for Cancer benefit night, as I have been every year since its inception. It is always a huge night and it raised \$30,000 this year alone. Dick has sadly announced his retirement from the event—he is more than 80 years old—but I am sure he will continue to make every effort to attend. Once again, I congratulate Dick and his wife, Joan.

TRIBUTE TO ALMA HUNT

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:11): I acknowledge the contribution of Alma Hunt to the Heckenberg Parents and Citizens Association. Alma has been working for the parents and citizens association for 51 years. She first started as a volunteer in June 1965, the same day her children started at the school. She had just moved to the Green Valley area. It was the beginning of residential development in the area and Alma's involvement with the parents and citizens association accordingly charts the history of the school and the neighbourhood. A new suburb meant building up links with the local community. The first project was fundraising for a canteen. She was also involved with hat parades, bus trips and theatre restaurant trips. For many years Alma was treasurer of the parents and citizens association.

The parents and citizens association held a big morning tea to thank Alma for her extraordinary contribution to the school, its students and the community. She was also announced in January as the Liverpool Citizen of the Year. The current parents and citizens association president, Manal Toukan, who has been in contact with me about Alma's contribution, has been effusive in her praise of Alma. As the local member and on behalf

of the whole community I extend my congratulations and thanks to Alma Hunt. It is extraordinary volunteers like Alma who provide the glue that holds communities together.

OUR COMMUNITY PANTRY, TAHMOOR

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (16:12): I recognise the fantastic vision that Paula Zrilic had some years ago for Our Community Pantry in Tahmoor, which is a huge success. Paula Zrilic, assisted by Tia Veech, plays a huge part in alleviating some of the stress experienced by Wollondilly families with everyday living. Our Community Pantry is a new food distribution system that helps many low-income families, single parents, university students, retirees and those who just need support for a week or two due to unexpected external factors. One of the most common questions asked is, "Where does the food come from?" Most of the items, including fresh fruit and vegetables, dairy and bread are sourced from Foodbank. Members of Our Community Pantry can pick and choose items; they are not given a box pre-packed with some items they may not need. Word is spreading and membership is growing each week. A great group of volunteers helps Paula to put the pantry together each week. They work tirelessly to provide a much-needed service to our community. I thank Paula for her vision.

TRIBUTE TO HILDA WALKER

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:13): It is with great sadness that I inform the House that Hilda Walker, a tireless community advocate in Maitland, passed away last month, aged 86. Hilda started her working life as a nurse and over time she became a carer for her husband, sister, mother and father before their deaths. The hard, emotionally demanding work of carers which is undertaken by so many women in our community is not often recognised as much as more formal caring work, but it should be. On top of her personal efforts for her family, Hilda was a stalwart for the Hunter River Branch of the Country Women's Association [CWA], Meals on Wheels, the Red Cross and the Australian Labor Party.

A ferocious advocate for her community, Hilda won fights for better traffic management in East Maitland, the construction of the Bruce Street Community Hall in East Maitland and improvements to the hall. She also documented the work of the CWA through the *Maitland Mercury* for many years. In 2015 Hilda was awarded the Maitland Community Service Award. Hilda's life was one of service to her family and her community. She was an inspiration to all and will be greatly missed.

NUWARRA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:14): I congratulate Nuwarra Public School and its principal, Mr Reg Corney, on the implementation of the Buddy Bench program in its playground. Nuwarra Public School places high value on promoting empathy and friendships in the playground, and that is exactly what the buddy bench aims to do. This program is designed to inspire young students to invite others to play and participate in a group setting and to not let anyone spend lunchtime alone. Nuwarra Public School has also introduced the buddy reading bench in the playground to help with a street library and encourage books and literacy in the playground. A special mention goes to the Nuwarra Parents and Citizens Association, which works tirelessly for great initiatives like this in the school. Again I congratulate Nuwarra Public School and look forward to seeing all of those new friendships grow and develop in the future.

PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE MARINE RESCUE AWARDS

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:15): Last week Marine Rescue Port Stephens member Mr Laurie Nolan was bestowed the prestigious honour of being the first ever recipient of the Marine Rescue NSW Medal for Valour, the organisation's highest award for bravery in the line of duty. On 6 and 7 January 2016, Marine Rescue Port Stephens responded to five mayday calls over 22 hours. Commissioner Stacey Tannos said at the ceremony:

Mr Nolan's selflessness in saving his fellow crew members from being entangled and dragged underwater was the finest demonstration of mateship and the Australian volunteering ethos.

Twenty other marine rescue volunteers were also recognised for their bravery. I thank David Jack, Ken Johnson, Eryl Thomas, Peter Merlino, Suzanne Freeman, Nigel Waters, Michael Duggan, Noel Corcoran, Ron Lighton, Michael Smith, Richard Pizzuto, Tom Miller, Ian Drummond, Paul Sullivan, Stephen Alta, Ian Peacock, John Vassallo, Peter Baldwin, Michael Grover and Colin Cahill. I thank and congratulate Mr Laurie Nolan and all other award recipients, including Unit Commander Lee Uebergang, his executive team and all marine rescue volunteers.

SCHOOL SPORT AUSTRALIA MEDAL RECIPIENT BRIANNA WORSFOLD

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:16): Brianna Worsfold is a talented young sportswoman from Pymble in my electorate of Davidson. In November last year, Brianna competed at the School Sport Australia Track and Field Championship in Sydney for under 12-year-olds. Brianna won a gold medal in shotput, a silver medal in the combined event—the 100 metres, 800 metres, shotput and long jump—and a silver medal in the

medley relay. She also came fourth in the 200-metre sprint and fifth in discus. These are amazing results for an 11-year-old with a reasonably slight build, especially her gold medal in shotput. At the 2015 annual State Championship, Brianna was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Perpetual Trophy for the most outstanding athlete. I commend Brianna for her achievements and hope her track and field success continues. She is currently being coached by two former Olympians and may well become an Olympian herself one day. Well done, Brianna.

TRIBUTE TO MAURICE "MOZ" BRADY

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:17): Today I pay tribute to Maurice Damien Brady and celebrate and honour his life. Born on 9 December 1956, Maurice—known fondly as Moz—was much loved by his family and friends and the Blue Mountains community. He was a tireless and enduring campaigner for social justice. Moz was a family man, a union man, a Labor man—a good man. He was the salt of the earth. In the last six months of 2016, Moz's heart condition deteriorated. He celebrated his sixtieth birthday in hospital, remaining positive despite ill health, sharing stories and memories and farewelling his family and friends over the Christmas-New Year period. Sadly, Maurice died on 2 January 2017. I honour his lifetime of quiet dedication to community campaigns that improved the experiences of those less fortunate, particularly in his role as social worker extraordinaire with the Blue Mountains City Council. I honour the fund established by his family in his name and for his work to provide emergency assistance to women and children escaping domestic violence. I honour his family: his strong, beautiful partner, Suzie van Opdorp; his incredible children, Nicky, Madi and Jack; and his grandchildren, Rafferty, Lotte and Birdie Marlou. Vale Moz: may you now rest in peace.

ALBURY ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (16:18): Australia Day 2017 saw the announcement of awards to many wonderful community-minded residents of the Albury electorate. Among those were Carl Friedlieb, named Albury Citizen of the Year for his years of leadership of the Border Relay for Life; Emma Aldrich, Albury Young Citizen of the Year for her volunteer work with a remote community; and Loretta Buchhorn, Albury Volunteer of the Year for her work with Camp Quality. Congratulations to these worthy recipients and also to Federation Council's Citizen of the Year, Lynn Fredericks, for his involvement in many community and service organisations, and to Young Citizen, Caitlyn Moore, for her role in Anzac Day at the Corowa War Memorial. Greater Hume Shire's Citizen of the Year is Jeff Grosse and its Young Citizen is Emily Jones. In Tumbarumba Edward and Jacki Lauder shared the honours of Citizen of the Year for their volunteer work. The Senior Citizen award went to Albert Jones, and Jemma Lorimer was named the Young Citizen of the Year. Congratulations to all recipients.

KARM EL MOHR ASSOCIATION

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:19): Last Sunday I had the great pleasure of joining the Karm El Mohr Association to welcome the mayor of Karm El Mohr, Mr Gihad Bechara, to Granville. The Karm El Mohr Association represents more than 2,000 Lebanese Australians across Sydney, including approximately 800 from Granville. Their links to Lebanon are strong and their pride in the achievements of the new mayor was evident at Sunday's dinner in his honour. Mr Bechara has established a new meeting place for the council, upgraded roads, commenced discussions with the adjoining villages about regional cooperation, and started plans to restore and upgrade their church—all this in nine months. No wonder hundreds came to the hall in Granville to meet their mayor. I congratulate the president of the association, George Bechara, the executive and all the women who prepared incredible food for everyone on a successful dinner. I am sure that the mayor will return home to Karm El Mohr motivated by the warm welcome he received in Sydney.

AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:20): I congratulate the Richmond Valley and Clarence Valley councils on this year's Australia Day award celebrations along with the Association of Iluka Residents. I particularly congratulate the award recipients from Richmond Valley Council: Citizen of the Year, Brian O'Farrell; Young Citizen of the Year, Aidan Yourell; Sportsperson of the Year, Robert Johnston; Volunteer of the Year, Bill Bartier; and Young Volunteer of the Year, Nicholas Colbrelli-Adams. I also congratulate award winners from the Clarence Valley Council: Citizen of the Year, Florence (Diane) Lee; and joint Young Citizens of the Year, Bennett Mitchhill and Hannah Smith; Local Hero, Roger Green. The Community Achievement Award went to Grafton Midnight Basketball. Iluka's Citizen of the Year, Kay Jeffery, was a very worthy winner. I congratulate all those volunteers on behalf of the House.

PENRITH COUNCIL AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (16:21): I was delighted to attend the Penrith City Council Australia Day awards dinner to see some of our remarkable community members rewarded for their outstanding service and devotion to the Penrith region. In particular, I acknowledge Ross Hutchison who was awarded Penrith Citizen of the Year for more than 50 years of service to our community in performing arts, community radio, Rotary and

the Carer Car organisation. Penrith's Young Citizen of the Year, Mitchell Beggs-Mowczan, is an extremely impressive young man with a very bright future who helped raise more than \$100,000 for a mate of his to receive life-saving brain surgery. Leonie Moore was awarded Sportsperson of the Year for her decades of work with Penrith Basketball. Other award recipients included Ray Debono for his years of service to the community and charity; my good mate Kevin Finlayson, who has been a tireless disability advocate for more than 15 years; Denise Roberts, who is another outstanding local disability advocate; Robert Baines for his work with the Emu Plains Lions Club; and Christine Erskine for her work protecting the lives of children in the community. Congratulations to these upstanding and deserving award winners.

BAULKHAM HILLS COMMUNITY LEADERS

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (16:22): I acknowledge the efforts and contributions of two exemplary community leaders in my electorate of Baulkham Hills: former councillor Cathy Aird and Mr John Gale. Cathy has poured an enormous amount of time and energy into her community in her capacity as a life member of the Baulkham Hills Netball Association. The community also has Cathy to thank for the good work of the Hills Relay for Life, for which she served as the founding chairwoman. I also commend John for his service to the community through his efforts over the past decade with the 2nd Baulkham Hills Scout Group. Cathy and John are shining examples of the positive impact of volunteers in my electorate. On behalf of the people of my electorate I thank them for their contribution.

LAKE HAVEN RECREATION CENTRE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:22): In December last year the Lake Haven Recreation Centre turned 30. The Lake Haven Recreation Centre is run by the Young Men's Christian Association and has for three decades provided sports, fitness and community activities in Lake Haven. The centre provides free programs such as a mums and bubs program, which aims to promote a healthy transition into exercise and wellbeing after pregnancy. The centre offers a free program known as Brightside, which gives access to all the centre's facilities with one-on-one support to people suffering from mental illness. The centre also offers sporting programs for people with a disability. These are the services that communities like Lake Haven in my electorate would be without if not for the recreation centre. I congratulate the Lake Haven Recreation Centre on its thirtieth birthday and look forward to celebrating future milestones as it continues to grow as a vital and well-loved community asset.

