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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 4 April 2017

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

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Personal Explanation

MINISTER FOR PLANNING COMMENTS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (12:01): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Granville that a personal explanation must be about something personal and must be brief. Leave is granted.

Ms JULIA FINN: On Thursday 30 March 2017 the Minister for Planning made assertions about me speaking at a rally "surrounded by swastikas and Hezbollah flags". This was a revolting attack on my personal and professional integrity. Indeed, it is an utterly offensive misrepresentation of who I am and it is completely inaccurate. I table a photograph of me speaking at the rally against Benjamin Netanyahu's Government and the ongoing expansion of Israeli settlements on the West Bank. I was surrounded by Palestinian flags. I stated my support for a two-state solution and I am happy to provide my speech notes to anyone who wants to read them. I lay the photograph on the table of the House.

I did not see any swastikas at the rally, which was attended by dozens of Jewish people, including members of Jews Against the Occupation. Had I seen them, I would have asked the organisers to remove them or I would have withdrawn from the event. I wholly reject anti-Semitism. Any perusal of the speeches that I have made in this place will show that I wholeheartedly reject religious discrimination and that I support broadening anti-discrimination laws to protect against religious discrimination.

The SPEAKER: Order! The explanation is getting beyond brief. Has the member concluded her remarks?

Ms JULIA FINN: I have. Thank you.

[Notices of motions given.]

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery this afternoon communications students from the University of Technology Sydney and Macquarie University.

Private Members' Statements

HUNTERS HILL HARBOURSCULPTURE EXHIBITION

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (12:12): It is a pleasure to speak in this Chamber about a little artistic culture. As members of Parliament we get to do some interesting things and become involved in some extraordinary cultural activities. As the member for Lane Cove I am proud to be patron of the Hunters Hill Sailing Club's HarbourSculpture Exhibition, which is held at the sailing club. If members think an exhibition of sculpture is a little highbrow, they can think again. This exhibition is Australia at its best, on display with the quintessential Aussie backdrop. There are the inevitable—or should I say extremely talented—artists, volunteers, sponsors and viewers. There are the inside exhibitors and those who have their works displayed outside. I marvel at how this event manages to grow in size from year to year.

Last year the exhibition was held during the winter months, and while the crowd number was large—8,000 people attended during the first weekend alone—it was decided to make 2017 a summer outing and the crowd came. I will enthral members with some statistics. This is the fourth HarbourSculpture Exhibition and I have been privileged to be patron since the start. This year the public have had the chance to view the works of more than 100 exhibiting Australian artists at the picturesque Clarke's Point Reserve. I thank the dedicated, diligent and always delightful volunteers—Helen Darke, Linda Bell and their team—for the great work they have done.

Of course there would be no public exhibition without sponsors. I acknowledge the major sponsors—AGL and the Johnston family of the URM Group. The community sponsors this year were generous and appreciated. I thank Meredith and Matt Bayfield; the Hunters Hill Sailing Club; the Hunters Hill Council; Tracey Dixon Real Estate; the Harbour Trust; Eden Garden; Cobden and Hayson; the popular Woolwich Pier Hotel; the Sculptor's Society; Veno online; Hunters Hill Rugby Club, great players, great supporters; and the caterers, Carl Nicholls and the Piquant Catering team. Those are among the many who made the event such a success.

I could—and probably should—regale the Chamber with stories and the histories of the over 100 exhibitors, but I appreciate that my time is limited. Let me name a representative few of those whose works were free for viewing, yet available for purchase at the exhibition. In no particular order, they included Wendy Black, Gary Christian, Kerry Boar, Robert Barnstone, Mary Boland, David Doyle, Jules Jones, Paul Harrington, Denise Lithgow, James McCallum, Margaret Westcott, Karen Manning, Richard White and Alison Winchester. That is a very small group of names from the rollcall. Perhaps next year members can visit the exhibition and check out all of the brilliant works by some of Australia's best sculptors.

In the categories of artwork there were, inevitably, the lucky category winners. Among some outstanding pieces this year, prizes were awarded for works by Tracey Dixon, Heather Shaw, Ingrid Morley, Louise Pratt and Leanne Thompson. As I inspected some brilliant works on the opening night of the 2017 HarbourSculpture Exhibition, I was struck by the thought, "How can 2018 reach the artistic standards of this year?" But then I thought, "Of course it will!" Give Australians—particularly those in my electorate—a challenge, whether it is in sport, academic pursuit, research, politics, artistic endeavour or whatever, and they will rise to new heights. While none of us wanted the 2017 exhibition to end, I cannot wait to see what is presented for display next year.

I began by saying that members of Parliament are privileged to become involved in some extraordinarily cultured events. I thank the House for allowing me to wax lyrical about this extraordinary event—the 2017 HarbourSculpture Exhibition. Again, I thank the exhibitors, the coordinators and the public. Most particularly, I thank the volunteers. There are too many to name in the short period I have today. As a proud patron, I am staggered at the class, beauty and artistic output the exhibition continues to put on display. I look forward to next year's exhibition.

NSW POLICE FORCE

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (12:16): Today I was concerned to read an article published in the *Daily Telegraph* titled "New police commissioner Mick Fuller set to make huge changes, including police station amalgamations". At the outset I take the opportunity to congratulate Commissioner Fuller on his most prestigious appointment and wish him the best. From this article I understand that Commissioner Fuller has indicated that he is considering proposals to drastically change the way that police resources are allocated, including the potential amalgamation of various local area commands throughout our State. While I am not opposed to the police commissioner investigating measures that may distribute more efficiently the resources allocated by the Government to the NSW Police Force, it would be remiss of me not to strongly urge the Premier and the police Minister to ensure that the Bankstown Local Area Command and the Campsie Local Area Command remain as independent police commands.

The area serviced by the Bankstown Local Area Command [LAC] spans from Villawood in the west to Greenacre in the east and Revesby in the south. The Bankstown LAC has its main police station based in Meredith Street in the Bankstown central business district, with two smaller ancillary stations based in Bass Hill and Revesby. The population and geographical locations covered by the Bankstown LAC are large, and my community clearly requires all three stations to maintain existing policing standards. The Bankstown Local Area Command operates completely separately from the Campsie Local Area Command, which services the areas of Kingsgrove, Hurlstone Park and Canterbury. As a whole, the Bankstown community is still reeling from the impact of the forced merger of the Bankstown City Council with the Canterbury Council by this Government. The message I send is very clear: council mergers should not correlate with the mergers of our local area commands. The merger of the Bankstown LAC and the Campsie LAC inevitably would result in administrative dysfunction and would potentially place our community at risk.

The Bankstown community is continuing to deal with a number of issues and Bankstown LAC plays a crucial role in reducing crime. Bankstown has almost four times the number of homicide incidents per 100,000 people compared to the rest of New South Wales. The rate of domestic assaults in Bankstown has increased by 3 per cent over the past five years, with 430 incidents recorded in the past year. Our community simply cannot afford a drop in the high level of policing services offered by the Bankstown LAC. The priority always must remain keeping our community safe from harm, rather than hypothetical efficiency and budgetary savings following a reduction of services under any potential merger. With a significant proportion of the Bankstown community coming from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, there is a much greater

need for the local police force to build trust and develop social cohesion with the local community to address the factors that may lead to isolation and disadvantage before they manifest as crime and antisocial behaviour.

On the whole, the Bankstown LAC is doing a tremendous job in protecting the safety of the Bankstown community. There are very high levels of satisfaction in the Bankstown community with our local area command, and this is due to the strong relationships that the Bankstown LAC has built with a range of local community groups over a number of years. Despite some media myths, crime rates across a range of many offences, including assault, malicious damage to property, theft and sexual offences, are proportionately lower in Bankstown when compared to other regions throughout metropolitan Sydney and New South Wales.

Bankstown LAC is already one of the largest area commands in the State, with 227 officers stationed at the command as at 31 January 2017. There are 137 officers stationed at the Campsie LAC. If those figures were combined it would become the largest local area command in the State. Police officers from Bankstown LAC already have a considerable workload. Some of the most serious task forces in the State are based in the Bankstown LAC. The command possesses a number of unique responsibilities, such as responding to all emergencies and accidents at the Bankstown Airport and responding to all incidents that occur at the Villawood Detention Centre.

I have previously called on the Minister for Police to ensure that the Bankstown LAC is at full strength. Sadly, my requests have been ignored and the Bankstown LAC is still 13 officers under strength. I make it very clear that I, along with the Labor candidate for East Hills, Cameron Murphy, and the shadow Minister for Police, the member for Fairfield, oppose any merger of the Bankstown LAC with the Campsie LAC. This would have disastrous consequences for the Bankstown community. I call on the Minister for Police and the Premier to provide a guarantee that the Bankstown LAC will not be merged with any other area command.

TRIBUTE TO KARL KLEIN

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (12:21): Today I acknowledge the deeds of one of Wollondilly's great servants of the community. Karl Klein was born in Sudan in 1958. When Karl was 12 years old his family moved to Australia for a better life. Wilhelm and Margaret Klein settled their family of seven children in Randwick, where Karl attended the Cleveland Street Boys High School. Karl left school at the age of 15 and later went on to obtain his Diploma of Occupational Health and Safety. In 1978, Karl joined the Army Reserve and was an active member of the University of New South Wales Regiment for five years. During this time he obtained his army driver licence and not long after that he met his future wife, whom he married in 1979.

Karl and his wife relocated to Ingleburn in 1981. While in Ingleburn Karl began a lifetime of dedication to the assistance of others as an active member of Apex, helping the elderly by cleaning, mowing lawns, maintaining yards and trimming trees. The first of Karl's children, William, was born in 1982 and Anne was born in 1983. The family moved to Tahmoor in 1988 and since then Karl has been an enthusiastic and energetic volunteer in a wide range of sporting and community organisations such as Group 6 Rugby League Referees Association, the Picton Chamber of Commerce, the Picton Masonic Lodge, the Picton Magpies Rugby League Club and the Lions Club of Tahmoor.

As chief fundraiser with the Picton Masonic Lodge, Karl was able to secure two grants to provide suitable occupational health and safety-compliant school shoes for students at the Picton High School and he raised further funds of \$5,500 to support the Wollondilly Cancer Support Group. During 2014-15, as secretary of the Picton Magpies Rugby League Football Club and treasurer of the Victoria Park Ground Management Committee, Karl initiated and oversaw the construction of an outstanding barbecue facility at Victoria Park as well as a major upgrade of the canteen and dressing room facilities. Karl's involvement with the Picton Junior Rugby League Football Club spans right back to 1991 and he has served as coach, manager, trainer, club secretary and referee.

Karl obtained his rugby league referee certificate in 1997 and presided over many matches in group 6. In 1998 Karl achieved accreditation with Sports Medicine Australia. That year he also was appointed as the secretary of the Group 6 Referees Association, a position he held for 12 years. One of Karl's many highlights working in rugby league was in 1999 when, as a trainer for the Western Suburbs Magpies—as they were then known, and they are still the best club today—he worked alongside rugby league legend Tommy Raudonikis. It was a real eye-opener for Karl and a period he really enjoyed.

Since that time Karl has contributed a vast amount of his time to rugby league in the region. In 2002 Karl joined the Narellan Jets Rugby League Football Club as their head trainer, enjoying two years in that position before being appointed the head trainer for the Mittagong Rugby League Football Club in 2005. During 2014 Karl was appointed as the secretary of the Picton Magpies Junior Rugby League Football Club, a position he still holds. Since that time the first grade team has made three grand finals in a row, winning two of them.

Some six years ago Karl was elected the President of the Picton Chamber of Commerce in his capacity as the owner-operator of a very successful restaurant—La Bella Charli in Picton. In his first year as president,

Karl grew the membership base by 22 members to a total of 43. Among his many other pursuits, Karl is a staunch advocate for the Lions Club of Tahmoor where he is still active. He has been involved in many fundraising activities over the past five years. From 2013 to 2016 he was a director on the board of Lions International and responsible for the distribution of funds raised. Another one of Karl's roles in the community is as Treasurer of the Victoria Park Management Committee, which administers the activities of the ground on behalf of Wollondilly Shire Council.

During last year's disastrous storms in Picton, Karl took charge of ensuring that Victoria Park was returned to its former condition—spending countless hours volunteering and obtaining sponsorship valued at \$20,000 to replace all the fencing around the playing area. Through his tremendous hard work, Karl secured a New South Wales Government grant—and I acknowledge the presence here in the Chamber this morning of Minister Ayres, who facilitated that grant—to improve disability access to the clubhouse and to replace all the whitegoods destroyed by the storm. Due to the tireless efforts of Karl and his helpers, the ground was ready to be played on just two weeks after the storm. I was there, and I saw the players and everyone involved there. It was an amazing sight.

In 2016 Karl was duly recognised for his passionate work for our great community when he was nominated for the Wollondilly Citizen of the Year and Local Hero award. Wollondilly is very lucky to have a man as giving of his time and energy in all facets of community life as Karl Klein. I have known Karl for a long time now, and it is an honour to call him a friend. He is someone I can always seek wise counsel from when it comes to all things Wollondilly. I commend him and his efforts to this House and I thank him for his generosity, his time, his charity and his endeavours in all he does for Wollondilly.

PENRITH CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT CAR PARKING

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (12:27): Not a week goes by when I do not talk to constituents of my electorate and people who use the Penrith central business district [CBD] about the need for additional car parking capacity in the Penrith CBD. It is one of those things that inhibits business, as it makes it more difficult for people to access the Penrith CBD and to get to the shops and to work. It amazes me that we are still in a position where the Penrith City Council has not been able to develop any new permanent car parks. This stands in stark contrast to what the New South Wales Government has been able to deliver for the Penrith community since I was elected. I will go through a couple of those projects.

We built a new multistorey car park at the Nepean Hospital. We built a new multistorey car park at the Penrith train station, and a second multistorey car park at the Penrith train station is currently under construction. We opened a new commuter car park at the Glenbrook train station and we also have opened a new commuter car park at the Kingswood station. The very first stage of the Nepean Hospital redevelopment will be the construction of another multistorey car park at the hospital. It will free up space for additional clinical services and the clinical services tower that will be built as part of the hospital redevelopment.

I stand in this Chamber as a representative of the people of Penrith, knowing that the Government has consistently delivered new car parking for that community over the last six years. That is in stark contrast to what the council has been able to deliver. In fact, the only multistorey car park in Penrith is the Judges Car Park, which was opened in the 1980s. This tells me that many of our councillors lack the capacity to understand the importance of car parking in our community. This made me look further into what is happening there.

At the moment something like a civil war has broken out among Labor councillors over who will be the candidate for Penrith in the upcoming State election. John Thain, current mayor and councillor, has all the support of the locals and is doing a pretty good job as mayor but has not been able to build the car park. Karen McKeown has the strings attached of Sussex Street telling her all the things she needs to do. The Sussex Street inner-city Labor stalwart is looking after one candidate group and the locals are fighting to get their guy, John Thain, voted in. This civil war is tearing the local Labor Party to pieces and the only people who are missing out are the hardworking people of Penrith. Council should be focused on delivering the services that the people need.

I challenge John Thain and Karen McKeown, whoever is the candidate, to start walking up and down High Street in Penrith to talk to the businesspeople who have invested their own capital to bring jobs into our community and ask them what they want. It will not take very long in the conversation before people start saying, "Build us a car park". As a good example, Karen McKeown has been on council since 2004. Over 10,000 homes have been built in the Penrith community in that time yet not one new permanent car park has been delivered by the council over that period of time. If one wants to look at someone's track record and their capability to deliver for the community, one need look no further than car parking in the local Penrith CBD.

We have seen time after time, year after year, the procrastination of these people as they squabble among themselves about what might happen in the future. It is time that they got local; it is time that they started delivering what the community deserves. The community has been demanding additional car parking. The car park at the Nepean Hospital was demanded of me when I was first elected and it has now been delivered. The multistorey car park at the Penrith station was demanded by the community and has now been delivered. They should put their little civil war and pitting Sussex Street against the local person away and start delivering for the community. If they are not capable of doing that they should not bother putting their hand up. If they want to have a go anyhow, all we will say is, "You have built 10,000 new homes in Penrith but you have not delivered a single new car park to support local businesses, local jobs or those people trying to get on with their daily lives". That is their track record and it stands in direct contrast to what has been delivered over six years by this Government.

PARKRUN

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:32): Parkrun is the name given to a collection of five-kilometre running events that take place every Saturday morning in 14 countries across five continents. Events are run by volunteers and participation is completely free of charge. The parkrun idea was established in the United Kingdom in 2004. Runners are required to register online in advance for a unique athlete number and to print their own identification barcode that they use to take part in events. Runners' results in each event are processed and uploaded online after the event by the volunteers.

Each registered runner has an individual page cataloguing the details of each event in which they have participated so they can all keep track of their progress in the parkrun world. There are now over two million registered parkrunners globally, together having done over 12 million runs with over one million instances of direct volunteering in the parkrun events. It is a magnificent sporting event run by the community on a worldwide basis and it is a great community to be a part of.

On the Central Coast there are two parkruns. Both were established by two residents in my electorate, Naomi and Brad Rogers, who have been the driving force behind the parkrun on the Central Coast. The first parkrun was established on the Mount Penang parklands and the second one was established last year in my own electorate of The Entrance. I was very proud to be associated with the establishment of The Entrance parkrun last year and to participate in its inaugural run. The size and geography of the Central Coast means having two parkruns, one down in the south and one up in the north, complementing each other. Given that they start at different times—The Entrance run at 7.00 a.m. while the Mount Penang run at 8.00 a.m.—a number of runners start at The Entrance and then travel up to Mount Penang to do the second five-kilometre run up there. I have not tried that one yet, but certainly I stand in awe when I watch people leave hurriedly and make their way to the next event.

Events in The Entrance hosted by parkrun have been an absolutely fantastic way of fostering the community and are a boost to our local economy. Because it is a worldwide community, there are a bunch of parkrun tourists who plan their weekends to visit another parkrun. At The Entrance on any Saturday morning we regularly have 100-plus people attend, many of whom are from outside our area. They stay in the area afterwards to have breakfast and visit local sights. These visits also are a great boost to our local economy. I want to acknowledge some of the volunteers I regularly see at The Entrance, who welcome me when I turn up at 7 o'clock on a Saturday morning: Dianne Greening, Erin Tierney and Nicole Brice as well as Naomi and Brad Rogers.

I encourage everyone to get involved in parkrun. It is open not only to those who want to run the whole five kilometres but also to people who simply want to participate in a group activity with friendly people. They may wish to walk the entire course, push a pram or walk a dog. It is a great activity, and I wish the participants, volunteers and organisers all the best on both the Central Coast and worldwide stage.

TAMWORTH ICE ACTION GROUP

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:35): The Tamworth Ice Action Group is a group of committed people in the Tamworth community made up of non-government organisations, police, ambulance officers, health workers, alcohol and drug workers and other interested members of the community. Tomorrow Tamworth will hold the group's first event in New South Wales, ICE—Raising the Awareness. It is an education forum for year 9 students. Every available year 9 student in the Tamworth electorate will be bussed to the forum where experts will talk to them about the dangers of crystal methamphetamine, or ice as it is better known. Presenters at the forum tomorrow include drug and alcohol specialists from the Alcohol & Drug Foundation and non-government organisations like Centacare and headspace. The special guest speaker is Luke Kennedy. Each school will be allocated a two-hour session consisting of short, sharp, focused awareness and educational components that will keep the students engaged.

The sessions are aimed at giving students a platform from which to make informed decisions about what they put in their bodies and what ice does to them as well as the long-term ramifications of dabbling in ice. Schools that will participate in tomorrow's event include the Barraba Central School, the Manilla Central School, the Oxford High School, the Peel High School, the Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School, the Tamworth High School, the Gunnedah High School and the Quirindi High School. Close to 900 students will rotate through sessions at the Tamworth Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre to hear about the dangers of ice. It is no good having parents or politicians talking to these students about the dangers of ice. Mostly such talks are greeted with eyes glazing over and murmurs of, "Yeah, yeah, we've heard it all before". Instead we are bringing in special guest speakers, including a young fellow called Luke Kennedy, who will talk to them about the consequences, choices and peer pressures.

Luke was formally an obese alcoholic and drug addict. He was a leader of a street fighting and graffiti crew from Sydney. He came close to death numerous times and also nearly killed others in street battles. He was stabbed on two separate occasions, once in the lung and the other time in the head. He will tell of his journey, how his life turned from an innocent, happy childhood to violence and drugs. He will show how he got out of that life and now runs a successful business, including his speaking business, and how people can turn around their lives. This will provide a platform for year 9 students. At that age it is critical to supply young people with education, support and awareness that they can absorb and will empower them to put their hand up and say, "No, I will not use drugs". If they feel peer group pressure at a party or with mates, they will be able to say, "This is not for me". The next two days of presentations in Tamworth to year 9 students will help drive down the use of ice in regional New South Wales. It will drive out those who choose to live in the dark corners of society and produce and peddle this drug.

I, and those taking part in the awareness program, will help to prevent young people from crossing the line and entering into the world of drug taking. We sincerely hope that they spread the message. It is about education. We need to think outside the square when combating the insidious drug ice. I thank all the organisers and presenters for putting time into the two-day education forum.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (12:40): I echo the words of the member for Tamworth and emphasise that it is leadership from the local member of Parliament that raises the profile of this drug. Many of the year 9 students who will listen to the presentations over the next couple of days have no idea what ice is capable of doing to their bodies. I have seen up close and personal what this drug can do, and it is horrific. It has the capacity to capture a user from the very first time it is ingested. If there is only one message that the young people take away from the forum it is that you often do not get a second chance once you use this substance. It is easy for us to say, "Just say no", but I encourage the young people present to take advantage of what is being said in Tamworth over the next few days as it could save their lives.

WESTCONNEX

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:42): I bring to the attention of the House two local community events I attended on the weekend protesting against WestConnex. I acknowledge that the Minister for WestConnex is in the Chamber and I am pleased that he will hear firsthand about the events that occurred in my electorate concerning the impact of WestConnex. One event was held at the Sydney Secondary College Leichhardt Campus, which is represented by my Greens colleague the member for Balmain, Jamie Parker. The other was in the electorate of Newtown, in Camperdown. Both events were held in response to the proposed location of mid-tunnelling points, otherwise known as dive sites.

This is part of stage three of the M4-M5 tunnel, which is the "connects" element of WestConnex—or more accurately described as an eight-lane monstrosity of a tunnel that, according to sketchy plans made available, may or may not connect the M4 with the M5 by tunnelling under Newtown, Camperdown and the inner west. If people are confused they should not be surprised. The reason we are so confused is that WestConnex is an ever-changing, ever-growing, ever-expanding toll road that started as a \$10 billion project but has blown out to a \$16.8 billion project—and it is still growing.

One thing is clear about WestConnex, and it is not the detail. It is clear that WestConnex is not an answer to Sydney's congestion problems and that the Coalition Government is scattered when it comes to WestConnex. Despite the fact that much of the project is unclear, unplanned, unfunded and still to be tunnelled, some people to whom I speak think it is too late to stop this toll road. Why do they think it is too late? It is because the Minister for WestConnex, who is in the Chamber, and the Sydney Motorway Corporation are doing everything they can to convince people that this is a done deal and that WestConnex is here to stay.

But let us take a step back and consider the options that are available. The Government says that there is the option of locating a dive site next to a secondary high school or locating it in another residential area. It says

that there is the option of running a tunnel under heritage homes or under the nuclear facility at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. These are false choices. The reality is that this is not a done deal. The draft designs, the planning process and approval for stage three have not even been released, they have not been approved and the tunnel is not funded. By putting out false decisions the Government is trying to pretend that everything else is done. Let us have a little look at how far we are from the delivery of WestConnex. The M4 east tunnel, a \$3.8 billion part of WestConnex, is not due for completion until 2019. How much of this tunnel is complete? It is about two kilometres of the 5.5 kilometre tunnel, which is about 30 per cent.

The new \$4.3 billion M5 is not due for completion until 2020. About 20 per cent of that project is completed. The M4-M5 link is a \$7.2 billion part of the tunnel. Is it complete? No. Has it been started? No. Have the draft plans been released? No. Does it have planning approval? No. When the Minister seems to suggest that one community should choose this tunnelling point over that tunnelling point, do not be fooled because the planning approval for the tunnel and the funding to make it happen have not yet been established. Do not think it is too late to stop this crazy toll road project. In fact, it is not too late at all. The whole point of WestConnex in the first place was to connect people to the airport, but where are the Sydney gateway plans? The Sydney gateway will connect WestConnex to the airport so people might think the plans are done and dusted; but, no, the draft designs have not even been released.

Yes, the Government is building a St Peters interchange allegedly at Sydney Park. It is cutting down trees right now, but do we have the plans for how WestConnex will connect to the airport? No. The Sydney gateway plans are not due to be released until the middle of this year. They have not been released as draft designs. The planning approval process has not even been started yet and it is completely uncoded. The expected completion date for that is 2023. On any measure that is a long way off, but on a measure of how quickly we go through Premiers in this State it is a very long way off. Considering the average cycling through of Premiers in New South Wales, we will have had four to five new Premiers by the time the project, on the Government's own figures, is due to be completed. I say to the community that it is not too late. It is not too late to stop this madness that is WestConnex. We can stop the Government putting public money into private hands. We can stop this polluting toll road. Join the campaign. Get involved.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (12:47): I acknowledge the words of the member for Newtown and I put on record that as we are building Australia's largest infrastructure project, involving lots of construction in local communities, there will be disruption. I say thank you to many of those communities who are dealing with that level of disruption. WestConnex comprises three toll roads that will connect to very important parts of the community. The widening of the M4 and the completion of the M4 east have not happened for 25 years. The duplication of the M5 tunnel will open up capacity. We need to link both those roads or cars will simply back up. With the M5-M4 link we are trying to put most of that traffic under the ground so that the local member's community is not disrupted in the future. That is the Government's commitment. It is investing in a road network that is part of integrated transport, alongside rail, metro rail and light rail that is the future of transport in New South Wales.

ALBURY ELECTORATE MILESTONES

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (12:48): This year marks significant milestones for many aspects of community life in Albury. With some help from the Albury and District Historical Society, I will highlight a few of them. It was just 10 years ago that Albury's award-winning Library Museum opened. Its dramatic architecture set a benchmark that the border region is yet to better. It was an immediate success with the public, offering a safe space to sit and contemplate, along with free wi-fi, computer access and child-friendly places. It is also 10 years since the opening of the Hume Freeway through the city. This revolutionised the way the border community get around, whether for work or the school run. It was a divisive issue and location at the time, keeping heavy transport inside the city rather than along its edge like a true bypass. Nevertheless, we could not live without it now.

Twenty-five years ago I performed the role of the team liaison officer for the Zimbabwe national cricket team when it came to Albury to play a World Cup match against England. As a former resident of Zimbabwe, I naturally threw my support behind the team. England won the toss and chose to field. Against predictions, Zimbabwe defeated England by a mere nine runs. Player names like Gooch and Botham still resonate today. But player of the match was the Zimbabwean, Eddo Brandes, who took four English wickets for 21 runs. Half a century ago, Albury saw the light—and it went green, amber, red, and back to green again. It was a big deal at the time, I am told. At one point some disgruntled citizens began to refer to Albury as the "City of Lights" as the city grew its collection of traffic lights at prominent intersections. Initially there was some confusion, as pedestrians thought the colour changes affected their movements, too. And now, in some locations, Albury has 30-second countdown clocks, which enable us to time our crossings with daredevil precision.

One of our great local hospitals, the Mercy Hospital, has undergone a number of transformations in its short but busy lifetime. Now focusing on aged care assessment, day therapy programs, allied health, healthy

ageing, geriatric evaluation management and palliative care, it was once Albury's maternity hospital. But 60 years ago, it had a broader role when Cardinal Gilroy came to Albury for the official opening of the "new" Mercy Hospital in Poole Street. In other ways as well, 1957 was a big year for Albury with the addition of the Hume Power Station to the Hume Dam. This is a 58-megawatt hydro power station comprising two 29-megawatt turbines linked into the high-voltage network in both Albury and Wodonga.

Seventy years ago the Bonegilla Migrant Reception and Training Centre opened post World War II. We also completed the first Housing Commission homes in North Albury. Eighty years ago, on 7 December, the first meeting of the Ovens and Murray Amateur Swimming Association was held at the Albury Pool. It is a sign of the times, and of the ravages of time and significant use, that the very future of this pool is now under consideration by the Albury City Council. Also caught up in this debate is the Lavington Swimming Centre, which is 50 years old this year. This will surely be a testing time for all who use these vital facilities for exercise, sport or rehabilitation.

In 1927 the Regent Theatre opened its doors—and it remains hugely popular to this day, now as Regent Cinemas, a nine-screen cinema complex with Australia's largest regional cinema screen and two Gold Class cinemas with food and beverage services. The year 1917, a century ago, saw Albury go through a record flood—one of those 100-year floods we hear about when discussing town planning or insurance cover. Well, this was that year for Albury. It was also the year that Australian soldiers—including many Albury residents—fought a tough battle at the little French village of Noreuil on the Western Front. I recently spoke about this conflict and remind members and the public that the commemoration of Albury's 100-year connection with Noreuil is set down for 8 April in the riverside park.

It is not a big march from matters military to things brassy and musical. This year will be a joyful year for the Albury City Band, having reached the praiseworthy mark of 150 years. This beloved concert band has been at the heart of so many of our community's most significant events for a century and a half, and is one of the longest continuous public bands in the nation. While there will be special concerts across the year, we are all looking forward to the centrepiece event on 20 May, which will see the Albury City Band play host to leading local and national bands. I wish the band, and music director David Worrall, all the very best for a rich and glorious year of fine music. One hundred and fifty years really is a remarkable achievement, both in the arts and as a leader in community service. It is looking like another fantastic year for Albury, and I hope many members can join us.

HURLSTONE AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (12:53): Everybody is accountable to somebody, but when it comes to accountability there are a number of problems with this Government, one of which is the Minister for Education. Like many on this side of the Chamber, I go to quite a bit of effort to ask concise and unambiguous questions. Question No. 4754 on the *Question and Answers* paper is a case in point. It is a simple question with five subparagraphs, yet I am left completely astounded by the answers provided. In fact, they are non-answers; just more government spin. The important questions I submitted on the Hurlstone Agricultural High School were, at best, not fully understood or, at worst, completely ignored.

If it is the latter, it smacks of ministerial arrogance and a Minister who does not believe he is accountable to the Parliament and to the people. If it is the former, comprehension is clearly not the Minister for Education's forte. Given his portfolio, that is somewhat ironic. I recommend that he brush up on his comprehension skills. To this end, I refer him to the Department of Education's Super Six Comprehension Strategies website. Interestingly, the first comprehension strategy is making connections. Clearly, the Minister is out of touch and makes no connection with the Macquarie Fields electorate, its students and its families. He fails to see how the loss of the Hurlstone Agricultural High School and its farm at Glenfield will have an enduring and devastating impact on my community. The Minister does not connect because he simply does not care.

The second strategy is predicting. Is the Minister too afraid to predict what may happen if Hurlstone is finally uprooted from its home at Glenfield and moved to Hawkesbury? Is he also afraid that it might expose the Government's appalling backflip on Hurlstone as a farce that undersells the future educational opportunities of south-west Sydney's young people? The third strategy is questioning. The Minister is not interested in delving any deeper into my questions; nor is he interested in considering them more fully. Why? Because the true answer would expose the unsuitability of the proposed deal. It would also show that the Government is not—I repeat, is not—expecting to achieve the integrated outcome that it anticipated. The fourth strategy is monitoring. If something does not make sense, we should stop, reread and think about it to try to understand the meaning. Despite the ongoing inherent shortfalls revealed by the Government's own officials, the Minister is not having a bar of it and has his spin machine on the job—end of story.

The fifth strategy is visualising. Painting a picture in one's head helps to bring the text to life, requires imagination and uses all of the senses. The Minister is visualising only the developers' for sale signs and dollar

signs. The sale of the Hurlstone Farm is nothing more than a greedy land grab; it is not about educational outcomes. On the flipside, sadly I am visualising the irreversible loss of our vital green open space, the loss of one of Sydney's last fully functioning urban farmlands, and the loss of an educational icon that consistently ranks as one of this State's best-performing high schools. My vision is no great stretch of the imagination. What I see coming is more urban splatter, more congestion, and a community sold out by the Liberal Government's appalling duplicity.

The last strategy is summarising. That is the ability to notice the most important things in the text and to put them in one's own words to demonstrate an understanding of what has been read. This is where the Minister comes completely unstuck. My five-point question received his standard short, glib response. That is shameful. The Minister should not pretend that his highly workshopped answers will suffice: They will not. My electorate deserves answers, proper answers, not workshopped spin—as does this House, which is Australia's oldest Parliament.

PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:57): It is now just more than two years since the 2015 State election. I take this opportunity to remind the House of a few examples of what has been achieved in the Port Macquarie electorate in that time because New South Wales has a government that understands the significance and the benefits for local communities that come from sound economic management. My staff and I have worked hard to ensure that we achieve the best possible outcomes for our electorate, and we are as committed as ever to delivering improved infrastructure and services for the benefit of each and every one of our local communities.

I am extremely proud to have seen the completion of a number of projects in the past two years, including the building and opening of the new \$10 million Lake Cathie Public School. I am pleased to inform the House that just after the 2015 election the school was opened and since then has continued to grow its student numbers. Currently there are 215 students at the school. It will soon be at capacity and is already looking for new classrooms to house the ever-growing enrolments. This school was a success story, with a first-class principal in Jock Garvin, and a team of outstanding teachers and support staff delivering quality education to young students from the Lake Cathie-Bonny Hills area. The long-awaited and much talked about Stingray Creek Bridge, which provides an appropriate and safe link between Laurieton and North Haven, finally has been completed.

The Government contributed \$16.4 million towards the \$26 million project that had been on the drawing board for decades but was never constructed under a Labor Government or while Independent members were at the helm. It was not until the Liberal-Nationals Government came to power and the hardworking Minister Duncan Gay from the other place was put in control of the Roads portfolio that the plans for the bridge progressed. I am pleased to report that on 10 February the bridge opened to traffic in both directions and is now used by more than 8,000 vehicles a day. For that I know the people of Camden Haven are extremely grateful.

Planning is now well underway on the \$15.9 million expansion of the mental health unit at the Port Macquarie Base Hospital. Many active community members and I have advocated for that expanded unit for many years. Unveiling the design plans recently was a very exciting step in the delivery of the important project. The expanded and refurbished Port Macquarie Mental Health Unit will include flexible patient care zones, staff stations, secure patient rooms with natural light, quiet spaces for relaxation, a multifunctional activity room, dining and lounge areas, secure landscaped courtyards, a seclusion room, and an interview and/or admission room. The new unit has been developed in consultation with local user groups including clinicians, nurses, allied health personnel, support staff and consumers, who assisted to finalise the layout and configuration. Following completion of the next stage, which is detailed design, tenders for the construction of the new Port Macquarie Mental Health Unit are expected to be issued mid-year. Construction is to follow soon after.

Playing sport is an integral part of the lifestyle on the mid-North Coast and this Government has a real focus on working with local communities to improve sports facilities. We know that obesity is increasing in prevalence, particularly among young people. That is why it is a Premier's priority. As a Government we want overweight and obesity rates of children to reduce by 5 per cent over 10 years, which means we are aiming for 62,000 more children in New South Wales to be at a healthy weight. It is important that we have first-class sporting facilities in our communities to encourage young people to participate in sport and physical activity.

Last Saturday I joined with an excited group of players, officials and spectators of all ages to officially open the upgraded Macquarie Park Netball Complex. The Government was able to support the project through a grant which transformed that asset for our local netball clubs and the more than 1,200 players in the Port Macquarie-Hastings Valley region who enjoy the popular sport. The upgrade has been completed in time for the 2017 netball season, which also was launched on the day and included the highly competitive march-past. I congratulate the Wauchope Netball Club on taking home the honours. The project included a surface upgrade, significant improvements to the drainage system, construction of a unisex disabled access toilet and upgrades and

repairs to the clubhouse. The New South Wales Government provided a \$920,000 grant to the Hastings Valley Netball Association through sport and recreation infrastructure funding, which is used to support modern and safe facilities for people to enjoy leisure activities and boost fitness and wellbeing.

Still on the topic of sporting infrastructure, on the weekend prior I attended the opening of the upgraded clubhouse of Kendall Tennis Club, which the Government funded to improve another important asset to the mid North Coast region and the more than 300 members of the club. The new tennis complex previously received both State and Federal funding to construct three new hard courts with full fencing and lighting as well as an upgraded clubhouse, office, canteen and improved disability access.

PARRAMATTA AQUATIC CENTRE

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (13:02): I am pleased to confirm the great news that the New South Wales Government will commit \$30 million to construct a new pool in Parramatta following demolition of the Parramatta Memorial Pool. In further great news, the City of Parramatta Council has indicated it also will contribute up to \$30 million towards the new facility. For more than a year following the announcement of the new Western Sydney Stadium and the need to demolish the pool I have fought for construction of a new swimming centre. Rest assured, no member wants to close or relocate a pool in their electorate. Unfortunately, I was unable to stop the closure of this pool. For the first six months I argued for colocation of the pool and stadium. That was not possible for several primary reasons. Firstly, the new stadium must be aligned with true north. Secondly, the stadium will have a larger footprint because it will accommodate 30,000 rather than 20,000 spectators. Thirdly, safe pedestrian access must be provided around the stadium precinct to avoid crowd crush and for various other security reasons.

I apologise to the public and to the residents of Parramatta for the inconvenience caused by the closure and relocation of the pool but this also presents a great opportunity for us to build a world-class aquatic centre to benefit future generations. We can have the best of both worlds—the Western Sydney Stadium, which will seat 30,000 people, and a \$60 million world-class aquatic centre right in the heart of Parramatta—and anyone who says that \$60 million is not enough is either a goose or politically motivated. The State Government and the City of Parramatta Council will build this world-class facility. I take this opportunity to congratulate administrator Amanda Chadwick and the council staff on their hard work. I also thank the Premier, the Treasurer, Minister Constance and Minister Ayres for all their efforts. Most of all, I thank the residents and all those genuinely concerned about the closure and relocation of the pool for the messages of support they have sent me. There has been strong community debate. I have attended many rallies and listened intently to those concerns. It is great news for the people of Western Sydney that a new world-class aquatics centre will be built.

So what is next? We already have allocated \$400,000 to the Mays Hill Precinct Master Plan. The new pool complex is to be located on the site of the former golf course in this precinct. A consultation process is currently being undertaken with concerned residents and I note that the closing date for submissions to the council is 7 April. We want this new world-class aquatic centre to include an outdoor 50 metre Olympic size pool with 10 lanes, a water polo pool, a learn to swim pool—because every child in New South Wales should be taught how to swim—and an outside area for other children's activities. We also want an indoor facility so that the pool can be used 365 days a year. I promise the community that I will do everything that I can to expedite the start and completion date of the pool so that residents will not miss out on their swimming activities and vital swimming lessons for too long. In conclusion, I again apologise for the inconvenience and I commend the Government on this fantastic investment.

MOTOR VEHICLE REPAIR INDUSTRY

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (13:07): Today I draw the attention of the House to continuing concerns about the smash repair insurance industry and the process faced by drivers after they have had a motor vehicle accident, which is already a stressful time. I take this opportunity to also acknowledge my colleague and shadow Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation and member for Swansea, who has a great interest in this issue. Put simply, many hardworking tradespeople, small business owners and, most importantly, road users feel they are subject to an unfair smash repair process that favours insurance companies and is more about profits than about helping people through a highly stressful time. Frankly, it is widely considered that the current smash repair insurance system is, at best, opaque and prejudicial—and, at worst, erroneous and flawed.

A local Campbelltown woman summed it up when she described her recent experience after her first car accident as "slow, costly, ambiguous, inconvenient and more designed to increase the already enormous profits of an insurance company rather than deliver a fair cost-effective and safe service to get someone back on the road." Like this local constituent, many insured road users have paid thousands of dollars in insurance premiums over many years without an accident, yet for many when they have an accident and try to take their car to a repairer of their own choice they find themselves being antagonised and forced to take it to a repairer preferred by the

insurance company. Insurance companies are now pushing more and more consumers into policies that require them to use a preferred repairer, limiting consumer choice and squeezing small smash repair businesses out of the market altogether.

Small smash repair businesses are left with no choice other than to sign up as a preferred repairer with one or more insurance companies, and that is when the headaches really begin for those business owners and indeed for the consumer. In an aggressive push to increase their profits, insurance companies use the so-called "funny time, funny money" system to value the cost of repairs which, despite what the name might suggest, is no laughing matter. The "funny time, funny money" system drastically underestimates the amount of time taken to perform repair processes. I have also spoken to several stakeholders in the industry who have reported that the hourly labour rate used by the insurance companies in this system makes it nearly impossible for businesses to pay their employees a fair and competitive wage without losing all profitability.

I am sure I do not need to remind anyone in this place what happens to quality standards when businesses are pressured into drastically lowering the cost of repairs and the time taken to do them. This issue is not limited to the financial cost to businesses and consumers; it is also about the safety of road users and making sure all repair work is done to the highest standard. Almost three years ago the Select Committee on the Motor Vehicle Repair Industry delivered its report following an inquiry into the industry held in early 2014 and proposed several recommendations that the Government could implement to fix this issue and several others affecting the smash repair industry. Disappointingly, when the Government delivered its response to the report in December 2014, it rejected a number of those recommendations outright and only partially supported many others. Most disappointing was the outright rejection by this Government of recommendation 21, the final recommendation of the report, that the Government would use the "real time, real money" schedule of repair times developed by the Motor Traders' Association of NSW to resolve disputes arising from the "funny time, funny money" problem I described earlier.

This is a blatant admission from the Government that it is happy for insurance companies to continue to slowly squeeze small smash repair businesses out of the industry by forcing them to work to unrealistic repair times while consumers suffer through decreased competition and declining quality standards. The Government must take action and put the "fair" back into Fair Trading on this issue and have a model for the smash repair industry that provides certainty for road users and small businesses and their workers alike. Any reform must put the interests of the consumer at the forefront to enable a transparent and balanced model to get motorists back on the road safely and effectively while also ensuring that small businesses in the smash repair industry are not subject to the stranglehold of wealthy insurance companies.

JOHN HUNTER HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:12): Today I tell of the horrific ordeal that a constituent of mine experienced in the emergency department at the John Hunter Hospital earlier this year. The young lady has asked not to be identified and for that reason I will call her "Emily". Late last year Emily and her husband were surprised to find out Emily was pregnant with their second child. They were elated. The six-week scan showed no complications. At nine weeks Emily started to bleed. Sadly, another scan detected no heartbeat. The baby had stopped growing two weeks before. As a result, Emily's general practitioner [GP] sent her to the John Hunter Hospital to be admitted for a dilation and curettage [D and C].

Emily arrived at the emergency department only to be sent home, being advised to wait to see if she would miscarry at home. Over the next two days Emily returned to the hospital twice. She was having labour-like pains, bleeding more heavily and not coping while waiting at home. Emily begged the doctors to admit her for the D and C procedure. There were many patients coming in to the emergency department and Emily seemed to slip through the cracks. She was not attended to and again on the Saturday night Emily was sent home. On Sunday Emily thought she had passed her baby at home. She went to bed to lie down but the pain only increased. Emily collapsed and her husband called the ambulance. Arriving at the John Hunter Hospital in the ambulance, Emily finally was admitted for the D and C procedure, which she had four days later. In total, Emily was in hospital for a week. Emily had begged the emergency department to administer health care, yet was turned away on three occasions. It was not until she was rushed to the hospital in an ambulance that she received the attention that she needed.

I cannot imagine what a distressing time this must have been for Emily and her family. Emily contacted my office with the intention of sharing her story and to do what she can to make sure no other woman goes through this traumatic ordeal. Emily has reiterated to me that once she got past the emergency department the hospital care and the staff were attentive, supportive and amazing. It was trying to get attended to at the emergency department that made this ordeal so terrible. Their baby had passed away at seven weeks but the bleeding did not start until nine weeks. Emily describes it as a missed miscarriage, which was all the more reason for justifying a D and C.

Emily's family, like many others, spends nearly \$200 a month on private health insurance, believing it bought them the security to avoid a situation such as this and knowing that, if they needed medical assistance, they would be definitely attended to and prioritised. There is a serious problem with our health system when a woman attends hospital three times begging to be attended to but is not able to be admitted until she arrives in an ambulance. I have written to the Minister for Health for his response to this terrible case, which exemplifies what is happening in our health system, and in particular at the John Hunter Hospital. New South Wales Health and our hospital system is under enormous pressure. The latest independent Bureau of Health Information statistics show a record number of patients presenting to emergency departments. Across New South Wales more than a quarter of the State's patients waited longer than four hours in the emergency department. This number is higher for the John Hunter Hospital where 35 per cent of patients wait for more than four hours.

The waiting has to stop. Something is wrong when our system forces patients to wait at every stage. Patients wait for an ambulance; outside the emergency department; inside the emergency department; for a bed; and then they are discharged to make room for other patients. I thank Emily for her bravery in sharing her story. I hope those on the other side are listening to this tragic example of what this woman, already under distress, had to endure. Our hospitals are underfunded, under-resourced and our health care needs are not being met. The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government has a responsibility to ensure that this matter is rectified so that no other woman goes through the awful experience that Emily endured.

BRISBANE WATER LOCAL AREA COMMAND

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:17): It was a great honour to represent Mr Troy Grant in his capacity as the Minister for Police at the Brisbane Water Local Area Command awards ceremony. It was my honour to present the awards, which recognise and celebrate the achievements of many of our police officers at the Brisbane Water Local Area Command. The Brisbane Water Local Area Command covers my electorate of Terrigal. It is one of the largest metropolitan local government areas. It includes major urban centres such as Gosford and Erina, rural areas such as Mangrove Mountain and beach side suburbs, including Terrigal and Avoca Beach, which are high tourism areas. It stretches from the Hawkesbury River in the south to Ourimbah in the north, and from the coastal strip in the east it stretches west to the Judge Dowling Ranges.

The diverse topography of this region features coastal fringes, natural waterways, hilly terrain and mountainous terrain. This has presented a dynamic working environment and distinct policing challenges to the Brisbane Water Local Area Command, which in the future with the development of land and population growth also is expected to grow. This will impact on policing, social and community issues, presenting new challenges for the 200 police officers attached to the Brisbane Water Local Area Command. Our local police are well led by their commander, Superintendent Daniel Sullivan. In his speech, Danny spoke about the 190 years of continuous policing service to the Central Coast and the connection between the Gosford police and the community. There has been significant investment in policing over that 190 years but it started in 1827 when Trooper Webb occupied a three-room, shingle-roofed, timber slab structure, at a significant investment of £537. He quickly outgrew that office. The Brisbane Water Local Area Command obviously works out of a much more modern facility in Gosford.

The awards I presented last week recognise the professional endeavours of the recipients. This demonstrates the sustained diligence and skills throughout each individual's successful policing career. I had the honour of helping to present the many awards, including the National Police Service Medals, the New South Wales Police medals, the NSW Police Long Service Awards, the Region Commander's Awards, the Commander's Unit Citation, the Local Area Commander's Commendation, the VIP Awards and G20 Medals. Some of those medals are national awards, bearing recognition of the NSW Police Force among the other jurisdictions around Australia. It is great to see so many police men and women from the Brisbane Water Local Area Command receiving such high levels of recognition for the vital role they perform in responding to crime. Their strong local presence helps our community feel safer, thereby acting as a disincentive to criminal activity.

I also remind members in the Chamber of the record numbers of officers in the NSW Police Force. Currently, the authorised strength of the force is at a record high of 16,730 officers. Since December 2011, we have recruited an additional 924 positions to join the NSW Police Force. In 2015 our Government also committed to an additional 310 police officers by 2018. This will boost the authorised strength of the NSW Police Force to 16,795. The Brisbane Water Local Area Command has received 34 new probationary constables over the five years since 2011. This demonstrates that our Government is delivering on its commitment of record numbers of police officers across New South Wales. The proof of this commitment can be seen in my electorate where we have seen significant reductions in crime. The cases of break, enter and steal have gone from 1,167 cases in 2010 to 656 cases. Cases of breaking and entering a non-dwelling have dropped from 690 to 200. In 2006 there were 545 alcohol-related assaults. This has been reduced to 284. Cases of stealing of motor vehicles were reduced from 523 vehicles in 2016 to 304.

Being a police officer is an incredibly important responsibility, and many police officers serve with integrity and honour. In the Brisbane Water Local Area Command a number of officers have paid the ultimate sacrifice. They include Chris Thornton, Gordy Wilson, Dick Whittaker and Clinton Williams, who have given their lives to keep our community safer. Officers make a remarkable commitment to serve in the Brisbane Water Local Area Command. Many officers serve for many decades to keep our community safe. It is always an honour to spend time with our local area command. The team does an amazing job, and I was lucky enough to spend an evening out with team members, which was an eye-opening experience. I congratulate the Brisbane Water Local Area Command.

BONDI MIZRACHI SYNAGOGUE

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (13:22): On Friday 10 March, I visited the Bondi Mizrahi Synagogue to announce funding for the kitchen and community hall renovation. The New South Wales Government has helped to fund the project with a \$30,000 grant as part of the Community Building Partnership Program. The grant will be used to improve the facility for the many volunteers who donate their time each year. I met with Rabbi Shua Solomon, President Michael Goldberg, vice-president Eran Brill, honorary secretary Michael Balkin, treasurer Nathan Smith and synagogue administrator Miriam Marks to celebrate the start of this ambitious project. While I was there I toured the kitchen and hall facilities that were being prepared to be gutted for the renovation that the New South Wales Government has helped to fund. Rabbi Solomon kindly invited me to stay for Friday evening Shabbat service and presented me with hamantaschen as a gift for the upcoming Purim holiday. These are beautiful biscuits, which I took home to my family. It was good to be welcomed to that Shabbat service by Rabbi Solomon's wife, Rebbetzin Solomon. I was made to feel very welcome among the women in the shule.

It is timely to reflect on the history of the Bondi Mizrahi Synagogue. It started in 1938 when a group of like-minded individuals who had previously attended services at the Central Synagogue decided to establish their own congregation. Being located in the eastern suburbs of Sydney, the new congregation was called Mizrahi, which is Hebrew for "east". Initially, services were held in the Masonic Hall in Bondi Road, Bondi, with Rabbi Kirzner officiating. In the 1940s, Rabbi Abramson was appointed to assist him and he took over as rabbi of the congregation in 1951 when Rabbi Kirzner stepped down.

Meanwhile, in 1949, the president, Max Mann, had overseen the purchase of a property at 214 Old South Head Road, Bondi, and the synagogue now owned premises of its own. Membership in the years after World War II consisted predominantly of Polish Holocaust survivors, and Yiddish was frequently spoken at the synagogue. In the 1950s Mr Moshe Lederman was appointed as the Cantor, or the Chazzan. In 1973 the synagogue relocated to a purpose-built synagogue on its current site at 339 Old South Head Road, Bondi. Rabbi Abramson remained as the rabbi of the synagogue until his death in 1981. Rabbi David Miller and Rabbi Shimon Lawrence served as rabbis briefly before the appointment of Rabbi Moshe Gutnick as rabbi in 1987.

Most recently, Rabbi and Rebbetzin Solomon took up positions of spiritual leadership of the synagogue in July 2015 and were formally inducted on 16 August 2015. Rabbi Solomon grew up in Perth and taught in a number of programs in Israel where he also served as a combat soldier stationed on the Gaza border. I was honoured to attend the inauguration ceremony of Rabbi and Rebbetzin Solomon nearly two years ago and I thank them for their strong leadership of our local Jewish community.

The Bondi Mizrahi Synagogue regularly hosts community events, such as Tu Bishvat, which is the New Year for Trees. It was celebrated with a Saturday afternoon tea that more than 150 people attended. The day after my visit, the synagogue celebrated Purim, as did many other synagogues across Australia and the world, and the congregation gathered to hear the story of Purim. On Purim there is a tradition to dress up in costumes. The tradition comes from the story of Esther in which the Jews dressed up in costumes in order to avoid being killed in war by their numerous enemies.

Several reasons are given for the age-old custom of dressing up in costumes on Purim. In contrast to the overt miracles of the holidays of Passover, Chanukah and other Jewish holidays, the miracle of the holiday of Purim was disguised in natural events. The custom of wearing costumes on Purim is an allusion to the nature of the Purim miracle where the details of the story are really miracles hidden within natural events. While many people think Purim is only about dressing up or eating those wonderful jam biscuits, it is really a Jewish holiday where people are meant to feel joy, to share that joy with their family and to give that joy to somebody else.

I look forward to continuing to work with Rabbi and Rebbetzin Solomon and to see the important project of renovating the kitchen and community hall come to fruition. I thank them both for creating a warm, safe and family-oriented atmosphere for our local Jewish community to enjoy. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

MIDCOAST COUNCIL

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:27): I give the House an update in relation to the MidCoast Council. There has been some misunderstanding in relation to a contribution I made in the House last week regarding the MidCoast Council. I understand that there may be some alarm over a proposed rate rise by the MidCoast Council. I make it clear that I am not proposing a rate rise. I do not have a say in whether a council raises its rates or it does not; it is a matter for the MidCoast Council. I fully appreciate that any rise in rates, regardless of the amount, is of concern and I recognise that any change in rates will have a material impact on individuals and households. That is why I have supported the newly created MidCoast Council and have worked with it to ensure the best outcomes for residents.

Previously, the former Greater Taree City Council had sought a rate increase of almost 50 per cent over six years to deal with the \$200 million road and bridge maintenance backlog. The Gloucester Shire Council had sought an almost 40 per cent increase, and the Great Lakes Council had sought a 20 per cent increase. The rate increases proposed by those councils were unacceptable. As I said, I am not proposing a rate rise. The proposed increase put forward by the MidCoast Council previously if approved was for 20 per cent over four years—that is, a rise of 5 per cent per annum each year for four years, inclusive of the 2 per cent rate peg which currently exists. In real terms this would be about a 3 per cent increase on rates across the MidCoast Council area.

The New South Wales Government began a reform agenda, which included a \$15 million roads package to work with our councils to ensure that they have the best services and infrastructure. Through other New South Wales Government programs, like Bridges for the Bush and Fixing Country Roads, we have begun to address the roads and bridges maintenance in our region. But there is more to be done. The MidCoast Council had previously proposed a rate increase for an average residential property of between \$1 and \$1.50 a week to further improve the roads, bridges and footpaths. This proposal will have to be looked at again by the MidCoast Council. It will have to make an application, and provide evidence to support it, to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] before any decision is made. It is not a decision that I have made and I understand how difficult it would be for residents in the MidCoast Council area.

As I said, all the former councils had proposed rate increases. The Greater Taree City Council had completed an IPART application prior to the merger for a 49.6 per cent rate rise over six years, which is significantly more than had been proposed by the MidCoast Council. The Great Lakes Council had applied for a rate rise of 20.8 per cent over four years and the Gloucester Shire Council applied for an increase of 39 per cent over three years. The former Gloucester Shire Council area still has a remaining 13 per cent increase from a previous special rate variation. This would be dropped and replaced with any proposal that the MidCoast Council takes to IPART.

So what will be the cost if there is a rate rise? For the Manning region the average increase will be \$59 per year, which equates to \$1.13 per week. For the Great Lakes region it will be \$64 per year, which is an average increase of \$1.23 per week. For Gloucester it will be \$77 per year, which is an average increase of \$1.48 per week. This is not something I am proposing—the legislation that was passed last week was unanimously supported by all members of all political persuasions, whether they be from The Nationals, the Liberal Party, Labor, The Greens, or the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. They all voted in favour of this legislation. One of the benefits of this is that it allows the MidCoast Council to address the almost \$200 million backlog if it chooses to apply for a special rate variation.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): I will now leave the chair and the House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

The SPEAKER: I welcome our guests in the gallery to question time for this final sitting before Easter. Although I know he will not want me to mention it, I wish the member for Liverpool a happy birthday. I extend a very warm welcome to John Hollis and Peter Veness from the Rail Action Bathurst Group, guests of the Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing, the member for Bathurst. I give a warm welcome also to Mr Steven Marshall, Leader of the Opposition and member for Dunstan in the South Australian Parliament, guest of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, and Parliamentary Secretary for Education, the member for Kiama. I trust he is looking after you. I acknowledge and welcome Councillor Andrew Hope, Mayor of Liverpool Shire Council; Councillor Catherine Redding, Mayor of Narrabri Shire Council; and Ms Rebel Thomson, executive officer of Namoi Councils Joint Organisation, guests of the member for Upper Hunter. I acknowledge in the gallery also students and teachers from St Mary's High School Gateshead, guests of the member for Charlestown. Welcome to you all.

*Commemorations***CENTENARY OF FIRST WORLD WAR**

The SPEAKER (14:19): On 2 April 1917, about 100 years ago almost to the day, President Woodrow Wilson addressed a special sitting of both houses of Congress. The sinking of American ships in the Atlantic over the previous two months by German submarines was, he said, "nothing less than war against the Government and the people of the United States" and that America's policy of armed neutrality was no longer "feasible" or "desirable". Much of the history of the twentieth century and America's notion of her place in the world was shaped by the speech that followed. He said:

We are glad ... to fight thus for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples ... for the rights of nations great and small and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life ...

The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion ... We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind ... we shall fight ... for democracy.

The President spoke for 36 minutes. According to the *New York Times*, his remarks were met with a great scene of wild cheering from the floor and from the galleries. Republicans and Democrats alike stood in their places, many waving flags. Four days later a resolution declaring war on Germany was passed by the Senate 82 votes to six, and by the House 373 votes to 50. And with that, the United States entered the war. More than four million military personnel would be mobilised over the coming months. More than 100,000 never came home. Let us not forget.

*Bills***LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (RATES—MERGED COUNCIL AREAS) BILL 2017****Assent**

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Governor notifying His Excellency's assent to the abovementioned bill.

*Question Time***MEMBER FOR DRUMMOYNE**

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:24): I direct my question to the Premier. Will the Premier inform the House whether she is satisfied that her parliamentary secretary to the Premier and Cabinet has declared all his property holdings?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:24): I answered that question a number of times last week. I expect all members to disclose all of their interests. I understand that that has been done. I ask the Leader of the Opposition: Is he satisfied that the member for Strathfield has done the same? I say this because last week it was revealed that the member had declared an income for six months without disclosing any properties.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. I am happy to table my disclosure of three properties.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. Now is not the time to table documents. The Premier is being relevant to the question. There is no point of order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I say the following. It was curious that the member for Strathfield had on her return a listed income but did not list the three properties from which she was deriving the income. She did so subsequently. I say to the Leader of the Opposition that he should check the records of all his members before asking such a question. I note that the declaration by the member for Strathfield of one of the properties occurred 18 months after its purchase, which is not consistent with requirements. When it comes to matters of disclosure, the Leader of the Opposition does not possess any integrity.

With regard to property, it is not just the actions of the member for Strathfield, who declared her interests subsequently, but other Opposition members who declare income but do not declare from where they derive it. Let us not forget that it took my raising the matter in this place, seven months after his promise, for the Leader of the Opposition to disclose his diaries. Unlike those opposite, Government members uphold disclosure requirements with integrity. If Opposition members behave in that manner now, what would they be like in government?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease arguing across the Chamber.

NORTH COAST FLOODS

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (14:27): I address my question to the Premier. Will the Premier inform the House how the New South Wales Government is supporting flood-affected communities on the North Coast?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:27): I thank the member for Clarence for his question and appreciate that his community and that of the member for Ballina are doing it tough at the moment. Parts of the Ballina shire are impacted by flooding. Both the member for Lismore and the member for Tweed are excused from the House as they are with their communities today. I take this opportunity to express the deepest condolences of the Parliament to all those who have lost family members. Tragically, I report to the House that police divers have recovered three bodies, thought to be that of the mother and her two children, from a submerged vehicle in the Tweed River, near Tumbulgun. The vehicle plunged into the river yesterday afternoon. The member for Lismore and I were close to the location as the tragedy unfolded. That takes the death toll from the flood crisis in New South Wales to six.

I speak for all members when I express sympathy to the families and friends of those who have passed away. I express the Parliament's condolences to the young girl who miraculously escaped the crash that killed her mother and two sisters and who bravely ran to raise the alarm. No-one can imagine the trauma that this little girl, her family and the community are experiencing at this time. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of them during this difficult period. I take this opportunity to thank the staff and volunteers from the State Emergency Service, fire, ambulance, police, State and Federal government and local councils for doing everything possible to keep the North Coast community safe and to help it recover as quickly as possible.

Yesterday I observed some very confronting situations but I want all members of the community to appreciate that we are doing everything we can during this difficult time. As members of the House will know, 20,000 people in New South Wales were subject to evacuation orders and it was not until yesterday that some 11,000 people were given the all clear to return to their properties and see what remained of them and their possessions. Until this morning the office of the member for Lismore was out of bounds as it was flooded. I know that his staff are back there today and I thank them for their efforts. Their communities will be relying upon the staff to support them in every way.

An evacuation order remains in place for about 300 people. I am pleased to say that electricity has been restored to the region and Essential Energy is undertaking door-to-door assessments of flood-affected premises. The NSW State Emergency Service [SES] has received more than 2,700 requests for assistance since the event began, and there have been a total of 487 flood rescues. Approximately 1,000 people in the region remain isolated on rural properties, particularly in the lower Richmond area, and emergency services are doing everything to make sure that they receive the supplies they need.

I cannot thank enough the volunteers and workers whom I met with yesterday. They are not the only phenomenal workers and volunteers in the Tweed and Richmond who are supporting their communities; I also shook the hands of SES workers who came from places like Singleton, Marrickville, Manly and all around the State. It was gratifying to know that everybody is pulling together to support those communities. I am advised that the damage bill for flooding across New South Wales has passed the \$200 million mark, and I anticipate that that figure will increase. Insurers have already received close to 20,000 claims. I am pleased that disaster assistance has been made available to affected communities in the following local government areas through the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements: Tweed shire, Lismore city, Ballina shire, Byron shire, Richmond Valley and Kyogle.

I especially thank my ministerial colleague the Minister for Emergency Services as he and I were able to make that announcement on Friday at the Bankstown SES headquarters. Normally such arrangements take weeks to come to fruition but he worked very closely with his Federal colleagues to make sure that the declaration was available from Friday. As we appreciate, families returned to their homes only yesterday and we anticipate the assistance that is triggered by these arrangements will come to fruition in the next days. This support includes: help for eligible people whose homes or belongings have been damaged; support for affected councils to permanently restore roads and bridges to pre-disaster standards; concessional interest rate loans for small businesses, primary producers and not-for-profit organisations; and grants for non-profit organisations. [*Extension of time*]

We are currently collecting information to determine what further assistance will be required. I assure the House and the community that our Government will work day and night to provide support for those communities not just in the coming days but also in the coming weeks and months because we know that is how long it will take to restore those communities. Yesterday we were pleased to announce that Mr Euan Ferguson had been appointed the recovery coordinator on the ground to manage flood recovery efforts and also to ensure

the community is aware of and receives all the support it needs. His role will be to involve establishing recovery centres, which I understand has occurred today. Members in those regions will let their communities know where they can get assistance. Mr Ferguson will be responsible for arranging short- and long-term accommodation, supporting the clean-up effort and working with businesses and communities to establish the best way forward. He also will work to ensure that insurance companies work quickly to resolve claims and he will coordinate efforts between the three levels of government.

Mr Ferguson will respond directly to me, the Minister for Emergency Services and the Deputy Premier so we are assured that every assistance will be given when the community needs it. I again express my deepest gratitude to all our emergency services personnel who are going through very challenging times. Many of them left their own homes and belongings to help others. Yesterday I listened to some of their experiences and we have established many learnings in the past few days about what we can do in the future. I look forward to visiting those communities again to show our support, but importantly to providing resources where they are needed most in the coming days, weeks and months.

MEMBER FOR DRUMMOYNE

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:34): My question is directed to the Premier. In the light of the Premier's answer to my earlier question, will she advise whether her parliamentary secretary to the Premier and Cabinet owns commercial property at 120 Great North Road, Five Dock, given that the official New South Wales Land and Property Information title search records a "John Sidoti" as being joint tenant of the property, yet the member has not disclosed any such ownership?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:34): I have answered this question on a number of occasions.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will come to order or he will be removed from the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What action did the Leader of the Opposition take when it was revealed that the member for Strathfield did not adequately disclose her properties—not one, not two but three properties? What action did the Leader of the Opposition take when it was proven, not just alleged, that the member for Strathfield did not disclose three properties? This is on top of the fact that in June 2015 the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser—not the Liberal-Nationals Government—wrote to the member for Strathfield saying she had "a conflict of interest arising from your residence in Ashfield". Those opposite should stop the hypocrisy.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129. I sought that advice and, having done so, I disclosed where I lived. Maybe your people should learn how to read a disclosure statement.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will cease arguing the point. There is no point of order. The Premier has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I repeat what I expressed in my first answer today: If those opposite cannot be trusted to tell the truth in opposition how on earth can they be expected to tell the truth in government?