GREAT ILLAWARRA WALK

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:23): The Great Illawarra Walk is happening on Saturday 18 March and Sunday 19 March. People can walk one kilometre or 100 kilometres over the weekend, with 100 per cent of the funds raised being donated to Southern Youth and Family Services. Why not get a team together and encourage family and friends to sponsor you? I will certainly be taking part. The walk is from Shellharbour village to Coalcliff and return. The key focus this year is on youth and special needs. This includes addressing issues such as homelessness, education, training, family breakdown, child abuse, domestic violence and health issues, including mental health. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Great Illawarra Walk. So far more than \$500,000 has been raised for charity. I acknowledge the 2017 committee members including Emilie Wells, Michael Wells, Christian Lovatt, Ruth Lovatt, Chris Lovatt, Martin Merritt, Jim Crawford, Liz Shepherd, Dan Hunt, Stephen Dodd and Mick Donohoe for their outstanding contribution to this wonderful charity, this quintessential fundraising event for the Illawarra and a great way to enjoy our local environment and raise important money for charity.

BELMONT TAFE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:24): Last Friday we celebrated a very special birthday in the electorate of Swansea: the fiftieth birthday of Belmont TAFE. For the past 50 years Belmont TAFE has been churning out outstanding alumni—people like Knights legends Paul "The Chief" Harrigan and Mark Sargent. Even I went to Belmont TAFE and learned the very invaluable skill of typing. I also completed an MS-DOS course—if members can remember what that was. The staff at Belmont TAFE are hardworking and caring tradespeople and teachers, who know the importance of accessible education and the difference it makes to people's lives. Since 1967, Belmont TAFE has been providing local people with the skills they need to get a good job. Proudly public, Belmont TAFE has been a treasured local institution in the Swansea electorate, and I can safely say that our local community will fight to keep it public for the next 50 years and beyond. Happy Birthday Belmont TAFE. Hip, hip, hooray!

TOONGABBIE REZONING

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:25): I pay tribute to the grassroots community engagement that is occurring in my electorate of Seven Hills, namely, the leadership shown by John and Wendy Lazanas, who oppose the rezoning of numbers 21 and 21A Tucks Road, Toongabbie. Last November I addressed a group of 150 local residents to discuss the proposed rezoning of the site. I am proud to represent a constituency that is as proud of its local area as I am. When residents stand alone their views are sometimes lost, but when communities stand together they are always very strong. In December last year I undertook further consultation with locals, including John and Wendy, and Christine and Roy, who were against the rezoning. In the new year I met with the administrator of the new City of Parramatta Council to discuss the concerns of the Toongabbie locals. At that meeting the administrator indicated that a stakeholder meeting with the residents, the owner and representatives from council would occur once the application goes on public exhibition. I look forward to such a meeting and I commend the community-minded local residents for standing together.

PHUOC HUE LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:26): On 27 January I had the pleasure of attending Lunar New Year celebrations at the Phuoc Hue Ancestral Temple in Wetherill Park. The ceremony began at 11.00 p.m. on Lunar New Year's Eve and was attended by hundreds of Vietnamese people of the Buddhist faith, praying for luck and paying respects to the Lord Buddha. I was joined in attendance that evening by my parliamentary colleague the member for Fairfield, as well as Vietnamese Community in Australia State President, Dr Thang Ha. At midnight we farewelled the Year of the Monkey and welcomed the Year of the Rooster.

Lunar New Year is a very important occasion for both the Chinese and Vietnamese communities. Prior to the New Year, families would have been busy cleaning and dusting their houses to make sure that they can welcome in luck for the new year. Lion Dances bring luck and ward off evil, and Lunar New Year is a time to celebrate with family and loved ones. I thank the Most Venerable Thich Phuoc Tan, the Abbott of the Phuoc Hue Ancestral Temple, for his invitation to attend. I extend to all members of this House a healthy, happy and prosperous Lunar New Year. Chuc Mung Nam Moi.

LONG TAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND TEAMWORK AWARDS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:27): These days it seems that leaders in all walks of life, whether elected or volunteers, are increasingly subject to criticism, with the consequence that others are discouraged from following in their footsteps. However, that is not so for two Ku-ring-gai High School students who, in mid-December last year, received Long Tan Youth Leadership and Teamwork Awards from the Australian Defence Force for their commitment to upholding in the school community the values that are intrinsic to military service. Outgoing School Captain Larissa-May Anthony and year 10 student Tysha Suarez had been recognised by the school as demonstrating the spirit of leadership and teamwork that was evidenced 50 years ago in Vietnam at the battle that is commemorated by Australian forces. I congratulate both Larissa-May and Tysha on embodying the ideals of service, teamwork, leadership, loyalty and integrity, and I hope they will forever continue to be proactive exemplars of all of the qualities that, as Australians, we hold in high regard.

CHINESE NEW YEAR

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (16:28): This Chinese New Year heralds the year of the Rooster. Roosters in the Chinese lunar calendar are proud, hardworking, punctual and confident—perfect illustrative examples of the Chinese Australian community in Australia. Around one million Australians share Chinese heritage, and I am sure the House would unanimously agree that they have added immeasurably to the economy, life, and prosperity of Australia. We are lucky to have them. As a member of Parliament representing an electorate that has the highest number of Chinese Australians in the country, it will not surprise members to know that I was very busy during the Chinese New Year period. I wish the Chinese Australian Services Society, Asian Women at Work, the Benevolent Society and the Australian Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification of China a happy Chinese New Year, and I thank Georges River and Bayside councils for successful Chinese New Year events.

AVOCA BEACH SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:29): The Avoca Beach Surf Life Saving Club has produced another success story in the surf with its open men's surfboat crew taking down New Zealand in a Test series. Sweep Richard Brierty and his crew of John Paterson, Duke Brierty, Daniel Tamblyn and Brad Mitchell claimed the series 2:1 in the flat waters across the ditch. They earned the right to compete in the trans-Tasman boat event just before Christmas when they edged out Bulli at the selections trials. The boys said they were stoked and honoured to be representing their country. The national honour is the first for this young squad. Mitchell is the oldest at 24 whilst their sweep, the senior Brierty, is one of the best sweeps in the country, having earned multiple

golds in State and Australian competitions. The result is the start of something big for this crew that is committed to staying together to compete for the honour again next year. Well done to the Avoca Beach Surf Life Saving Club.

Petitions

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES BUSINESS ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM

Discussion

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:30): In May last year, the Minister for Primary Industries, and Deputy Leader of the National Party, announced the start of the Commercial Fisheries Business Adjustment Program. At that time he said that the Government would:

...look after those fishers who want to stay in the industry and support those who wish to exit.

The petition that we are considering today, which carries the signatures of more than 10,000 citizens of this State, is proof positive that that is not the case. The petition reads:

Brings to the attention of the House that it is our will that you have regard for the security of the jobs of the commercial fishing industry in New South Wales and its importance to the seafood supply of citizens in Australia who are seafood consumers and reliant on our industry for fresh seafood.

We, the undersigned petitioners, therefore ask the Legislative Assembly to pause the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries-Fisheries business structural adjustment program to re-evaluate the activating of latent effort by equal activation of linkage options; restore the catch history of each and every commercial fisher; and recognise that their catch history in each region and each fishery is integral to the multi-endorsed component of the NSW Fisheries and, therefore, its sustainability; evaluate the removal of latent effort as a separate component of business buyout; and consult with every fishery for the future direction of essential management region by region.

Currently, there are approximately 1,000 commercial fishers operating along the coast of New South Wales. Most are small family operated businesses that have operated for a number of generations. I take this opportunity to recognise the fishing families who are attending today.

Mr David Harris: Hear, hear! Well done.

Mr DAVID MEHAN: Well done, indeed. The effort by such a small industry to generate so many signatures on a petition is a credit to those fishers. I particularly note that Mary Howard, coordinator of the Wild Caught Coalition, is in the gallery. Allan and Sue Reed are from my area and they are a fishing family that is well known on the Central Coast and in Tuggerah Lakes. I acknowledge the efforts of those families to bring us to this point. The Coalition Government's business adjustment program continues the process that was begun by the Greiner Government in 1994 with the introduction of the Fisheries Management Act, which introduced a share market in fishing entitlements. In 2007, fishers were granted an equal number of shares that gave them a simple right to harvest a particular type of fish in a particular way. The adjustment program seeks to replace this simple arrangement by linking those shares to catch and effort quotas. The new system will commence on 1 July this year.

The main problem created by this Government is the way the quotas have been linked to the shares held by the active fishers. At present, fishers are required to report to the Government the catch they harvest and the days they work. This catch and effort history of active fishers has simply been divided amongst all those who hold fishing shares, including inactive fishers. That is, those fishers who have not done any work using those shares in the past five years. In doing so, the catch history of active fishers has been diluted, and if the active fishers want to continue to fish at their present level, they have to buy extra shares. That is what fishermen mean when they say to this Government that they are being asked to buy back their jobs. For example, estuary general fishers in my area are currently entitled to trap crabs and can do so without limit.

From July they will be limited to 673.8 kilograms per year, unless they purchase more shares. What does it mean in practice? Well, Allan trapped 1,875 kilograms of crabs last year. Unless he purchases more shares, he will not be able to do that again next year. Likewise, Allan fished on Tuggerah Lake for 120 days last year. He was entitled to do 365 days. Next year he will be limited to 93 days, unless he purchases extra shares. The adjustment program is analogous to the Government confiscating business goodwill and then asking the business to buy it back. It has been a miserable and stressful process for these families, and the support offered by the Coalition is no support at all.

Allan received a letter from the Government the other week offering him a loan of \$80,000, which he could repay over 10 years and give the Government \$10,000 extra for the benefit of buying back his own business. It is an absolute disgrace. These men and women, these families, have no economic security generally outside their ability to fish. We consume and import more than 80 per cent of our fish in this State from overseas. The

Government should heed the petitioners and put a stop to this program, which is damaging so many fishing lives in this State.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:35): I acknowledge all the fishers in the gallery and all those who have signed the petition. I acknowledge their work and their livelihood—fishing. It is a tough industry and certainly welcomed by the citizens of New South Wales—but clearly not enough, because only 15 per cent of the seafood we eat is caught locally; the other 85 per cent is imported. New South Wales fishers have more than the Government on their backs, they have God, nature, the elements and the market. There are a lot of things against them, but we do not want the Government to be against them. The last thing we want is to politicise the jobs of the fishers in this State and that is not what we are trying to do. With the likes of fishing Ministers such as Eddie Obeid and Ian Macdonald, it can be understood why we are in this mess. I ask those opposite not to politicise the mess that they have put us in. The Government does not politicise it because we are talking about fishermen's lives. I have lived in Maclean on the Clarence estuary for 35 years so I understand the fishing industry and its complexities.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! Opposition members will allow the member for Clarence to be heard in silence, as was the member for The Entrance.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: There are a thousand fishing businesses in the State; the member opposite is right about that. They all compete against each other, they all use different techniques and they are multi-endorsed. It is a complex issue, otherwise it would have been fixed a long time ago. The Government has put \$16 million on the table to subsidise the shares that fishers have to buy—to buy back the shares from the Government. That money will be injected directly into the fishing industry, not into compliance or administration but directly into the fishing industry. As far as bipartisanship goes, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5 reviewed the restructure. A member of that committee is Labor's shadow Minister, the Hon. Mick Veitch. That committee wrote to fishers saying:

In our view, the Business Adjustment program should proceed as swiftly as possible, subject to a small number of immediate modifications.

That includes the Labor spokesperson for fishing. The Government will make those modifications, but one cannot fix something that is so complex with a snap of one's fingers. It will take a number of iterations. We do ask the fishers to have some faith and to trust the Government. We know they do not. We know they do not trust or have faith in the fisheries officers they have to deal with. I understand that. I talk to fishers on a regular basis and I understand that there will not be enough shares and that they will be too expensive. I understand the statement, "We will not have enough days to catch our quota" and so does the Minister.

Will it be sorted out with the first iteration of shares subsidy trading? It may not be. There will be a chance to look at the winners and losers and to learn where and how to tweak the process. The legacy of Eddie Obeid and Ian McDonald remains. Those opposite want to play politics with fishers' lives and that is the attitude the Government must deal with. The Government has committed \$16 million to the restructure. What did those opposite do when they had an opportunity? The Opposition did not commit any money and managed to stuff the system. That is why fishers are now knocking on my door day in, day out. It is for that reason alone.

Mr Guy Zangari: That is history.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: Of course it is history. It is a mess because of the processes Labor applied to the fishing industry. Previous governments recognised the need for sustainable management but did nothing to address the problem. Labor has made it worse for these people and that is why they are here. This Government will address the problem. This State is the powerhouse of the nation and the fishers will not be left behind. They need to have faith in what this Government is doing.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:40): I support the petition tabled by my colleague the member for The Entrance. I support those people in the gallery and others across the fishing industry in New South Wales. It is an absolute disgrace that National Party members talk about politicising this industry while spouting rubbish across the Chamber. This is a disgrace; a wriggle and squirm. There are members in this Chamber who have refused to meet with local constituents about the issue. The member for Myall Lakes had to be reminded of the slim margin by which he won in his electorate before he would meet with his constituents. He lost 22 per cent in the last election, and he will lose more votes on the back of this issue. It is a disgrace.