NORTH COAST FLOODS AND SMALL BUSINESS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (14:36): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. What is the Government doing to help the small business community impacted by the floods in northern New South Wales?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:37): I thank the member for Myall Lakes for his concern for the communities of the northern rivers and the many small businesses that are so important to the functioning of regional New South Wales. I acknowledge the work of the volunteers and all those who are supporting the communities during a very tough time. I also pass on my condolences to families and friends of those whom we have lost through this disaster, including the young mother and her two children. I am sure all members of this House feel a sense of despair that will remain with us for a very long time.

I acknowledge the Premier, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Emergency Services, who showed leadership in the northern rivers and demonstrated their support of those communities. They let them know that they are in our thoughts and that we are here to help them through this very tough period. This year has been tough and a bad start for many people in regional New South Wales, with the fires earlier in the year and now the floods. There is no question that we are being tested by Mother Nature. At times of strife we get to see the fantastic side of Australians as volunteers and as communities come together to support those who need it. I have often talked about the resilience of regional communities, which has been tested in 2017. I know that our communities will

unite to make sure we look after those who have been tested in the northern rivers as well as those in the cyclone-damaged communities of Queensland.

I often talk about the importance of small businesses to regional communities. They not only create jobs for themselves and the community but also are the fabric of our communities. They are so important. Normally, they would coach the football side and the butcher would offer up free sausages for the local Parents and Citizens [P and C] committee. Our small businesses are part of our community. They always have been and always will be. Over the next weeks and months, they will have to deal with the damage and destruction of their businesses. Even for businesses that have insurance, it comes nowhere near covering the losses, the clean-up and the effort it takes people to get back on their feet.

Many new businesses have been emptied out because of the floods. New businesses have initial start-up costs and nothing can be insured in relation to that. Some of those businesses have been there for a long time; they are part of the fabric of their communities. There have been significant stock losses. We acknowledge that it is going to be tough, and the ripple effect will continue through the community in the weeks and months ahead. These businesses supply the food, clothes, shelter and everything that communities require to function. That is why it is important that the Government responds.

The NSW Small Business Commissioner, Robyn Hobbs, is a member of the State disaster recovery advisory group. As we speak, the high impact team, comprising small business advisers, economic development advisers from the Department of Industry and the Department of Premier and Cabinet regional group have been assembled and are on the ground in Lismore. Business connect advisers will continue to provide affected businesses with independent and confidential advisory sessions. We also appreciate that most businesses are concentrating on cleaning up and do not have time to attend some of these events or make inquiries. Through the Office of the Small Business Commissioner and the Australian Taxation Office we are developing a fact sheet to be distributed to businesses that clearly spells out the support available and the numbers to call.

I also congratulate and thank the NSW Business Chamber. Two events are planned for later this week to brief those business communities about the support networks, information and advice that is available. Of course, it will not just be business stakeholders at these events. There will be representation from the State Emergency Service, the Lismore City Council, the Office of Regional NSW and the NSW Business Chamber. The first will be on Thursday at 7.30 a.m. at the Zest function room at the Southern Cross University, Lismore. The second will be in Murwillumbah on Friday at 7.00 a.m. at the Murwillumbah RSL Club. I also acknowledge the Minister for Emergency Services for his work in triggering the natural disaster declarations as quickly as he did. [*Extension of time*]

As the Premier said, that is normally a process that takes a little longer. Doing it quickly allows us to begin supporting the community. Of course, there is help for those who have lost homes or had their belongings damaged. There is support for affected local councils to help with the cost of cleaning up and restoring damaged essential public assets. There are concessional interest rate loans for small businesses—this is important if we wish business owners to get back on their feet quickly and to restock—and that includes primary producers and not-for-profit organisations. Loans of up to \$130,000 are available for eligible small businesses at a concessional rate. There are also available freight subsidies for primary producers and grants to non-profit organisations. We will continue to monitor the needs of communities as the days, weeks and months pass.

I know everybody in this House is united in ensuring that we work for and on behalf of affected communities. They need to know that all levels of government, every agency and every person in this State has them in their thoughts and prayers. We are committed to ensuring that we continue to support them. When a crisis is at its peak, emergency services personnel are involved and the local and national media spotlight is on our community. The hardest times are often in the days and weeks afterwards when communities are left to deal with the mammoth task ahead of them. I remind them that we will be there. We will continually come to the northern rivers to support communities, small businesses and local government to make sure we get them back on their feet as soon as possible. I make this clear: if there is more to be done and if it is possible we will do it.

MEMBER FOR DRUMMOYNE

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:44): My question is directed to the Premier. In the light of her answer last Wednesday in which she advised the House that she maintains the highest level of public expectation in relation to disclosures, is she aware that her parliamentary secretary to the Premier and Cabinet has not disclosed his company directorship of, and shareholding in, Betternow Pty Limited, yet this is recorded in reports from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:44): I acknowledge that this is the same question I have received from members opposite on a number of occasions. Of course, we expect all members of this place to disclose all of their interests.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will be called to order if he continues to interject.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We also expect people to speak up when they think something is wrong. I again refer to comments of Labor identities in relation to the Leader of the Opposition. I have another transcript here, which I alluded to last week, that records comments of former Senator Doug Cameron about the Leader of the Opposition in 2013.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra does not know where the Premier is going with her answer. I warn him that vexatious points of order will not be tolerated.

Mr Michael Daley: I do, because she did it last week and it did not work then either.

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

Mr Michael Daley: It relates to Standing Order 129. The question was very clear.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Premier remains relevant to the question. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I stress it is not Liberal members or The Nationals saying this; it is Labor Party people. Doug Cameron said:

What Luke Foley said yesterday about a chorus of complaints, about a loss of moral compass, about the abandonment of Labor principles was not put at that meeting. In fact Luke Foley was very quiet at that meeting. There was certainly no warnings.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: It is obvious the Premier does not know Doug Cameron. It is always very hard to get a word in.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Swansea made no attempt whatsoever to name a standing order under which her point of order was taken. I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Doug Cameron continues:

And I have to say to you if then at that meeting people like myself—

and he names other Labor identities—

did nothing then he should have done something about it. These are people of the highest propriety and I must say I reject completely the view that's being perpetrated out there that Luke Foley was some white knight and everyone, and I kept Macdonald alive.

There was a consensus position adopted and Luke Foley was part of that consensus and he should have opposed the two years.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. How on earth is this relevant?

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled on the point of relevance. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This goes to the integrity of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr David Harris: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind Opposition members that I have ruled on relevance.

Mr David Harris: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. This should be done by way of substantive motion. The Premier's last words confirm that this is a personal attack.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have not heard enough to rule on that point. The member for Wyong will resume his seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Opposition members can move the substantive motion; I am happy to debate it. Doug Cameron continues:

The situation from my point of view is, if Luke Foley had such great concerns then he should have raised them at the meeting and people would have done something about it. In fact my union, the AMWU that I led at the time, feel quite betrayed that if Luke Foley had those points of view and he had any evidence of corruption we should have known about that other than be put in the position that we're in at the moment.

He said:

I'm very angry about it. Very, very angry. I'm angry because my union has been drawn into this and if Luke Foley had these serious concerns about the probity of Ian Macdonald in 2006 why did he say nothing about it at the meeting and why did he say nothing for three years after that meeting?

I rest my case.

CRIME STATISTICS

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (14:48): My question is addressed to the Minister for Police. Will the Minister update the House on the work that the NSW Police Force is doing to keep the community safe?

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (14:49): I thank the member for Parramatta for his question. Every member in this place supports our police because they play a vital role in keeping our communities safe. The NSW Police Force is one of the best police forces in the world. Indeed, it is one of the largest police forces in Australia and internationally. Every day police officers dedicate their lives to the safety and protection of the community, and I join with every member of this House in thanking them. The latest quarterly report of the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research shows that over the past five years major crimes have trended down in the 17 crime categories, and the continuation of our 20-year low crime record is the envy of the nation. Six of those categories in particular have fallen and the rest, other than the offence of steal from retail store, have remained stable. Indeed, the offence of shoplifting, which has increased by 6.1 per cent, remains of concern.

Across the State we face different geographical challenges. Domestic violence is still an issue in some areas and the Government remains committed to continuing to invest in resources to police that crime. My electorate of Dubbo has significant challenges in property crime and police are working very hard to overcome that. I am pleased to report that in the electorate of Parramatta there has been a 31 per cent decrease in robbery without a weapon, 12 per cent decrease in break and enter dwelling, 22 per cent decrease in break and enter non-dwelling; and a 9 per cent reduction in fraud. In Madam Speaker's electorate of South Coast there has been a 21 per cent decrease in break and enter dwellings and a 34 per cent decrease in break and enter non-dwellings—community or commercial buildings. That is a terrific result. In the electorate of the shadow Minister for Justice and Police and member for Fairfield, there is much consternation about certain crime types and I acknowledge that additional resourcing and attention is needed in some categories.

But the shadow Minister will be comforted to know that local police in his electorate are continuing to do a great job—including a 13 per cent decrease in sexual assault and a 28 per cent decrease in break and enter dwelling. The crime category of motor vehicle theft is close to stable across the State but in the Fairfield Local Area Command it has decreased by 6 per cent. That is a reflection of the exceptional work that is done day in, day out by uniformed officers, specialist squads, proactive teams, those in plain clothes and detectives. Indeed, these statistics represent the number of people in New South Wales who are no longer victims of crime because of the outstanding work of the NSW Police Force but that work is not only driven by police. Last week I was speaking to the member for Lakemba about this very issue.

[Interruption]

I acknowledge that interjection. He is not only a good member; he is a good fellow too. Police rely very heavily on the partnerships that they have with their communities and across this State those communities are very diverse—for example, the communities in the electorate of Barwon reach out to their police in a different way because of their isolation and geographical challenges. The types of offences committed in Barwon include rural crime and trespass, and some who live there feel as if they are prisoners in their own homes because of the types of offences committed against them. The Government is working very hard to rectify that situation. Police face different challenges in the electorates of the Hunter, Newcastle and the electorate of the member for Lakemba where there are lots of different multicultural issues. *[Extension of time]*

I look forward to working with the new Commissioner of Police in driving down each of the crime types that affect electorates.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Domestic violence?

Mr TROY GRANT: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Canterbury. Domestic violence is absolutely a focus. It is a disgraceful offence and for far too long it has been under-reported in this State. But under this Government, with the NSW Police Force and our partners in combating domestic violence, significant gains have been made in giving the community and those victims of crime the confidence to report these offences. The figures for domestic violence are far too high—one domestic violence incident is one too many—and the Government will continue the investment led by the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, the Hon. Pru Goward, with the commissioner to introduce a new way of dealing

with domestic violence. We have invested in both programs about no bystanders and in specialist teams. We will continue to drive better results and outcomes in domestic violence right across the State. Indeed, in media interviews this week the commissioner said this will be a priority of the NSW Police Force.

Whilst talking about these successes, I join with the Premier in acknowledging the emergency services personnel who have joined police in the northern rivers. Today police divers have been involved in one of the worst jobs imaginable and when I spoke to them earlier I could hear the wavering in their voices. Our thoughts and prayers are with all those emergency services personnel who are putting their jobs ahead of their own welfare to make sure that everyone is looked after in very difficult circumstances.

MEMBER FOR DRUMMOYNE

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:56): My question is directed to the Premier. Is the Premier aware that a property owned but not disclosed by her parliamentary secretary at 120 Great North Road, Five Dock, is central to a proposal to change the City of Canada Bay's local environmental plan in order to increase density and building heights, including for her parliamentary secretary's undisclosed property?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:56): I refer the Leader of the Opposition to my previous responses. The Government expects all members to disclose all of their interests at the right time. I hope the Leader of the Opposition has his facts correct because time and again he has got them wrong. The people of New South Wales have certain expectations of an Opposition leader. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition is falling way short of those public expectations.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order: Fair enough. I seek leave to table the title search.

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

Mr Luke Foley: The Premier asked me to prove it. I have his property interest here. This is the title search for John Sidoti.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will cease arguing. The Premier has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Time and again, the Leader of the Opposition has shown his inability to get his facts right. Time and again he has also shown a lack of integrity and that he is not keeping in touch with what the people of New South Wales care about. I refer the Leader of the Opposition to my previous responses.

MANLY AND NORTHERN BEACHES HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:58): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research. Will the Minister outline how the Government is supporting sick children and young adults across New South Wales as well as supporting the communities of Manly and the northern beaches?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (14:59): I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question and particularly thank her in her role as Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health. She is a stalwart in ensuring that we reach out across this State to provide the medical care that is necessary. Last Friday the member for Port Macquarie and I, together with the Liberal candidate for Manly, James Griffin, attended the Royal Far West Centre at Manly. I have known the Royal Far West Centre for many years, and it is a fantastic centre reaching out right across this State. We launched the new \$45 million dollar Centre for Child Health and Learning. It is something of which every member in this House would be proud. I always thought Manly was the centre of the universe but this proved it. I was told that the centre is now reaching out as far as Fitzroy Crossing in Western Australia and Gladstone in Queensland. With teleconferencing it is ensuring that it can provide the support people in remote communities cannot otherwise get.

The New South Wales Government has provided \$10 million to this redevelopment. The Federal Government also has contributed as well as the community and Royal Far West itself. The centre will see a tenfold increase in the number of families supported. The chief executive officer advised that they are currently helping approximately 1,500 families across this great nation, mostly in New South Wales. Within a few years when this centre is completed approximately 15,000 families will benefit from the opportunity to have the services otherwise not provided in remote areas. The centre will consist of classrooms, consultation and observation rooms, paediatric oral health, dental orthodontics rooms, ophthalmology, occupational therapy, sensory rooms and a telecare centre. I saw how that worked and it is amazing. The candidate for Manly, James Griffin, was enormously impressed. I acknowledge that when James was working at KPMG his company provided pro bono support to Royal Far West to ensure that the teleconferencing opportunities were twenty-first century.

Sunday saw the Premier at Bear Cottage. For the benefit of those members who do not know, Bear Cottage is an amazing facility. It was the result of the community coming together in 1995 and recognising that palliative care was needed for the most vulnerable children and their families—those children who are going through terminal illness, an end-of-life process, which is so hurtful and draining to families. The Manly community came together and raised the funds for this facility. It operated for many years. I know nurses and doctors who worked in that facility and I have visited it many times. It is an amazing centre, a place of love and care where young people can go and know that they and their family will be supported at that very difficult time when their life is ending far too soon. The centre was funded for many years by the community until the Liberal-Nationals Government stepped in under our former Premier Mike Baird and said surely we can do more. Backing the Children's Hospital in 2013-14 the Liberal-Nationals Government supported the centre with regular funding each year.

The Premier, along with James Griffin, announced that the Government will be contributing \$2 million to another vital step. I am sure members on both sides will understand and would have experienced the challenges for people aged 18 to 30 years when there are no facilities anywhere in the country for these people to have the support they need. The Liberal-Nationals Government said it is time we took a stand on this and we will support a facility on North Head. The Government is looking at locating the centre as part of the redevelopment that will occur when the full capacity of Manly Hospital is no longer—as a result of the construction of the Northern Beaches Hospital, which is progressing amazingly well. [*Extension of time*]

Ms Tania Mihailuk: There is a by-election there.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It is not a by-election when we are talking about people who are dying. This is an initiative of the Liberal-Nationals Government. Since the member for Bankstown raised this issue, I point out that for 16 years Labor and Labor-supported Independents did absolutely nothing. The member for Bankstown should not be interjecting on something as sensitive as this. On Sunday the Premier made an announcement which gives the local community of Manly great pride to know that Manly will be the place where young people aged 18 to 30 from across this State can come and be supported. The member for Bankstown has raised the issue of election matters: It was not an election matter for 16 years when Labor supported an Independent who did nothing on the northern beaches.

Since the Liberal-Nationals Government came to power there have been massive upgrades of our schools: the Harbord Public School, the Manly West Public School—my old school, the Manly Vale Public School, and the Curl Curl North Public School. This morning I, along with James Griffin, the Liberal candidate—who will be a fabulous member for Manly, very much in the mould of Mike Baird—attended the \$50 million community health centre being built at Brookvale—again, never delivered by Labor, never delivered by Independents. That is as well as the open and working community health centre built at Mona Vale—another \$20 million. Another one at Dalwood in Balgowlah is open and working. The Independents and Labor did nothing for 16 years and this Government has delivered, is delivering, and will continue to deliver under James Griffin.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Lake Macquarie.

Mr Clayton Barr: I have a question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lake Macquarie has the call.

Mr Clayton Barr: It is Tuesday. We are supposed to have 10 questions.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will discuss my decision with the shadow Leader of the House. I would like somebody to examine the way in which I have calculated the allocation of questions, which is entirely fair. The member for Port Stephens will come to order. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the second time.

MEDICAL CANNABIS

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:06): My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Government consider implementing a moratorium on the prosecution of persons for the use and supply of medical marijuana while the Government oversees clinical trials and develops a definitive policy?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:07): I thank the member for Lake Macquarie for his question. I know he feels very strongly about this issue and I am grateful he has given me the chance to respond to his concerns. Our government is proud to support the most vulnerable people in the community among whom are people suffering from a range of serious illnesses, including people who are receiving palliative care and children with intractable epilepsy. That is why I am especially proud that our Government continues to lead the reform of medicinal cannabis in Australia, driving greater access to safe and effective cannabis-based medicines in the State under a framework that puts patient safety first. Since September 2014 our Government has invested \$21 million to increase access to medicinal cannabis for people suffering from

a range of serious illnesses. The first step on this journey in 2014 was to establish the Medicinal Cannabis Compassionate Use Scheme, a program that extends compassion to adults with terminal illness who use cannabis and—in direct response to the member's question—by providing guidelines for New South Wales police officers to help determine the appropriate circumstances in which to use their discretion not to charge. As at 12 December 2016, 310 people with a terminal illness had registered for the scheme.

It is important to note that this scheme formalises the inherent discretion of New South Wales police officers not to charge any individual where particular circumstances exist. I am advised that officers have exercised and continue to exercise that inherent discretion for compassionate purposes in relation to medicinal cannabis. As the member for Lake Macquarie is aware, a review of the scheme is underway and the concerns that he has identified are exactly the ones being examined as part of this review to consider whether we need to do anything further beyond what is already happening.

We accept as a Government that it is not only compassion that is needed. We also need to increase access to safe and effective cannabis-based medicines. That is why we are funding three clinical trials to investigate the benefits of medicinal cannabis: for terminally ill adults in palliative care; for chemotherapy patients suffering from nausea and vomiting; and for children with severe drug-resistant epilepsy. These trials are helping us to build the evidence around medicinal cannabis and to draw on the research from some of the world's leading doctors and researchers in this field. I appreciate the member raising these issues and I assure him that guidelines exist to treat people with compassion in specific circumstances, but the reviews we are undertaking will provide advice to the Government as to whether there is more we need to do. I thank the member for the question.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (15:10): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Will the Minister update the House on the major flow-on benefits of infrastructure projects, and is the Minister aware of any alternative plans?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:11): I thank the good member for Kiama for his question. He knows only too well the benefits of infrastructure and what it can bring to the people of his electorate.

Mr Gareth Ward: I'm after more.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: And he is after more. There is no doubt that the mega projects that we are building right across New South Wales have a very significant impact on jobs. I am very happy to report to the House that our projects are on time and on budget. I can also reveal to the House that our mega projects, such as Sydney Metro, Sydney Light Rail, WestConnex, the new Intercity Fleet and the More Trains, More Services program, are delivering some 55,000 jobs. What is very pleasing about that is that many of those projects will benefit people in Western Sydney.

I was particularly excited to see last week that at least one member opposite supports growth in Western Sydney—the member for Blacktown—when he spoke about Western Sydney growth. The only problem is that this week he is not supporting growth after he discovered that his own beard had run away from him because he is so unpopular. I do not know what is happening, Robbo, but bring back the beard.

Returning to the news about the 55,000 jobs, I am happy to reveal to the House that of those 55,000 jobs, 30,000 people are working on the Sydney Metro, 10,000 people are working on the light rail, 10,000 people are working on WestConnex, and what are the plans of those opposite? They want to cancel every single one of those projects. That is proof that the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is the party of the worker.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Those opposite are absolutely hell-bent on cancelling all of those jobs and sending all of those families onto the scrap heap. I am particularly interested in the WestConnex project. I know that the Minister for WestConnex is working around the clock to deliver that, but I am particularly interested in questions that were asked in this place in relation to the WestConnex project on 23 August 2016, 25 August 2016, 12 October 2016 and 19 October 2016 because a number of those questions related to issues such as land acquisition valuation. It is very interesting that those questions were asked and it is very interesting that earlier in question time the Premier referred to the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser advising the member for Strathfield that she had a conflict of interest arising from her residence in Ashfield.

One would think that when the member for Strathfield was given that advice she would have changed her pecuniary interest disclosures. But the good member left a period of time before making that declaration and, in that interim period, she asked specific questions in the House in relation to WestConnex. The point I make is that last week we heard the revelation that the member for Strathfield purchased a number of properties. It is a bit

rich that those opposite start pointing the finger when questions were asked at a time when a declaration had not been made and when the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser had told the member that she had a conflict of interest.

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

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

Ms Jodi McKay: If the Minister reads the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser's advice, he will see that it was with regard to an emissions stack.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is speaking about issues relating to transport infrastructure. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.

Ms Jodi McKay: I am very happy to give the Minister a copy of the advice.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield is ignoring me again. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the first time. I will extend the time for the Minister's answer if the member continues to take spurious points of order.

Mr Luke Foley: What, smearing her and she's meant to cop it, is she?

The SPEAKER: Order! I think members on both sides of the House have done a bit of that today.

[Extension of time]

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It is interesting that a couple of questions were asked in this House at a time when the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser had given the member that advice and no declaration had been made.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: What is even more telling about the property that is 300 metres from WestConnex is that when questioned about it the good member for Strathfield said, "It didn't cross my mind to tell Parliament. I did disclose it to Sydney Motorway Corporation", which had no record of that disclosure.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled that the Minister remains relevant to the question. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the second time. If the member continues to argue she will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: There is no doubt that the member for Strathfield is a repeat offender because there is previous evidence that she did not even disclose a \$50,000 donation from Buildev. If the member for Strathfield wants to throw mud at us, she is asking for it.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: This has nothing to do with the question the Minister was asked.

The SPEAKER: Order! I did not hear what the Minister said because of the level of interjections in the Chamber.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. I will refer the Minister to the Independent Commission Against Corruption if he wants to question my integrity.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. The Minister has the call.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It is interesting that the only person defending the member for Strathfield is herself. The point I make is that if the member for Strathfield wants to ask questions about WestConnex without disclosing her property interests the bottom line is that Labor's Opposition is nothing more than as a party of protest. We will continue to build for this State in the knowledge that all that those opposite will do is stop every single project.

The SPEAKER: The time for questions has expired.

Personal Explanation

MEMBER FOR STRATHFIELD

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:18): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Strathfield that her personal explanation must be brief and it must be personal. Leave is granted.

Ms JODI McKAY: I confirm that I sought advice from the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser with regard to the proximity of my home in Ashfield to the M4 East emissions stack. I did, and I continue to do, everything that is required of me in that regard. I believe more members should make use of the Ethics Adviser.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is not an argument. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the third time.

Documents

REGISTER OF DISCLOSURES

The SPEAKER: I table a copy of the Supplementary Ordinary Returns by members of the Legislative Assembly as at 31 December 2016. I order that the document be printed.

Committees

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 34/56

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled, "Legislation Review Digest No. 34/56", dated 4 April 2017. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: I also table the minutes of the committee meeting regarding Legislation Review Digest No. 33/56, dated 28 March 2017.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

Chair

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 30 March 2017 Jai Travers Rowell was elected Chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the consideration at this sitting of the notice of motion to be accorded priority given by the member for Oatley, followed by the notice of motion to be accorded priority given by the member for Fairfield, prior to the commencement of Government business.

Motion agreed to.

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**.

Surry Hills Light Rail Station

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

Ferry Services

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

Elizabeth Bay Marina Ferry Services

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

Gilmore to Batlow Rail Branch Line

Petition requesting the closure of the remaining portion of the Gilmore to Batlow Rail Branch Line, received from **Mr Darryl Maguire**.

Safe Schools Program

Petition calling on the Government to maintain and continue funding the Safe Schools program, 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**.

Police Powers

Petition requesting the provision of more police powers and stricter penalties to combat reckless driving, received from **Mr Kevin Humphries**.

Motions Accorded Priority

WESTCONNEX

Priority

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:23): I move:

That this House supports the construction of the M4-M5 WestConnex Stage 3 link.

I make it very clear at this point that the WestConnex M4-M5 link will keep the traffic flowing across the WestConnex project and reduce the congestion that plagues hundreds of thousands of motorists each and every day. The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is committed to investing in and building the roads and infrastructure that New South Wales desperately needs. Those opposite had 16 years to futureproof New South Wales but they did nothing. They had no vision, no plans—just many unfunded promises. This motion has been accorded priority because the people of New South Wales want and need this Government to get on with the job without the roadblocks put up by those opposite. This is Labor's opportunity to step up and show its true colours, to be responsible and support the construction of WestConnex and to fix the M4 and M5.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: I agree with you. You are not arguing priority.

Mr MARK COURE: I know that. I said that already. Those opposite should stop playing political games with the lives of people from western, south-west and south of Sydney and support WestConnex finally.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: It's okay. We've got a debate.

Mr MARK COURE: Well, put it on the record. Why don't you put it on the record? We on this side of the House are getting on with the job of delivering for the people of New South Wales. I invite those opposite to put on the record their support for WestConnex and fixing the M4 and the M5 finally, instead of just being a roadblock.

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

Mr MARK COURE: Communities, and particularly working families living in Campbelltown, Fairfield, Liverpool, Kogarah, Rockdale, East Hills, Oatley, Camden, Holsworthy, Penrith, Mulgoa, Parramatta and Lakemba, want this project to be delivered to ease traffic congestion and make their lives better. These areas will benefit greatly from the single biggest infrastructure project currently being built anywhere in Australia. WestConnex will widen and extend the M4, improving traffic along Parramatta Road and throughout the inner west. Labor has no plan when it comes to building much-needed infrastructure in Sydney and New South Wales. If people want congested motorways, Labor will deliver that—and that is the only thing Labor will deliver. The Liberal-Nationals Government will deliver an efficient, integrated, efficient transport system that supports growing the greater Sydney region for the west, south-west and southern suburbs.

Unlike the Opposition, the Government does not throw up its hands and say, "Sydney is full." We get on with the job of fixing the problems that affect people across this great State each and every day. WestConnex will be at the core of Sydney's motorway network, providing the long overdue underground link between the M4 and M5 and creating a seamless motorway without traffic lights. This project will let commuters bypass over 50 sets of traffic lights each and every day. This project will ensure greater connectivity between the greater west, the south, the south-west and of course the inner-city hubs across Sydney. Not only will commuters stand to benefit but life will be made easier for those working families, the tradies, the couriers and the freight operators who rely on Sydney's road network to do their jobs.

This Government is building an integrated road network and WestConnex is central to this. Most importantly, Sydney needs the M4-M5 to bypass the central business district, reducing traffic and dispersing it through the Rozelle interchange, and laying the foundations for future infrastructure projects, including the F6 and the Western Harbour Tunnel. This not only will reduce traffic congestion from local roads but also will bring economic benefits. In fact, the WestConnex project is expected to inject \$20 million in economic benefits into the New South Wales economy. [*Time expired.*]

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:28): I thank the Government for moving this motion because I always appreciate the opportunity to talk in this place about WestConnex and the mismanagement of that project—as I have done since it was first proposed. Overriding everything that is wrong with the way the Government is managing the project is the premise on which the Government proposed WestConnex. It sold it to Western Sydney as a project that would allow motorists to get to the airport and the port much more efficiently. It recognised that there was vehicle congestion for the people of Western Sydney; the Opposition agrees. The fact remains that the M4 East and the M5 duplication are underway, yet we still do not know how we are going to get to the airport or the port. The Government has not been able to fulfil the premise of this project.

The cost of this project started at \$10 billion. It is now \$16.8 billion, with no explanation as to why or how that cost has increased. This side of the House is firmly on the side of residents whose houses have been compulsorily acquired and we have advocated for a fairer deal for those residents. The M4-M5 link environmental impact statement [EIS] and business case are no longer current. The Government changes each day the way the proposal will work. Recently it removed the Camperdown exit. The traffic can enter and leave the motorway only at Haberfield and St Peters. The business case and EIS were premised on the Camperdown exit and are, therefore, no longer current. Labor has spoken time and time again in the House and publicly about the community's concern about tolls. The M4 will be tolled, but in 2010 the toll on that road was removed by Labor. Labor supports a toll-free M4. Labor supports a different way to manage tolls that includes the involvement of the Auditor-General and the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal. It categorically opposes tolls increasing beyond the consumer price index, which is what will happen with WestConnex and other roads in this State. Tolls will increase by up to 4 per cent a quarter.

I do want to touch on the secretive Sydney Motorway Corporation. That is important when considering the botched way in which this Government is delivering WestConnex—not just the M4 widening, the M4 East, the M4-M5 Link or the duplication of the M5, but the entire project. The Sydney Gateway was supposed to deliver people to the airport, but it is still unclear how that will happen. We are told the Sydney Motorway Corporation is a private entity and therefore not subject to the Government Information Public Access Act requirements of releasing information to the community. There is very little known about this organisation. It is not possible to discover how much the chief executive officer of the Sydney Motorway Corporation is earning. That is a fundamental question for the Government.

Mr Troy Grant: Ask him.

Ms JODI McKAY: The member for Dubbo says that we should ask. He should know that the Opposition has asked and received no answer. The Government opposed the Government Information Public Access Act amendments proposed by the Opposition that would have forced disclosure.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Strathfield will direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms JODI McKAY: I will. Recently, the Sydney Motorway Corporation sponsored the Greater Western Sydney Giants Australian Football League team. That is a rort involving Tony Shepherd, the chair of the Giants and former chair of the Sydney Motorway Corporation. Taxpayers' money is being used to support a sporting team in exchange for branding on a building and signs that people hold up at the game saying "WestConnex: Kicking goals for Western Sydney". If this Government were serious about supporting the Giants it would fund the team without asking for something in return. It has asked for the branding of WestConnex all over the Giants. For the first time in history a tollway is sponsoring a sporting team. The Government will not answer fundamental

questions about how much it is paying the Giants and what the terms of the contract are. The Opposition is happy to debate motions concerning WestConnex.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:33): The people of Sydney have no doubt that this is a Government capable of investing in and delivering integrated transport solutions for the people who rely on the network. It is staggering that the Opposition continues to peddle the absurd notion that the crucial link between the M4 and the M5 should never be built. Labor's infrastructure plan, *A Better Way*, states that the proposed M4-M5 tunnel link is not a transport priority. If the link is not built the F6 will not be built, thereby ensuring a life of traffic gridlock for the people of southern Sydney and the South Coast. Delivery of the stage three M4-M5 tunnel link is the single most critical part of WestConnex, and it is central to Sydney's future transport network.

The M4-M5 links to the future new M5 and will form part of the integrated transport program to get Sydney moving. It includes the Sydney Metro Northwest, the Sydney Metro City and Southwest, the Sydney West Metro, NorthConnex, the CBD and South East Light Rail, and Parramatta Light Rail. Road users do not need to be reminded that travelling on the M5 can turn from a great run into a lengthy trip as you sit in gridlock with commuters travelling to and from the city every day. I do it regularly and cannot wait for a road to be built that will allow more flexibility.

WestConnex will double traffic capacity along the M5 East corridor by building a new section of the M5, which includes construction of twin underground motorway tunnels from Kingsgrove to a new interchange at St Peters. The Government is pushing ahead to deliver the new M5 for all road users. Whether you are travelling from the west, south-west or all the way in from the Southern Highlands, this road will help you. Tunnelling is taking place 24 hours a day, seven days a week at three tunnelling sites, with additional road headers to launch from Kingsgrove this year. It is obvious when you drive past that it is progressing well.