Some of the people who signed this 10,000 signature petition are present in the gallery today. I congratulate them on the hard work involved to fight the Commercial Fisheries Business Adjustment Program, which should rightly be named "buy your own job". If this Government prides itself on being a friend of small business how can it support this program? It is the same Nationals Party that let down the greyhound industry and does not care about painters, hairdressers or taxidriviers. The Nationals believe that in a disrupted business

environment people should be left to fight it out. There are businesses that have been in families for five generations. The Minister responded by making a disgusting and appalling comment about the small text used on the petition.

I lay upon the table the tiny amount of information that the Minister is providing to people for a process that will affect their whole lives. That package is another iteration of this botched, appalling policy. The Government does not have the right to represent small business in country areas. It should be ashamed of itself. There are fishing co-ops that contribute up to \$10 million to coastal villages. The multiplier effect of that is in the vicinity of \$50 million, yet the Government is happy to rip that money out of cafes, service stations, mechanics and tourism operators. The Australian tourism and cooking industries rely on the fishing industry. The Government is a disgrace.

[Interruption from gallery]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): I ask those in the gallery to refrain from applauding. I remind the member for Maitland that the way in which the documents were tabled was unparliamentary. I ask the member to refrain from further behaviour of that sort. Debates become emotional and excited in this place, but there is no need to depart from showing decorum towards the officers of this building.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: I apologise. It is very hard to make myself heard because every time I speak this pack of dogs has a go at me.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): I remind Opposition members that they give as good as they get. The member for Kogarah and the member for Fairfield in particular disregarded my last warning. Members may argue with me outside the Chamber.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: While it is important for our democracy that debate is robust, there is no excuse for a member of this House to throw documents across the table. It is inexcusable and highly regrettable.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): I have already ruled on that point of order. The member for Tweed has the call.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (16:45): I acknowledge the people in the public gallery and all the people who signed the petition. I have met with fishermen in my electorate a number of times.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Do they have to remind you about the margin?

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Could I have the chance to speak before the member for Maitland rudely interrupts?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: I will give you the chance you gave me.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: The member for Maitland is so rude. I have known some of those families for the past 27 years. I understand their concern. I understand their distrust of the Government and of any type of reform, but I believe reform is needed. As we heard from the member for Clarence, reform was started many years ago, when too many shares were allocated that were not linked to catch, meaning that the shares were worthless. To compensate, burdensome regulations were put in place that made fishing inefficient. There are restrictions on the days a person can fish, the kind of net they can use, how big their boat can be and how many traps they can have. There are many more regulations, and the industry is struggling under the weight of them. Change is needed. Instead of ignoring this, as has happened before, the Government has set aside \$16 million to help transition to share management. It is committed to helping active fishers to remain in the industry. I want to see those people remain in the industry. I want their families to be supported.

Ms Kate Washington: They can't.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Allow me to finish. Show some courtesy.

Ms Kate Washington: Explain how they can stay in the industry.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: This is beyond politics. We are talking about people's lives. Opposition members are cheapening the debate.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Opposition members will listen to the member for Tweed in silence.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: The ongoing commitment of this Government is to work through the complex issues. There is a lot of emotion involved. I share some of the concerns that have been raised. I have taken those concerns to the Minister on a number of occasions. There is a mud crab farmer in my electorate who used to catch

five tonnes. At the moment he has only one share, which allows him to catch only 750 kilograms. We are working through that matter with him, face to face. I believe we will achieve a positive outcome, but we are not there yet. These are people I know: personal friends and friends of my family. I see them at the pub. I have a great deal of respect for them. For Opposition members to say that the Government has ignored these people is rubbish. This is a difficult time. I do not want to see these people harmed in any way. We are currently working with the Minister and the department to achieve a proper outcome.

Ms Kate Washington: Look them in the eyes.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: I see the people in my electorate.

Ms Kate Washington: You can see them in the gallery.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: That is rubbish. I talk to them virtually every day.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (16:48): By leave: I acknowledge the member for The Entrance for tabling this petition. I also acknowledge the fishing families who are here today. I speak on behalf of The Greens and the commercial fishing industry of Ballina. The Greens support in principle the call by the signatories of this petition to improve the fairness of the current commercial fishing reform process and the structural adjustment to fisheries business arrangements. There is currently an upper House inquiry considering the commercial fishing industry in New South Wales and, specifically, the detail of these reforms. My colleague Justin Field, The Greens spokesperson for marine fishers, serves on that inquiry.

Much of the concern raised in that inquiry—which I note is yet to report—relates to how shares were historically allocated and how they did or did not relate to historical catch data in a fair or equitable way. That has clearly had profound implications for the way the reforms proceed and has left many fishers in a position where they feel that they have been forced to buy back their jobs, or that the minimum shareholding requirement falls short of what would make for a viable fishing business. I take this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Ballina Fishermen's Co-op, which is concerned about the future of the commercial fishing sector on the North Coast and in my electorate. The Ballina co-operative made a submission to the inquiry, and is clear in its opposition to the reforms and what it sees as a failure in consultation. Members of the co-op are clearly concerned about its viability. In their submission they say:

From 2008 ... as a result of changes in the industry including, regulation, reviews, retirements, weather, decline in water quality in the Richmond river, bullying by both fishermen and fisheries personnel. The industry has changed. Our co-operative has attempted to meet the industry changes with a number of restructures, retirements and retrenchments.

Today our Equity is \$900K less than just prior to the commencement of Industry restructure, Fishers have declined by over one third and staff by 50%. Our local economy has been reduced as a consequence of this.

I am not suggesting for a moment the Government is responsible for all that, but certainly the restructure and the current proposals on offer for the Ballina co-operative will mean that the commercial industry is not viable. The future of commercial fishing is about far more than the current reforms, and it is in the interests of us all to have access to quality, healthy and affordable seafood. I thank the petitioners for raising this important issue in the House. I particularly thank those from my electorate who signed the petition. I think it is fair to say—it is evident from today's debate—that we need more time. This petition is calling for more time so that this can be dealt with properly and in a bipartisan manner.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:51): By leave: I support this petition on the Commercial Fisheries Business Structural Adjustment Program. I particularly support the commercial fishers and their families who are in the gallery. They represent others up and down the coast of New South Wales. I also acknowledge the Wild Caught Fishers Coalition, particularly Mary Howard, and the work that they have been doing in advocating for the commercial fishers. I acknowledge the Professional Fishermen's Association as well. Some of its members are here today. The association, too, has been advocating for their members.

This has been a complete dog's breakfast. This reform is not a reform. This reform is forcing people out of the jobs that their families have done for generations. People are having to buy back their own jobs. They are having to take out loans to buy back their jobs. In fact, there is somebody in the gallery today who sought a loan in August last year but does not even know where he stands with respect to that. Somebody had to pay for legal services to understand the contract, which was tabled by my friend and colleague the member for Maitland. The industry has been completely disrupted to the extent that we will not be eating local seafood in this State any longer because of what this Government is doing.

I want to know how the Minister is going to fix this situation. The Minister has said that he is going to fix it for families and commercial fishers who cannot buy back their jobs. We have been talking about people who might be able to buy back their jobs but there are circumstances in which they might not be able to buy them back. The Minister has said that he is going to fix it, but what is he going to do? The Minister needs to say why the

fishers are being forced to buy back their jobs. Why is the Government implementing a program that has enabled the large commercial operators to continue operating while the smaller operators are losing their jobs and are not able to work anymore? Why are the commercial fishers being forced into a less sustainable environmental program of fishing due to the way endorsements are being carried out? This is an absolute abomination for all the fishers who are trying to do their jobs. This Government is shutting down an industry, just as it did with the greyhound industry. The Government needs to answer the fishers' questions. What is the Minister going to do to fix it?

Community Recognition Statements

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (16:55): I congratulate the Women's Activities and Self Help [WASH] House and the Outer West Domestic Violence Network on their initiative "One Billion Rising Western Sydney 2017" held on 14 February 2017. Whilst One Billion Rising events have been held in Sydney in the past, this is the first attempt to bring the whole Western Sydney region together as one so that everyone in Western Sydney can unite towards ending violence against women. One in three women on the planet will be beaten or raped during her lifetime, and with the world population at seven billion, that means more than one billion women and girls—a staggering statistic. I commend the WASH House and the Outer West Domestic Violence Network for bringing awareness to this important issue and for uniting Western Sydney against domestic violence.

SPORTS MASTERS AWARDS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:56): Forster surf life saver Laura Thurtell is one of six State finalists in the 2016 Sports Awards Master's category, due to be announced on 23 February. The nomination is an acknowledgement of Laura's efforts in both surf and pool. She is an active member of the Forster Surf Life Saving Club and a keen safety advocate with a particular interest in Indigenous youth for Surf Life Saving NSW. Laura competed at the Lifesaving World Championships in the Netherlands last year, where she won a swag of medals, including gold in both the surf and ski race, silver in the women's ocean race, bronze in the board race and three silvers in the pool.

Vying for the Athlete of the Year is Rio Olympic gold medal winner sailor Tom Burton, son of proud Forster parents Lynne and Peter Burton. Tom made his Olympic debut in Rio de Janeiro after missing out on a spot at the London 2012 Games. Burton finished second at the World Championships in 2014 and went on to win two World Cups in 2015. He claimed Australia's one Laser spot for Rio. He took up sailing at the age of nine, after following his dad, Peter, to regattas. His Olympic dream was then sparked by a school excursion to Sydney Olympic Park during the Sydney 2000 Games. I congratulate these two on their nominations and wish them luck in their respective categories.

COFFEE WITH A COP INITIATIVE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (16:57): On 24 January 2017 the Fairfield Local Area Command hosted Coffee with a Cop at the Fairfield Forum. The first Coffee with a Cop for 2017 was the biggest one yet. Community leaders, service providers, and members from other local area commands joined in to offer assistance to local residents. Coffee with A Cop is a fantastic initiative and has proved to be a great way for the community to engage with their local police. This initiative aims to develop good relationships between local area commands and the community in which they serve. I was pleased to learn that due to the resounding success of the Coffee with a Cop initiative it will now go statewide next month. I congratulate Fairfield Commander Superintendent Peter Lennon and the entire Fairfield Local Area Command on bringing this very important initiative to New South Wales.

QUEEN'S GALLANTRY MEDAL RECIPIENT MARGARET WARBY

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (16:57): I recognise the tremendous bravery and professionalism of Mrs Margaret Warby. Mrs Warby, who now lives in Mittagong and continues to serve her local community through the Mittagong Country Women's Association, was one of the first to respond to the distressed and injured during the Granville rail disaster some 40 years ago. For her feats on that day Mrs Warby was awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal in honour and recognition of her selfless acts of heroism. Unfortunately, the medal was stolen by thieves in 2008 and Mrs Warby told the *Southern Highlands News* that she thought she would never see the medal again.

Due to the fantastic work of the Hume Local Area Command, a replacement medal was able to be organised with representatives of Buckingham Palace and presented to Mrs Warby during a ceremony at Bowral police station. As we pause to remember those who lost their lives on that tragic day, we must also express our gratitude to those who put their own lives at risk to save those who could be saved and for comforting those who sadly could not.

CONGOLESE COMMUNITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:58): Last Sunday I joined the Congolese community to celebrate the life and mourn the recent passing of the Democratic Republic of Congo's Opposition Leader and former Prime Minister, Dr Etienne Tshisekedi wa Mulumba. Sydney's Congolese community consists mainly of refugees who have made a new life in Australia after enduring the world's deadliest war since World War II, which claimed more than five million lives. It is no surprise that they hold Tshisekedi in such high regard given that he had been the leading voice for democracy since 1980, when he left Mobutu's Government and formed the first opposition party, and for being a strong voice for a peaceful transition to democracy after Mobutu's government collapsed, instead of war, and leading the Opposition in recent years. It was a fitting tribute to a principled man who had spent more than half of his 84 years fighting for peace and democracy. I commend the President of the Congolese Community of New South Wales, Theophile Elongo, and pastors Nava Maluba and Francoise Machara for the lovely memorial service.

MOON ROCK ABORIGINAL HERITAGE SITE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:59): Moon Rock at Belrose, within the Davidson electorate, was declared an Aboriginal Place last year. This Monday the local Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and its board will celebrate this momentous decision at Waratah Park in Duffys Forest. Moon Rock was a traditional meeting place that served as a place for learning, healing and education. It has about 50 engravings depicting Aboriginal astronomical knowledge and lunar phases as well as local totems, food and weapons that were used by the local Garigal clan. The engravings have a strong aesthetic and spiritual presence, which reflect the compelling cultural value of the site. Establishing the site as an official Aboriginal Place under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 will protect it for future generations and allow the New South Wales Aboriginal community to share its heritage with the broader population. I applaud and celebrate Moon Rock's declaration as an Aboriginal Place.

CHINESE NEW YEAR

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (17:00): On Chinese New Year Day I visited the Ming Yue Lay Temple in Bonnyrigg, as I do every year, to pay my respects and to wish the Chinese Buddhist community a healthy and prosperous Year of the Rooster. The Ming Yue Lay Temple is arguably the largest of the Chinese Buddhist temples in metropolitan Sydney, attracting thousands of worshippers from all over Sydney every Chinese New Year. For the constituents in my electorate of Cabramatta it is a religious and cultural hub that has grown larger and larger over the past 30 years. The temple is administered by the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society under the leadership of Chairman James Chan, OAM, and President Vincent Kong, OAM.

The large crowd was treated to performances from the Australian Chinese Teochew Lion Dance Team and the God of Wealth was also on hand to distribute lucky red envelopes. As always for Chinese New Year, the weather was hot and the thousands of worshippers all lit incense to pray for good luck, good health and prosperity in 2017. Chinese New Year is always a fantastic time of the year for my community and the broader constituency of my electorate of Cabramatta. I congratulate the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society and its army of workers and volunteers on another job well done and wish them all the best for a lucky, prosperous and healthy Year of the Rooster.

FORSTER TENNIS CLUB

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:01): Forster Tennis Club Inc. has been given the title of New South Wales' top club. Late last year Tennis NSW rated all State tennis clubs in categories that included many of Tennis NSW's programs such as Cardio Tennis and Hot Shots, the total number of club members and whether they were becoming members of Tennis NSW online. They then named and rewarded the top 20 clubs. Forster Tennis Club came out on top. It was closely followed by a town near the Victorian border. Club committees of the two towns were invited to have a tour of the whole complex in Homebush and to watch the final men's doubles and singles matches from a private box in the main arena at the Australian Open.

The club's successful top-20 rating was a result of the work of a very talented coach, Jaime McDonogh, who delivers the programs; the contributions of the many volunteers who work constantly to keep the club at the forefront in every aspect, especially at tournament time; and a dedicated committee that keeps all aspects of the business on track. To be singled out from hundreds of other clubs around the State is a truly impressive achievement. In Forster we are fully aware of the wonderful work the club does, but it is pleasing to see it receive the wide acclaim it deserves.

ROSEBANK COLLEGE 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (17:02): I bring to the attention of the House the 150-year celebration of Rosebank College, Five Dock. The college was founded in 1867 by Archbishop John Bede Polding and the Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of Saint Benedict. Rosebank College has a proud tradition of providing a quality education to young women, and in 2012 it opened its doors to educating young men. The school encourages its students to live by Benedictine values of peace, a love of Christ, stewardship, hospitality, compassion and service. As part of the celebrations the school held a mass in recognition of the humble and selfless women of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan—in particular, the work undertaken by Mother Agatha Cassidy and Mother Scholastica Gibbons. It is wonderful to see that this coeducational school has women at the heart of its teaching. I congratulate Rosebank College, its staff, students and parents on this very important milestone.

ILLAWARRA ACADEMY OF SPORT

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (17:03): I recognise a number of young athletes from the Wingecarribee area of my electorate who have been selected for a range of athlete development programs with the Illawarra Academy of Sport. The academy currently provides athlete development programs across eight sports disciplines, and the programs generally last for 12 months with some athletes spending two to three years and longer under the various programs. Some of the more notable athletes to have attended this program include recent Olympians athlete Ryan Gregson and swimmers Jarrod Poort, Emma and David Mckeon; surfer Sally Fitzgibbons; rugby league players Josh Morris and Brett Stewart; as well as Australian Test Cricket great Brett Lee.

The young people selected for this year include: James Morton of Mittagong, who has been selected for the cricket program; Tearloch Carr of Bowral, who has been selected for the cycling program; Georgia Wade, Rhys Chivers and Ashley Stone, from Bowral, who have been selected for the hockey program; Georgia Barr of Bowral, who has been selected for the netball program; and Kyle Jesshope, who lives in Yerrinbool and has been selected for the athletes with a disability program as a promising hockey player. Each of these young people is a credit to our community and we wish them all the best with their future sporting endeavours.

Private Members' Statements

PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:04): I inform the House of the fantastic contributions made to my local community by some outstanding volunteers who were deservedly recognised at this year's Australia Day celebrations. Whilst Australia Day means many things to many people, it is an opportunity to say thank you to men and women of all ages who go above and beyond in their various roles in our community. In the category of Community Group of the Year the nominees were the Tacking Point Lions Club, Sailability Port Macquarie, Port Macquarie and Wauchope Park Run, Herons Creek Trail Committee and Hastings Community 2WAYFM Radio Station volunteers. The winner for 2017 was Tacking Point Lions Club.

The Tacking Point Lions Club has worked and volunteered within Port Macquarie since 1997. It has achieved many successes and provided significant benefits for our community. It is estimated that every month members of the club undertake 400 hours of community service. With too many projects to list individually, I will mention that the most recent project completed is the redevelopment of Gaol Point. The efforts of the club do not stop there, with its annual Port Macquarie Sand Mudder, endless barbecues and other fundraising activities raising some \$300,000 for the benefit of our local community. Tacking Point Lions Club provides meals to patients, assists local disadvantaged children, supports Camp Quality and undertakes maintenance works for local disadvantaged groups and the women's refuge. The Tacking Point Lions Club is an example of many people working together for the betterment of our community. I congratulate each and every one of its members and look forward to seeing more projects taking shape.

The nominations for the Senior Citizen of the Year are equally worthwhile of receiving recognition. I congratulate Mal Merrick, Edna Lamb, David McAlpine, Neil Black, Gwen Grimmond, Ken Fletcher, Joan Evelyn and Larry Brook on their nominations for helping so many others in the Port Macquarie-Hastings community. The winner was Neil Black—a stalwart of the Port Macquarie community and, like me, a proud Rotarian. After a distinguished career in technical education, Neil retired from the role of Director of North Coast TAFE in 2006. Neil has worked tirelessly as a volunteer in a variety of roles, including President of the Port Macquarie Meals on Wheels Service, Co-director of Rotary Club of Port Macquarie Sunrise Community Services Committee and Chair of the Rotary Club Lighthouse Restoration Project, just to name a few. Neil demonstrates the characteristics of self-sacrifice in all that he does for the community. He willingly gives his time

to assist other people on numerous occasions. I congratulate Neil on being named Senior Citizen of the Year and thank him for his efforts in supporting our community.

The two nominees for Young Citizen of the Year were Stephanie Clark and Isaac Sanderson. Stephanie took out the award and was recognised as an inspirational role model within our community who is determined to find ways to give back to the local community. Stephanie volunteers tirelessly for Tacking Point Surf Life Saving Club, the Red Cross, Salvation Army and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service. I congratulate Stephanie on her commitment to our community. Nominees for the prestigious award of Citizen of the Year were Sue Fitzgerald, Benjamin Simon, Robyn Maunder and Phil Hafey. The winner of Citizen of the Year was Phil Hafey, yet another Rotary Club member. He and I are members of the Laurieton club.

Phil has been a member of Rotary since 2007 and has held many positions. As such, he has participated in many and varied projects both with Rotary and the Bonny Hills Progress Association. Phil is found at many fundraising events and barbecues and also completes grant applications to secure funding to assist with the construction of local infrastructure projects. Phil is always there to lend a hand and volunteers his time as Chairman of the Rotary Lodge Board. He has been involved in many successful projects that have benefited our local community. I congratulate Phil on receiving this well-deserved award. On behalf of the Port Macquarie-Hastings community, I congratulate all the nominees for each category at this year's awards. I look forward to seeing them all continue their exceptional volunteer work in the future.

CLOSING THE GAP REPORT

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:08): February 13 marked nine years since Kevin Rudd's apology to the Stolen Generation—a moment in time few of us will forget. It was an apology for what he termed as "this blemished chapter in our national history" and "the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians." The catalyst for the apology was the 1997 Bringing Them Home report. That report suggested the first step in healing is the acknowledgment of truth and the delivery of an apology.

The release of the report was followed by a wave of apologies to the stolen generations by State Parliaments, judges, churches, civic associations, trade unions and ethnic groups. But it remained the responsibility of the Australian Government, on behalf of previous Australian governments that administered these wrongful policies, to acknowledge what was done and to apologise. Eleven years after the release of the "Bringing Them Home" report, Kevin Rudd said sorry. It was an important starting point in healing the wounds of the past and a historic step forward for our nation of which we can be proud. Rudd had previously recognised the significance of the word "sorry". He said:

... simply saying that you're sorry is such a powerful symbol. Powerful not because it represents some expiation of guilt. Powerful not because it represents any form of legal requirement. But powerful simply because it restores respect, powerful not because it represents some expiation of guilt, powerful because it restores respect.

This anniversary of the apology coincides with the annual "Closing the Gap" report—a fact-check on the state of Indigenous affairs that provides practical measures adding to the symbolism of the apology. It is dreadful that State and Federal governments are on track to meet only one of the seven targets in the strategy. The life expectancy gap persists: The report puts it at 10.6 years for Indigenous men and 9.5 years for Indigenous women. Employment, numeracy and literacy indicators in other areas remain mixed and unlikely to reach targets.

Clearly, more needs to be done by governments to close the gap. In the absence of sufficient government focus, however, there are many community groups and individuals around Australia doing amazing work to fight this uphill battle. In my electorate, the Centre for Hope assists both Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people who are in need of intervention to improve their educational and life outcomes. The centre's vision is to empower young, disadvantaged Australians to respect themselves, connect with the wider community and create an inspired life. The Centre for Hope has created several highly successful programs such as student mentoring, Wheels for Hope and the drop-in centre, both located at Lake Macquarie shopping centre, a homework centre at Windale library and the Supporting Families program.

I also recognise the work of the National Rugby League [NRL] in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and equality. A perfect example of this is the annual week-long event that celebrates Indigenous Australia, culminating in the Indigenous All Stars versus World All Stars match, which I had the pleasure of attending in Newcastle—the first time it has been held in New South Wales—last Friday. To watch the Indigenous players and local Aboriginal people perform the war dance before the game was spine-tinglingly powerful, and the final score was a massive 34-8 win for the Indigenous team. The women's game held earlier in the afternoon also resulted in a win for the Indigenous women, with a 14-4 victory over the favoured World All Stars. The players on both the women's and men's teams, as well as the programs run by the NRL to work towards the strengthening of Aboriginal leadership, pride and culture, are inspiring.

Other local groups that work to enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, pride, health and wellbeing and that are important to recognise are the Bahtabah Local Aboriginal Land Council, the Windale Interagency and Community Alliance, the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, the Police Citizens Youth Club at Windale, and Tunbilliko, which works to improve the relationship between our local First Peoples and police, as well as the many Landcare groups in the electorate, particularly those in the Belmont State Conservation Area and Warners Bay. Community groups are doing huge amounts to close the gap; governments clearly need to do more. I call on the Liberal-Nationals New South Wales Government to do just that, because achieving a measly one out of seven targets to close the gap is just not good enough.

COOTAMUNDRA ELECTORATE POLICING

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (17:12): My electorate incorporates the four local area commands [LACs] of Griffith, Canobolas, Cootamundra and Wagga Wagga, and the various Police and Community Together [PACT] meetings held throughout the year are great for stakeholder engagement. They are truly local in focus, which is particularly important outside the major regional centres, given the unique nature of some of the social and economic problems associated with greater isolation. The latest PACT meeting of the Cootamundra LAC was held yesterday at Young while I was here during sittings. However, the meeting included an informative briefing from the Cootamundra LAC's Domestic Violence Liaison Officer [DVLO], Rennai Kentwell.

While the latest NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research statistics indicate that domestic violence was down in some areas of my electorate, it remains a significant issue, with 136 instances of domestic violence assault in the Cootamundra LAC over the nine months since May 2016. About half of the 136 instances were in Tumut and Young alone, with 32 cases for Tumut and 35 cases for Young. In Young, the rate of apprehended violence order applications is the third highest in this State. It is a 300-kilometre, three-hour round trip between Young and Tumut, and the caseload for both towns is the responsibility of Rennai Kentwell, the sole DVLO for the Cootamundra LAC. A typical month for Rennai involves eight days in court. On top of this, there is liaison with local domestic violence support groups, schools and other stakeholders. Then there is the actual caseload, which is time consuming, delicate and emotionally draining.