The new nine-kilometre M5 tunnel will run underground from Kingsgrove to St Peters roughly in parallel—just to the south—of the existing M5 East, expanding the overall motorway corridor from two to four lanes in each direction, thereby doubling its capacity. This vital stage of WestConnex will cut up to half an hour from an average peak-time journey between Liverpool and south Sydney and motorists will be able to travel from Beverly Hills to St Peters in around 10 minutes. What a difference that will make to motorists. During peak times the average travel times on the M5 East generally will be halved and average travel speeds will be doubled for the more than 100,000 motorists who use the corridor every day. There will be around 12 kilometres of new and improved shared pedestrian and cycle paths around the interchange site. It will change the lives of thousands of motorists each day. It cannot be completed soon enough.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (15:37): Sending the member for Oatley out to argue in favour of the M4-M5 WestConnex stage three is like sending General Custer to the Battle of the Little Bighorn: It is doomed to fail. As the member for Oatley strutted up and down the Chamber with his hand in his coat, trying to appear as the conservative Winston Churchill, the only similarity was his stature—and I do not mean the way he dominated the House. The Government's announcement at the end of 2012 shows the reality of the WestConnex shambles. It stated that the M4-M5 link would resemble the boulevards seen in Paris and Barcelona. Remember that?

The Government stated it would be a magnificent structure that would be completed for a grand price tag of \$10 billion. The genesis of this roadway was to cater for the volume of traffic to and from Port Botany and the airport. The problem is that the announced roadway did not go within eight kilometres of Port Botany. To this date, as expenditure has crept above \$17 billion, it still does not go near the airport or Port Botany. It does not do anything about Sydney's freight or the movement of millions of airport passengers. The Government has not even approached Sydney Airport to gain access to the airport.

This road is simply a political announcement. The Government is incurring expenses of more than \$17 billion so far, and that figure will keep climbing as holes are dug in the middle of Sydney. It is a political solution to deal with traffic chaos. The Government is trying to sell the poor people in Western Sydney a bill of goods as they sit there, struggling, in car parks on the M4 and M5. What happened to the magnificent Paris or Barcelona boulevards? I suppose it was probably best described when announced in the *Sydney Morning Herald* by some reputable journalists, Josephine Tovey and Jacob Saulwick, who wrote "Traffic sewer will be no Paris or Barcelona". The Government's sewer policy was disclosed when it was announced in 2012. On 15 April 2013 the Paris- or Barcelona-like boulevard or slot was magically dropped. For three years Government members ran around the State announcing a magnificent boulevard. [*Time expired*]

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:40): By leave: I express my serious concern about this motion. I was asked to be less mean in this Chamber so I ask the Government nicely to take a minute and ask itself, "At what point do we take stock and halt the construction of WestConnex?" Originally it was a \$10 billion plan but now it has blown out to more than \$17 billion plus, which does not include the cost of linking WestConnex to

the airport because the Sydney gateway cost is now set outside it. I ask the Government: With the cost increase, at what point does it call a halt, take a step back and review the business case—which is questionable in the first place in terms of the cost-benefit ratio—and say that the cost has blown out too much? The Government needs to stop what it is doing and take a step back.

I ask: How many changes to the original plan have to be made and announced before the Government says what it is building is no longer what it announced or what it was supposed to build in the first place? The Government needs to halt this process and go back and consider the alternatives. The member for Holsworthy said that workers are tunnelling 24/7. I can report that the people of Haberfield, where heritage homes were acquired and demolished at the hands of this Liberal Government, hear them tunnelling 24/7. I assure everyone who is listening to this debate and who wants this project to stop that the Government, by its own measure, is far from building the M4-M5 link. There are no draft design plans, there is no planning approval and, most importantly, there is no funding.

There is a \$7 billion cost associated with this tunnel. It will cost more to build than the groundbreaking tunnel that links France and the United Kingdom. This WestConnex tunnel, which will be an eight-lane monstrosity built under the Newtown, Camperdown and inner west, will cost more than the Channel Tunnel. Is that the best use of the New South Wales taxpayer dollar? Is that the best use of public funds to address congestion? At what point will the cost blow out so much that the Government will listen, call a halt to construction and review this crazy tollway?

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:40): In reply: Today we have exposed each and every member of Labor and The Greens, who have always opposed WestConnex.

Ms Jenny Leong: Exposed or opposed?

Mr MARK COURE: Opposed. Today we exposed Labor. Labor members say one thing in this Chamber in opposition to WestConnex, the M5 and the M4 but another in their electorates where they support the project. The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is committed to investing and building the roads and infrastructure that New South Wales needs, unlike those opposite who had 16 years to futureproof New South Wales and did nothing. The former Government had no vision or plans, just a lot of unfunded promises.

[Interruption]

The member for Maitland will have her turn shortly. The people of New South Wales want and need this Government to get on with the job without facing roadblocks put up by those opposite. Today was Labor's opportunity to step up and show its true colours, to be reasonable and support the construction of WestConnex and finally fix the M4 and the M5, but today its members spoke against the project. Today they failed each and every one of the people, communities and working families in Western Sydney as well as south-west and southern Sydney by opposing WestConnex. We on this side of the House are getting on with the job of delivering for the people of New South Wales.

Extending the M4 to the M5 and linking them via WestConnex is important infrastructure for the people of New South Wales, particularly those who live in the western, south-western and southern suburbs of Sydney. Families in those areas must be able to get to work and return home sooner. I urge those opposite to be on the right side of history and to support the construction of stage three of WestConnex because the people of Sydney and New South Wales want this Government to deliver. Communities, particularly those in Campbelltown, Fairfield, Liverpool, Kogarah, Rockdale, East Hills and others such as Cabramatta, Holsworthy, Camden and Penrith, want this project to be delivered to ease congestion and to make people's lives better.

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

The House divided.

Ayes47
Noes37
Majority.....10

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Elliott, Mr D

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Davies, Ms T
Fraser, Mr A

AYES

Gibbons, Ms M
 Gulaptis, Mr C
 Hodgkinson, Ms K
 Kean, Mr M
 Marshall, Mr A
 Patterson, Mr C (teller)
 Petinos, Ms E
 Rowell, Mr J
 Stokes, Mr R
 Tudehope, Mr D
 Williams, Mr R

Goward, Ms P
 Hazzard, Mr B
 Humphries, Mr K
 Lee, Dr G
 Notley-Smith, Mr B
 Pavey, Mrs M
 Piccoli, Mr A
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Taylor, Mr M
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Mrs L

Grant, Mr T
 Henskens, Mr A
 Johnsen, Mr M
 Maguire, Mr D
 O'Dea, Mr J
 Perrottet, Mr D
 Roberts, Mr A
 Speakman, Mr M
 Toole, Mr P
 Ward, Mr G

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Car, Ms P
 Cotsis, Ms S
 Dib, Mr J
 Finn, Ms J
 Harrison, Ms J
 Hornery, Ms S
 Leong, Ms J
 McKay, Ms J
 Minns, Mr C
 Robertson, Mr J
 Warren, Mr G
 Zangari, Mr G

Atalla, Mr E
 Catley, Ms Y
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Donato, Mr P
 Foley, Mr L
 Haylen, Ms J
 Kamper, Mr S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Mehan, Mr D
 Park, Mr R
 Scully, Mr P
 Washington, Ms K

Barr, Mr C
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Daley, Mr M
 Doyle, Ms T
 Harris, Mr D
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Lalich, Mr N (teller)
 McDermott, Dr H
 Mihailuk, Ms T
 Piper, Mr G
 Smith, Ms T F
 Watson, Ms A (teller)

Motion agreed to.*Bills***STATE REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017****Returned**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I report the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the abovementioned bill without amendment.

*Motions Accorded Priority***NORTH COAST FLOODS****Priority**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! Standing Order 54 requires all members to be seated while they are in the Chamber.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:56): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Expresses its deepest sympathies at the loss of life in the North Coast floods.
- (2) Conveys its great appreciation to the organisations that have responded to the flooding emergency with professionalism and dedication.
- (3) Notes the strength and resilience of the communities of the North Coast as they deal with grief and recover from the extensive damage wreaked by the floods.

On behalf of the Opposition—and the Government, I am sure—I express our condolences to the families and communities who have been impacted by the North Coast floods, especially those who have lost loved ones. I pass on our thanks to the NSW State Emergency Service [SES], the Rural Fire Service [RFS], the NSW Police Force, Fire and Rescue NSW, the Ambulance Service of NSW, local government and all other organisations that have

dug deep to lend a hand throughout this very trying time. They are the epitome of the great Aussie spirit. As we have seen in the past, they always rise to the occasion under adverse conditions.

We pay tribute also to State Emergency Service Commissioner Mark Smethurst and Acting Deputy Commissioner Mark Morrow for their efforts in keeping the community updated and prepared during the event. Their work was second to none. We also thank business owners for releasing employees to assist SES units and RFS brigades. Our big thanks go to all units and brigades from around the State for helping during this event and for their ongoing assistance during the recovery process. Through social media, television, newspapers and radio we have learnt of the devastation that occurred as the 700 millimetre deluge poured down on the community. There is a lot of work to be done. We cannot underestimate how long it will take; it might be up to six months.

As we know, the effects of inundation can sometimes be seen in houses and buildings years later as mould starts to creep through. We realise that the clean-up will take an extremely long time. But we put on record through this motion that we acknowledge the resilience of our brothers and sisters in northern New South Wales at this most difficult time. As a collective, we call on insurance companies to assist those families and to process their claims in a timely manner. Insurance companies should not be placing red tape in the way of financial assistance to affected communities. I thank all local government representatives for their support, and make particular mention of the efforts of my friend Mayor Isaac Smith and the Lismore City Council.

Sadly, people are still not listening to the messages of the NSW State Emergency Service and other organisations. We now have hashtags such as #floodwit and #ifitsfloodedforgetit. I am amazed that we have to resort to social media to deter people from entering floodwaters. To date, 487 flood rescues have been undertaken, which has put in danger not only the lives of our volunteers but also the lives of loved ones and individuals. Somehow the message has to be made clearer that people should not enter floodwaters. Unfortunately, there have also been reports of looting. One man has been charged and police have given 16 move on orders. In my opinion, the book should be thrown at those offenders.

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (16:01):

I support the motion of the shadow Minister for Emergency Services, and member for Fairfield. Communities in northern New South Wales have suffered badly from this severe weather event and statistics regarding the damage caused by Cyclone Debbie and the following southerly front have been well articulated both in this House and in the media. Communities such as Ballina, Kyogle, Murwillumbah, Tweed Heads, Lismore and many other smaller areas of that beautiful region of our State have been inundated with an unseen and unprecedented deluge. Yesterday I joined the Prime Minister and Premier at the flood zone where I saw firsthand the resilience of those community members. They are extraordinary people, dealing with extraordinary events.

Those communities are not naïve; many have endured floods previously. But not like this one. Over the decades the characteristics and traits of floods have been mapped, predicted and responded to in many ways. But Mother Nature continues to throw even greater challenges our way, and that is exactly what occurred in this instance. More than 700 millimetres of rain were recorded in some areas; they were overwhelmed. However, we have heard some remarkable stories of resilience, effort and service above self on the part of our emergency services personnel and, as the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services, I am enormously proud of those efforts. On behalf of the Government, I express our appreciation for everything they have done, and will continue to do.

Yesterday I received a call from Northern Region Commander Assistant Commissioner Loy to brief me on the potential tragic loss of life in a river system in that region. It was very sobering. It has been confirmed today that a 44-year-old mother and two of her children, tender in age, are deceased. A third sibling, who was able to escape that horrendous situation, raised the alarm in a desperate attempt to save the lives of her family members. This has had a massive impact on that community and on the emergency services personnel who responded in this very difficult situation. The police divers and the rescue personnel from the State Emergency Service and other services at that tragic site will have to live with this incident for many years to come. The Government and the broader community will support them through that journey. We express our deepest sympathies and appreciation to all those organisations for their efforts. We identify and recognise also the strength and resilience of those communities. But there is much more to be done.

The recovery effort will be long, sustained and complex. The Government has made the necessary announcements and declarations for funding assistance to flow under the natural disaster arrangements that we have in place with the Commonwealth Government. An assistance point of contact at the Murwillumbah Community Centre has been established. The centre started operating at 9.00 a.m. today and more than 400 requests for assistance have been made already. As the Premier announced yesterday, Mr Euan Ferguson has been appointed as recovery coordinator. Recovery centres will be established to act as a one-stop shop for communities to access all the government services they require and to help people navigate the assistance available

to them. It is all well and good to talk the talk, but these recovery efforts are about walking the walk to get those people back on their feet.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:06): I join the shadow Minister for Emergency Services, and the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services in extending our deepest sympathies and condolences to the people of northern New South Wales. Earlier this year I visited Murwillumbah and my thoughts go out to the residents. I also offer my thanks to the emergency workers. Two years ago, when I had been in this place for little under a week, a category two cyclone hit my electorate. My constituents are still living with the ongoing impacts of that storm. It takes a long time to recover from such weather events.

I was heartened to hear the Premier talk earlier today about learning lessons from this storm. I hope that she has also learnt some lessons from the Maitland floods. I have spoken in this place before about farmers not being able to get anything more than a \$15,000 grant from the Government and how those who had not been working for more than 12 months in a full-time farm capacity were ineligible for that funding. That meant some retirees and others who were new to farming were not eligible for the grant. That put them in a position of significant hardship. I note the comments of the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Small Business about supporting business. During the Maitland floods there were no grants other than loans of \$130,000, and many are still leveraged as a result.

I urge the Government to work quickly to restore the assets of northern New South Wales communities. Last week I spoke about a school in my electorate where four teachers are still suffering from the health impacts of mould caused by the April 2015 super storm. One family was forced to live in a mould-infested house for months. The Government has failed to address these ongoing issues in my community. I again urge the Government to deal with these issues quickly and to make sure that insurers meet their obligations. I note that the member for Ballina is in the Chamber. I hope that she and the other local members are included in the discussions. One of the biggest constraints in assisting the communities of Maitland and the Hunter following the super storm in April 2015 was the obstructionist efforts of the Parliamentary Secretary to exclude local members from recovery meetings. I agree that we should be walking the walk, but the Government needs to make sure they actually do it.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:09): I thank the shadow Minister for bringing this important matter to the House and acknowledge the work that the Minister for Emergency Services and the Premier have done in visiting the area and offering disaster relief very quickly after announcement of a natural disaster area. We live in a high rainfall area on the North Coast. We live on a flood plain and we understand floods, but every flood is different, as was this one. It was high intensity rain over a very short period falling in a specific area. Last Thursday night whilst I was still in Sydney my wife phoned me to inform me about the heavy rainfall we were having around our place and the fact it was seeping into the garage. I knew we would have problems because we live on a hill. It was a question of the drains not having the capacity to take the volume of the rain that was falling. The next morning when I was flying to Grafton I was very wary about whether the Rex flight would actually make it. We made it to Grafton but the flight to Lismore was redirected to Ballina because Lismore was flooded.

My electorate has suffered but not as significantly as Lismore has. The community at Coraki is still isolated to a degree and many of the houses have been inundated. Coraki is a small low-lying community, but it is resilient and capable of looking after itself. Today I spoke with the council general manager to get an update. He informs me that council staff are in Coraki working hard to provide some relief for the residents. There will be a council clean-up and the council has been assisted by the disaster relief announced by the Government waiving the waste levy. That helps residents in those communities who are flood affected to get rid of damaged items and try to get back to some normality as soon as possible. We are not immune to flooding but we are resilient; we fight hard, we work hard and we need assistance. This is a time for us to come together to provide that level of support and assistance to our communities. I thank the State Emergency Service, both locally and from afar, who have come to the area to provide support and assistance. Our heartfelt thoughts are with these communities.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (16:13): By leave: I support this motion on behalf of The Greens and as the member for Ballina. I thank the member for Fairfield for moving the motion and thank the Government for supporting it today. I acknowledge that the electorates of the member for Lismore and the member for Tweed are in the flood-affected areas. The impact on the community of this particular flood is devastating. People have been very frightened and it has had an enormous impact on everyone. Conversations over the four days with my two State Emergency Service [SES] controllers and the Area Commander, Kaylene Jones have shown that the organisation of business owners and residents in Lismore and my own electorate was quite astounding. People were well organised and prepared; they rallied around. There were many volunteers, with out-of-town SES members coming from everywhere—the Blue Mountains, Campbelltown, you name it. I commend all of the State Emergency Service members and NSW Rural Fire Service volunteers, as well as the work that the Salvation

Army did to feed the Wollongbar base camp for the SES. The amount of food being provided to the SES bases and evacuation centres was incredible—and it is mostly women providing that support. The Department of Family and Community Services and the Red Cross were incredible. There is a Facebook page for volunteers involved in the clean-up in Lismore and the number of people is off the Richter scale.

Out of the tragedy comes the incredible, heartfelt sense of community. Both councils in my electorate have procedures in place to deal with rubbish, from kerbside collections to delivery to council tips. I commend the Minister for Emergency Services for his early declaration of the disaster area, the recovery packages and the appointment of the controller on the ground. Yesterday at the airport I talked to the commissioner and Kaylene Jones, who said that Ballina was very lucky indeed. I now have to work to make sure that we are not caught in the future by the perfect storm. Again, I extend my congratulations to all the volunteers. Today my staff are in Ocean Shores, which has been hugely impacted by flood.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (16:15): In reply: I thank the following members for participating in this motion today—the Minister for Emergency Services, and member for Dubbo, Troy Grant, the member for Maitland, the member for Clarence, and the member for Ballina for their heartfelt words and their assistance to their communities. We have seen the tenacity of local communities coming together to assist each other in the face of adversity. The impact of an event such as this does not just go away, it takes time. All the members who spoke have identified that, whether they be small businesses, primary producers, schools, community groups; the list goes on and on. This certainly plays in the back of people's minds in many communities and there are significant mental impacts forever and a day. We need wherever possible to provide assistance to those people.

The member for Ballina mentioned the Salvation Army doing what it does best in assisting during times of need and providing copious amounts of food to volunteers and locals as well. The member for Ballina referred to the assistance of the Department of Family and Community Services and the Red Cross. Minister Troy Grant mentioned the remnants of Cyclone Debbie and the southern front. This was unprecedented—an amazing amount of water in a short period of time in a vast area. We thank the community, particularly those who took stock of warnings and assisted local authorities by doing the right thing. One of the great things about Australians is our tenacity and resilience; more importantly we share that great Aussie spirit of coming together during times of need. The New South Wales Parliament passes our condolences on to the families who have lost loved ones, and to the communities. It is a difficult time for those who are grieving.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that the motion as moved by the member for Fairfield be agreed to.

Motion agreed to. Debate resumed from 28 March 2017.

Bills

GREYHOUND RACING BILL 2017

Second Reading

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (16:19): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017. I expect there will be more than one speaker on this bill on this side of the House and a few on the other side, if they are being honest, who will say what a shame it is that we are having to even consider this business in this place today. What a shame it is that this Government found itself in an extraordinary pickle after having visited upon the greyhound industry the greatest act of gratuitous political violence I have seen in my time in this place or that I can ever recall. I do not recall an industry in New South Wales ever being assailed in the way the greyhound industry was by this Government in the past 10 months.

I recall my amazement when the announcement was made in July last year on Facebook that an entire industry was going to be extinguished, with no justification whatsoever. I have spoken at length in this place on a number of occasions about that, but to say that it is regrettable, that it was a sorry piece of work that was completely avoidable and was one of the lowest acts in the annals of New South Wales government, would not be an overstatement. It was bewildering that the Government decided to seize upon the McHugh report and then selectively pick anecdotes from that report, some of which were highly contentious, to found a decision to ban an entire industry. At the time we debated the first piece of legislation in this place I said that nowhere in the McHugh report was there to be found a recommendation that, without further recourse to the people of New South Wales, to the industry or to the Parliament sitting as a body, the greyhound industry in New South Wales be extinguished. Yet that is what Mike Baird and his right-hand person, the member for Dubbo, and the then Treasurer and now Premier decided to do.

It was arrogance upon arrogance and folly upon folly that led this Government down a sorry path from that day until today. The Government refused to wait, even though the Greyhound Breeders Owners and Trainers

Association [GBOTA] had an action in the Supreme Court to set aside the McHugh report, which would have led to an amazing position, had the legislation gone through and had the GBOTA been successful in the court, where this Parliament would have rushed to a decision to extinguish an industry on the basis of a report that was flawed. But, nonetheless, the Government pushed on. The Government refused to support my bill—ironically, the Greyhound Racing Amendment (Greyhound Racing Integrity Commission) Bill 2016 that I introduced into this place—which would have done, in effect, much of what is contemplated and contained in this legislation. Having announced that it was changing its mind, the Government was not minded to support the bill that the Leader of Opposition introduced into this place, the Greyhound Racing (Repeal of Ban) Bill 2016, which would have halted the ban and given the good people in the industry a much happier Christmas than the one they ended up having.

This was manifest arrogance at its worst. It showed a complete and utter lack of empathy and a lack of understanding—a lack of willingness to be empathetic or to understand the little person in New South Wales. This Government was just marching over the top of the little people, or so it thought. Much damage has been done to individuals, to families, to businesses and to reputations; people went broke, people lost money, people were stressed, people contemplated suicide and marriages were put under stress—I do not know if any marriages failed but it would not surprise me if they did—and why? For nothing. It was just because a government decided, again, that it was not going to listen to the little people, it was not going to listen to communities and it would not hear the pleas of the good people in the industry.

The Labor Party is proud that, from the first minute of this deranged announcement, it stood with the people who founded the Labor Party over 100 years ago—the little people, the battlers. Within about an hour of the announcement being made I was on my feet condemning it and announcing in the most unequivocal of terms that having consulted with the Leader of the Opposition, the Opposition would have nothing whatsoever to do with this ban. I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition, who then took up our fight. I was with him on many occasions in every community, at every greyhound track and at every club in every corner of the State to join with the little people in this terrific industry in fighting back and not giving up.

I congratulate all the industry groups, the GBOTA, Brenton Scott and others, and all the people whom we met around the racetracks of New South Wales—some of those people are in the gallery today—on refusing to give up. The people who joined with us and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party—the new member for Orange is present in the Chamber; he was into it up to his eyeballs—and members of the Labor Party all over the State can hold their heads up and they can tell their grandchildren that they had a victory over a government that was mightily ascended at the time. Those people's efforts were not without some significance in bringing down a Premier and a Deputy Premier who deserved, on the basis of this legislation and of their treatment of the ordinary person, to be brought down. Their efforts stand as a lesson to all ordinary citizens who are assailed by a government that thinks it can ride roughshod over communities anywhere in this country. This is not how we should proceed with legislation and it is not how we treat people in New South Wales.

When I addressed this House on the Greyhound Racing Amendment (Greyhound Racing Integrity Commission) Bill in 2016, I said that communities were not given an opportunity to defend themselves and they woke up to this brutal news. I said:

The simple fact is that in Australia in 2016 the right to be heard is a privilege. It is not a gift. It is a right. The right to defend oneself, to challenge decisions, to elicit facts and find fairness is inherent in so many aspects of modern life. Procedural fairness and natural justice have become bywords entrenched in the legal system that protects our society. I went on to say:

They are entrenched in the field of employment. If a government worker bullies a fellow worker or steals a stapler from the stationery room he or she will be charged with misconduct, go before a panel and have the right to defend themselves, to be heard and appeal. If you are one of the thousands of good people, the overwhelming majority in the greyhound industry, those rights do not exist. They have yesterday and today been torn up and extinguished by this Government. Labor thinks those rights should continue to exist.

Those rights do exist and this Government that was dragged kicking and screaming to introduce this bill deserves everything that it got because we should never have reached this stage in the first place. Might I say that the now Premier was wily enough or perhaps some might say lacked sufficient courage to walk into this place. She kept her head down during this unfortunate melee but make no mistake about it: she was completely and utterly araldited to Mike Baird's right arm while he was visiting this legislative atrocity upon the good people of the greyhound industry; she was right there. And the same arrogance that manifested itself in respect of the greyhound industry is still manifesting itself in forced council amalgamations and the privatisations that are now lethally unpopular across the State—hospitals, sizing up of RailCorp for privatisation, Land and Property Information on the chopping block and the unmitigated continuing sale of public real estate and public assets to overseas interests.

Premier Berejiklian was up to her eyeballs in the sort of arrogance we saw manifest itself in the ban of the greyhound industry and she is now leading the charge with the continuation of these sorts of arrogant behaviours in other fields of endeavour right across New South Wales. I thank former Premier the Hon.

Morris Iemma, who chaired the Greyhound Industry Reform Panel, and members Simon Draper, Deputy Chair, Mr Brenton Scott, Mr Steve Coleman and Dr Christine Middlemiss. They came up with a report that they would have come up with if this Government had listened to Michael McHugh because the first recommendation of the McHugh report states:

Given the findings of the Commission concerning the management and governance of the greyhound racing industry, the Parliament of New South Wales should consider whether the industry has lost its social licence and should no longer be permitted to operate in NSW.

The salient word in that recommendation is "Parliament". Commissioner McHugh, one of Australia's most eminent jurists, meant what he said when he used the word "Parliament". He anticipated that his report would be considered by a parliamentary committee or there would be some other way for members as a body to work out everything that was necessary in contemplating whether the social licence had or had not been lost. I think there would have been a parliamentary inquiry or perhaps the Opposition could have sat down with the Government and said, "Why don't we form a greyhound industry reform panel with perhaps Morris Iemma, Simon Draper, Brenton Scott, Steve Coleman and Dr Christine Middlemiss." They would have come up with a similar report. We could have sat down with the industry then and got to exactly where we are today without all the pain that was running through the industry. But that was not to be.

I suppose we should be thankful for small mercies, that is, that in Australia when citizens band together and get help—and we should acknowledge some serious help for the industry from various sections of the media that made a significant difference—we can achieve results. We can be thankful that at least today the things the ordinary people in the industry pleaded for are now a reality because when we went around the State the sentiments were quite clear: no-one has any tolerance whatsoever for cruelty to animals or to a greyhound in the greyhound industry. We made it very clear time and time again, the Leader of the Opposition, others and I that we wanted the small number of perpetrators in the industry who were doing the wrong thing to be rubbed out. That is what the good people in the industry wanted as well. They wanted to throw the book at them—prosecute them, ban them and rub them out.

However, the industry said, "Give us a chance to reform ourselves. Give the good people in the industry a chance to run it. Don't rub us out. Give us another go." That is what they asked for, that is what we tried to effect here in the Parliament but were denied. Thankfully today 101 of the 122 recommendations of the Greyhound Industry Reform Panel are embodied in this legislation and the Opposition takes no exception to the fact that the administrative body will not be a state-owned corporation. That is not something we were particularly concerned about so we accept the legislation and the mechanisms that it puts forward to achieve what we have always been trying to achieve from day one.

The Greyhound Racing Bill 2017 has two key functions. The first is to repeal the Greyhound Racing Prohibition Act 2016, which would have come into effect on 1 July 2017, the Greyhound Racing Act 2009 and the Greyhound Racing NSW Rules. We wish that had been done through the bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition last November so that everyone could have had a much more settled Christmas and New Year than they did, but we are here. Secondly, it establishes new governance arrangements to allow the industry to continue while improving animal welfare.

The bill separates the commercial and regulatory functions of the industry currently performed by Greyhound Racing NSW but creates a new regulatory body for the industry, the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission. It establishes a new industry animal welfare committee to inform the commission and a new code of conduct. It amends various offences relating to animal welfare. It requires the registration of greyhounds, including a bond and annual registration fee. It gives the commission the power to impose penalties of up to \$110,000 on corporations or \$22,000 on individuals, to suspend, cancel or impose conditions on a registration, and disqualify or, if required, prohibit an industry participant from greyhound racing. Greyhound Racing NSW may take disciplinary action against racing clubs. Finally, it gives the commission's inspectors the power to require information and search premises and it creates a new offence of failing to comply. The Minister in his second reading speech went through the detail of the bill and I do not propose to repeat that here. I turn to the question of the future funding of the industry. On 27 March 2017 I received a letter from Brenton Scott, Chief Executive of NSW Greyhound Breeders Owners and Trainers Association, and spokesperson for NSW Greyhound Racing Industry Alliance. In that letter he said:

It is our understanding that the NSW Government is currently finalizing its response to the Reform Panel recommendations and is likely to announce its position very soon. We believe that the Government's response is likely to involve the flagging of a funding contribution to assist with the increased regulatory, governance and animal welfare costs.

We remain highly concerned, however, that the response will not address the critical need of recurrent funding. Both NSW GBOTA and the Alliance will strongly object to the Government's response if these concerns materialize. Mr Scott then spoke further about funding. The legislation is silent with regard to funding. The Minister in his second reading speech states:

On the operational side, a public contribution of \$11 million will be provided towards the costs of regulation. Funding will commence in 2017-18 and will continue for the next four years. This contribution is based on the bottom-up development of what the new welfare and integrity commission will need in its initial set-up phase, its staffing requirements and associated staffing costs, and realistic assumptions of additional non-staff costs.

That is all that is said about the \$11 million. I ask the Minister to guarantee that there will be a serious lick of that money in this year's budget. Eleven million dollars over four years could mean \$1 million this year, \$1 million next year and the rest of it back-end loaded to make the budget position look better in the forward estimates until after the election. This Government has performed that trick many times with regard to the healthcare regime.

I ask the Minister to indicate the budget position. I understand he is not the Treasurer, but the Cabinet will have scrutinised the submission. Treasury will have set out the contemplated funding timetable. I understand that is Cabinet-in-confidence. The Minister must assure the industry that the money will be front-end loaded and not back-end loaded. The new administrative and integrity bodies need to hit the ground running. If the Government will not assure the industry of that today in the Minister's reply, then a small number of people—I concede at this point in time it is small—who have contacted my office and said, "The Government is setting the industry up to fail," will have a voice. The Minister is present in the Chamber and I commend him for listening to the debate. I will assume the lack of detail concerning how the \$11 million will be spent over the next four years is an oversight and not creative wording. The Minister states:

In terms of capital funding, \$30 million over five years has been proposed as appropriate to meet minimum requirements for capital upgrades.

I respectfully ask the Minister, in the same vein as my comments in relation to recurrent funding, to detail what the Government is contemplating and commit to that funding. I understand that some of the capital will be spent on safety upgrades for tracks. If that is not done this year and more dogs are injured or killed there will be a blue. The Opposition would rather not have a blue; every member in the House is sick to death of having blues. Let us get the commission up and running.

The letter from Brenton Scott spoke of continued recurrent funding of the industry. Various solutions have been proposed but they are not contemplated in this bill. I note that the Labor Party in the Legislative Council has spoken to another party and it is likely that when this bill is debated in the other place there will be amendments proposed concerning funding. If those amendments are in the form seen today the Labor Party is highly likely to support them. I note that there is an amendment that contemplates further examination of the funding requirements of the commission and Greyhound Racing NSW and a full and frank examination of the anticipated costs to be incurred, as a result of the enactment of this Act, by the greyhound racing industry and its participants.

That is a perfect opportunity to have a serious, earnest look at, and examination of, the funding requirements of this industry into the future. Having had the God almighty blue, having won and then banded together to save the industry, Labor will not allow the industry to languish to a point that this process is repeated. Parliament must bulletproof this industry as much as possible. Labor wishes the good people of the industry peace and enjoyment working with their dogs—God knows, they deserve it.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:45): The member for Maroubra, perhaps understandably, milked the opportunity to point-score politically, but he did have the decency to acknowledge that the bill does what needs to be done. It will ensure that the greyhound racing industry can be restructured on a proper footing to meet the twin objectives of animal welfare and greater integrity that will ensure community acceptance and support of the industry. This discussion began in the middle of last year with a report that seriously questioned the animal welfare outcomes in the industry. Both sides of the Chamber shared the concerns highlighted by the McHugh report and were worried about the terrible outcomes documented. Responses differed as to the best way forward.

This bill is a good bill. I am glad the member for Maroubra has said it will be supported. It does what needs to be done. The bill has been thoroughly prepared and based on proper research. The Greyhound Industry Reform Panel provided the basis for a way forward for the industry that respected the concerns of the community and the natural concerns of the Government about integrity within the industry. It will allow the good, decent and ordinary people in the greyhound racing game to get on with their business.

The majority of members can agree that there has been progress and the industry is in a better place today than it was 10 or 12 months ago. The old regime was not as good as this new regime will be. I do not criticise those people who attempted, in the intervening period, to lift their game. When I last spoke on this issue I acknowledged that Greyhound Racing NSW over the last year or two has been attempting to improve and has raised standards. Unfortunately, it was starting from a low base and an unsatisfactory situation in which it was not able to meet the expectations of the community or the Government. This bill, built on the foundation of the report of the Greyhound Industry Reform Panel, can help to leave that behind and provide a better future.