There is also a requirement to attend Safety Action Meetings [SAMs] in Wagga Wagga. This is a fortnightly interagency meeting enhancing communication and coordination across the district. By all reports, the SAMs have been extremely beneficial to stakeholders and I congratulate the Minister on this initiative. What is problematic, however, is the associated travel to attend such meetings, which equates to another two full days per month away from casework. I am therefore seeking the Minister's support for these meetings to be held outside the major centres on occasion to make it a little easier on those who are doing the legwork on domestic violence in the regions.

Rennai and her counterparts in the Wagga Wagga, Griffith and Canobolas LACs do a tremendous job and are to be commended. Together with the great work of our DVLOs, the value of awareness campaigns and support initiatives through community organisations cannot be underestimated. Groups like the Narrandera Domestic Violence Committee are important. Serving on that committee is Iris Schofield, who received a Hidden Treasure Award last year for her work in this area. The Domestic and Family Violence Sub-Committee of Young, which includes Naomi Peters, does some great work in conjunction with the Young Police Citizens Youth Club.

The group ran a Respect, React, Respond community awareness campaign last year during which more than 40 local businesses and organisations, me included, were photographed with the slogan. Similarly, Grenfell's Voices Against Violence committee undertook an awareness campaign ahead of White Ribbon Day last year. Congratulations to Elly Schiller of Grenfell Community Health on this initiative. The team at Junee Community Centre have said that, in conjunction with Wagga Wagga's Sisters Housing Enterprises, the Link2Home program is going very well. Particularly when there are children involved, it allows for minimal disruption of their schooling. This liaison has proved incredibly helpful for Junee.

Finally, a quick word on other issues raised. The need for a new police station at Young is a high priority, as is a designated mental health room at the Young District Hospital. The lack of such a facility at the Young District Hospital means that police are called up to the hospital frequently, away from their duties elsewhere. This is an issue that I have raised repeatedly in this House, particularly the need for a new police station at Young. I cannot stress enough to the Minister for Police that this is an absolute priority for my electorate. It is currently on a split site. It is inconvenient for all, and impractical.

Opportunistic theft from a motor vehicle continues to be an issue across the Cootamundra LAC. I remind constituents to remain vigilant when it comes to locking their vehicles and residences, and to leave valuables hidden. Please do not make yourself an easy target. Finally, the mobile drug testing program is going very well,

with officers reporting a high hit rate. I thank the Government for ensuring that we have those mobile drug tests operating on our highways throughout the electorate of Cootamundra. I thank the House for its attention.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:17): I also add my congratulations to the many community groups in the electorate of the member for Cootamundra who are working tirelessly to reduce the incidence of domestic violence across the electorate. More should be done across the State and across the country to ensure that domestic violence incidences are reduced.

CAMDEN COUNCIL AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (17:17): Today I speak about the wonderful recipients of the local Camden Council Australia Day awards. Camden's Citizen of the Year was awarded to Robyne Meek. Robyne's contribution to the Camden community has been exemplary and, quite frankly, must be exhausting for her, with her involvement in Meals on Wheels, running the local school canteen when her children were younger, Quota International Club, Macarthur Voice Interest and Education of Women—VIEW—Club and the Country Women's Association through which she continues to raise funds and provide support to the disadvantaged. In 1995 Robyne established the Gumnut Guides for children who were too young to join Girl Guides.

Camden's Young Citizen of the Year was awarded to Johann Marais. Johann has been a longstanding and dedicated member of the Camden Youth Council since 2012. He graciously gives his time to assist with the planning, implementation and delivery of many Camden Youth Council events and is involved in promoting opportunities and services for local young people. Johann's initiative is refreshing to see. Sportsperson of the Year was awarded to Guy Creber. Mr Creber has been the head coach of the South West Sydney Academy of Sport triathlete program for the past two years. Guy is one of the most successful triathlon coaches in New South Wales. In 2015 Guy was nominated for triathlete coach of the year. Guy was an instrumental part in establishing and now running the academy's triathlon program. The program has gone from strength to strength under his guidance. As a triathlete, Guy has more than 10 years of competition experience under his belt, including representing Australia in 2012 and competing at World Championship events in New Zealand and England. He is to be commended for his true dedication to the athletes.

Young Sportsperson of the Year was shared this year by Nathaniel Stewart and Hannah Trethewy. Nathaniel is a talented local hockey player, who recently won gold at the Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing, China. His community service commitment is readily demonstrated by his dedication to developing young players in the sport of hockey. Hannah is an exceptional cricket player and an inspirational role model who has mentored many junior cricketers. Hannah has taken to coaching my son Tom in wicketkeeping for the past season in her own time. She is an outstanding wicketkeeper and Tom has had the best season under her guidance. I thank her for her time and efforts. Hannah's cricket representation has gone beyond the local Camden level to New South Wales and Australian representation. She was selected in the New South Wales Lend Lease Breakers Academy, training with the New South Wales Open's team 2015/2016. Hannah got two baggy blues, when Alyssa Healy was away, with the Southern Stars last year. Hannah is also School Captain of Elderslie High School this year. She is an outstanding young woman.

Community Event of the Year was awarded to the Macarthur Lions Anzac Run, which is held on the weekend after Anzac Day and, as the name suggests, is run by the wonderful Macarthur Lions Club. President John Smith, Secretary Keith McLeod, Treasurer Ron Mangham, all committee members and all club members should be very proud. The Anzac Fun Run is open to all ages and abilities, and was established to give people the opportunity to reflect on the Anzac conflict and those who we lost at that time. The event is held on the 200-acre Bicentennial Equestrian Park in Camden, which is owned by Camden Council and is overseen by a committee consisting of equestrian and community volunteers.

Community Group of the Year was awarded to the Youth Solutions Youth Advisory Group. The volunteer group consists of young people who are passionate about improving the lives and health of their peers in the Camden region. Congratulations go to Danielle Kahn, Gopi Subramanian, Karralene Cox, Kasee Payne, Lauren Payne, Rachel Scott and Samantha McAuley—the 2016-2017 Youth Advisory Group members. Some of the activities coordinated by the group include peer-led workshops focusing on safe partying practices, mental health and road safety. The group runs a campaign that focuses on the effects of smoking. I congratulate all winners and thank those who attended. I thank Camden Council for yet another wonderful Australia Day event within the Camden local government area.

TRIBUTE TO ANNE FARAH HILL

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (17:22): It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge a person who has worked tirelessly in the community services sector in both my electorate and in the electorate of Oatley, Ms Anne Farah Hill, whose work in the community services and welfare sector spans 35 years. She managed

non-government organisations throughout the Sydney metropolitan area, particularly in the inner west and St George districts. For the past 17 years Anne has served the community in the St George area through her work as the chief executive officer of the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre, which plays a vital role in the district, providing a much-needed community hub for the people of St George.

The centre operates from a \$3 million building in Morgan Street, Kingsgrove, which was purpose built in 2005 to serve the needs of the many groups and individuals in the St George community. The development of that centre is due in no small part to the efforts of Anne in incessantly lobbying governments of all political persuasions and at all levels through my predecessor and former member for Kogarah, Cherie Burton, former Mayor of Hurstville Vince Badalati and all the councillors and staff of Hurstville City Council on the needs of the modern facility to service properly the many and diverse needs of this wonderful community.

Anne's work and vision have always centred on the needs of the most vulnerable in our community, such as older people, struggling families, people with disabilities and new migrants. The centre's mission statement reflects that vision through its commitment to responding to the needs of people in our local community, with special consideration for the socially, economically and linguistically disadvantaged. The centre's motto is, "We are local, accessible and relevant." Anne's view is that it is important for an organisation to be local if it is to serve the real needs of the local community. Her philosophy is clearly working. Anne's commitment and experience in multicultural affairs and with multicultural communities has been crucial because deep, longstanding relationships with the leaders of those many different communities is essential for organising effective community events in our suburbs.

In October last year the centre celebrated 50 years of service to the St George community. I join in the congratulations from across the community on the achievement of that milestone. The Government and the private sector have recognised Anne's work over many years. Recently, I had the pleasure of nominating Anne for the Kogarah 2017 Local Woman of the Year award. I commend the endeavours of the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre and its chief executive officer, and wish them continuing success. The Kogarah Community Aid Centre organises amazing services for the people of St George. If people are bored and wish to see some friends, it provides social outings, general social groups and Chinese-speaking social groups—I note that the member for Oatley was learning Mandarin but I am not sure if he has continued to do so.

Mr Mark Coure: Xiè xiè.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Xiè xiè. It also provides Arabic speaking social groups, senior art therapy programs, gentle exercise classes and linedancing—I remember Liberal candidate Nick Aroney and I were called up to linedance at one of their events. Hopefully, that will not happen again. It also has knitting groups and group activities.

Mr Mark Coure: I will do that with you this year.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The member for Oatley skipped out before the dancing began, which was a clever attempt to abrogate his responsibility to dance for the local community. The centre also provides information sessions, long excursions, podiatry services, hearing checks, information and referrals, and courtesy calls to clients. It is a wonderful organisation that does tremendous work for the people of Kogarah and the St George region. I commend its service and commitment to our local community.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:27): I too congratulate Anne Farah Hill, who is a close friend, for the past 17 years of service she has provided to the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre and for her contribution to the community. Last week I participated in the annual dinner of the Maronite Catholic Society, which raised much-needed funding for many community groups. Anne Farah Hill has had a leadership role in the Maronite Catholic Society for many decades. The Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre has provided services to multicultural communities, the frail and aged, and children not only in my electorate but also in the Kogarah, Rockdale and Canterbury electorates for many years. I look forward to supporting that wonderful organisation in the future.

PENRITH ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (17:28): As we start 2017, it is a good opportunity to remind the House and the people of Penrith of the number of things we have been able to do over the past 12 months. It is fair to say that in the 16 years that the Labor Party was in office, Penrith was definitely taken for granted, but the past 12 months is a good snapshot of how things have changed significantly under this Government. The Nepean River Green Bridge is now under construction, which will transform the way people in our community interact with the Nepean River. They will be able to see the river for the first time and cross between Penrith and Emu Plains. They will also have a safe pedestrian and cycle crossing, which will help to celebrate one of the great landscapes in our community.

We have also started construction on our new ambulance super station. It will have 22 bays with the best possible working conditions for our paramedics who work tirelessly across the community.

Penrith railway station is undergoing its largest upgrade to date. The stairs and concourse have been upgraded, it has new lifts, improved bus and taxi areas, and there have been significant upgrades to its lighting and closed-circuit television systems. Work is also underway on a new 350-place station car park, which will ensure that communities are better catered for. We have already started the planning work around the widening of Mulgoa Road, with early stage works happening across the Jane Street intersection. We are in the first planning phase of the M4 and Mulgoa Road interchange and, having announced the design plans for the Northern Road, the widening will be happening in 2017. These are two crucial roads for the Penrith community and this Government has taken responsibility for upgrading them.

We are also seeing great results across education. Under the Resource Allocation Model [RAM], \$12 million has been invested in needs-based funding. I am proud of the Government's decision to be at the forefront of supporting Gonski funding; my community is benefiting from it. For example, the Penrith South Public School has used its needs-based funding to release assistant principals to work shoulder to shoulder with classroom teachers in one-on-one environments. This will ensure that students get the services and support they need to get ahead in life. We are also making sure that parents who work long distances from Penrith are supported with our out-of-school-hours [OOSH] care. Six new schools have already opened up OOSH centres in Penrith. St Finbars at Glenbrook, St Mary MacKillop, Henry Fulton, Glenbrook Public School, Penrith South and Our Lady of the Way have all taken advantage of this program. Flashing lights have been installed at many of our schools, including St Dominic's College, Kingswood, and St Nicholas of Myra Primary.

TAFE has also been a big winner in our community. The \$27 million Health and Student Services Centre has been opened at Kingswood reinforces the Government's focus on vocational education. For a long time now I have been fighting for the \$570 million investment in Nepean Hospital, and the community desperately needs it. It is the largest single investment in that hospital's history. That funding will be used to correct the mistakes of the past and to prepare Nepean Hospital for the bright future it deserves. Currently that commitment is \$200 million more than anything that has been offered by those opposite. One does not need to look further than that to see the difference between what this Government is doing for the people of Penrith and what the Opposition is proposing.

The Government's commitment goes beyond capital works. Our local health district has seen a 50 per cent increase in recurrent funding annually since 2011. The comparison in real figures is \$500 million under Labor annually, to \$740 million each year under this Government. That is not just about bricks and mortar; it is about making sure doctors, nurses and services are filling the wards. That is what this Government has been about. Some 300 full-time staff have come into our health network—234 nurses and more than 70 new doctors—and I recently got to meet many of them. We have also seen cultural opportunities expand. For example, "Ballet Under the Stars" coming to Penrith. I am also proud that the high-performance rowing centre for women will be calling Penrith home. The past 12 months have been a bumper 12 months in Penrith.

SHOALHAVEN AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (17:33): Today I pay tribute to the exceptional community members who were honoured at this year's Shoalhaven Australia Day awards and citizenship ceremony. On the evening of 25 January I attended the ceremony held at the Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre in conjunction with the Federal member for Gilmore, Ann Sudmalis, MP, the member for Kiama, Mr Gareth Ward, and the mayor of Shoalhaven, Amanda Findlay. The awards attracted more than 300 guests from across the Shoalhaven. All were in attendance to welcome the 34 new Australian citizens and celebrate the 34 nominees for their outstanding achievements. The local Indigenous Elder, Uncle Paul McLeod, whom I know well, gave the Welcome to Country. He emphasised that Australia Day is about belonging and unity. He was followed by Australia Day Ambassador and award-winning conductor and composer George Ellis, who delivered a fantastic keynote address.

June Stevens of North Nowra was recognised as the Shoalhaven Citizen of the Year for her longstanding contribution to community services and her work aiding families. June was a marriage and family therapist for 10 years and a founding member of the Nowra Neighbourhood Centre. June served as the chief executive officer of Australian National Lifeline and Lifeline South Coast before becoming a board member in 2002. For two years she served as the chair of Shoalcare. She is now a board member for the Kemblawarra Child Care Centre and a director of Southern Cross Community Housing. June is an incredibly hard working and selfless individual who has dedicated her career to community service. I congratulate her on being named the Shoalhaven Citizen of the Year.

Earlier today I informed the House about Dick Manwarring and his efforts to support cancer patients and their families in the central Shoalhaven. For more than a decade he has undertaken fundraising for cancer. I have

attended all of his Code C fundraising initiatives. I nominated Dick for citizen of the year. I imagine that the judges found it difficult to choose. Dick received a commendation. Ava Del Tufo was announced as Shoalhaven Young Citizen of the Year for her unwavering dedication and wholehearted enthusiasm to assist with social issues and community initiatives. At only 18 years of age, Ava has already accrued a long list of prestigious achievements and made lasting contributions to her local community.

Following the death of her younger brother, Jeramiah, to brain cancer when he was eight years old, Ava became heavily involved with the Cancer Council. She raised more than \$35,000 for the organisation. Ava also volunteers with the Mollmook Surf Life Saving Club. In 2013 she founded the Big Fish, Little Fish mentoring program. In 2016 Ava was nominated as a New South Wales finalist for the Lions Youth of the Year. An Ulladulla High School student, Ava has twice won the Award for Excellence in Public Speaking, she was elected school captain and will this year begin her Higher School Certificate. Congratulations and good luck, Ava.

Wallaroos captain and Vincentia local, Ashleigh Hewson, was named the Shoalhaven Sports Person of the Year in recognition of her promotion of women's sports at all levels, particularly rugby union. Ashleigh has represented Australia in rugby union, cricket, soccer, touch and athletics and is an outstanding representative for those sports. In 2010 and 2014 she competed in the Women's Rugby World Cup. In 2016 Ashleigh was the recipient of the John Eales Medal for Women's Player of the Year following Sydney's back-to-back wins at the national championships under her captaincy. Well done Ashleigh, and I wish you the best of luck as you continue to represent sportswomen and the South Coast.

Tarje Whitford, whose family I know well, was announced as the Shoalhaven Junior Sports Person of the Year for his consistent contribution to, and performance in, rugby league. Last year he was a member of the St George Illawarra Steelers under 16s team and was winner of the player's player and international player awards at the Milton Ulladulla Junior Rugby League annual awards. Tarje is an Ulladulla High School student and captains their under 16s touch team. In addition to volunteering his time with the Mollmook Surf Life Saving Club, he coaches young league players and referees. In 2016 he was a joint winner of the South Coast Group 7 Kevin Walsh Scholarship Award. Tarje, I congratulate you on your achievements both on and off the field. I commend Tarje's parents, Kevin and Sue Whitford.

I make special mention to the Shoalhaven residents named in the national Australia Day honours list. I offer my congratulations to Councillor Joanna Gash, AM, former Federal member for Gilmore, Raymond Vincent, OAM, John Bennett, OAM, and Robyn Florance, OAM. Once again, well done and thank you to all the winners and nominees of the 2017 Shoalhaven Australia Day Awards. I congratulate Shoalhaven City Council on organising a wonderful event.

WARNERVALE AIRPORT

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:38): Tonight I wish to pose some questions about what was the Warnervale airport, now the Central Coast airport. I will supply a little history to begin. The old Wyong council has an obsession with building a regional airport and, to that end, spends ratepayers' money buying land. It has dumped three previous sites. The council has now returned to the existing Warnervale airport site. Mr Laurie Eyes is a community champion for good governance of local government, and he has queried the Central Coast Council's pursuit of an airport upgrade. Mr Eyes submitted a Government Information (Public Access) Act application for the Warnervale Airport Development Opportunities Feasibility Study, dated February 2013.

Mr Eyes was granted access to that document by the administrative tribunal. The council appealed his access, through a barrister, to try to stop him from seeing the document again. Mr Eyes won the appeal, spending a lot of his own money. He then went to get the document, but the council would not let him have it or view it. One wonders why a public organisation such as a council that is spending ratepayers' money to develop a project will not let ratepayers see the feasibility study showing the reason for pursuing the project. Once Mr Eyes saw the document it became clear why the council did not want anyone to see it. Page 13 of the document talks about the case for change. It mentions a couple of items. The first is asset maintenance. The document says:

General maintenance and repairs to the leased airport land costs WSC—

that is, the old Wyong Shire Council—

around \$12,000 per annum. This figure can be dramatically increased when substantial repairs to assets are required. An example, repair works to the runway pavement started in Dec 2012 to the extent of 300 metres and at a total cost of \$15,000.

The second item is income. The document says:

Annual income received by WSC is approximately \$5,000 ...

The council's annual reports show that the airport lost \$635,000 last year, in 2014-15 it lost \$265,000 and the value has been written down by about \$450,000 over those two years. One wonders why, when council is closing

preschools and looking at closing pools, it is trying to maintain this asset. Page 13 also mentions the case objective. It says:

A \$5,000 income stream from a property worth \$12.75m represents a poor return on investment to WSC.

On page 25 the document outlines options. It says:

Upgrade of the Warnervale Airport is not considered to be a viable option. The costs are considered prohibitive.

The airport will continue to be a financial liability to Wyong Shire Council until such time as the site is developed or disposed.

Edwards—

which is an aviation company—

also admitted that the Warnervale site has specific constraints. These include weather to the extent that Edwards will not land there.

On that page there are four options:

Option 1—Do nothing

Option 2—Upgrade airport

Option 3—Sell WVA land

Option 4—Develop WVA land and sell and/or retain the subdivided parcels.

Options 1 and 2—do nothing or upgrade the airport—scored 10 on the evaluation matrix. The option to sell the land scored 16. The option to develop the land and sell or retain the subdivided parcels scored 19. The council's own report advises it to sell the land and provide a return to ratepayers. There are questions that need to be asked, and the first one is to the Government. The Opposition has discovered that the council is lobbying the Government outside the independent process that is currently looking at the Warnervale Airport (Restrictions) Act 1996.

The first question is: When will the Warnervale Airport restriction review be released? The second question is: Why is the Central Coast Council lobbying the Government outside the independent process? The third question is: Why will council not follow the recommendations of the report it commissioned? The report also shows that keeping the airport will have an adverse effect on the Wyong employment zone, which is a major employment hub identified under the Central Coast Regional Plan. The Central Coast Council has to sell this airport and start looking after ratepayers and jobs.

ENGADINE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (17:43): It gives me great pleasure to draw to the attention of the House a group of outstanding students at Engadine High School, in my electorate. The Velocity team of five students is representing the school in the F1 in Schools competition, an internationally recognised science, technology, engineering and maths [STEM] extracurricular program. The team comprises teacher and mentor Mr Ray Treloar; Ben Green, who is the student manager; Josh Harris, who is the designer; Joshua Upham, who has responsibility for research and resources; and engineers Aaron Maraccini and Max Hayes.

These students have designed and built a CO₂-propelled track car utilising F1 technology and design features from the multimillion-dollar F1 racing teams. The students have had some challenges recently. Their supervising teacher has taken leave, leaving the boys without a supervisor for a time. Despite the hurdles, the team has created a highly competitive vehicle, and the speeds that have been clocked have been equal to, or better than, many of the more senior teams across Australia. At the end of February, the team will travel to South Australia to compete at the national F1 schools competition. High hopes are held for great results, which will lead them into the international competition in Singapore. Engadine High School has a rich history in the F1 school competitions, with winners at State levels and a finalist at the international level. The F1 competitions run CO₂-propelled cars down a 20-metre track along a fishing line guide. There are automated starts and a team member with the fastest reaction time—the fastest finger—starts the car. I have been told that the students are not allowed to consume V or any energy drinks that may quicken their reaction times before the race.

As I have mentioned previously, these cars are designed and manufactured by the students. To assist in this endeavour, Engadine High School has furnished a 3D printer for the boys to use in their design work. Once the final design is decided on, the finishing starts. To ensure that the car slips through the air without any drag, a lot of sanding is done before the cars are painted. The science, physics, technology, engineering, maths, time management, eye for detail and creative design from scratch required for this project give the participants life skills that will serve them well in their future chosen career fields. I wish the team well in South Australia and look forward to hearing the news that they are off to Singapore.

WESTCONNEX

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (17:46): I express my very grave concern about the way in which the Government continues to cut a swathe through my electorate due to the hopeless way it has developed the WestConnex project. From the time that the Government announced the WestConnex project in August 2012, I indicated to this House that this ridiculous proposal was an unplanned, uncosted and under-designed project that would create havoc with Sydney's traffic. WestConnex is not just an underground road. This road has been contentious, mostly because of the Government's stupidity in its implementation. Only this week, the Australian National Audit Office reported on the \$1.5 billion grant funding and the \$2 billion concessional loans. It found:

The WestConnex project had not proceeded fully through the established processes to assess the merits of nationally significant infrastructure investments prior to Australian Government funding being committed.

That is an independent national assessment of this ridiculous project. It has resulted in people's homes being taken, and the Government has conceded that it has not compensated them properly and has treated them unfairly. The Government provided an environmental impact statement that did not examine the traffic impacts in various parts of my electorate. Only several weeks ago we discovered that the WestConnex Delivery Authority had outsourced truck works to associates of the outlaw Rebels Motorcycle Club, which were running unsafe trucks within my electorate. People in my electorate have already had to put up with terrible dust emissions and asbestos removal from areas neighbouring their homes.

As if that were not enough, I have been telling the House—and I told the previous Minister for Roads privately—that a catastrophe will be created in areas of Alexandria and Gardeners Road in Kingsford and Kensington, because 60,000 vehicles will be exiting from the St Peters interchange. The impact of that had not been examined in an environmental impact statement. I took the former Minister for Planning on site to show him the impact of the St Peters interchange and I told him there was no way that the Government could deal with the influx of 60,000 vehicles into Alexandria. Over the Christmas period the Government announced its Alexandria to Moore Park upgrade as it was concerned about this influx of traffic in Alexandria. The Government wants a six-lane highway from Alexandria all the way through to Moore Park and Dacey Avenue and then on to Alison Road near Anzac Parade. Imagine an influx of tens of thousands of vehicles at that location.

This Government does not properly plan its major infrastructure projects or call for environmental impact statements to determine what impact these projects will have. The Government will be relocating trees, houses and businesses and in an effort to avert a catastrophe 60,000 vehicles will be redirected from Euston Road, Alexandria to Alison Road near Anzac Parade as Lachlan Street and McEvoy Street are widened to six lanes. The cost of the WestConnex project has not been assessed or made available to the public but allegedly it is being costed by Roads and Maritime Services. I implore the Government to concede, as did the former planning Minister, that development of this State significant precinct should not adversely impact upon the road system. I implore the Government to ensure that it averts any crisis in my electorate.