The Greyhound Racing Bill 2017 is the vehicle providing the greyhound racing industry with the opportunity to function properly in New South Wales. A key component of the bill is the creation of a fit-for-purpose governance regime for the greyhound racing industry. As it stands today Greyhound Racing NSW, a body fully funded by income from the industry, has dual yet competing responsibilities. On the one hand, it seeks to maximise commercial returns to the industry; on the other hand, it is the industry watchdog, responsible for ensuring integrity and animal welfare standards. I think we all acknowledge that it was not the ideal structure, which was also highlighted in the report of Justice McHugh.

There have been significant improvements in Greyhound Racing NSW recently, and I acknowledge the significant efforts of the current and former administrator in driving change within the organisation. Notwithstanding, if community trust in the industry is to be fully restored, it is overwhelmingly clear that the commercial and regulatory functions of Greyhound Racing NSW must be separated. That is what the bill does. Greyhound Racing NSW will be reconstituted. It will have a new, majority-independent board and will focus on developing a sustainable greyhound industry. It will be subject to an operating licence issued by the Minister for Racing, and this operating licence will spell out the expectations of and requirements for the commercial body.

At the same time, responsibility for integrity and animal welfare functions will move to a newly formed Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission. This bill sets out the roles and responsibilities of each body. The bill empowers the reconstituted Greyhound Racing NSW to fulfil its role as the key commercial body responsible for promoting the greyhound industry. Clause 24 of the bill provides that Greyhound Racing NSW functions will include: conducting greyhound race meetings or authorising greyhound racing clubs to do so, allocating greyhound racing dates and racecourses, registering greyhound racing clubs and providing oversight of club governance, distributing prize money, developing safety standards for licensed racecourses and managing greyhound adoption programs.

The responsibilities of the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission will be that of industry regulator. It will have the necessary powers and functions to ensure that the industry operates under best practice governance and is the benchmark for all Australian jurisdictions. The bill provides that the primary functions of the integrity commission include controlling, supervising and regulating greyhound racing in the State. It will set standards and develop policies that will guide industry participants. The body will establish systems to check whether regulated parties are meeting those standards and it will monitor compliance with the standards and legislation. It will also investigate noncompliance and undertake enforcement actions where necessary.

An important part of the commission's policy setting will be the development of an enforceable Code of Practice for Greyhound Welfare. The commission will also have the functions of registering industry participants, greyhounds and greyhound trial tracks. It will establish and manage a greyhound register that will track greyhounds at all stages of their life cycle and provide a feedback loop on the behaviour of individual participants. The registering of greyhound industry participants and greyhound trial tracks will give the commission a greater knowledge of what is happening with greyhounds in the industry. This will make sure that some of the rogue elements that have existed in the past on the fringe of the industry will now be caught under the regulatory umbrella.

The commission will establish educational needs and training for licensees. It will also manage systems for flagging noncompliance by registered persons as well as determining when investigations are necessary. The enforcement powers of the industry regulator will be stronger than ever. The commission will have the power to weed out the bad elements of the industry and its strengthened enforcement powers will ensure that they are no longer welcome back. I am sure all of the decent people in the industry would agree with that. Those committing the serious offence of live baiting will be banned for life. The cost of the establishment and ongoing operations of the commission has been discussed at length and, as we have heard, will continue to be discussed.

The new body will cost more than is currently spent on animal welfare and integrity functions. The Government is fully aware that the industry will need time to adjust in order to meet the additional regulatory costs. That is why it has committed \$11 million over four years to help meet the start-up and operational costs of the integrity commission. This bill creates the appropriate governance structure for a sustainable and ethical industry. As we have heard, it does formally enact the repeal of the prohibition that went through last year. It sets up a situation in which people who wish to pursue greyhound racing in New South Wales properly and ethically will be able to do so and will have confidence that the structures in place will support them to do that and allow the industry to have the reputation it deserves within the community of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (16:54): On behalf of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party I speak on the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017. From the outset I indicate that we support this bill. However, we remain unconvinced that those opposite in the Liberal-Nationals Government are genuine and sincere in their commitment to ensure the long-term financial, cultural and social sustainability of the industry. I make this comment because

the Government's support package for the industry, which is a fraction of its fair share, is an insult to say the least. As with many recent Government decisions, I question the sincerity with which Government Ministers and members approach yet another "deplorable" group.

Greyhound breeders, trainers and owners have waited a long time to find out what their future will look like and in which regulatory and administrative space they will operate. Whilst I agree that the industry must work to the highest standards of animal welfare and safety regulations, which I will turn to shortly, the funding promised by the Government to the industry falls well short of what the industry will require to successfully meet the targets and objectives of the bill. In our opinion, this bill is only a small step in the right direction because without the appropriate level of funding and a genuine willingness by the Government to support the industry, greyhound racing in New South Wales could very well collapse or become a shadow of its full potential.

Turning to the bill itself, we support the establishment of the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission as an independent regulator and the reconstitution of Greyhound Racing NSW as an industry commercial entity. This reflects the recommendations of the Greyhound Industry Reform Panel and is good policy. Under the bill, the separation of regulatory and commercial functions, the formation of an integrity commission, the increased powers of the incoming commercial entity and the uncompromising approach to best practice animal welfare standards will fundamentally underpin the industry's future operating model. I applaud Greyhound Racing NSW for its commitment to best practice regulation, governance and animal welfare with complete and total conviction. It is unfortunate that it has had to fight the Liberal-Nationals Government for survival and to ensure their industry will remain sustainable in the future.

I turn now to the critical shortcomings of this bill and the Government's approach to the reform of the industry. A funding shortfall and an inequitable inter-code agreement are essentially the reasons the industry is where it is today. The financial impact and gross inequity of the inter-code agreement and the tax harmonisation between the three racing codes cannot be stressed enough. In 2008 Alan Cameron undertook an independent review of wagering in New South Wales for the then Minister for Gaming and Racing, Kevin Greene. He concluded that the inter-code agreement must be revisited. The McHugh special commission of inquiry concluded that the inter-code agreement must be revisited. The Greyhound Industry Reform Panel also concluded that the inter-code agreement and/or tax harmonisation needed to be revisited. In fact, recommendation 118 clearly states:

Government should consider intervening to increase revenue to support the greyhound industry support the additional welfare, integrity and operational costs of the integrity commission and industry by:

- a. legislating to amend the Inter-Code Deed so distributions better reflect contribution to TAB turnover (should the industry be unable to agree to a revised arrangement); or
- b. revisiting the distribution of the tax harmonisation revenues.

The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has always maintained a very clear position on the need for the New South Wales greyhound industry funding model to be considered and improved to properly reflect its performance in the wagering marketplace. The greyhound racing industry in this State has a proud history and New South Wales was once considered the premier greyhound racing State in this country. We have been actively campaigning for the interests of law-abiding greyhound owners since 2013, when my upper House colleague the Hon. Robert Borsak was first approached by the industry. Against the backdrop of a funding crisis and animal welfare concerns facing the industry, in 2014 the Hon. Robert Borsak chaired an upper House inquiry into greyhound racing in New South Wales. In total, that committee made 18 recommendations and two findings.

The first finding found that the then structure and sources of revenue may leave greyhound racing in New South Wales unsustainable. This was in large part due to the inequitable inter-code agreement, which was robbing greyhound racing of millions of dollars of money owed to it. The second finding was that the then management and operational model under which the industry operates needed substantial review and restructure. The common denominator amongst these various inquiries and commissions is clear. The greyhound industry cannot continue to grow and meet its obligations unless it receives recurrent funding that is aligned to its market performance. This Government has conveniently ignored all these recommendations. The support package connected to the current bill continues this ignorance and asks serious questions of the sincerity with which the Government approaches the long-term sustainability of the industry.

For many years, the Government has been well aware of precisely what issues were facing the greyhound industry and how to rectify them. Until Mike Baird announced he would be shutting down the industry, some senior Coalition members, pushed by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, began working together with the industry to ensure these findings did not fall on deaf ears. The rest, however, is history. We now find ourselves in this position: on the one hand the greyhound industry is working with the Government to commit itself to best

practice management, and on the other hand the Government is throwing pennies to the industry to meet said management.

Currently, the combined impact of the inter-code agreement and tax harmonisation distribution percentages means that the New South Wales greyhound industry cross-subsidises the New South Wales thoroughbred and harness industries by approximately \$25 million per year. The Government's support package is scarcely over this figure. It is an insult to the industry. Why should the greyhound industry submit itself to a higher standard of regulation without getting its fair share of what it is owed due to a continual ignorance and disdain from the Government? It is fundamentally unfair and unconscionable on the part of the Government. It is subsidised failure. In light of this, my upper House colleagues will move amendments to the bill that redress these issues and go to the heart of the Government's legitimacy and seriousness about the long-term commercial viability and sustainability of greyhound racing in New South Wales.

The amendments do not tinker in any way with the inter-code agreement or tax harmonisation percentages. However, they will ensure that it is the intention of the Parliament that the Government provides the commission with the necessary amount of money to meet the operating costs and obligations of the commission and Greyhound Racing NSW under the bill—in other words, money that has been systematically robbed from the industry for far too long. The future of the greyhound industry—and in particular its commercial viability—rests with this Government. It can make the decision to commit itself with sincerity and genuineness to the long-term sustainability of the industry or it can kill the industry off by stealth and underfunding. History will judge it accordingly and so will the people of New South Wales.

At present, I understand our amendments have the support of Labor and the Christian Democratic Party in the upper House. This means that, should the Liberal-Nationals members decide not to support them, they will have to yet again side with The Greens to kill off the greyhound industry. I understand that this may be difficult for some members to digest given that they were so vocal in their support of shutting down the industry, but greyhound racing does and will have a bright future in New South Wales. I applaud those members in this Chamber and the other place who had the courage to speak out against their peers and not vote with their party to shut down the industry. That was then and this is now. In this place I will continue to champion the interests of law-abiding greyhound owners, trainers and breeders because the industry contributes so much to our State, particularly regional communities.

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES (Barwon) (17:02): I thank the member for Orange for his passionate speech about the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017. I will comment on some of the issues he raised. I overwhelmingly support the removal of the prohibition contained in the Greyhound Racing Prohibition Act 2016, which would have commenced on 1 July 2017 if things were not turned around last year. I must acknowledge a couple of people, one of whom is not here. Dr John Keniry did a fantastic job in his review of the industry. He is a well-respected person from the Natural Resources Commission who has worked on many fronts. His report and community consultation were second to none. No party in this place responded to the concerns of the industry until Dr John Keniry began to publish and articulate some of the results. For any party or individual in this place to claim some sort of victory or say they are the protector of or main advocate for the greyhound industry is fundamentally incorrect.

It took somebody with Dr Keniry's skill and ability—and the cooperation of the industry and eventually the general community—to bring to light that what was happening to the greyhound industry was fundamentally not fair. The process was not fair. Good government is always about due process. Whilst I spoke out against some of my colleagues, a number of them felt the same way. Good governments can turn around bad decisions. Bad governments let bad decisions roll through. That happened too much in the past. I acknowledge Dr John Keniry for his work and for raising issues about the viability of the industry. He also highlighted the welfare concerns of the general community. They do not want buckets of money thrown at any industry without good reason. The people of New South Wales want the greyhound racing industry to continue but they want it to be conducted under a much more stringent welfare regime.

The other group I acknowledge is the Greyhound Breeders Owners and Trainers Association [GBOTA]. Many of its members are in the gallery. If not for their leadership in working with people such as John Keniry and others involved in the review, these issues would not have been dealt with constructively. People could have put their heads in the sand, certain groups would have had their way and we would not be having this debate. Thankfully, level heads prevailed and they articulated a cogent argument to say the industry should continue, acknowledging that welfare issues related to breeding, training and wastage can be dealt with under a more robust licensing regime. We know the industry can work together and potential safety issues at some tracks can be resolved. It takes money, but it does not take hundreds of millions of dollars. It needs to be done in a constructive way, which the industry needs to lead. At its core this bill provides for that.

There has been a process of internal review. I have no doubt that the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017 will make the industry much stronger. In fact, I am quite optimistic about the future of the greyhound racing industry. I do not think viability will become a problem. Identified welfare issues will be dealt with through the integrity commission. As soon as the greyhound racing board is up and running it will look at the business side of things and conduct audits for the cost of track upgrades and the benefits to begin to address some of the issues that have hung over the industry's head for some time. The sooner we get on with it the better.

The governance that the bill provides for is key to the future of the industry. The fact that \$41 million has been provided to fund not only the board, the operational side of things and track upgrades but also the integrity commission is fundamentally important. If thoroughbred, trotter and harness racing industry participants think the establishment of the integrity commission has no implications for them they are being naive. It is important that we get the integrity commission right because it will have implications for the wider racing industry. The fact that GBOTA has taken the lead and put forward a sensible plan about limiting breeding numbers through a licensing regime and whole-of-life tracking of racing dogs shows it is a responsible group. The industry has taken on many of the problems and provided a sensible outcome to the Government, which acts on behalf of the people of New South Wales.

This bill is not about the inter-code agreement. That agreement was set up for a reason and all industries took part. To say the nature of wagering and betting has not changed is an understatement. Technology—online and phone betting—has changed the track experience. The way things are going, bookmakers will be the next endangered species. An issue that the Government is investigating—and I suspect it will be raised in the upper House—is: How does it respond to betting regimes not only in this State but also across the country? I believe all 34 tracks in New South Wales should and will stay viable, whether they become country racing tracks or centres of excellence.

We have also missed out on point-of-consumption taxation on online betting sites—the Minister is nodding. It is estimated that point-of-consumption taxation in New South Wales will generate between \$80 million and \$90 million annually. So there is room to equalise the disparities within inter-code betting. Point-of-consumption taxation for some of the operators that are currently operating tax free is the next iteration of how we will keep the racing industry viable and, more importantly, how we will play catch-up with some of the issues that the greyhound industry will face going forward. Some would say that it is all doom and gloom for the greyhound industry; that is not the case. The greyhound industry will be sustainable and much stronger in the future. Indeed, on this side of the House we will continue to make sure that happens. Over the next six months, in particular, the emphasis will be on governance because to get the best business case for the industry we need the right people sitting around the decision-making table—whether that be the integrity commission or the governing board of Greyhound Racing NSW. They will then come back to us with a strategic plan that will include an audit of all tracks.

I have also discussed with the Minister the difficulty created when the industry loses control and the bureaucrats take over. I refer to a couple of decisions that have been taken about some tracks in rural New South Wales, particularly the one at Coonamble, where a couple of unfair decisions have been made. I understand that the Minister is looking into the issue and will ensure that, once the board is up and running, the decision-making will not default to bureaucrats or to those operating in a vacuum. I have given that undertaking to the people involved in that discussion. I have apologised to people for the Government having ended up in the position of requiring legislation to fix something that was fundamentally wrong. In particular, I thank the people in the gallery who have gotten themselves into a better position.

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (17:12): I make a contribution to debate on the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017. At the outset, I acknowledge the members of the industry who are seated in the gallery and for whom it has been an extremely stressful nine months. We hope for a better and brighter future for them. When I first spoke about the greyhound racing industry I demanded an explanation for the Government's response to the McHugh report. What I got was an indefensible Liberal plan to shut the industry down. The McHugh report contained workable and sensible suggestions. It weeded out offenders—reprobates who brought shame on this good industry with their cruel and greed-fuelled practices. Former Premier Mike Baird got it horribly wrong. Instead of seeking a simple solution to a complex problem, he banned the industry without any consultation.

It was impossible to make Mike Baird listen. Thousands of good Australians were thrown under the bus and their cries fell on deaf ears or went unheeded. However, a petition containing 37,000 signatures—which the community rallied to gather over a two-week period—got the Government's attention. The Government's response to the recommendations in the McHugh report involved an unprecedented misuse of \$1.6 million of public funds for advertising. That media brief insulted the intelligence of a vibrant and diverse community of dog breeders, racers and racegoers, and completely disregarded legislative and parliamentary practices, including the sidestepping of necessary peer review processes for all commissions and inquiries. It is a nice change to have this

legislation in front of us, rather than the partisan extremism of the ban. I might, if I dare, even commend Mr Baird for admitting his Government's mistake. I may even thank the Government, under Premier Berejiklian's leadership, for tabling this legislation.

The bill marks the decision by the Government to acknowledge the pain and hardship that banning this industry would have caused to thousands of people—it has already caused stress. The bill acknowledges that the greyhound racing industry brings people together—be they trainers, punters or social members. More than 6,000 people in Wallsend alone will be very relieved that the industry on which their livelihoods are based will continue to exist beyond July 2017. Clause 11 of the bill states:

The principal objectives of the Commission are as follows:

- (a) to promote and protect the welfare of greyhounds,
- (b) to safeguard the integrity of greyhound racing and betting,
- (c) to maintain public confidence in the greyhound racing industry.

The heart of the problem lies in the "confidence in the greyhound industry". The banning of the greyhound industry in response to a story that appeared on the *Four Corners* program did more than just cause financial damage. The greyhound racing industry's social licence was damaged by the intolerable and unforgivable actions of a few rogue breeders and trainers. The Baird Government refused to implement the recommendations contained in the McHugh report by instating regulatory infrastructure, as this bill suggests, and chose instead to ban the industry outright. In so doing, the Government singlehandedly dismantled the greyhound racing industry's already damaged social licence. Clause 23 of the bill states:

The principal objectives of GRNSW are as follows:

- (a) to be a commercially viable entity,
- (b) to exhibit a sense of social responsibility by having regard to the welfare of greyhounds,
- (c) to promote greyhound racing in the State as a competitive and sustainable industry with a high of public trust.

That is what the people in the industry wanted and had been trying to implement when the report was handed down. At that time, local journalist Kat Ernst said:

The greyhound industry admits its faults, but right in the middle of reform we are shut down—just as the bad apples were being weeded out! The good people in this industry deserve a chance to show everyone that we love our dogs and treat them right!

She is right. As for a high level of public trust, how can the public trust a government that has spent well over \$1 million vainly attempting to gain public support with inaccurate and false information to defend its indefensible position? The Government then insulted and denigrated people in the industry by referring to them as "illiterate". It painted them as incapable and unwilling to reform. The good men and women of the greyhound racing industry will continue to work hard to rebuild the public's trust after it was trashed by those opposite.

The greyhound racing industry is made up of ordinary people. Within our local greyhound racing industry and community are newsagents, plumbers, painters, plasterers, concreters, tilers, miners, upholsterers, mechanics and many others. They should not be demonised or set apart from anyone else. The Wallsend greyhound community are not stuck in the past; the people embrace change. These men and women were rightfully worried about what the previous Government's Twitter announcement would mean for them and their families. Our people were asking for a chance to be heard, a chance for our community's stories to be told. Too much was at stake for the Wallsend community and other regional communities as well. They did not want the Government to approach the industry with a closed mind.

I agree with the member for Maroubra, who made some very good points. He said that the Minister and the Treasurer must give the community and the industry a clear indication of their funding timetable, funding must be front-loaded rather than back-loaded and the industry needs a fair share of funding. I certainly agree with that. The member for Orange made a very good point and, like him, I do not want the industry to collapse. I am determined that this honourable industry thrives and survives. The Government must look at the Coonamble track. After living in Walgett for four years I know the Coonamble track well and want to see tracks like it survive. I am proud to have stood up and fought for the members of my community—particularly The Gardens Greyhound Club at Wallsend—and look forward to working with them to ensure that we have a viable, socially responsible industry with a very high level of trust.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (17:21): In speaking to the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017, I note that its overview contains several very good objectives. The first and most important is to remove the prohibition on greyhound racing in New South Wales that was due to commence on 1 July 2017. It reinforces other issues that have been of concern to the Government, particularly animal welfare. In joining members on both sides of the House who support the bill, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Brenton Scott and

members of his team who have come to Parliament this afternoon. They have been through the most tumultuous time since 7 July 2016.

I have three greyhound racing tracks in my electorate: a most beautiful, immaculately cared for track in Temora, owned by the Greyhound Breeders Owners and Trainers Association, that holds meets regularly; another beautiful track in Young; and another in Cowra. There are thousands of greyhound racing enthusiasts across my electorate and the State. When an industry is as important as greyhound racing there are many small, spin-off businesses, particularly in regional New South Wales, that are totally reliant upon it. When the greyhound racing ban was announced on 7 July 2016 my world descended into turmoil as I began receiving telephone calls from people, some of whom had had a pretty rough start to life and some of whom were very successful. Whether prince or pauper, they all had a common theme: The greyhound racing industry should not be banned. They asked what it was all about.

Sitting at my desk in my Yass electorate office I was shocked to see the emails and to learn that the bill was to be introduced without consultation. I determined at that time to do whatever I could to see the decision reversed. I issued a media release on the same day saying that I was appalled by the ban, which would affect the livelihoods of thousands of people, and I pledged to try to get it overturned. I said, "I will be doing whatever I can to have this decision reversed." It was a joyous day indeed when the former Premier announced on 11 October 2016 a change to the Government's policy in respect of greyhound racing in New South Wales and the Greyhound Industry Reform Panel was established to provide recommendations on potential new animal welfare and governance arrangements to reform the industry and restore confidence in its integrity.

On 16 February 2017 the hardworking panel's report was released publicly. I congratulate the Minister on pursuing the necessary reform and on making sure that this bill came forward in a timely manner. I congratulate him and the entire Cabinet on making sure that the bad legislation of 2016 was replaced by something that is quite excellent. If we are to take something positive out of this episode it is that the industry has had to have a good, hard look at itself. I know it has been doing that for some time but I cannot help think everybody will be a little more careful when it comes to reporting people who do the wrong thing. I am the first to admit that some people were definitely doing the wrong thing, and some will continue to do so. We must be vigilant and make sure that people who breach animal welfare guidelines are reported and dealt with according to the law. This new legislation enhances the enforcement regime.

In my electorate I have trainers, owners, breeders, punters and bookies. I also have farmers, who continually tell me that people should not attribute human qualities to animals. If they continue to do so we will no longer have a primary industries sector, a meat industry or a dairy industry. While animal welfare and the humane treatment of animals is incredibly important, we must be very careful about where we draw the line. Once an industry is banned because of a certain perspective, where does it stop? Will that approach be applied to the merino breeding industry, the kelpie breeding industry or the dairy industry? There could be no end. That was another side of this debate, which demonstrates the importance of overturning the legislation. The government of the day was well intentioned, but those of us who have grown up in and who live in the regions—I am a fifth generation Yass resident; you do not get much more rural than that—know people who have been greyhound trainers and breeders. This is a great day for them.

In my speech on the original legislation I pointed out the importance of dog ownership and the warmth that owning a dog can bring into a family. It can also lead to good health as walking a dog is fantastic exercise. Unfortunately, figures released by the Heart Foundation paint a very grim picture of the health of the Riverina, where half of my electorate lies. The figures show that the Riverina is the second laziest region in the country. Regional Australians are 30 per cent more likely to have cardiovascular disease than those who live in metropolitan areas. But for residents of the Riverina the risk is even greater. It has the second highest rate of physical inactivity in Australia, at 81.2 per cent, which is nearly 30 per cent higher than the national average. It has the fourteenth highest rate of high cholesterol in Australia and the seventeenth highest rate of cardiovascular incidents. Anything we can do to get people out and about, including dog ownership, must be encouraged.

Some prominent people came out in opposition to the ban. I thank Ricky Ponting—it was a side of him I had never seen before—and Sam Neil, who spoke some very positive, encouraging words about overturning the previous bill. I also thank all the clubs and associations around New South Wales that chose to name races after those of us who supported them. That was a very touching and unexpected gesture. I put on the public record how touched and humbled I was, as I know were many other members. It was not at all necessary but it was greatly touching and certainly something I never expected to say on the public record during my parliamentary career. I received literally thousands of letters of support from everywhere in relation to my stance in support of the greyhound racing industry, but the most prolific letter writers were in southern New South Wales.

It was never my intention to be the great saviour of the greyhound racing industry, but for some of us on this side of the House there was nothing else we could do. As the representative of the electorate of

Cootamundra—it does not have a big city; it is just a series of country towns and villages with good, hardworking, country people—there was nothing else I could do. If I had to do it all again, I would. I know the Government has certainly learned from this exercise, particularly when it comes to banning an industry as a fait accompli without full consultation with all Government members. I hope that this serves as a message for future generations of parliamentarians in this place that before they go around banning industries they must ensure that there is full and comprehensive understanding of the impact of their actions on the common man. If that impact is likely to be negative, they should think twice, think thrice and then consider an alternative proposition. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:31): I speak on behalf of The Greens in debate on the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017. I start by reading out a couple of quotes from the special commission's report. One paragraph states:

The Commission's view is that, despite the best intention and efforts of the new management at GRNSW, it appears unlikely that the issue of the large scale killing of healthy greyhounds by the industry can be addressed successfully in the future.

Another quote reads:

It is an industry where, as Chapter 17 details, many trainers appear to prefer cheap and sometimes painful methods of treating greyhound injuries instead of using the services of qualified veterinary surgeons.

Another paragraph of the report states:

In September 2009 and March 2010, senior officials even prepared documents for meetings of the GRNSW Board which plainly indicated that the practice continued ...

That is the practice of people using painful methods to treat greyhound injuries instead of using the services of qualified veterinary surgeons. A further quote from the report reads:

Given these views, and the highly entrenched nature of live baiting as a traditional training method, there is a very real risk that, once the harsh spotlight of this Commission is removed from the industry, the practice of live baiting will thrive once more. It is imperative that regulators take all available steps to try to ensure that this does not occur.

Primarily, the bill repeals the ban on greyhound racing in the Greyhound Racing Prohibition Act 2016. That legislation was passed in August 2016 by the New South Wales Government with the support of The Greens. The Greyhound Racing Prohibition Act prohibits greyhound racing in New South Wales from 1 July this year. It is shameful that we now find the Government introducing a bill to repeal that Act and the ban. I acknowledge the work of my Greens colleague Dr Mehreen Faruqi in the other place in consulting with the incredible organisations and groups that stand up for animal welfare. I acknowledge also that in fact the late Dr John Kaye—my Greens colleague whom we miss dearly—introduced a bill to ban the greyhound racing industry back in May 2015. I acknowledge Lauren Waldon from Dr Kaye's office who worked tirelessly on the legislation.

It is important that we look back at the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Greyhound Racing Industry in NSW and remember the McHugh report found that thousands of greyhounds were killed each year because they were deemed uncompetitive as racing dogs, or "wastage". The report estimated that even if the industry was reduced to minimum viability, 2,000 to 4,000 dogs would be killed as wastage prior to reaching racing age each year. The report found evidence of live baiting extending as far back as 2009 and that around 10 per cent to 20 per cent of trainers engaged in the practice. The commission concluded that there is endemic support for the practice and that Greyhound Racing NSW knew about the practice but did nothing about it. Greyhound racing is run commercially in only eight countries. The largest of those is the United States of America, where greyhound racing has been in decline over a number of years, with Arizona becoming the fortieth State to ban the sport in June this year. Based on the evidence gathered, the first recommendation of the special commission of inquiry states:

Given the findings of the Commission concerning the management and governance of the greyhound racing industry, the Parliament of New South Wales should consider whether the industry has lost its social licence and should no longer be permitted to operate in NSW.

The Government acted on that recommendation, but then did a sensational backflip after ongoing pressure from the Labor Opposition and pressure from a range of people in the community. It is important to recognise that the substance of the bill has serious implications beyond the repeal of the ban. Recommendation 48 of the reform panel states:

As a condition of the operating licence, the commercial entity should fully offset the costs to Government of maintaining the integrity commission.

The Government has decided instead that the industry will not pay fully for these costs for another five years, which amounts to using \$41 million of taxpayers' money to subsidise the greyhound racing industry. The Government has said that \$11 million will go towards establishing the integrity commission and the balance will go towards capital works.

Mr Paul Toole: You only have jelly beans in the upper House, don't you?

Ms JENNY LEONG: I note that the Minister is interjecting. I express real concern to the Assistant Speaker that the Minister is heckling; but he can heckle as much as he wants about jelly beans. Many of the animal welfare measures that have been announced, such as controls on euthanasia, litter limits for breeding females, bonds for dogs and lifetime tracking, are not mentioned in the bill. They will presumably be in the code of practice to be developed by the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission, but it is concerning that there is nothing in this bill to ensure that those practices are overseen and that measures are enforced to stop them. Even if those measures appear in the code of practice, the Minister for Racing does not necessarily have to apply the code, but rather may apply it, and he has the ability to amend or repeal it.

This bill is a step forward on the almost non-existent animal welfare standards in the greyhound racing industry that applied before the ban. But it cannot change the fact that the greyhound racing industry is an inherently lethal and dangerous sport for animals. The Greyhound Racing Bill 2017 does not enact a registration system for greyhounds but is weak and non-transparent. Dogs are required to be registered only after 12 weeks and, while a breeding cap has been a key promise of the industry in the past, it has backtracked on that measure and a cap was rejected by the Greyhound Racing Reform Panel. The Greens oppose the reintroduction of greyhound racing in New South Wales and believe no amount of legislated animal welfare measures can stop the inherent cruelty. We must acknowledge that the decision by this Government, its backflip and the playing of politics by all sides on this issue have had real impacts on people's lives. That is never welcome.

The reality is that this report and the commission's recommendations were listened to and enshrined in legislation introduced by the Government. The Government should have held its ground, not caved into the dirty politics that we saw from the Labor Opposition. I acknowledge the constituents in my electorate of Newtown and The Greens' supporters across this State who contacted us and who believe animal welfare needs to be at the heart of all considerations. I acknowledge the Humane Society International, the ABC *Four Corners* exposé on live baiting, GREY2K, Gone are the Dogs, the Anti Greyhound Racing Network and Greyhound Rescue.

I acknowledge also Greyhound Rescue. I foreshadow that I will move amendments to this bill because it is important for us to acknowledge that if there is to be a review of this Act in three years time the review must also include a requirement to consider whether greyhound racing should be banned on animal welfare grounds in the future. The amendments do not seek to ban greyhound racing now but if the Government and the Opposition are genuinely committed to ensuring that this industry cleans itself up on the grounds of animal welfare, they will have no issue in supporting The Greens amendments, which say that should be considered as part of the review. I have tabled a copy of the amendments.

I conclude by stating that The Greens oppose the reintroduction of greyhound racing in New South Wales because we believe that no amount of legislative change can protect animal welfare and stop the inherent cruelty. We do not support any public funding going to subsidise the cost of implementing the new measures to support the racing and gambling industry, an industry that has been shown to have engaged in animal welfare issues and cruelty. It is a shame we saw such dirty politics being played. There was a report and it recommended a ban. The Government acted on that report but then caved in to the dirty politics by Labor. The way that Labor has played all sides of this is shameful. Labor members go to the election claiming they care about animal welfare. They see a political wedge; they slam the Government over it when the Government follows the recommendations yet they still locally narrowcast and pretend they care about greyhound welfare and greyhound rescue in areas where it plays well to them. The way the Opposition has behaved on this bill disgusts me. I acknowledge that there are different political positions but to narrowcast and be so targeted in their reaction to this offends and disgusts me.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (17:41): I support the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017. Greyhound racing makes a significant contribution to small businesses and our regional communities, as the Assistant Speaker would know as a regional member. It is fair to say that much angst has been experienced throughout the greyhound industry, not just directly but indirectly with suppliers, businesspeople and farmers. In my contribution on 11 August 2016 I said that farmers and other groups were worried that this would be setting a precedent. However, the Government has listened, learned and is now correcting that situation. I acknowledge members of the Greyhound Alliance who are present in the public gallery. They have professionally and consistently put their case to the Government and individual Government members for why the greyhound industry should and will have a good long-term future.

The Greens have said that they do not have faith that people in the industry will be able to make the necessary changes for the long-term benefit of the industry and the welfare of participants and the animals. The Government does have faith. The previous flaw in the greyhound industry will be addressed by this bill. The oversight and regulatory role of the integrity commission will be separated from the functions of the commercial role of the greyhound industry. It should always have been set up like that; those two roles should

always have been separated. There are many instances where an industry cannot be its own regulator and this bill addresses that problem.

The integrity commission is being supported by \$11 million from the Government for its first five years to enable the commission to be set up and to put the policies, procedures and oversight measures in place to ensure that animal welfare and participants are properly regulated. In addition, the industry will have a commercial arm that will drive the short, medium and long-term viability of the greyhound industry and participants in the industry. A sum of \$30 million of the \$41 million package has been set aside for the greyhound industry essentially for track and facility improvements based on animal welfare issues. For instance, where particular tracks have a bad camber or need upgraded rails, participants can apply for funding from that \$31 million to upgrade those tracks. The Government is the facilitator to allow the longevity and long-term viability of the greyhound industry.

It is up to the industry and its members, such as those in the gallery, to ensure that they get it right. The commercial board and the integrity commission must ensure they get every aspect right, including animal welfare policies and commercial realities. The board must consist of properly qualified people whose focus is on nothing but the long-term viability of the industry. In my speech on 11 August 2016 I mentioned a fellow I knew, Maurie Grey, who unfortunately passed away, but who spent 50 years working as a volunteer in the greyhound industry. He was the president of the Muswellbrook Greyhound Racing Club and was passionate about greyhounds. On 11 August 2016 I said that Maurie would be turning in his grave at what was happening at that time. Maurie can now look down with some degree of comfort knowing that every cloud has a silver lining.

Maurie took a pragmatic approach and like the alliance members in the gallery perhaps needed that time to focus on what the industry and its participants required for their long-term benefit. I have no doubt that Maurie would have played a strong role in ensuring that the greyhound industry had a long-term viable future. I know he would be much happier that we are now discussing this bill to reconstitute Greyhound Racing NSW, with appropriate measures, because many people across New South Wales love their dogs.

In August last year I also mentioned Steve Whalland, finishing line photographer at many tracks and a great mate of mine. I have known him for 35 years. He has integrity. He had a 10-year business plan that a year ago he would not have been able to proceed with. Now he can fulfil those goals. A year ago Kancool Pet Food, in my electorate, would have gone broke but will now stay open. It will now thrive and flourish in the long-term and secure nine to 11 jobs in the small towns of Willow Tree, Quirindi and Murrurundi. These are important measures. There are many small businesses involved in the greyhound industry and many people who are passionate about the welfare of their dogs and ensuring that they can continue their passion for racing. There is nothing wrong with it.

The Greens are totally off the mark if they believe this is a capitulation to integrity within the industry. It is not. This bill is an improvement to the industry to ensure that its long-term viability is assured. The bill will separate the integrity commission from the commercial functions of the industry. With the right people on those boards there is no doubt that the greyhound industry will continue to thrive in the long term. On a Saturday night about 20 years ago I used to attend the Muswellbrook greyhound racing track and see 200 to 300 people in attendance. I see no reason why the Muswellbrook track cannot thrive once again. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:51): Labor has never played dirty politics with this issue. Labor will not be lectured to by The Greens in relation to playing dirty politics with this issue. I acknowledge in the gallery today representatives from the greyhound racing industry and I welcome them to the New South Wales Parliament. There are many greyhound owners, breeders and trainers who love their dogs and will do anything for their dogs. I highlight to The Greens that the McHugh report never recommended that the Premier make an arbitrary decision to close the industry. The McHugh report had 80 recommendations but it never said "close it down".

I support the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017 and the new beginning that it offers for the greyhound racing industry. It will mark the end of a Government-funded witch-hunt and the destruction of thousands of livelihoods. What I have always believed to be true will now be assured, that this industry continues to value its animals and will guarantee their welfare above all else. My electorate of Shellharbour is home to Dapto Greyhound Racing Club—the world famous "Dapto Dogs". My relationship with this club is a strong one. I stood with them to fight against the original misguided ban and celebrated with them when this Government backflipped. Dapto Dogs is an icon of the Illawarra region. It remains at the heart of my community. The people associated with this club are, in my opinion, excellent examples of the greyhound racing industry.

These are hardworking individuals and families who love and care for their dogs. As we look to the future of this industry I feel it is important to reflect on the decisions that have led us to this point. The former Premier first announced the shutdown of greyhound racing as a knee-jerk reaction to save face. It was an arbitrary act and embodied the Premier's self-driven bastardisation of an entire community based on the actions of a few.

This individual's dangerous preoccupation with Facebook "likes" nearly cost thousands of people their income and way of life. Despite the untold number of people his actions would have hurt and whose livelihoods would be lost, the Premier was happy to ban an entire industry he deemed broken—without first trying to fix it.

The Premier used \$1.6 million of public funds to sell the destruction of this industry to the State. The then Premier's office attempted to defend a campaign hell-bent on demonising the entire greyhound racing community by arguing its costs accounted for less than 1 per cent of the Government's annual advertising budget. The money wasted on this statewide transmission of propaganda could have been spent on countless other projects to assist the public. The money could have been spent on enhancing laws to ensure animal welfare and enable authorities to prosecute the individuals engaging in cruelty. More generally, it could have been used to improve the lives of citizens rather than encouraging hate and fear. The price tag, content and messaging of this advertising campaign was obscene. The outrageous accusations of systemic animal cruelty, inflated wastage numbers and an exaggerated level of live baiting incidents published in the media were unadulterated and obvious propaganda to manipulate the public.

I note that the aggressive nature of this campaign and the speed with which it was instituted are usually reserved for public health and safety emergencies, yet this advertising campaign was afforded the same priority. It was a blatant attempt to justify an individual's arbitrary decision-making and the hasty shutdown of an entire industry. I have no doubt that this \$1.6 million campaign was not created to educate and inform the public; it was an individual from this House making use of public funds to justify his misguided and destructive actions. At best, the advertising campaign associated with the greyhound ban was a misuse of public money. At worst, it was this State's Premier using the taxpayers' dollars to demonise a community and reinforce false and outlandish information to further his own agenda.

This bill presents a fair and much-needed opportunity to the greyhound racing community. This is an industry which provides jobs for thousands of hardworking Australians. It is an industry which makes a valuable economic and social contribution to the make-up of our State. It lies at the heart of many communities in regional New South Wales, including my own electorate of Shellharbour. Finally, this industry has shown it was as sickened by the highly publicised, but rare, incidents of animal cruelty as the rest of our citizens were. The greyhound racing industry has worked alongside and in cooperation with both the Government and the RSPCA, following this Government's original decision and the backflip that followed. I believe it was this cooperation that led to a satisfactory outcome for all parties involved. In short, I support this bill and hope it will restore confidence in a hardworking community and the successful greyhound racing industry. At the time some members opposite made some wild statements about the industry. The now Deputy Premier, John Barilaro, stated:

At times governments have to take tough decisions and this is one of those times. This is the correct decision. For the reasons laid out in the McHugh report and the previous upper House report I stand by this Government's decision. A noble dog deserves a noble life and we seek to do that with this bill tonight. The decision of this Government will, in time, be judged as to whether it was right or wrong, and I genuinely believe it was right.

The Deputy Premier was wrong. Another corker issued from Mr Scot MacDonald in the other place. He stated: This is a defining moment for the Liberals and Nationals. What do we stand for? Do we have the principles? Labor cannot stand up and say it has serious principles.

In a very short time he was wrong, and he will shortly be eating his words. I congratulate the electorate of Shellharbour. I congratulate my good friend at the Dapto Dogs, the trainers, owners and punters and the spectators every Thursday night who show their support. I congratulate Labor. We stood up for what we believed in. The minute I heard about the legislation I called Katrina Novak at Dapto Dogs and advised that I would not stop fighting until that legislation was overturned. I particularly congratulate Labor on having the guts to stand up to this Government to ensure that the legislation was overturned.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (18:00): I am pleased to speak to the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017 and I know that my constituents in Clarence will also be pleased with this bill. I acknowledge the members of the industry in the public gallery. The next time they hear the song "Who let the dogs out" they will know it was the Liberal-Nationals Government. Yes, we made a mistake and unlike those opposite we admit we made a serious mistake. We have recognised it and reconsidered the matter and have come together with a good package. This bill repeals the Greyhound Racing Prohibition Act 2016. It removes the legislated prohibition on greyhound racing in New South Wales and in doing so it vindicates all the good people in the greyhound racing industry who were penalised by the prohibition legislation.

I opposed the prohibition legislation right from the start on the basis that it tarred the whole industry with the one brush. It treated every person in the industry as a criminal and as a live baiter. This premise was fundamentally wrong. If we are to adopt that premise then every politician in this House is Eddie Obeid and every cop is Roger Rogerson. We know that is not the case. This second chance sets the foundations and governance arrangements for a sustainable greyhound racing industry with the highest animal welfare and integrity standards

in the country. This is what the greyhound industry wants, this is what the Government wants and this is what the people of New South Wales expect.

We want a sustainable greyhound racing industry that addresses issues of overbreeding, live baiting, high levels of injury and the euthanasia of healthy dogs. We want an industry that is sustainable, provides jobs and makes a valuable economic and social contribution to our local communities as well as the State. Greyhound racing is big in my electorate. It means jobs both directly and indirectly. Just as importantly the two clubs in Grafton and Casino provide an important social function in bringing people together. Those people love their dogs, their sport and entertainment and want to have a punt. I firmly believe that this bill not only gives the industry a lifeline but also gives it sustainability and integrity.

Many of us want to see a strong greyhound industry and many of us are sickened by those who do the wrong thing, but not everyone did the wrong thing in the greyhound racing industry, just as not every politician does the wrong thing in this House. Live baiting, cruel treatment and unnecessary killing of healthy dogs will not be tolerated. This restructure process commenced in October 2016 when the Government established the Greyhound Industry Reform Panel. The panel was tasked to find a new regime that would allow the industry to continue while applying the strictest animal welfare standards in the country. It was chaired by former Premier Morris Iemma and included the chief executive officer of the RSPCA New South Wales, the chief executive officer of the Greyhound Alliance, the New South Wales Chief Veterinary Officer and a deputy secretary from the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The panel submitted its report to government in February this year and made 122 recommendations of which the RSPCA and industry representatives failed to agree on only two. That shows that the panel has made some significant findings and recommendations which were nearly totally accepted by the various diverse sectors that were represented on the panel. The panel's reforms involve a new governance framework that separates the commercial and regulatory functions of the industry, a comprehensive and best practice animal welfare plan, registration and accreditation requirements for industry participants and new offences and stronger penalties for animal cruelty. The Government will implement all but one of the recommendations put forward by the panel in its report delivered to the Government earlier this year.

The one recommendation that was not accepted relates to the form of the commercial entity, that is, while the panel proposed Greyhound Racing NSW be reconstituted as a statutory state-owned corporation, under this bill it will remain a body corporate that does not represent the Crown. This bill introduces new governance, regulatory and animal welfare arrangements and will build trust in the integrity of the greyhound racing industry. The bill will separate the regulatory and commercial functions currently being carried out by Greyhound Racing NSW. This will minimise potential conflicts between the commercial imperatives of industry and animal welfare considerations. This separation will help build the community's confidence in the industry. A new integrity commission will be established to perform the regulatory functions.

It will set standards, register participants and supervise and regulate greyhound racing across New South Wales. The Minister for Racing will be responsible for the commercial entity and the integrity commission, with the Minister for Primary Industries having a concurrence role for the commission on certain key animal welfare-related decisions. This governance model is consistent with ministerial arrangements in Queensland. The Government is confident that this bill will put in place appropriate checks and balances to ensure that we have a thriving greyhound industry that adheres to the highest animal welfare standards in the world. In my discussions with many in the industry during this process before the panel's recommendations I was advised that the industry had already adopted some 70-odd of the recommendations anyway. The industry was already conforming with community expectations, which shows the industry's commitment to being sustainable and to having animal welfare standards of the highest integrity.

The bill provides for the operation of the reconstituted Greyhound Racing NSW. Greyhound Racing NSW will be responsible for developing greyhound racing in New South Wales as a competitive and sustainable industry. It will be independent of the Crown and will not represent the State. It will have significant autonomy in determining how to structure the industry in order to achieve commercial sustainability. It will have a number of responsibilities through this bill, including conducting greyhound race meetings or authorising greyhound race meetings to be conducted by greyhound racing clubs and developing track safety standards and operating the greyhounds as pets adoption program. Greyhound Racing NSW will be required to hold an operating licence to authorise its role as the industry's commercial body. This will provide autonomy to meet its commercial imperatives and manage daily operations, while still allowing the Government to set the high order requirements and conditions for the industry's operation.

The Minister for Racing will be able to issue, amend, suspend or cancel the commercial body's licence. Prior to doing so, the Minister must consult with the integrity commission. This provides a mechanism for the Government to take action where, for example, the commercial entity is found to be breaching its licence or the

integrity commission identifies matters of concern. The bill also creates a strong welfare framework for those greyhounds involved in the industry. Part 4 of the bill creates a greyhound industry animal welfare committee to provide advice to the commission. The five-person committee will provide advice to the integrity commission, especially as the enforceable code of practice relating to the welfare of greyhounds is developed. The code of practice will address standards for keeping, treatment, handling and care of industry greyhounds. It will also set standards for the facilities, equipment and conditions at premises where greyhounds are kept, trained or raced. Breaches of the code will be dealt with through new penalties including infringement notices, fines, suspension or disqualification. There will also be the option of prosecution action with a potential jail term of two years for some offences.

This bill reflects the outcomes of exhaustive public inquiry and stakeholder engagement over the past several years. It puts animal welfare front and centre of the new restructured greyhound industry. The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring the industry succeeds. To assist with this objective, a public contribution of \$11 million will be provided towards the cost of regulation. This funding will commence in 2017-18 and will continue for four years. This contribution is based on the cost of the initial set-up phase, staffing requirements and so on. Some \$30 million over five years has been proposed as an appropriate amount of capital funding to meet— *[Time expired.]*

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): Order! I remind members that under Standing Order 52 members with the call will be heard in silence. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. If members wish to have private conversations they will do so outside the Chamber.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:10): I support the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017, which comes after the Greyhound Racing (Repeal of Ban) Bill 2016 tabled by the Leader of the Opposition earlier this year. I acknowledge in the Chamber Mr Brenton Scott, Mr Kevin Gordon, Sue Absalom and others from the greyhound industry who are here to listen to this debate. Unlike the Government, we have not been sitting on our hands on this issue. We have been putting forward bills. I have visited many communities around the State in the past few months, including Wagga Wagga, Gosford, Cootamundra, Albury and the Tweed Valley. The question on everyone's lips has been, "When will the Government keep its promise?". This Government has no credibility in our community.

That lack of credibility shows in how this decision was made and announced last year. When former Premier Mike Baird announced the greyhound ban on Facebook, everybody in our community was stunned. It was another sign of how out of touch the Liberal-Nationals Government is with everyday people and small businesses, our regional communities that rely on strong small businesses, and the local clubs that the greyhound racing industry supports. As the member for Shellharbour and the member for Wallsend mentioned, this Government has completely wasted \$1.6 million in justifying a decision it should never have taken and that members of The Nationals spoke against. I admire the member for Barwon, the member for Clarence and the member for Cootamundra for voting against the party line. I note the weasel words of the member for Upper Hunter, who spoke about what a difficult issue this was. On the night he did not even have the guts to show that he was voting with the Government. He sat so it appeared as though he was supporting the greyhound industry, but his vote was not there. If the Government wants to know who its friends are, Government members should look at how people vote and not just listen to what they say in this Chamber.

Another waste of money was the cost of the then member for Orange leaving his seat. He knew how bad it was getting in New South Wales and so he went off to Federal Parliament. Then the house of cards started to fall. Premier Baird resigned, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party now have a seat in this place and more changes are to come. In the two years I have been in this place I have seen that members of the Government are not up to the task. The Premier announced his plans to destroy the livelihoods of thousands of greyhound breeders and trainers on a social media website, which was very telling of the Government's approach to small business. Instead of taking the issue to Cabinet, confronting the people of New South Wales or the people in the industry and being subjected to questions, staffers in his office fired off Facebook posts and tweets from their ivory tower. They left battlers in the bush reeling.

Where have The Nationals been on this issue? Asleep at the wheel. The police Minister watched as the Premier gouged a hole in the heart of many regional and rural communities. As the then Leader of The Nationals he did nothing to protect the livelihoods of the many good-hearted men and women who love their greyhounds and treat them well. He has paid the price for his lack of voice on the issue: As he judged, condemned and sentenced their industry to oblivion so too has The Nationals sent him to his own oblivion.

We do not subscribe to collective punishment in Australian law. We believe in the onus of proof. We do not shut down an industry over the actions of a few. We do not assume that if one is bad all are bad. People from all sorts of farming and agricultural enterprises have come to me, showing great concern. Will the Government spread its ban to egg farms, horseracing and harness racing, or sheep and cattle stations? Where will it end?

It ended in Orange, with the loss of that key seat of The Nationals for the first time in nearly 50 years. Regional and rural New South Wales have not forgotten and will not forget this ban and the careless manner in which it was announced. They will not forget that—except for a few brave members—The Nationals did nothing to stop it. The Nationals should hang their heads in shame for being complicit with this Sydney-centric Government.

Greyhound tracks are the lifeblood of our regional towns, which can only be understood by people who live and breathe regional New South Wales. In places such as Dapto, Cessnock, Maitland and Orange the greyhound tracks provide recreation and a livelihood for our residents. We stood up for those communities. My office was inundated with calls about the ban. People asked what would happen to their livelihoods, how they could afford to keep their dogs and why the Premier was taking away one of their most important pastimes. Those constituents were not naive; they recognised there was need for reform in the greyhound industry. When the former Premier decided to cruelly ban the entire industry he shirked the hard work required. It was easier for him to act on one recommendation than to implement all the others.

Greyhound industry participants are willing and motivated to ensure that the industry is free of cruelty. Indeed, the people who care the most about greyhounds are their owners. I have heard many stories of greyhounds being cooked special meals and tucked into comfortable beds at night. Those people love their animals and they look after them. No-one—including people in the industry—could see the footage shown on that infamous *Four Corners* program and not be sickened, but it is not representative. Just like in any industry, there are outliers. We must recognise that those who participate in animal cruelty in the greyhound industry are the exceptions and not the rule. The industry will not tolerate them and nor should we.

This ban was not about targeting them. It targeted the countless small businesses and local economies across the State that are dependent on the economic benefits that greyhound racing brings. More than 1,000 people are employed in full-time work affiliated with the greyhound industry. This Government was willing to let them go. At the greyhound track the vets, dog walkers, caterers and even the race callers would have been affected. Breeders and trainers travel to regional towns and purchase fuel, accommodation and food. Some of them might even share a beer at the local club. The rates of unemployment across regional New South Wales are higher than in the cities. At a time when the Government should have been implementing policies to increase employment, it was forcing thousands of people out of their jobs. In Maitland we are feeling the decline of the mining industry and the end of the resources boom.

Ms Shelley Hancock: What about animal welfare?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I acknowledge the interjection of the Speaker and member for South Coast. I wonder how she will vote on this bill. To force more stress on our local economy as a result of this ban would have been unforgiveable. In a way the response to this ban was heartening. People joined together with the Labor Party and the media and stood up to this Government. We said, "You've got it wrong." Finally, after the pressure got too much for the former Premier, he backed down on his ban. Some Government members said that was political courage. That is nonsense. Backflipping on a clearly flawed decision which was opposed by a majority of the public is not courage; it is opportunism. The Leader of the Opposition showed real political courage. He sat in this place day after day as the Minister and the Premier attacked his integrity. They were the first ones to backflip.

The Nationals are not the party of regional New South Wales. They take orders from their Liberal Party mates and swallow their pride. Labor always has been and always will be the true representatives of regional New South Wales. We opposed the greyhound ban, we are fighting the disastrous reforms to commercial fishing and we are stopping the cuts to Tiresome weeks ago I called Deputy Premier John Barilaro and asked him, as someone who has owned his own business, like me, how as Minister for Small business, Deputy Premier of this State, and Leader of The Nationals, he could stand by and watch his Government cut down the great New South Wales commercial fishing industry. That industry will be seen as the dogs of the sea for The Nationals. Our regional communities are under attack and the Deputy Premier is concerned. He might not have the numbers in caucus but I explained to him that the former Leader of The Nationals, Troy Grant, had lived and died by the dogs on the track; and he will live and die on the dogs of the sea.

Those opposite cannot keep attacking small businesses in regional communities and expect to be re-elected. On 12 November I was with the Deputy Premier at a polling booth in Orange. It was a good opportunity for us to discuss our shared portfolio of small business. He knows what those opposite are doing. Country people are being pushed over the edge because this Government is continuing to ignore their needs. This Government is bad for small businesses in New South Wales.

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (18:20): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017. Labor's opposition to this bill is nothing more than party politics—rub your nose in it. I spoke against the original legislation and I abstained from voting. Why?

Ms Jenny Aitchison: But you voted for it.

Mr ANDREW FRASER: No, I did not vote for it.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: You abstained?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): Order! The member for Maitland will cease interjecting or leave the Chamber.

Mr ANDREW FRASER: It feels much better in here now that the member for Maitland has left the Chamber. At that time I spoke to the industry and to the then Deputy Premier, and I also spoke in the joint party room about a piece of legislation that I thought was totally flawed. The McHugh report gave the Government two options—to introduce 81 amendments or to ban the industry. I had four trainers in my electorate but I had never seen an issue as hot as the banning of the greyhound industry. At that stage I had only ever been to one dog meeting; I have since been to another at Wentworth Park. It was a great night and the crowd was fantastic. The greyhound industry, despite the changes proposed in this bill, already ensures that anyone who practises animal cruelty is dealt with appropriately. As I said in the original debate, I do not support animal cruelty in any way, shape or form. The decision to close the industry was made in isolation and without party room contribution. That was bizarre, and options that were available at that time have now been put in place in conjunction with the industry.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the industry on working in conjunction with the Government on this legislation. I also congratulate the Minister on bringing forward a package to ensure that animals in the industry are treated humanely—as I said, I believe the industry has always treated its animals humanely. We have all heard people say, "A dog has been shot." I began shooting at the age of seven—I have now handed in my gun licence—and one of the most humane ways to kill an animal is with a .22 calibre shotgun. Without a licence I have had to wait for up to 48 hours for a vet to come to my property—and it costs \$300 each time—and kill injured or ill cattle. A single bullet to the brain of those cattle would have been far more humane than waiting for up to 48 hours for a vet. However, one has to live in a country area and own animals to appreciate that.

Why did I abstain from voting on the last occasion? Mr Hadley will be interested to read that I abstained from voting because I did not support playing party politics on this issue. Opposition leader Luke Foley had said privately that he wanted to close the industry. Labor had spent 16 years in government but I was not going to vote with them either because of the capital works they had pulled from regional and rural New South Wales in that time. I distributed an email to all members of Cabinet offering a solution. That email was leaked, but the majority of the solution offered has now been adopted. I will never support the Labor Party because of what it has done not only in the 16 years we were in opposition but also over the generations—supporting unions but not supporting the people. I support everyone in my electorate and I support the decision to overturn the ban. I repeat: I did not vote against the previous legislation for the reasons I have given.

As a matter of interest, I won about \$72 that night at Wentworth Park. I am not much of a punter; the bookies normally get me. Thank you for a great night. I wish the industry all the very best. I know the administrators will do their best for the reformed industry. I look forward to attending another meeting at Wentworth Park on a future occasion. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (18:25): I contribute to debate on the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017. The purpose of the bill is to enact legislation to finalise one of the biggest backflips seen in the recent political history of this State. I hate to speak ill of the politically dead, but I will: On 7 July 2016 then Premier Mike Baird informed the thousands of people in our State employed in the greyhound industry—the trainers, breeders, vets, hospitality workers, gaming operators and small business suppliers—that their livelihood, and for some their beloved hobby, would be shut down within 12 months. That blow was not delivered through any consultation with the industry nor through any compromise to work out viable alternative options and solutions, but through the cruel push of a button on Mike Baird's Facebook page. I and many other Opposition members, particularly our leader, Luke Foley, implored the Government to listen to common sense and to reconsider the ill-conceived decision to simply ban an entire industry off the back of a Facebook post.

In my electorate of Bankstown the closure of this industry would have jeopardised the future of the Potts Park Greyhound Racing Track at Yagoona, the Arena Sports Club, formerly known as the Greyhound Social Club, and at least 30 direct jobs associated with the industry. The thousands of local residents who take their children to Saturday races at Potts Park, which are always a real family affair and held in a welcoming atmosphere, would no longer be able to do so. Developers were rubbing their hands at the prospect of an empty Potts Park. It did not take long for the club to call me and say that the council had brought some surveyors out to look at the site. Why were they surveying the land? Government members would not listen to their own communities, who were pleading with them to reconsider their support of the ban. From memory two or three of The Nationals voted

against the ban, one abstained and the others voted with the Government, and I do not recall any Minister breaking ranks.

Government members were implored not to support legislation to ban the racing industry. No doubt many members are rightfully embarrassed by the remarks recorded in the *Hansard* of the debate on the Greyhound Racing Prohibition Act 2016. I will again put on record some of those contributions. The now Deputy Premier said that as a Cabinet Minister he supported the decision to end the greyhound racing industry. The member for Northern Tablelands, Adam Marshall, said:

My response is that I will stick to my guns. I support this bill not because of a loyalty to a party or to a leader but because, as difficult as it is, I believe this is the right decision. Where is the member for Northern Tablelands now? I note the member for Kuring-gai said:

The Greyhound Industry Prohibition Bill 2016 is an example of the Baird-Grant Government being prepared to make decisions based on evidence to determine what is in the best interests of the community.

Of course, the wonderful member for Oatley made very clear in a long-winded speech last year that he stood absolutely shoulder to shoulder with the then Premier and Deputy Premier in supporting the ending of the industry. Ministers such as the Hon. Pru Goward also stood here in this place and supported the ending of the greyhound industry. Let us not forget those words and what this Government did last year. I appreciate that it has now backflipped—and I note the members of the greyhound industry who are here today. Clearly the industry is thankful that the Government has backflipped.

The Opposition will support this bill because we support the industry. It was our leader who originally introduced legislation to ensure that the ban would not go ahead. The Government was not going to support that legislation because it was about politics and they needed to put their own stamp on this. It is important to understand that what is most important to the Opposition is to ensure that the industry continues. It is important for areas like mine and for other electorates that have racing tracks but it is also important to ensure that the livelihoods of those who work within the industry continue. We must remember that there were so many different elements to the legislation that the Government failed to realise the true impact this ban could have had on our communities until six weeks after the legislation was initially rammed through this place. Many of us will still remember that evening when we were here until 3.30 a.m.

Mr Michael Johnsen: Four o'clock.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: Four o'clock—I stand corrected. I remember the heartbreak on the faces of many who were in the gallery that morning. It was horrendous to see their pain and how heart wrenching it was for them. I still remember that and our leader Luke Foley's two-hour speech.

Mr Christopher Gulaptis: It was long, wasn't it?

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: It was long but it was rightfully long. It was worth at least a two-hour speech because the industry has had an amazing history in this State and this nation, and it was worth our leader ensuring that that history was in *Hansard*. It was the Orange by-election—as many of us on this side have reminded the House today—that was the turning point and the reason Mike Baird decided to backflip on the original strong stand he made on Facebook that morning in July. Following a sustained media campaign supported by the greyhound industry, the Leader of the Opposition and commentators such as Ray Hadley, Alan Jones and others made sure the message was propelled across the State that what the Government had set up was wrong.

A reform panel has been set up, chaired by a former Labor Premier, Morris Iemma. The bill will effectively implement 121 of the 122 recommendations made by the Greyhound Industry Reform Panel, which were submitted to government in February 2017. As the shadow Minister has outlined, NSW Labor has publicly supported the findings of the reform panel. I note the Leader of the Opposition introduced his own bill—which would have achieved the objectives of this bill—to overturn the greyhound racing ban. It would have come into effect in July this year to ensure a vibrant greyhound racing industry with the strictest ethical standards in animal welfare. This bill will separate the commercial and regulatory functions of the greyhound racing industry, which are currently undertaken by Greyhound Racing NSW.

The bill will establish the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission as the new regulatory body for the industry, and an industry animal welfare committee will be established to provide information to the commission to oversee an industry code of conduct and amend various offences relating to animal welfare. I would have thought The Greens would have been happy with that. The new commission will have the capacity to impose penalties of up to \$110,000 for corporations and \$22,000 for individuals for breaches of industry standards, which of course we support. The commission will have the power to suspend or cancel a greyhound racing registration as well as other new powers, including the capacity to impose conditions of registration or disqualification or prohibition on individuals from participating in the greyhound racing industry as a whole. Inspectors of the

commission will acquire information relating to these new functions of the commission, including the ability to search premises, with penalties for failure to comply with a search request.

It is important to note that this backflip from the Government has cost the taxpayers approximately \$41 million and created an unimaginable amount of unnecessary heartache and uncertainty within the greyhound racing industry for more than nine months. The greyhound industry has indicated its willingness to implement these reforms and the highest level of animal welfare standards. There was never a need to ban the industry. I am pleased that this bill will ensure that greyhound racing will be able to continue at Potts Park, Yagoona. I look forward to attending the 2017 Bankstown City Cup, which will be held at Potts Park Greyhound Track later this year. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (18:35): I contribute to the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017 on behalf of The Greens. At the outset I say that we really hope we are wrong. I say to those members of the industry who are here today that we hope we are wrong on this. I will be the first to admit we were wrong if in three years' time we see an absolutely thriving, wonderful greyhound industry—one that my grandparents appreciated and one without the animal cruelty and the systemic concerns that have come to light in the past 12 months. I will be the first to say that, and we hope that that is the case. This bill repeals the ban on greyhound racing and re-establishes Greyhound Racing NSW as well as a new Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission. I note the previous speaker's reference to the 100-odd animal welfare provisions—and we welcome those.

This bill is in line with most of the recommendations of the Greyhound Industry Reform Panel, which was established by former Premier Baird when he publicly announced he had backflipped on the ban. Crucially, under recommendation 48 the panel recommended that the industry fully fund the reforms by way of the Government paying for them, then the industry paying those costs to the Government. However, the Government has said the industry will not pay fully for these costs for another five years. We have concerns about that because we think the industry should pay for its own capital improvements.

Many of the animal welfare measures that have been announced, such as controls on euthanasia, litter limits for breeding females, bonds for dogs and lifetime tracking, are not in the bill but will presumably be in the code of practice to be developed by the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission. We believe this is problematic as there is no legislative commitment—and even if there is, the Minister for Racing does not necessarily have to apply the code, but rather may apply it, and has the ability to amend or repeal it. My colleague the Hon. Dr Mehreen Faruqi will be moving amendments in the other place.

This bill is a step forward regarding the almost non-existent animal welfare standards legislated before the ban, but we still hold concerns about the system and in particular the "wastage", which is a euphemism for the killing of dogs each year. Members may well talk about the greyhound industry being given another chance but I think it is important to face some statistics. At a certain point the benefits of what was once a family-driven, grassroots racing system became a big gambling industry in this State. In my view—and this is not my party's view—profit and greed has corrupted what was once a family hobby. How can we explain the torture, animal cruelty, injury and dog deaths on an unprecedented scale, except as the direct result of the industry? We have not demonised families and we do not say people do not love their dogs, but we have seen statistics for what has been happening.

We are concerned about how we address that. We commended former Premier Mike Baird for having the moral courage to draw a line in the sand and say enough is enough. The Greens have long highlighted the appalling and inhumane practices surrounding the industry, which were horrendously highlighted by the special commission of inquiry and have become evident during this debate. We do not share the confidence of the Labor Party and the Government in its policy backflip that the industry can be fixed. We will certainly monitor very closely the so-called "watchdog" to see how things play out.

In 2013 the evidence suggested that somewhere between 50,000 and 70,000 of the nearly 100,000 greyhounds bred in New South Wales in the previous 12 years were killed because they were considered too slow to pay their way or were unsuitable for racing. I am not sure how this legislation addresses that, and I will be very interested to meet with members of the racing fraternity to find out how that is being addressed. The Greens are compelled by the assertion of the inquiry that Greyhound Racing NSW is concerned about the number of healthy dogs being destroyed each year but that addressing the mass slaughters is beyond the industry's capability. Each year the industry currently needs—and without a dramatic reduction in the number of race meetings it holds will probably continue to need—6,000 or more greyhounds to be whelped in order to maintain its racing schedules. However, the industry cannot and will not be able to find homes for between 50 per cent and 70 per cent of those dogs. The Australian Working Dog Alliance reported:

If greyhounds are unable to deliver financial rewards, their demise is probable. Indeed, death at an early age is the likely fate of most of the dogs that never make it to the race track.

No-one is talking about this insidious aspect of the industry. I highlight that this evidence comes from research undertaken by the industry's peak body. In recent years Greyhound Racing NSW, like the controlling bodies of greyhound racing in other States and Territories, has attempted to reduce wastage rates principally by rehoming greyhounds. Those efforts have not been successful. Since 2007 it has rehomed only 593 greyhounds through its Greyhounds As Pets program, at a cost of \$200,000 per year. The commission estimates, given the tax consequences for potentially rehoming organisations, that this approach is extremely fraught and there has been no evidence of a viable plan.