TERRIGAL ELECTORATE SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:51): My electorate of Terrigal is brimming with talented sports stars—from young sports stars to accomplished masters. As a former competitive swimmer, I recognise the benefits of sport in keeping healthy, connecting with new people and striving for success. Tonight I refer to a few outstanding local individuals to demonstrate the breadth of age and the sporting fields represented in my electorate. Sixteen-year-old Macy Callaghan from Avoca Beach is a local surfing sensation. Macy has been involved in sport since a young age, starting at surf carnivals in Terrigal at only a few years of age and progressing to train at Avoca Beach as a young nipper.

As she focused on surfing, Macy excelled at various competitions including being crowned the Junior and Open Australian Champion and Australasian Junior Qualifying Series Champion. Whilst training hard, Macy has also managed to balance surfing with her study at Kincumber High School, where she recently entered senior school. Macy's skill and ability to cope with the pressure of large competitions was on display recently when she competed in the World Surfing League Junior Championship at Kiama Beach. Performing well through the many heats, Macy was challenged in the quarter finals with her opponent scoring well but she eventually triumphed to make it through to the final. Her hard work and perseverance was rewarded when she won the final comfortably. This achievement places Macy at the pinnacle of youth surfing and is a testament to her dedication to the sport, which I am sure will continue in future competitions this year.

I am pleased that one such surfing tournament is being held at Avoca Beach in my electorate. The event is part of the World Surf League Qualifying Series and Avoca, as well as three other New South Wales beaches, were lucky enough to be chosen to host these tournaments. In 2016 the series saw surfers from more than 20 countries flocking to New South Wales beaches. As part of the event in 2017 New South Wales and the Central Coast will benefit from worldwide exposure, an estimated injection of \$1.8 million tourist dollars and more than

1,000 overnight stays at local accommodation providers. This is an exciting event and I look forward to following its success in the future.

Another local sporting personality is Mrs Joan O'Connell, OAM, who was recently recognised in the Australia Day honours list for her services to golf. Mrs O'Connell has been involved in golf for more than four decades and has played an integral role in promoting the sport among women through her various roles with the Central Coast Women's Golf Association [CCWGA]. The CCWGA has 10 affiliated clubs with many active members and runs numerous events to engage women in the sport including the Interclub Match Play Competition and the annual tournament. In addition to her involvement with the association, Mrs O'Connell has been a longstanding member of both Gosford Golf Club, where she has been president, and the fantastic Breakers Country Club, in my electorate. It is wonderful to see such dedication to the promotion of this great sport by accomplished veterans like Mrs O'Connell. I wish her well in her future endeavours as she continues to enjoy golf at the many fantastic courses on the Central Coast. But local sporting stars do not succeed on their own, with parents, volunteers, supporters and others involved in sporting clubs playing vitally important roles.

One such volunteer is 90-year-old Peter Wyllie, OAM, of Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club. Mr Wyllie began his connection to the club in the late 1940s, when it was lacking members and needed help in training youth. Mr Wyllie has continued with his support for the club throughout his life, serving three terms as president and as a life member—a very worthy distinction. Today, thanks to these efforts, Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club is thriving as one of the largest clubs on the Central Coast with approximately 1,000 members, from young nippers to experienced club patrons. Members patrol the beach every weekend, supervising the many locals and more than 150,000 tourists who visit Terrigal every year. The benefits to the community from these patrols cannot be underestimated, with many lives saved through the tireless efforts of volunteers. Mr Wyllie also served in the Royal Australian Navy, and is well known for his community work. This service and dedication to the Central Coast is what enriches the electorate of Terrigal, and I sincerely thank all who contribute in a similar way.

MAITLAND ELECTORATE EVENTS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (17:56): Over the Christmas break the Maitland electorate was bursting with achievements, and I am so proud and honoured to represent such a talented and generous local community. I would like to share with members some of those achievements and acts of generosity and kindness. Recently I attended the Australia Day celebrations at Maitland Park, where 42 people became new Australian citizens and the Maitland Citizen of the Year and Young Citizen of the Year awards were announced. Beverly Steggles was awarded Maitland Citizen of the Year and was recognised for her tireless and wideranging volunteer work in the community, particularly for her work with Grandparents as Parents. Sammy Seth, a wonderful young woman, was named Maitland's Young Citizen of the Year and was recognised for her passionate advocacy for young people in her role as ambassador for the Multicultural Youth Affairs Network.

I also congratulate the other Maitland of the Year finalists: Anthony Milburn, Carol Connaughton, Craig McGregor, Danny Phillips, Donna George, Eileen Garry, Geoff Winsley, Georgina Grine, Joe Gollan, Kevin Short, Max Fitzpatrick, Patricia Munton, Paul Clyne, Peter Hodgson and Tony Grace. I also congratulate Young Citizen of the Year finalists Brittany and Kimberly Simmons, Grace Ahrens, John Leao and Laurie Mexon. The sheer number of nominations shows the strength of community spirit we have in Maitland. An estimated 6,000 people made their way through Maitland Park that day to congratulate our finalists, our award winners and our new Australians. I thank Maitland mayor, Councillor Peter Blackmore, OAM, Councillor Henry Meskauskas and the Maitland Australia Day Committee, as well as all the other councillors and council staff who ensured that the Maitland community welcomed our new citizens, acknowledged the remarkable achievements of local people within our community and reflected on our nation's history in such a positive and enjoyable way. I thank the ambassador for the day, Ms Tanya Wilks.

Before Christmas my office was a collection point for Share the Dignity's "It's in the bag" campaign. I am extremely grateful to local community members who donated more than 170 bags filled with hygiene products, cosmetics, sanitary items, et cetera, to give to people who are less well off. Abby Rawlings is a local woman who told her family and friends to donate a bag instead of buying her a birthday present. Abby's friend Kate Moore kindly delivered all her donated bags to my office. I am so grateful to the many individuals and businesses that donated including Castle Personnel Services. It just shows how incredibly generous members of the Maitland community are. It is nice to be able to reach out to people in our own backyard who need help and support. I thank the entire nationwide Share the Dignity volunteers who raise funds and bring awareness of the daily challenges that homeless women face each day in our community.

Another issue in my electorate is how to keep young people active, energised and engaged with our community. It is often hard to provide them with activities that give them a sense of purpose. There has been some antisocial behaviour in Woodberry in my electorate, but I am so proud of how the community has addressed it. It is easy to beat the law and order drum, but in the spirit of community the Woodberry citizens and the many caring

community groups who serve them are working together because they know they cannot "arrest" their way out of these issues. The Maitland Neighbourhood Centre ran Boredom Busters, which involved more than 150 people over three days of the holidays. Program coordinator Naomi Rees described local community worker Leanne as a Pied Piper driving around the suburb, collecting young people and encouraging them to participate. Reverend Doug Morrison Cleary and many other community workers were involved and it was a great opportunity for everyone to get together.

Reverend Doug is starting a get-together for local people in the skate park on Wednesday afternoons in March and Maitland Youth Development Officer Bron Dyason is beginning work to empower young people to help each other with drug and alcohol issues. She is also providing mental health support to students at Francis Greenway High School. In addition, Aboriginal elders Leon Hammond, Aunty Dawn Field and others are doing a lot of work with local Indigenous group the Red Belly Blacks. There are simply too many things going on in Maitland to mention them all in the short five minutes we are allotted each week. I could go on for hours. I will update the House next week about all of the fantastic things that are happening in Maitland.

WAGGA WAGGA ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (18:00): Last Friday and Saturday my electorate had the great honour and pleasure of hosting our Premier Gladys on a visit to Wagga Wagga to see some of the wonderful investments our Government has made. It was also a chance for the Premier to meet many of the wonderful people working throughout the community including accountants, solicitors, doctors and nurses. In fact, a wide array of people attended the functions we held. At Wagga Wagga the Premier visited the jewel in the crown of regional hospitals in New South Wales. So far the Government has spent \$282.1 million on our new rural referral hospital, which services a large area and some 280,000 people. Stage 2 of the hospital has been almost completed. The old hospital tower has been decommissioned and demolished. There only remains the original part of the hospital to be demolished. The project will cost some \$170 million.

After touring the hospital and meeting the nurses, doctors and administrators the Premier announced she would fast-track the final phase of the Wagga Wagga Rural Referral Hospital redevelopment. The \$170 million investment will be used to continue the deconstruction and then begin the construction of ambulatory care, community health, renal dialysis and other service buildings on the footprint. The doctors, nurses, administrators and the community warmly welcomed the announcement. They have worked tirelessly for this wonderful building which the former Labor regime long promised but never delivered—like many projects across regional and rural New South Wales. Our community is extremely excited that it is happening.

The Premier attended a number of functions and visited many facilities around the city. Many people who make a contribution to our great city including community leaders, the mayor of Wagga Wagga, representatives from Lockhart Shire Council, general managers and the Committee for Wagga were invited to attend the functions. As part of the tour the Premier visited a number of other projects that have received Government investment. They included the levee banks in which the Government has invested millions of dollars to ensure that the city is protected. That work is progressing well.

The Premier also visited the new intermodal terminal. In partnership with the Federal Government and the council the new intermodal terminal will be the foundation for industrial expansion in our great region and an important part of our economic development for the next 100 to 150 years. The Premier visited the site to which our Government contributed \$16.5 million, which will allow us to complete the vision of the Wagga City Council. It will allow Byrnes Road and Olympic Highway to be joined, allow for new infrastructure to be built and attract businesses. It will put in place the railway lines we need to load containers for companies such as Thies to export to countries all around the world. Those companies produce products, carry on business and create jobs in the city.

I will point out some economic facts that were highlighted to the Premier. In 2015-16 there was a 10 per cent increase in the volume of houses sold in Wagga Wagga and a 6.25 per cent increase in the median price. There has been an average 5.3 per cent increase in the volume of unit sales. Indeed, there has been an 18 per cent increase in sales of land in Wagga Wagga. The vacancy rate is 2.18 per cent. Population growth is forecast to continue at 1.4 per cent. Our unemployment rate is 3.06 per cent—a regional city performing well against a national average of 5.9 per cent and indeed a State average of 5 per cent. The population of Wagga Wagga is the largest in New South Wales at 64,748, and it is increasing by 1.4 per cent. The average mortgage repayment in Wagga Wagga is only 31.1 per cent of the average wage. This is fantastic news for a regional city, and it was brought about by investment in regional New South Wales by a Government that understands where our future lies.

NEWCASTLE REGIONAL SHOW

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (18:06): The Newcastle Regional Show is a Newcastle icon and an institution in both Newcastle and the Hunter. It was first run in 1908 and has run every year since, except for five years during World War II and two years in the 1920s because of the influenza epidemic. It has a very proud history, but unfortunately the Newcastle show is cash-strapped and faces being permanently wound up unless the State Government agrees to provide emergency funding. While this year's show is safe, Newcastle Show Association president Brett Gleeson has warned that three consecutive years of bad weather, the loss of the show public holiday and the redirection of funding from the showgrounds to the State Government's coffers has led to a critical situation that could mean this year is the last time the show is held. In 2006 the trust listed assets of \$3 million; now the Newcastle Show Association has \$10,000 left in the bank. The show association president said in the *Newcastle Herald*:

The show association is going broke because we can't get access to any income while Venues NSW is sitting on money that belongs to the Hunter.

This situation has been made considerably worse by the loss of the annual show public holiday. As a former councillor on Newcastle City Council, I can say that every year for eight years we debated the public holiday for the show weekend. The Hunter Business Chamber complained every year about the cost to local businesses of the public holiday, saying it was \$35 million. In 2015 the Show Association relented and agreed not to apply for the holiday. Mr Gleeson said:

We gave up the public holiday and had hoped that with the benefit they received we would have had support from the business community ...

But after losing about \$130,000 from not having the public holiday, Mr Gleeson said the show got only about \$18,000 from additional sponsors. The Hunter Business Chamber could do well to provide a bit more support, given it is allegedly saving \$35 million from not having that show public holiday. Mr Gleeson made a representation to the Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter, Mr Scot MacDonald, and he has also written to me. I hope that Mr MacDonald passes Mr Gleeson's request to Catherine Cusack MLC, the new Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter.

He has requested of the Government that it increase the cost of the parking at the showgrounds for weekly farmers' markets to partly address the financial issues, increasing the payment from \$2 to \$3 and providing \$1 of that to the show association, which would put it in a much more financially secure place. It also requested a \$40,000 grant. I believe Mr MacDonald was approaching the Deputy Premier to get that money. I certainly hope that he continues to do that and talks to the new Parliamentary Secretary and the Deputy Premier about that. I have also written to Mr Ayres, Minister for Sport. I have also read the Sporting Venues Authorities Act 2008 part 6 section 34. I was concerned to learn the association is being charged \$60,000 to hire the entertainment centre for three days because the Act states:

- (1) The Authority is to allow the Association to use the Showground land for the Association's annual show:
- ...
- (b) free of rent or any fee ...