In evidence before the select committee in 2013, Dr Karen Cunnington of the Greyhound Rehoming Centre said that if only 50 per cent of the dogs being bred in New South Wales each year were trained for rehoming, the cost of that training would be up to \$60 million. This indicates that rehoming the number of dogs being bred is not a viable proposition. We know from the inquiry that until recently the Greyhound Racing NSW policy regarding dog deaths on tracks was that information was not to be included in stewards' reports. This calculated stance by the regulator was intended to prevent the public, including persons who may be critical of the greyhound racing industry, such as animal welfare organisations, from obtaining information about the number and frequency of greyhounds deaths on racetracks in New South Wales. I certainly hope that will change.

As to misreporting of injuries, in April 2013 the commission found that Greyhound Racing NSW management had adopted a policy of sanitising and misreporting the description of injuries recorded in stewards' reports. The commission had no doubt that the reason management adopted this policy was to avoid criticism of the industry in New South Wales, particularly by animal welfare groups. I am sure that the grassroots, family greyhound businesses across the State would also be appalled if they found out the practice is continuing. I commend the work of the late Dr John Kaye and Dr Mehreen Faruqi on this issue over many years. This is not a new policy for us; it is a new direction. Our position has been consistent throughout. I also commend the RSPCA and Greyhound Rescue for the amazing work they do in rehoming greyhounds.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (18:43): I contribute to debate on the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017. The Greyhound Racing Prohibition Bill thrust upon us in 2016 may have been prosecuted by its supporters for what they believed at the time to be all the right reasons—and indeed I believe for many that was the case—but the process of its conception and passage through the House was so flawed that it was destined to be repealed or to cause a major, ongoing rift within our community. I acknowledge that the original legislation winding up the industry had its strong supporters and many people are disappointed that the decision is being reversed. The reality is that the original decision was not transparent and did not involve proper consideration and debate before the inevitable was put to a vote. That was a major flaw in process and in procedural fairness for people within the industry that impacted debate about the substantive issue: the endemic and pervasive problems with greyhound racing as identified by the Hon. Michael McHugh.

This bill is a step forward in putting animal welfare issues above those of the gambling industry and goes a long way towards restoring integrity to an industry plagued by bad seeds and those wishing to exploit animals for personal gain or greed. As I have said in this House before, I am not and never have been keen on greyhound racing—or, for that matter, horseracing. That is not to say that such racing is wrong. What I find wrong is the exploitation of these natural behaviours without due deference to the rights of the animals involved to live without cruelty and to live out the term of their natural lives and not be snuffed out prematurely as some accepted, euphemistically termed "wastage". Like everyone else in the House, I was disturbed and disgusted by some practices that had become all too common in the greyhound racing industry, even if practised by a minority of participants. The live baiting, the overbreeding, the callous treatment and the disgusting way in which many greyhounds were discarded because they could not run fast enough were totally unacceptable in a modern society.

This was an industry that, while denied procedural fairness in the move to shut it down, was also betrayed and diminished by certain members of its own community, and I am sure the industry recognises that. Those people should have been weeded out much earlier not only because of their cruelty to greyhounds and other animals but also because of their disregard for the good people in the industry who would suffer collateral reputational damage when and if their actions became known, and because of their contempt for the law. There are many good people within the greyhound industry who have always worked within the rules and care greatly about the welfare of their animals before, during and after the racing careers of those animals—and I have met many of them over the past six months. But even some of them were aware of this industry's dark underbelly yet, I guess for many reasons, did little or nothing to address them.

It is also on the record that, despite my feelings towards the industry, I opposed the greyhound racing ban, which was eventually approved by the Government, on numerous grounds but mainly because I had deep concerns about the way in which the process and the final decision had been undertaken. The then Premier announced his decision without any real consultation with his own Government members, let alone with the Opposition or crossbench, the industry or the community. It was a highly flawed process that failed to engage

with the people or the Parliament. Indeed, the ban on greyhounds, carried out as it was, may become a textbook example of how not to act even when one has the power to do so. Drawing a deep breath and discussing such matters broadly to allow genuine debate will always bring about a better result than a capricious decision, no matter how well intended.

The McHugh report offered two main solutions: option one was to ban the industry and option two had 79 embedded suggestions. The Opposition added to those with further proposed amendments, all of which could have been explored. If the decision to close down the industry had not been made on a whim the changes would have been well received by those fighting for animal welfare. I believe also that the industry would have responded positively. There has been a lot of criticism of the Government and of former Premier Mike Baird. I admire the way in which Mike Baird subsequently dealt with what was a mistaken process that he had implemented. I think he caused a lot of difficulty for his own people in the Liberal-Nationals Coalition and if some situation had not occurred it would have put heat on the Opposition. Under the rules, party members are put under a lot of pressure as to how they act. As an Independent member of this House, I am certainly not in that situation. However, I acknowledge the difficulty caused for many members.

I spoke to the Premier at the time and I know that he certainly did not take the decision lightly. But he acknowledged that it was a mistake and he should be given credit for that. Too much is being made of the opportunity to put the boot into the Government over this matter. My personal view remains that, despite the flawed process and despite my concerns about the exploitation of these animals, the greyhound racing industry, like any industry or entity, should be given the chance to prove that it can be redeemed. It can be rightly argued that the greyhound industry had many shots across its bow before the McHugh report made its findings but that report delivered an ultimatum that I believe was both warranted and gave the industry its final and gravest warning. This bill takes us back to the debate we should have had in August last year. I note that the Minister in his second reading speech said:

The Government has listened to all these concerns and announced that the industry would be given a further chance to prove itself.

That is the sort of discussion we should have had last August, so I commend the Government for its review not just of the greyhound industry but of its own actions. I believe this new bill establishes a framework for governance and the application of best practice in regard to animal welfare. I note that it significantly increases penalties for animal cruelty and establishes a welfare and integrity commission, which will oversee the welfare of the animals. The accountability and monitoring of race meetings, training, breeding, safety and licensing will also be increased significantly and be the most stringently and transparently managed in the country.

I note also that some in the industry have argued against the Government's insistence that the new body of Greyhound Racing NSW be a state-owned corporation and not a self-governing commercial entity. I support the Government's stance on this issue because it builds in an extra layer of regulation and oversight that I believe is needed to stop this industry from falling into its old patterns where commercial interests and profits for some rise above the welfare of the greyhounds. I also support moves that will require each greyhound to be registered and subject to an annual bond, refundable in certain circumstances, to further protect the greyhounds and minimise the sort of overbreeding and wastage that we have seen previously. It will provide whole-of-life care and monitoring of the animals and ensure better oversight of their treatment throughout their entire lives, not just while they are fit to race.

As I mentioned earlier, heavier penalties for rogue operators are very much welcomed and I know are supported by those good people in the industry who want the bad held accountable and weeded out. I have no doubt that the implementation of this new era of regulation will be difficult for many and expensive in some respects, but it has to happen if the greyhound industry is to deliver something that is acceptable to the broader community and if it is to overcome the litany of problems it has struggled with in the past. Already, this regulation and the establishment of the new welfare and integrity commission will cost taxpayers \$11 million. The industry and those who gain from it should, in my mind, meet any extra costs or at least be able to mount an absolutely compelling argument for receipt of additional public funds. In that regard, I acknowledge that this process needs to be watched closely so that access to funds is not restricted unfairly and used to cripple the industry.

In summary, while my own personal thoughts on greyhound racing are very clear, I firmly believe this industry should have a final chance to redeem itself, and can in fact be redeemed. The bill provides a tough and comprehensive framework for the industry to exist, for the welfare of the animals to be paramount, and for the industry to become much more accountable and consistent with broader community expectations. Therefore, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (18:52): The Greyhound Racing Bill 2017 reverses a compassionate Government commitment made in response to a strong community campaign to end the cruel and archaic greyhound racing industry that would have moved us to a more humane society that does not treat

animals as dispensable products or promote problem gambling. The Greyhound Racing Bill 2017 overturns the ban on greyhound racing that was due to commence on 1 July this year and introduces a number of reforms to try to reduce the suffering of animals that has long been a part of the industry's modus operandi. It is true that many provisions in the bill aimed at promoting welfare represent an improvement on the status quo, but cruelty is a fundamental part of the greyhound racing business model and no commission or committee pushing best practice will ever be able to guarantee that it can eliminate this.

Owning and training a very fast dog results in massive profits and the incentive remains to do whatever it takes to produce one. The industry kills massive numbers of bred greyhounds because they are not fast enough for the track. In the past 12 years 97,783 greyhounds were bred in New South Wales and between 48,891 and 68,448 were estimated to have been killed for being uncompetitive. Whole-of-life-cycle tracking and bonds cannot guarantee a stop to this mass euthanasia, particularly in an industry that is notorious for cover-ups. Cruel training methods such as live baiting and keeping other animals for greyhound training have been illegal for a long time yet the special commission of inquiry found the practice to be endemic. Stronger penalties will not be a deterrent and there will always be a way to escape oversight.

It seems the Government accepts that horrendous injuries during racing and training, such as broken hocks and legs and head trauma, cannot be stopped, with dogs killed following such injuries unlikely to be defined as "unnecessary kills" under the bill. Each week up to 200 injuries occur in the industry, with five dogs killed as a result. This will continue. Greyhounds are retired at three or four years of age and it will be impossible for more than a few to be adopted. Only a limited number of homes are willing and able to adopt a pet, and pounds and shelters across the State already put thousands of dogs down each year because homes cannot be found. How will greyhounds forced to become breeding machines before they stop breeding and are killed at five or six years be treated under the new regime? I do not believe the new provisions will make an adequate and considerable difference to the welfare of animals in this industry. Animal welfare workers have been raising concerns for decades about the greyhound racing industry covering up extreme cruelty. Former Premier Mike Baird in his speech in the House on the Greyhound Racing Prohibition Bill 2016 stated:

This industry has shown itself to be unable to change its practices and one that prefers cover-up to reform.

The special commission of inquiry undertook a thorough investigation, with private and public hearings, more than 2,000 submissions, 151,000 pages of evidence and 115 hours of recordings, and concluded that no reform could enable the greyhound racing industry to operate without extensive cruelty. Often forgotten in the debate is greyhound racing's reliance on human misery and loss from gambling. Gambling is addictive and destructive and often affects already disadvantaged people. A truly civilised society does not promote suffering and torture of animals for the sake of gambling.

Greyhound racing has nothing to do with battlers, and the wider population has no interest in this cruel industry. Over the past decade attendance at tracks has declined by an average 26 per cent and participation in the industry has declined by about 20 per cent. Greyhound racing is only legal in eight countries in the world and operates in only five states in the United States of America. Last year the Government told us that, regardless of the ban, greyhound racing will soon end on its own. I express my disappointment that the Government is now overturning what I and many others believe was one of its best decisions. It showed compassion for live, sentient beings who cannot advocate for themselves or vote. It was a move towards a more humane society.

Perhaps things would have been different had the Opposition chosen to treat this issue with respect for animals and their right to a life free from torture and suffering rather than with political opportunism amid a heated Opposition media campaign. Addressing animal cruelty should receive multi-partisan support and I worry that future governments will be too scared to show leadership and stand against other cruel industries such as factory chicken and pork farming. I would like us all to work together in the future against cruelty and suffering. The Government will spend \$11 million to fund the greyhound racing reforms—money that could be spent on more important infrastructure and services like schools, parks and the arts. While the reforms could result in small improvements to the industry, they will never change the culture and I suspect any improvements will be temporary. Greyhound racing is cruel and will remain cruel; it has no place in a modern and socially progressive society. That this House cannot end such senseless suffering demonstrates the lack of principles in contemporary politics. I oppose the bill.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (18:58): I am pleased to speak in support of the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017. The Government should have introduced this bill prior to making its premature decision to close down the greyhound racing industry after it received the McHugh report last year. In fairness, the McHugh report did not recommend the shutdown of the greyhound racing industry in New South Wales. Instead, it made a series of extensive recommendations that provided the basis for the greyhound racing industry to be reformed. Its first recommendation suggested that Parliament consider the evidence in the report and debate the future of the

greyhound racing industry. Although I was not a member in this place at the time, I believe this bill would have been the preferred method of dealing with and addressing the concerns that had been highlighted.

As I campaigned for the Wollongong by-election during August, September, October and mid-November last year, the future of the greyhound racing industry was raised with me. During that time not one person dismissed the poor treatment of racing dogs. Everyone agreed that reform of the industry was necessary. People were concerned and fearful that if the Government could just shut down an industry on a whim, what was to stop it from shutting down other racing activities across New South Wales? The Government stubbornly remained steadfast in its decision, but as the by-election dates in Wollongong, Canterbury and Orange approached, there was a gigantic backflip from the then Premier.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): Order! Members who wish to have private conversations will do so outside the Chamber.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: As quickly as the decision to shut down the greyhound industry was made, a decision was made to reverse it. It is now a matter of record that the Opposition always opposed the Government's capricious action to shut down the industry. Following a debate in this place, the Government should have taken the opportunity to craft a bill such as the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017, which could have achieved bipartisan support. This bill has two key objectives: it repeals the Greyhound Racing Prohibition Act 2016, which would have had effect from 1 July this year, and it seeks to establish new governance arrangements to allow the industry to continue whilst improving animal welfare.

The bill is a product of the Government's accepting 121 of the 122 recommendations made by the Lemma Greyhound Industry Reform Panel. It is the product of examining a report, working with stakeholders and introducing change—not conducting a review, ignoring the subsequent report and using Facebook to announce policy in the hope that it would drive up Facebook "likes". Importantly, the bill separates the commercial and regulatory functions currently performed by Greyhound Racing NSW. It establishes a new regulatory body, the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission; it establishes a new Industry Animal Welfare Committee to advise the commission on a new code of conduct; and it amends various offences relating to animal welfare.

The bill requires the registration of greyhounds and provides the commission with the power to impose substantial penalties on corporations and individuals. These can include imposing a fine; suspending, cancelling or imposing conditions on a registration; and disqualifying and prohibiting greyhound racing by an industry participant. The bill is comprehensive. It tackles the conflict of interest in the governance of Greyhound Racing NSW. It imposes substantial consequences for any person contemplating the abuse of animals in connection with greyhound racing, including by imposing a jail sentence of up to three years. The bill imposes a lifetime ban on any person who is found guilty of a live baiting offence under the Crimes Act or the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

Greyhounds involved in racing will need to be registered. Industry participants will be required to register with the commission and conditions can be imposed on any registration. The Greyhound Racing Bill 2017 is a tough bill—and it should be tough because honest people in the industry want and expect nothing less. The greyhound racing industry has been given a second chance to get its governance right and to strike out any cowboy behaviour that is detrimental and cruel to any animal associated with the industry. Under the bill, the taxpayer will contribute \$11 million towards the cost of regulating the industry for four years and \$30 million in capital funding will be allocated over five years.

The greyhound racing industry is a major contributor to the culture of many areas, especially in regional and rural Australia. It was in the regions of New South Wales where the loudest opponents spoke in a clear voice, informing the Government that its actions to shut down the industry were a step too far. I recently joined the Temporary Speaker, the member for Shellharbour, and other Illawarra Labor parliamentary colleagues to celebrate the eightieth anniversary of greyhound racing at Dapto Showground, the home of the internationally renowned "Dapto Dogs". I acknowledge and thank everyone involved with Dapto Dogs. The people who race their dogs at Dapto and those who watch them love the sport.

I acknowledge the President of the Dapto A and H Society Greyhound Racing Club, Tony Glackin, and his directors, and Secretary Manager, Dapto Greyhound Racing Club, Katrina Novak, for their work in hosting high-quality events every Thursday night. On every occasion that I, the Temporary Speaker and the Leader of the Opposition have attended we have been made very welcome. We might not have always backed the winning dog—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): You did.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I did one night. One thing is sure: The Government backed the wrong dog when it introduced a blanket ban without explanation and without means of appeal. It began the journey that led us here

to debate a bill to reinstate an industry following an earlier bill that introduced an unnecessary and unwanted industry ban. If the Government's original legislation had remained in place, the steady climb to a century of greyhound racing in the Illawarra would have ceased. It would have shut down this year. I hope that the Government has learnt a lesson from the New South Wales community, and particularly regional communities. The community spoke up and sent a plain message: Do not take us for granted. The Greyhound Racing Bill 2017 reflects the reform challenges facing the industry. It is comprehensive, tough legislation, which I am very happy to support. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (19:05): When historians look back over the past few years of New South Wales politics some will say it was the decision of the once shiny Premier Baird to ban greyhound racing that led to the downfall of the Government and the Premier. But the true failures of this Government can be traced back further. Its failures run thick and fast, and are leaving deep wounds in our communities. The decision to ban greyhound racing was just one of many decisions that has seen a once popular Government descend into a farce of ill-considered policies and factional infighting. I am appalled when I recall the late night sitting in this place during which the Government forced its agenda on the people by outlawing an entire industry, stripping livelihoods, closing businesses and destroying the fabric of many rural communities.

I am appalled that we now have to waste time in this place in order for the Government to undo what it should never have done in the first place. It was an extraordinary act of arrogance and a waste of time and money. In this place decisions and laws should be made in the best interests of the communities we represent. By this measure, the Government has utterly failed on so many counts. But banning an entire industry with the stroke of a pen, without any consultation or consideration of its impact on good people's lives, was a new low in this place. Make no mistake, this was not the decision of former Premier Mike Baird alone; it was a decision backed every step of the way by new Premier Gladys Berejiklian.

This Government does not get to snip off a limb and pretend it is not the same tree. The Government might treat the people of New South Wales as fools but they definitely are not. They know that the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is still the same Government that sought to shut down the greyhound industry. It is the same Government, mired in arrogance and factional warfare. It is through the advocacy of owners, breeders and trainers that this Government changed its position. I acknowledge those people in the gallery today and I thank them for their strong and well-founded advocacy on behalf of the industry. This bill is the product of sheer political expediency. The Government does not care about greyhound trainers, owners and breeders; the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government, like the Baird-Grant Government before it, cares only about its political survival.

I thank greyhound trainers, owners and breeders from across the State for coming to see me and other members to ensure that we understood what was at stake in this fight. They put up the strongest fight that we have seen against a decision, policy and legislation by this Government. That decision saw the Government lose the Orange by-election. I have not heard Government members acknowledge in this debate the harm that they have caused through this knee-jerk style of governing. They have acknowledged they made a mistake. We have heard an acknowledgment of the backflip but I have not heard from any member in this place an acknowledgment of the harm that Government members caused to the good people of the greyhound industry. Government members have not mentioned that in the debate today. People's lives were turned upside down.

The threat to anyone's loss of livelihood causes untold stress and anxiety, particularly when that livelihood is also their way of life. That is what I understood from discussions I had with greyhound owners, breeders and trainers in my electorate and in the electorate of the member for Myall Lakes when I was invited to attend the Taree Greyhound Racing Track but the member for Myall Lakes did not attend to front up to those people who were distraught, anxious and stressed by the repercussions of the decision of this Government for them and their industry.

This Government will never be forgiven for the harm it has caused, but it could at least do the decent and honest thing here today, show some respect and acknowledge the harm it has done to honest, hardworking people. Maybe it could even say "sorry". The culling of the greyhound industry was just another betrayal by this Government of rural and regional communities, and the list grows longer every day. People in regional and rural areas have woken up to the fact—their eyes have been opened—that their interests are not being represented in this place. We have seen The Nationals lock in behind their city mates on decisions about council amalgamations, greyhound bans, TAFE cuts, the sale of poles and wires, the sale of the Land and Property Information service and other decisions which erode rural communities and increase the cost of living for the people who live there.

Today the member for Upper Hunter tried to disguise what he did previously, which was to sell out the community he represents by voting to support the ban on the greyhound industry. He said today that he was not happy about the decision of the Government of which he is a member. He praised people in his community who would like to see a sustainable industry going forward. He acknowledged that a meat industry business would

have closed if the ban had proceeded. How did he vote? Did he vote to support his community? Did he vote to support the employees at that business or indeed business itself? Did he vote to support those people in his community who he said were passionate about the industry? He did not. He pretended he was voting on the other side but he was really a vote for the Government.

The member for Upper Hunter cannot continue to pretend that he has the interests of his community at heart when he backed legislation which would have seen people in his community lose jobs and lose their ability to participate in an industry about which he acknowledges they are passionate. When it came to the crunch, he chose to look at the repercussions on his own career instead of representing the community that elected him to represent them. The hypocrisy in this House tonight is palpable. If the greyhound bill and the backflip we are seeing is combined with the privatisation of disability services, the privatisation of Newcastle's public transport, the closure of too many government service offices in the regions and the awarding of a train manufacturing contract overseas, the priorities of this Government become all too clear. And it is certainly not rural and regional New South Wales.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): Order! The member for Port Stephens will be heard in silence.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I see members of The Nationals shaking their heads but they support the legislation to ban the greyhound racing industry that was so integral to many of the communities they represent. There are some common themes in the many poor decisions made by this Government and they are the reason it lost the Orange by-election. The Government has no interest in consulting with communities affected by its decisions, but arrogantly imposes its own Sydney-centric view on rural and regional communities and places no value on those things that the people of New South Wales value the most. This bill reverses only one of the Government's many ill-considered policies. Along with my New South Wales Labor colleagues, I support this bill. I hope this provides some relief to the many good men and women in the greyhound industry, that it achieves a sustainable and safe industry going forward where cruelty is stamped out for good so people who love their dogs can continue to pursue their passion.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (19:13): I will make a brief contribution to the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017. Last time I spoke on this subject was just after midnight a few months ago. At that time I said some things that I will probably repeat but at the outset I acknowledge those people in the public gallery who were affected by the earlier decision of the Government. I remember that at 3.00 a.m. one night last October a number of people attended in the gallery and it is good to see them here again. I am glad the new Minister for Racing is in the Chamber, and I am confident that he will do a good job to make sure this legislation is given effect. He has been given a difficult job, which in football terms is a hospital pass, but I know he will get it right. This legislation is about making sure that we get it right because when the earlier decision was made last year it was a knee-jerk reaction. Nobody condones animal cruelty, nobody wants to see it, and nobody wants to see the industry tarnished by the actions of a few.

At that time the Government underestimated community reaction to its decision to axe the whole industry. It was not just about the big picture, it was about the little people as well, that is, the people who work in the industry and those who rely on it in little regional communities. It could be the person who relies on a race meet to sell coffee from a coffee cart or the person who works part-time as a parking attendant. At the time I said I did not know how many people in my electorate went to the dogs. But I do remember as a university student at Wollongong University going to Dapto Dogs where we could get a really good cheap meal. I know that the Temporary Speaker, the member for Shellharbour, represents an electorate which includes Dapto. A race meeting is a good chance for the community to get together and it is a fun social occasion.

Wollongong is not an isolated part of the world and I can imagine that in all small regional communities something like a race meet brings people together and provides them with a social activity to touch base—it becomes some form of a touchstone. The Government did not take that fact into consideration at the time but those involved in the industry were the first to say, "If someone has done something wrong, throw the book at them and do what you need to do." The Government should not tar everyone with the same brush because of the actions of a few.

The Government decided to form a commission to conduct an inquiry that made sensible recommendations because they were same as those that had been put forward by members on this side of the House and also some members on the other side including the member for Cootamundra, the member for Barwon and the member for Clarence who made a tough decision to say something about legislation that would affect the communities that they were elected to represent and to speak up on their behalf. Earlier the member for Port Stephens said that in some ways this was the turning point for the Government. It is very easy to be Sydney-centric and to talk about the regions and industries but that was a very big turning point.

We know that arrogance and decision-making without proper consultation have such a negative effect. The same is occurring in relation to council amalgamations, the privatisation of the land titles registry and any number of things. I say to all members of Parliament that government and being in Parliament is about representing the views of the people. The worst thing that we can do is to start making decisions to tell people how to live without consulting them on what effect that will have on not only their livelihoods but also their lifestyle and their community. They are the challenges we have to face. When we make decisions based on the simple emotive things with knee-jerk reactions we miss the bigger picture, which is that the greyhound industry needed some cleaning up. Everyone agrees with that, but the Government did not make that decision. The Opposition held the Government to account, and thank goodness the Government saw the light. The Opposition took on board what the community was saying.

The industry is happy to work with a commission, with the Government and with the Opposition because it really wants an industry that stays. It is not just the people who work in the industry, it is not just the trainers or the people who supply food, it is all of the people who rely on the industry for a touchstone to meet with people on a social occasion or to make supplementary income. Some people do not make a lot of money out of it and some people do, but this is bigger than that. This is about the Australian way of life. Part of that is to make sure we do not tell people what they can and cannot do. We can make regulations and guide people, but we cannot make decisions without proper consultation, giving people an opportunity to redeem themselves or telling them what we do.

In this way, as an Opposition we asked the Government to give them a second chance. This is that second chance. It comes with strong requirements and good governance, and contains many good recommendations. The fact that 121 of the 122 recommendations have been accepted indicates that they have broad support, particularly in relation to registration, monitoring, and ensuring there are punishments and consequences for people who do not follow the proper processes and procedures. I think that was missing previously. This is a second chance for the industry and the Government to get it right. Through this bill we will prove that this Parliament listens to people, because it must. That is why we come to this place. Every member, regardless of their politics, made a promise that they will do their best to create a better society. Members on this side may do it differently from those opposite, but fundamentally we have the same aim—to create a better society. We cannot do that when we assume we know everything. We do not know everything. Sometimes it is easy to become distanced from that.

In that sense, the commission did a fantastic job. Led by former Premier Morris Iemma, the inquiry took on board everything that was suggested, studied it in detail and discovered some things. I know the new Minister will be working on this because there is no other option. We need to move forward with this. One of the best outcomes of our Parliament is when things are done right because an opposition holds a government to account. That is the way Parliament works. The average person on the street does not want the Government to make decisions based on thinking it knows best, what the social media team tells it or what it thinks will give it a quick bounce in the polls. The fact of the matter is people want governments to govern for everybody and not make knee-jerk decisions. People want governments to take their time and do things that are well thought out and well planned. That is a really important point to make.

A number of my colleagues from both sides of the House have spoken about the different elements in this bill, which is broken up and very detailed. It contains some very sensible things. First and foremost, this bill gives the industry a chance to make good on its promises. It also subjects everyone to a high level of accountability, which is important. A number of people will express concern about wastage and other issues. This bill will address that. I like the fact also that the commissioner will have serious powers and this legislation will have some teeth. That is what the industry was calling for. Industry participants did not say, "We do not want this, full stop." They said, "Give us a chance; we will get it right." That is what Leader of the Opposition Luke Foley said initially. I remember his three-hour speech in which he made it clear that nobody condones animal cruelty. But we also want to make sure that people who do the wrong thing are dealt with and receive the appropriate consequences, punishment or fine.

Having a go at the entire industry affects more than just the industry. This ban has affected entire communities. A lot of people tonight are eating humble pie because they decided not to stand up for their communities. They were dragged kicking and screaming to introduce this bill because the Opposition not only presented a very good argument but also prosecuted it, included the industry, and made sure there was a credible alternative. This bill is that alternative. In conclusion, this is a very important bill that demonstrates a good lesson for the Government to learn: Do not make decisions based on what the social media team says, the first thoughts that come to mind, or without consulting the people who will be affected.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (19:24): I acknowledge in the public gallery representatives of the greyhound racing industry who are here for the second time. I hope this time is better than the previous occasion they attended a debate. As the member for Londonderry, which is home to the large Richmond race track, it is

incumbent on me to contribute to debate on the important Greyhound Racing Bill 2017. In addition, the northern corner of my electorate abuts the electorate of the member for Hawkesbury. Many of the people I represent from that area have significant connections to greyhound racing either through owning dogs or being otherwise involved in the industry or businesses connected to it. I speak for those people in my contribution.

Over the past several months, hundreds of good, honest, hardworking people in my electorate have raised this issue with me. Their lives were brought to a standstill by the then Premier's announcement on social media that their industry would be shut down. Like all but a few members in this place, I am glad that we are repealing legislation that we voted against to begin with. The first decision was unfair and uneconomic, and it greatly affected my constituents. I am glad we are debating this bill, but, as Opposition members have said many times, we would not be in this mess if it was not for the unfortunate actions of the Government. The Government has been dragged kicking and screaming to introduce this bill by something we sometimes forget in politics—the age-old concept of people power from the tens of thousands of hardworking men and women who would have had their livelihoods ripped away. I represent many of them in this place and I am very proud to do so.

I am also proud that this legislation will make it harder for acts of animal cruelty to be perpetrated in the industry. No-one in this place condones cruelty against animals and I am glad the Government is acting on it. Of course, it was always only a small minority of people in the industry who committed acts of cruelty. It was always wrong to punish the good people who owned a couple of dogs or in some cases many more, or the people who watch greyhound racing for recreation. I also represent many of those people in Western Sydney. It was always wrong to punish them for the actions of a small minority.

The Opposition knew that greyhound racing could operate in a regulated and safe environment. It is good to see this legislation getting to this point. The industry could have been kept alive for the thousands of people who have always done the right thing. I note that members opposite have been interjecting. I use this opportunity to acknowledge those members who had the mettle and courage to stand up against their Government. It took a lot of courage, especially in Mike Baird's New South Wales, to stand up against a proposal that was announced without consultation or discussion, or the industry being given any chance to reform itself.

When I spoke to the original legislation I made a point of also speaking about businesses in the Penrith and Mulgoa electorates that abut mine and are represented by Cabinet members. Many of those business owners came to me about this issue because they were represented by members who advocated for the death of the greyhound industry. Those businesses that would have folded were not greyhound owners—for instance, Luddenham Pet Meats and Farra Pet Foods. Farra Pet Foods is an institution that has been operating in Penrith for more than 40 years. Businesses like these were on their knees saying, "What are we going to do?" They would have been killed off. It is unfortunate that we have to debate a ban that should never have been put in place but, nonetheless, I support the bill.

Pleasingly, the thousands of hardworking people in this industry will survive—and I am very proud to call many of them my constituents. Greyhound racing will now continue to be enjoyed in a safe and regulated environment and I will be interested to see how that goes. It gives me hope that with people power we were able to turn around this abhorrent decision by the New South Wales Government to kill an industry via Facebook. In the interim the Government has managed to lose one of its safest seats in the history of this State and Mike Baird is no longer the Premier. Well done to everyone involved in this industry in rolling the Government. Hopefully this successful industry will continue to thrive in the future. I happily support the bill.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (19:30): I make a contribution to debate on the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017. At the outset I congratulate the member for Londonderry on her contribution to this debate. Like her, I too am pleased to support this repeal bill. It gives me no pleasure to be once again debating this matter; it is something that I must do. I have strongly maintained from the day the former Premier announced the ban on greyhound racing in New South Wales that it was a terrible piece of legislation for working-class people in this State. On 7 July 2016 the former Premier threw the greyhound racing industry on the scrap heap—almost nine months ago to the day. But in an extraordinary about-face, with a backflip that would impress any gymnast worth their salt, three months later the former Premier overturned the Government's ridiculous decision. Again, while I welcome that backflip I maintain that the greyhound industry should never have been put through the awful miscalculated chain of unfortunate events in the first place.

While it gives me no pleasure in pointing out the Government's mistakes in its handling of the banning of the greyhound industry, one issue continues to concern me and the workers in the greyhound industry, including those in my electorate of Swansea—namely, it has taken a whopping six months to bring this bill to the Parliament. For those workers it has been six months of angst, six months of trying to go about their work with uncertainty hanging over their heads. That angst and uncertainty was illustrated in an article on *ABC News* about the potential effects of the blanket ban on the greyhound industry and the knock-on effects it would have had on associated small businesses. The article titled, "Dog food producers warns greyhound ban will 'destroy' businesses" gave the

account of Kankool Pet Foods, which operates in the small community of Willow Tree on the Liverpool Plains. Kankool Pet Foods provides fresh meat to dog trainers across the Hunter. Manager Kate Lord is reported to have said that there was no doubt that the Government's ban would annihilate her business.

Kankool employs 11 people in a community with a population of just over 160. Ms Lord is reported to also have said that the closure of the business would have a devastating impact on that tiny town—we all know that is a fact. She said that four of the people who rely on this facility for their livelihoods are aged over 55. She said further that she believed that the Government had not considered the overall impacts of its decision and she was surprised that not more warning had been given. She said:

We're a small business. We supply a lot of people. I just think that the treatment has been unfair.

She is absolutely right. The decision to smash the entire industry was not just unfair; it was plain wrong. I would have thought that as a government that prides itself on supporting the enterprise of small businesses in New South Wales members opposite may have known better. The way the Government went about banning the entire greyhound industry in New South Wales was nothing short of astonishing. In August 2016 the then Baird Government shut down the entire industry with the stroke of a pen without first debating the matter here in the Parliament, demonstrating the total contempt that this Government has for the people of New South Wales. What a show of arrogance it was.