While I note the Act allows for reimbursing the authority for costs arising from that use, \$60,000 appears to be quite excessive. I also note for the purposes of the Act:

"Showground land" means the land in respect of which the Newcastle Showground and Exhibition Centre Trust was trustee immediately before the dissolution of the Trust by this Act.

That includes the entertainment centre. I put it to the Government that surely that is not to be charged and there is quite a big refund due to the show association if that is correct. I ask that the Government consider refunding that, look into it and certainly waive the fee. The Leader of the Opposition was in Newcastle at the beginning of this month. He too called for the show and for Venues NSW to return the money to the people of Newcastle. That is where it is coming from. It would be devastating to lose the show. It is being used as a cash cow by this Government. Volunteers put enormous numbers of hours into repairing and replacing things around the venue and they are not recompensed by Venues NSW—or certainly not for the 220 hours. I ask the Government to look at this case and help the show.

COFFS HARBOUR DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING STAFF

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (18:11): I raise concerns in relation to the Government's move in my electorate and across a number of areas to transfer Department of Housing properties to community housing. In a correspondence from the then Minister Brad Hazzard to me on 5 October he advised that 940 properties were to be transferred to community housing this year. I have no problem with ensuring that community housing and Department of Housing get their fair share of housing, and the management of it is up to

standard. The problem I have is that a huge number of jobs will be transferred or will disappear from the Coffs Harbour electorate under this arrangement. We still do not know who the community housing provider in Coffs Harbour will be.

Those who will remain and will apply for jobs in the community housing sector will be financially disadvantaged because the salaries within the community housing sector are far lower than they are in the government housing sector. I raised these issues with the previous Minister. He assured me that everyone would be looked after and that redundancies would be paid. But I have to say in the first case in which someone applied to go from Coffs Harbour to Dubbo—and I would suggest going from Coffs Harbour to Dubbo is not a lifestyle choice; it is a career choice—they had to pay their own removalist costs.

After correspondence and phone calls, I eventually received a note that the removalist costs to this person, which are well and truly above \$4,000, will be reimbursed by the department to an amount of \$1,000. I think that is extremely unfair. When a government makes such a decision to gain a billion dollars worth of Federal Government funding under Council of Australian Governments [COAG] arrangements that were organised in 2009, I believe we have a responsibility, and in fact a moral obligation, to anyone within the Department of Housing who accepts a transfer because it is a career opportunity to ensure that they are not financially disadvantaged. The person I referred to will be out of pocket to the tune of somewhere between \$4,000 and \$5,000.

I also believed, following a text I received from the previous Minister, that redundancies would be offered. But now redundancies will not be offered. That, to me, is unfair. I had an assurance from the previous Minister that redundancies would be paid. But under the current arrangements, redundancies will not be paid. Last week the Public Service Association decided to fire a shot across my bows and said I did not care. That statement was fairly premature and, I believe, not very sincere. Since this announcement was made I have had several meetings with staff who will be affected and I believe there is still time to fix this. I have written to the former Minister and I have written to the new Minister. I have asked the new Minister to come up to Coffs Harbour, talk to those people and see how their livelihoods will be affected. Some people are quite happy to take an early retirement, but why take an early retirement if there are no redundancies to be paid?

Department of Housing staff, who have served me and my office faithfully for the past 26 years—a large number of them have been there for 20 years or more—are being treated unfairly by my own government. I cannot accept that. I have always stood up for my community, I have always stood up for the people who work for government departments up there, and I believe the service that we have received from the Department of Housing over the 26 years I have been a member of Parliament has been second to none. I do not know who the community housing providers are that will take over these 940 properties and I do not know the service they will give to the tenants or the conditions they will provide for the employees who transfer.

I appeal to the new Minister to come up to Coffs Harbour to have a look, sit down and talk, and give some guarantees to people because their futures and their livelihoods depend on how we, as a government, act towards them after we have made a decision in conjunction with the Federal Government in 2009 to transfer properties for a billion dollars. We need to support these people, assist the tenants and ensure that they get a fair deal across the board.

KU-RING-GAI AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (18:16): When Australia Day awards are announced, the focus of media commentators is inevitably on the well-known celebrities—the actors, musicians and sports stars, and even former politicians, whose meritorious work in their chosen fields has earned them special recognition. Ku-ring-gai is certainly not lacking in famous inhabitants. However, what is always exciting for me is that the awards bestowed on 26 January each year invariably highlight local residents whose achievements might not otherwise have come to the attention of the wider public. Given the significance of what they have done, these people should be celebrated, and, more than that, they deserve our thanks.

For more than 20 years, Associate Professor Geoffrey Painter of Warrawee has been travelling to China, to the Philippines and, most frequently, to the Solomon Islands to perform cataract surgery on patients whose lack of resources and inability to access skilled medical assistance had condemned them to a life of blindness. He has given the gift of sight to thousands. In typically modest fashion, Professor Painter insists that he is "just part of a team" and that "it's your obligation to humanity to help where you can". If that is so, then this ophthalmologist has fulfilled his obligation with distinction and is a most worthy new Member of the Order of Australia for his promotion of eye care in Asia and the Pacific.

Killara's Dr David Chen, another of Ku-ring-gai's doctors, was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] for his service not only to medicine but also to professional associations. Dr Chen has been a highly

respected medical practitioner since 1977, but he has also served since 1993 as the Secretary and the President of the Medical Benevolent Association of NSW and the ACT, caring for doctors and their families when they are doing it tough themselves. To the congregation of the Chinese Christian Church Sydney at Milsons Point, he has been a Sunday school teacher for 49 years, for many of those as the superintendent. He has been the Chairman of the Board of Deacons, a member of the choir and the organist too, which is an extraordinary contribution by a remarkable and humble man.

Two pillars of the Uniting Church, Susan Nurse and Pamela Walker, both of Pymble, now have the letters OAM after their names for their service to that denomination and, in the case of Ms Walker, to pastoral care programs. Helen Miller of Turramurra also has an OAM for her work with veterans and their families, which includes 20 years as the New South Wales General Secretary of the HMAS *Canberra*—HMAS *Shropshire* Association, a not-for-profit association that was formed to encourage and foster the comradeship developed by the men and women who served on those ships.

Volunteering has also been a way of life for Patricia Spooner of North Turramurra, who was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for her tireless community involvement. She has been the honorary secretary of the opportunity shop of St John's Church, Gordon, since 2003; she has been a volunteer at the Lady Davidson Hospital since 2004; and a guide at the hospital's Flowton Museum. The late and fondly remembered Turramurra scientist Dr Owen Slee was also awarded an AM this year. Dr Slee was an internationally recognised pioneer in the field of radio astronomy and he later made important contributions as a researcher, author and mentor of young scientists over a storied 70-year career.

Joining the Australia Day celebrations at Bicentennial Park, West Pymble, also gave me the opportunity to express my gratitude to Ku-ring-gai's local award winners, whose efforts have made a significant impact on the community. Dr Zeny Edwards of Turramurra is an emigrant from the Philippines who is a past president of the National Trust of Australia (NSW). She has devoted her life to promoting the sustainability of the cultural heritage of Australia. She is also a noted philanthropist who assists charities with their fundraising programs and now serves as director of the Peace Program of the United Nations Association of Australia. Her greatest love, however, is the architectural heritage of Ku-ring-gai. Her unflinching commitment to her area and its residents has led to her being named Ku-ring-gai's Citizen of the Year for 2017.

David Taylor of Warrawee is no doubt in a position to pursue a financially rewarding musical career with his considerable ability, but he prefers to use his talents for the benefit of others who need help. David wrote and released two songs in support of Ku-ring-gai Youth Development Service, which is a free counselling service for children. He recently donated all profits he received for those songs to that organisation, which is only the latest example of his championing of causes within the community. He was chosen as Young Citizen of the Year for his backing of mental health services and the young people of Ku-ring-gai.

Ku-ring-gai is justifiably proud of its substantial natural bushland and for many years its preservation has been the abiding interest of Helen Wortham of South Turramurra. Helen is the secretary of STEP, a community-based environmental protection organisation based in Ku-ring-gai, which has become a vital force in conservation in northern Sydney. Helen received the Individual Award for Outstanding Service to Ku-ring-gai. Earlier today I informed the House of the 25 volunteer researchers from the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society whose writer's group received the Outstanding Service to the Ku-ring-gai Community Award, which is an acknowledgement of their commitment to keeping the area's treasured history alive. I congratulate all of Ku-ring-gai's award winners on making a difference and for improving the lives of others locally, across Australia and around the world.

CABRAMATTA AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (18:22): I was honoured to attend the Fairfield City Council's Australia Day Community Awards and Citizenship Ceremony at Council Chambers in Wakeley on 25 January 2017. Apart from the usual dignitaries from council, it was an honour to be on hand to receive Mr Todd Greenberg, chief executive officer of the National Rugby League [NRL] who was Fairfield council's Australia Day ambassador for 2017. Mr Greenberg's leadership of the NRL and his interests in team building, community engagement, and cultural and brand recognition made him a standout choice for the role of Australia Day ambassador. Mr Greenberg was chief executive officer of the Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs for six years and is a strong advocate for elite athletes using their profile to enable positive change within the community.

Miss Elisa Kidane was presented with the 2017 Sports Achiever of the Year award and Mr Domenic Nascimben was the runner-up. Miss Kadine is an aerobic star who was previously fifth in the Suzuki World Championships. Mr Nascimben has a bright future in the world of football, having already been chosen as the number one ranked goalkeeper in the School Sport Australian National Championships. Both of these young citizens have fantastic potential and the world is their oyster. Robert Ward was winner of the 2017 Volunteer of

the Year and Rose Denham Baxter won the medallion. Bob Ward was a founding member of the Western Sydney Cycling Network and has been a volunteer for the recycling program for a decade. He has also volunteered at Flora Park in Fairfield for 10 years where he encourages people to look after our native plants.

Just to make sure he does not get bored, in his spare time Bob volunteers as a blacksmith at the Fairfield City Museum and Gallery. How could this fine gentleman not win the 2017 volunteer of the year? The medallion winner or runner-up, Rose Baxter, has volunteered for 10 years at Fairfield Council's community nursery, helping the nursery to produce more than 100,000 plants a year. Rose is also an active participant in the council's creeks and wetlands volunteer group at Fairfield's Flora Park. She continues to be active with the nursery, Flora Park, the bush care group and the creeks and wetlands group. These two fantastic local residents show the community spirit that makes Fairfield City and south-west Sydney such a fantastic place.

The community awards continued with Fadi Aluboodi winning the Young Citizen of the Year award and Nelson Lim picking up the medallion. Fadi is an outstanding community-minded young man who volunteers for the Salvation Army and recently became a White Ribbon Ambassador. He is a PROJECT L.E.A.D member and also helped to organise the Fairfield Relay For Life. As if this young gentleman is not busy enough, he volunteers at SummitCare aged-care facility and at events such as Bring It On! and the Cabramatta Moon Festival. Nelson Lim, who won the medallion, is Prairiewood Rotary Interact Club Vice-President. He is passionate about raising awareness and funds for homeless youth. In 2017 Nelson Lim will also be school captain at Prairiewood High School and, together with Fadi, helped to organise the Fairfield Relay for Life.

Nelson is also active in making sure that the culture of his community is looked after, being a member of the Australian Teochew Association lion dance team as well as a Wheel Team member at the Ming Yue Lay temple. Nelson is also a proud member of Young Labor. The most prestigious award of the night was Citizen of the Year, which was won by Mr Roy Hilton. Roy is an integral part of the Wetherill Park Rotary Club and, through his efforts, he has personally raised more than \$500,000 over the past 20 years. His leadership and experience ensures that the club is run professionally. Roy has also organised community events such as Carols at Horsley Park and the annual golf day at the Fairfield golf course.

The medallion winner was Rowena Tran, one of the most outstanding community-minded people I have met. Passionate about the community's youth, she has been on the council's Youth Advisory Committee for the past two years. She has been a youth representative at countless local, State and national conferences and is active in her community, having learnt martial arts and lion dancing for many years with the Australian Chinese Teochew Association, as well as being a senior member of the Wheel Team at the Ming Yue Lay Chinese Buddhist temple. I congratulate all the winners as well as the nominees for the 2017 Fairfield City Council Australia Day Awards.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:28 until
Tuesday 21 February 2017 at 12:00.**