We know from media reports that not only were the people of New South Wales caught by surprise by this announcement but in fact many Liberals and Nationals sitting on the government benches were completely oblivious to the impending ban until, as we now know, it was announced on Facebook. I can tell those on the other side—and I am pleased to take this opportunity to once again put it on the public record—that I never supported the complete ban of greyhound racing in New South Wales. I stood with the Leader of the Opposition from day one when I said that I do not support the decimation of an entire industry and the loss of thousands of jobs in rural and regional New South Wales on the whim of the then Premier.

For me the issue that those on the opposite side refused to talk about during the original debate was the jobs of working people. I joined the Australian Labor Party because it is the only party that truly looks after the workers in New South Wales. Since being elected to this place I have stood shoulder to shoulder with hundreds of workers who have been hung out to dry by conservative governments. I have stood with public sector workers who have had their jobs axed as a result of the privatisation of a number of State government authorities and agencies—for instance, the disability support workers of Ageing, Disability and Home Care—and with those workers who are being thrown on the scrap heap with the privatisation of Land and Property Information.

I have stood with workers from the New South Wales energy sector who watched their industry privatised and their workforce chopped in two by the Liberals and I have stood with our manufacturing workers—our train, ship, bus and ferry builders—who have seen their jobs offshored, including in the recent offshoring of the \$2.3 billion intercity train fleet to South Korea. Today, as I did in July 2016, I stand with those in the greyhound industry who rely on greyhound racing for their livelihood. We should never have attempted to shut it down. There were very few who agreed with shutting it down. In terms of animal welfare, we should acknowledge that at no time in this place did we ever condone animal cruelty. Labor could not be stronger in its approach to stamp out animal cruelty in New South Wales. We on this side believe that there is absolutely no place in a civilised society for cruelty to animals. Animal cruelty in all of its forms is absolutely abhorrent and should be punished with the full force of the law.

As we know, on 7 July 2016 the Premier released a report of the special commission of inquiry into greyhound racing. The Government's response was to announce that the greyhound industry would be completely shut down in New South Wales from 1 July 2017, which is just a few months away. On behalf of NSW Labor, Opposition leader Luke Foley and Michael Daley, the member for Maroubra, declared Labor's opposition to the industry-wide ban. Instead, Labor put forward a process of significant reform to provide a highly regulated and monitored greyhound racing industry with the highest standards of animal welfare. The decision to ban greyhound racing in New South Wales hit the entire industry extremely hard. There were people in my electorate who were beside themselves—almost suicidal, in fact—over the fact that they had invested tens of thousands of dollars into their industry and that it was going to be destroyed at the stroke of a pen.

It was devastating, to say the least. As members know and I have said here before, I grew up in a family that owned greyhounds, and we raced them from time to time. I understood the distress that those working people were feeling. I knew many of them personally. I see that we have members of Greyhound Racing NSW here in the gallery today. They would all know Jimmy McGlynn, a great friend of my father, and a great man—a man whom I respect enormously and have the highest regard for—who loves his dogs. He phoned my father and said to him at that time: "This is devastating for me, Jack. I don't know what I'm going to do without my dogs." That was a common thing to hear. I am sure the member for Shellharbour would have heard that. I wish to thank

the Cardiff Greyhound Social Club in the Hunter, which welcomed me with open arms and described to me the distress members were in and how awful and devastating this decision was for their organisation. What a wonderful group of people.

I see Kevin Gordon sitting in the gallery: I thank him for having me there that day and for his ongoing commitment to this industry. Greyhound Racing NSW has put together a wonderful campaign for what it knew was the right thing to do. It now knows Labor stood with it because we knew what it was doing was for the betterment of the people it represents: the hardworking men and women of New South Wales, those people who know that that industry can survive with the right regulation. We support Greyhound Racing NSW wholeheartedly and look forward to working together in the future. I commend this bill to the House.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (19:41): I speak on the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017 to endorse the comments of so many who have already spoken. I welcome the introduction of this bill to the House and agree with my colleagues who have said it is sad and unfortunate that we had to have this debate here tonight. It would have been better if we were not here having this conversation at all. I put on the record and reiterate briefly that we all condemn those people who have been doing the wrong thing. I have family members who have been in the greyhound racing industry for my entire life—and long before I came along and walked this earth—and who have been a part of the history of greyhound racing.

Greyhound racing has changed, and it needed to change according to this thing called the social licence, which we still cannot quite define. My aunty and uncle had to change their methods, no doubt about it. May they not turn in their graves but I am quite sure when I was much younger they probably participated in live baiting—I do not know that to be true, but they might have. Over the years that practice ceased and was removed from the regime that they participated in; they moved on and modernised. My great fear is that there might still be people in the industry who think that is okay, indeed, the *Four Corners* episode proved that. We are all unanimous in saying that those people need to go, and if they do not they need the full force of the law brought down on them. They must leave the industry now.

Some of the language used in this debate—I note it has not been used recently and the structure of this bill does not lend itself to this—has been that greyhound racing would have one last chance, one final opportunity. Since the Government decided to roll back the legislation, repeal the bill and set up a new structure, I have been concerned about what that one last chance would look like. What if a greyhound fails a drug test? Does that mean that one last chance has been and gone? What if a trainer has a greyhound who is sick or they do not treat it properly, for whatever reason? What if a greyhound breaks its leg on the corner at Wentworth Park? Injuries to greyhounds have been a concern. There is no description of or prescription for exactly what one last or final chance is in this bill. But what is in this bill, which gives me some confidence, is infrastructure to make sure that when those minor issues arise they can be dealt with properly and fairly.

Interestingly—I know that the gentleman and the lady who are sitting in the public gallery will appreciate this—my conversations with the people in the greyhound racing industry started about five years ago, long before the ban. I spent the first two years trying to get my head around the terminology such as National Coursing Association, the National Coursing Club, the Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association, Greyhound Racing NSW [GRNSW] et cetera. The industry has a language of its own. My interest was triggered by a very humble gentleman called Jim, who wandered into my office and said, "Clayton, I have been accused of doing the wrong thing at this particular track. I absolutely did not do it. I have had a 40-year career in the industry and I feel as if my reputation has been tainted." It seemed to be pretty straightforward so I bowled the issue up to the Minister, who sent it off to GRNSW and, of course, there was nothing to see there.

That is why I became intrigued by this industry. The more I looked at it, the more layers I pulled back, the more stories I heard from people in my local community and the more concerned I became about the old structure of Greyhound Racing NSW. For quite some time I have felt that change was needed. I felt that long before the ABC *Four Corners* program was aired. I felt that long before the McHugh report came out. I felt that long before the then Premier declared that he was going to close down the industry. As I have said, the industry did not just need a broom through it; it needed a vacuum blower used on it. I believe that there is an opportunity now for Greyhound Racing NSW to seize the chance to completely renew and regrow the industry.

I have one ongoing and lingering concern, and that was identified by the shadow Minister in his speech in the second reading debate. I know that he has asked the Minister to make some comment about it in his reply. Those in the industry continue to be concerned about the funds that will be required to make all of these changes possible. I know that there are some initial funds up-front for the first four years. From memory it is \$11 million each year for the first four years, and \$30 million over the following five years. So \$40 million, \$50 million, \$60 million or \$70 million will be contributed. Welfare costs a lot of money. A dog may hurt its fetlock on the turn while racing. Those sandy loam tracks require a specific camber and a specific depth of sand. Major rain events should be taken into consideration when the tracks are constructed. The tracks have to be turned and

churned regularly to prevent them from compacting so that dogs do not injure themselves as they race on the turns. That all costs a lot of money. Some of the people in my electorate have installed air conditioners in kennels and have done upgrades to the trial tracks. That all costs a lot of money.

People in the industry are concerned about how they will pay for all of this welfare and still have an industry that can thrive and survive. Today we are walking away from the announcement made last year by then Premier Mike Baird. I know that the Minister will go to great lengths to explain that the greyhound industry need not be concerned, but the people in the industry are concerned that, instead of killing the industry off with one fell swoop, the actions of the Government will cause it to die slowly. The concern is the industry will be slowly asphyxiated through lack of money. I do not want to see that happen. I believe that the Minister does not want to see that happen. I believe that the bill is not structured in a way that will cause that to happen. But the results will depend on the dollars available. We still do not have a certain and definite path forward with respect to the money that is required to implement the very important—essential—welfare issues that must be addressed.

I wish all of those honest, reliable greyhound owners, breeders and trainers who do the right thing the very best with their future careers. I hope that all of the dingbats leave, because they have the chance to ruin it for everyone. Unfortunately, this House has suffered its share of dingbats who have tainted the reputation of members on both sides of the Chamber. Not all politicians are like that; most of us are fair, reasonable and honest people who want to serve the people in their electorates. We understand what it is like because we have had our own in this place. But I say: "This is it, guys. For your own sake and for all the people in the greyhound racing industry who still think they might be able to throw a rabbit on a lure and get away with it, just walk away." I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:49): I note that Labor supports the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017 and, therefore, I will support the bill, which overturns the announcement made on 7 July last year by then Premier Baird that the greyhound racing industry would be closed as of 1 July this year. In doing so, the bill repeals the Greyhound Racing Prohibition Act 2016 and the Greyhound Racing Act 2009, and amends the Greyhound Racing Rules of New South Wales. The circumstances that led to that announcement by the Premier are contained in the McHugh report. I have considered why the Premier would make such a major and sweeping announcement in relation to one industry in the State that deals with animals when there is a whole bunch of industries in this State that deals with animals. If people are honest with themselves, a whole bunch of animal welfare problems in this State could be dealt with more broadly than the way chosen by the Premier and the Liberal-Nationals Government.

Instead of addressing animal welfare as a general and important issue to be dealt with by this Parliament, the Government closed down one industry and then went to great lengths to announce to the people of New South Wales that it was quite confident that in other industries, such as horse racing, the breeding of animals for sale in pet shops and the breeding of chickens for slaughter or for egg production, there were no animal welfare concerns. The Government went as far as passing a number of pieces of legislation last year, using its numbers in this House, to make it harder for people who are concerned about animal welfare in this State to identify animal welfare problems when they arise. The Government made changes to the Inclosed Lands Act, which criminalised trespassing onto land where animals are farmed for use by society, and it criminalised activity through the Biosecurity Act to make it harder for activists to identify animal welfare problems.

We should remember that it was activists concerned about animal welfare who identified the problems in the greyhound racing industry that led to the *Four Corners* report, the McHugh special commission of inquiry and the Premier's announcement on Facebook, without consultation with this Parliament. The activities of those people in identifying animal welfare problems were criminalised and cracked down on, but the sacrifice to show that that Liberal Premier was truly a good man would be the greyhound industry. Why do that? The only reason that I could come up with for doing that crossed my mind again when the Fair Work Commission handed down its decision on penalty rates. In its decision the Fair Work Commission spoke about nurses, firefighters, and policemen and policewomen who have to work on the weekends. It said maybe we should keep their penalty rates, but for people who work in restaurants, shops and cafes, maybe we should reduce their penalty rates.

Why would the penalty rates of one group of workers who are compelled to work on the weekend be reduced when another group of workers who are compelled to work on the weekend retain their penalty rates and are treated as deserving of a higher rate of pay? The answer to my question on this matter is that it is an elitist view of society—it is a typical liberal view, in the broadest sense, that there are those who are deserving and those who are undeserving. The people in the greyhound industry were marked down by those opposite, including some lackeys in The Nationals who should have been defending them and who are interjecting now. They were marked down as undeserving of any sort of protection or any opportunity to reform. They were marked down and the industry was to be closed down.

The consequences on the Central Coast would not have been in the best interests of the community. We have many small businesses on the Central Coast that operate in this industry. Brook Group is one of them. It has been operating on the Central Coast since the 1950s. It is a family business employing 10 people. They do the timing of all the greyhound races in New South Wales. Those 10 employees are a mixture of younger and older employees. They include family members. It is an established business on the Central Coast. This area has above average unemployment, so I am concerned about any company being put out of business. This business was targeted by the Liberal-Nationals Government without any thought being given to the consequences and without any thought being given to the contracts businesses such as this one had in place with the industry or what the closure of the industry would mean for them.

A bunch of other people on the Central Coast earn a small living—they are not making a huge amount of money; they are earning a small living—and occupy their time gainfully by pursuing their interest in greyhound racing. They are pursuing their interest in raising animals and the activities that can flow from the racing of those animals. That is all this was—it was elitism. I welcome this bill. I am concerned that the functions of Greyhound Racing NSW will become commercial functions. I am concerned, after the problems we had with the market in electricity and the problems we have had with the market in housing, that we would go down the path of commercialising greyhound racing even further. We should instead be considering a not-for-profit operation. But, leaving that aside, the Australian Labor Party endorses this bill. The Minister, who is in the Chamber and interjecting, should look at the comments of the Legislation Review Committee on the nature of the bill and some of the infringements on personal rights that flow from the bill. I would welcome his comments and invite him to address them in his speech in reply.

I thank the local greyhound racing community on the Central Coast for welcoming me into that community, including Rachael Harrington, Operations Manager at the Gosford Greyhound Racing Club; and Bradley Sabotic and Gary Minter, executive members of the Greyhound Breeders Owners and Trainers Association responsible for the Central Coast. They welcomed me to the Gosford greyhound race track, explained to me their issues and included me in their campaign to protect the livelihood of a whole bunch of people on the Central Coast. I appreciate the David Mehan appreciation stakes, run in November last year, which was won by the gloriously named Miss Foxy Lee. I had fun that night. I appreciate the racing industry and I appreciate meeting all the local people. I look forward to working with them in the future and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (19:58): I make a contribution to this debate on the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017. I endorse the remarks made by the member for Maroubra when he led for the Opposition. Nothing I say should be seen to be either directly or by implication inconsistent with the views that he has expressed in this House. I say that a lot because I am bound by caucus decisions, however on this occasion I actually agree with the member for Maroubra—and I actually mean it. I take issue with some remarks made by the member for Sydney in his attack upon the Labor Party and the position that Labor took on this issue. I have the highest regard for the member for Sydney, but to accuse Labor of simply taking a political position on this issue is not only unfair but also untrue.

This bill, which seeks to repeal last year's legislation, should serve as a warning to not only this Government but also future governments on how not to engage in the decision-making process. Parliaments and governments are not dictatorships. Governments operate not only through Executive Government but also through the party room process. This Government is a Liberal and Nationals Coalition and had it followed the proper processes instead of the former Premier being persuaded by remarks in the McHugh report, this situation would not have occurred.

People have differing views on the matter, but government is a collective and members are consulted. That is good democracy; it avoids error and emotional decisions. The Government's decision has had a significant impact in this State. The former Premier, before taking this decision, was the most popular politician in Australia, and the Government was unassailable in the way it went about its business. It used its political capital on a number of issues that were considerably unpopular. Even though I have been legitimately critical of some of the processes—including council amalgamations—I say to the former Minister for Local Government and now Minister for Racing, that was occurring. As a result of the decision to ban greyhound racing, the most popular Premier in Australia became the most unpopular. That then impacted upon the Government's confidence.

There is no point in blaming the Labor Party, which opposed the Government on a variety of principles. Some within the Labor Party had differing views, but Labor was right about the position it took that one cannot have a narrow section of government close an industry without engaging in a proper consultative process. That is the lesson to be learned. We accept that governments make decisions, but the entire Government must make the decision. Someone cannot simply read a report, be emotionally affected by what is in the report and then close an industry, punishing everybody in that industry. That decision had the potential to have major impacts, particularly in rural New South Wales.

Certain members of the Executive Government compromised their positions in standing up for their communities to make a point and in hindsight they were right. The main lesson to be learned from this decision-making process is that one cannot govern in this way. The Government has governed for five years, yet it has fallen over not just a major political error but also a significant public policy error. This should be a lesson not only to this Government but also to future governments. People cannot make decisions based on opinion polls, Facebook or social media. The Government should not be railroaded into making decisions or taking public policy positions simply because something appears on Twitter or from internet trolls. Proper public policy and legislation must be considered thoroughly, with members of political parties consulted; that is one of the reasons they are elected. Nobody knows everything; not even the most popular Premier in New South Wales knows everything.

This should sound a warning to the Government about some of its other public policy decisions. One can imagine the concern of an honest greyhound owner or someone whose employment in regional New South Wales depends on the greyhound racing industry when the Government arbitrarily decided to remove that work. Have people in regional New South Wales not been punished enough by the economic rationalist control of the public policy agenda? Members of The Nationals in this House would know better than I do how badly every closure of a power station in regional New South Wales badly affects the community. Every time the Government decides for economic reasons to take a policy direction because a Treasury boffin thinks it is a good idea, it is always those in regional New South Wales who pay the ultimate price in terms of their quality of life—and members of The Nationals know that.

I invite the Government to view this failure not as a political defeat but as a way in which good government needs to operate in this State. I commend those in the Opposition who took a forceful position in representing people in this industry. Not only have the people in this industry been saved and protected by the position that the Leader of the Opposition and Opposition adopted quite ferociously, but also the status quo has been restored. I recall that the McHugh inquiry came about as a result of a parliamentary inquiry in respect of this industry. I would think the appropriate decision was not a knee-jerk reaction by the Government of the day; the matter probably should have been referred back to a parliamentary committee to ensure transparency and consultation.

I hope that this sad exercise in all respects serves as a warning and a lesson to us all in this House, all who come after us, and all who have the honour and the privilege of forming part of the Executive Government in New South Wales. We should realise that we are not the fount of wisdom and we should not attack and close industries. We should recognise that we do not have the luxury of implementing policy based on gut reactions to terrible factual circumstances without engaging in consultation with the Cabinet and the party room as well as, most importantly, the community and the industry that is basically being sentenced to death. The industry would have died had the Labor Party not run its campaign. It is unusual for a member of the Opposition to say this, but I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (20:07): I support the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017 and I commend the Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing for bringing this bill before the House. Ordinarily I would start my contribution to debate on a bill by going through some of the speeches of members of the Opposition, but on this occasion I will not do so because many Opposition members chose to play politics with this legislation. I believe this legislation should be above politics. The bill has been introduced to repeal the Greyhound Racing Prohibition Act 2016 that was due to commence on 1 July 2017 and to provide the foundation for governance structures for a sustainable greyhound racing industry with the highest animal welfare and integrity standards in the country. The Minister, in his second reading speech, advised that since the assent of the Greyhound Racing Prohibition Act 2016 the Government has been in consultation with stakeholders to assess the potential impact the Act would have on the greyhound racing industry. This bill seeks to redress some issues.

I thank Greyhounds Transition Taskforce Coordinator General Dr John Keniry for his work on structuring the adjustment package. He told us that there was a deep and meaningful desire by the industry to reform not just for the sake of getting the industry past the post and convincing the Government to reverse its decision to ban it. It is good to see greyhound breeders Kevin Gordon and Mark in the gallery. Dealing with Kevin was a great delight; he is very professional. The Government has listened to the community, which wants the industry to have the opportunity to prove that it can operate appropriately. It is clear that the community wants the industry to provide jobs and continue to make valuable economic and social contributions to this State.

Nowhere is that settlement felt more strongly than parts of regional New South Wales where greyhound racing is a source of direct and indirect employment for so many and where clubs exercise an important social function in bringing people together and providing services to the community. The Government has listened to the community and engaged with the industry to find a sustainable way forward for the industry in New South Wales. The bill adopts 121 recommendations from the report of the Greyhound Industry Reform Panel. It applies

strict animal welfare standards and includes new offences and penalties. It will establish the Greyhound Welfare Integrity Commission, which will initiate, develop and implement policies in relation to greyhounds.

Regional communities have told the Government that greyhound racing is an integral part of their lives and it has listened. Not only does the greyhound industry make an economic contribution to regional communities, it also features as part of the social fabric with track facilities being regularly used by local clubs, charities and community groups. The Government has listened to the stakeholders and as a result the bill is before the House. I thank the members of the Taree Greyhound Club who met with me a number of times before the previous legislation was passed, and subsequent to that. I appreciate their passion and advocacy for the sport.

While the Government has been clear that welfare standards in the industry need to be drastically improved, it also recognises the significant contribution of greyhound racing to regional economies. I know there has been debate about the size of the industry's economic contribution, but even if we use numbers at the conservative end of the scale, it still remains important. There are many thousands of people whose livelihoods, directly or indirectly, depend on the greyhound racing industry. The Government's decision to give the greyhound racing industry the opportunity to reform means that the flow-on benefits of the industry for regional communities will continue. This is important for small businesses, particularly in our regional and rural communities, where greyhound racing can be a focus of community activity and for many participants it is not only their small business but also a passionate hobby.

All sorts of small businesses benefit when there are greyhound race meetings, such as bakers, butchers, and fruit shops. They all provide goods and services to local clubs. Those local businesses provide much-needed employment, which is often casual or part-time. This additional income makes a big difference in many families. Small businesses providing other sorts of goods and services such as racing equipment, transport equipment, veterinary services, abattoirs and pet food benefit from, and contribute to, the greyhound industry. The bill and the new package of greyhound industry reforms will ensure that many thousands of New South Wales small businesses, including those in regional New South Wales, will have the opportunity to continue to support and provide goods and services to the greyhound industry. This can only be a good thing. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (20:12): I support the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017. When the bill to ban the sport was introduced last year, voting on it was the hardest decision I had to make as a local member. That is not an excuse. I take full responsibility for my part in that decision and accept that I will be judged accordingly. I am a member of Government and I support the Government, and I understand the consequences of my decisions. It was one of the few decisions in this place that I have personally struggled with, knowing that my father was a greyhound owner. We were in the hotel industry and over time my father had a couple dogs. He had a great love for those dogs and for watching them run.

I say sincerely voting on the bill was an extremely hard decision. No-one had a gun to my head and I accept my role. That said, I am extremely glad that the Government has listened to the community and the industry, and that the industry will now have an opportunity to reform and to flourish. The crux of my discomfort about the Government's decision is that we were punishing the industry as a whole for the indiscretions of a few. Now that we have acknowledged that we made a mistake, I am happy that what we are putting in place will ensure that those people who do the wrong thing are punished. We will now have legislation to ensure that that happens. Those who do the wrong thing will be wiped out or struck off, and they will be subject to heavy fines or imprisonment. Having spoken to a number of people in the industry, I know that is also what they want; they do not want to be associated with these people.

Camden, like many other places, has a number of greyhound owners and breeders. If members were in the area and if they got up early in the morning they would see people walking their dogs. The people involved in the greyhound industry who came to my office are good people; they are mums and dads, nans and pops. As clichéd as it sounds, they would put their dogs before themselves. Their animals are well kept, well fed and well trained. A number of people said that they let their dogs sleep on their bed. I will not mention his name, but one fellow who came to see me said that his dogs were his reason for getting out of bed in the morning. He had experienced a bit of hard luck with work and family, and his dogs were his companions. He had only a couple of dogs, but when he finished work mowing lawns each day he tended to his dogs because that is what his dad had done. He would get out of bed in the morning feeling good about himself because he had his dogs.

Another man who clearly was not happy with the Government's decision to ban greyhound racing organised a protest at the front of my office. I thought that the least I could do was listen to the protesters' views. My discussions with them were extremely heated, although nothing untoward happened. My staff and I have worked with the protest organiser and I believe a mutual respect has evolved from a very adversarial beginning. I now call or text him to ask him how he is and to tell him what the Government is doing. In fact, I invited him to Parliament House recently, and the Minister was good enough to meet him. Although they should have been

supported from day one I am proud that this Government and the industry have such a mutual respect, which is a positive outcome from this process. In the six years I have been a member of Parliament this is the first time the Government has had to change its decision but I commend the Minister for Racing, who has been open and inclusive, for introducing this legislation. He spoke to and met my stakeholders in Camden and travelled all around the State to meet all stakeholders which has enabled us to get to this decision today.

Recently the Minister made it abundantly clear to me that he has a very good team behind him. They have done a lot of work and have supported him. They include: Justin Mulder, Caroline Davies, Paul Newson, Terry O'Brien, Paul Sariban, Alex King, Brooke Noorbergen, Janine Lonergan, Kathy Caruana, Heidi Carr, Ashley Gardiner, Lucy Brennan, Angie Lee, Jacqueline Moore and Mark Hare. I thank them for their efforts. I say to the industry that we got it wrong; there is still a heck of a lot of work to be done. At least we all want the industry to survive and flourish and this legislation is the first step in that process.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (20:22):

In reply: I speak to the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017. I begin by acknowledging those members of the alliance who are in the public gallery who have been committed all the way through this process. They have been relentless and have never given up. In the past few months whilst I have been the Minister for Racing we have had many discussions and opportunities to talk about issues in the greyhound industry so that we can have a sustainable industry for many years to come that will continue to support regional communities across this State. They have been relentless and it has been a great journey to introduce this legislation for the right reasons.

I thank members representing the electorates of Maroubra, Riverstone, Orange, Barwon, Wallsend, Cootamundra, Newtown, Upper Hunter, Shellharbour, Clarence, Maitland, Coffs Harbour, Bankstown, Ballina, Lake Macquarie, Sydney, Wollongong, Port Stephens, Lakemba, Londonderry, Swansea, Cessnock, The Entrance, Heffron, Myall Lakes and Camden who have contributed to this debate. The industry has been waiting a long time for this important day, to hear the debate on this legislation.

I think the industry has been waiting for some certainty to ensure that the ban will be repealed. Importantly, this bill provides a new start and structure for greyhounds and industry participants. It strengthens the welfare and integrity standards for the industry. It gives the industry the opportunity it has asked for—that is, the opportunity to continue and have a strong future. Despite some of the views shared tonight, it demonstrates that the Government has listened to the industry and the community. We have worked through this to get the right outcome. There has been an enormous amount of consultation in the development of this bill. It has been informed by the work of the Greyhound Racing Industry Reform Panel where 122 recommendations were submitted to the Government on 9 February. I appreciate the work of Dr John Keniry. When I met with him he said the industry could change, it wanted to change and there was a strong willingness to do so.

I turn to some of the comments made by members. Firstly, many speakers recognised that there were issues in the greyhound industry and something needed to be done. I recognise that some still may have concerns about the impact of the bill and the future of the industry. But the new arrangements are about ensuring that we are not setting the industry up to fail. The arrangements we are putting forward will provide a strong and new partnership with the industry. We want the industry to prosper. We have made an assessment of what support the industry needs to help it transition to the new arrangements. As a result, the Government is providing \$41 million in transitional funding to support the greyhound industry. That \$41 million is there because this Government is committed to a thriving greyhound industry. We also want a greyhound industry that can stand on its own two feet. The funding allows time for changes in the tax parity payments to be fully realised and it provides important time for the commercial body to assess how it will operate into the future and establish a sustainable path forward.

The member for Newtown suggests the bill does not do enough to address the problem of live baiting. However, there is much in the bill focused on live baiting. That includes new penalties, new offences, stronger investigative and enforcement powers, and lifetime bans for those who do the wrong thing. The good people in the industry that I have spoken to have no time for those who do the wrong thing. They also do not want them having anything to do with greyhound racing any longer. As I mentioned in my second reading speech, we recognise the important role the greyhound industry plays in New South Wales, and regional New South Wales in particular. Regional communities were upset by the ban, and we listened.

We know there are many thousands of people whose livelihoods either directly or indirectly depend on the greyhound racing industry. The Government's decision to give the greyhound racing industry the opportunity to reform means that the flow-on benefits of the industry for regional communities will continue. When I travelled the State I found that the many trainers, owners, breeders and those involved with businesses connected to the greyhound industry understand its importance. For many in the industry, greyhound racing is more than just an income, just a job or just a hobby. The greyhounds they care for and train have become part of their family. The greyhounds that they race represent their hard work, their passion and their life. I acknowledge that for some greyhound owners the industry is all they have. Not only does the greyhound industry make an economic

contribution to regional communities but it also features as a main part of the social fabric of regional communities, with track facilities being regularly used by local clubs, charities and community groups.

This bill will reform the greyhound industry to ensure increased transparency, separation of functions and implementation of animal welfare standards that meet community expectations. Above all, it will provide a framework for a sustainable greyhound industry. I thank Deputy Premier Barilaro for his incredible support of the industry and for his understanding of the importance of this industry to regional communities. I also thank my colleagues for their advice and suggestions, and for the support they have given in this journey. They too understand the importance of the greyhound racing industry to their electorates. This is a sensible and real partnership. It is a new direction in which the New South Wales Government and the greyhound industry will work together for a sustainable future. I thank my staff for their hard work over the past two months in preparing this legislation. I thank all members for their contributions to this debate and I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that the bill be now read a second time.

Division called for and Standing Order 181 applied.

Noes, 3

Mr A Greenwich
Ms J Leong
Ms T F Smith

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Ms Jenny Leong.

Consideration in Detail

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): By leave: I shall deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 to 102 be agreed to.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (20:37): I move The Greens amendment No. 1 on sheet C2017-020:

No. 1 **Review of Act**

Page 42, clause 102. Insert after line 9:

(b) whether greyhound racing should be banned on animal welfare grounds,

This amendment is to the review of the Act that is expected in three years time. I note that some members on the other side of the Chamber are standing up with their arms folded towards the Temporary Speaker, but to the rest of the members who are sitting on the other side I say that while it is clear that The Greens oppose this bill and that we supported the ban, I believe that this amendment actually honours what all of the members in this place have said the intention of the bill is: to give the industry a second chance. If everyone sitting in this place genuinely believes that the industry is going to take that second chance as a genuine opportunity to rule out all of the animal welfare issues that have been exposed and raised then there is no reason any member in this place could not support this amendment.

The amendment inserts a paragraph to proposed section 102, which deals with the review of the Act that will happen in three years time. It adds a requirement that a review consider whether greyhound racing should be banned on animal welfare grounds. The Government claims that this reversal is about giving the industry a second chance. If they have that chance, which is what we are passing here tonight, it is essential that the industry be held to account when it comes to animal welfare standards. If the industry has not delivered on its promise within three years—if the animal welfare in this industry has not improved—then it is only fair that the review of this industry include and consider whether or not greyhound racing should be banned on animal welfare grounds. If all of those members who spoke tonight believe the industry can clean up its act and stop the outrageous behaviour that has occurred, then there is no reason that an amendment cannot be made to include in that review a consideration of the animal welfare grounds.

I remind members before they vote on this amendment that the McHugh report estimated that over the past 12 years 97,783 greyhounds were bred and at least 50 per cent to 70 per cent of those were deliberately killed because they were never or no longer able to be competitive. That is up to 68,448 dogs killed—more than 15 dogs a day. I am not saying that the people members here have spoken about—mum and dad racers, or punters who want to go to the greyhound races—are responsible for that; we must admit that these are the facts. That kind of animal cruelty has occurred in this industry and, if we believe that there is a genuine ability for the industry to clean up its act, there is no harm in adding in that clause as part of the review.

It is important for us to remember that that report was handed down. It is important for us to remember that this legislation alone cannot deal with the animal cruelty issue. I know it is probably hard for the members on the other side to hear but we are talking about tens of thousands of dogs killed. If we are fine with that then there is no need to make this amendment and there was no need to introduce the ban in the first place. But there was a need to introduce the ban because of how damning this inquiry was. If we admit that there was a problem and that report was genuine, if we recognise that the industry can clean up its act and there is no intention to allow the industry to get away with animal cruelty, then there is no harm or risk in including this amendment in the bill. But by not including this amendment in the bill we are saying that we accept animal welfare is not a priority and that animal cruelty will continue in this industry. I urge members to consider whether or not this amendment can be supported and to recognise that without this amendment, saying that the industry can pick up and have a second chance rings hollow. If those words were true there would be no need to include and support this amendment.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (20:42): The Government opposes the amendment moved by The Greens.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (20:43): I express my huge disappointment at the Minister's intentions and genuineness. I appreciate that, as I said in my speech on this bill, it has been very challenging and dirty politics on all sides. I acknowledge that it has been very damaging for the people who are impacted by this bill. I acknowledge also that there is no denying that animal welfare is not at the heart of what happened and not why this ban was originally introduced. Dirty politics, political pressure and wedging resulted in us seeing this ban overturned. The issue remains that animal welfare and animal cruelty are at the heart of this debate. We are talking about tens of thousands of dogs that are killed because they are not up to it. They are referred to as "wastage". I am talking about serious animal welfare and animal cruelty issues.

This amendment is simple. I urge Labor Party members to consider where they sit in relation to this amendment. I notice the absence of certain members from this Chamber: the member for Summer Hill and the member for Blue Mountains. I am concerned about the fact that the Labor Party has pushed the Government to this position. If Labor Party members genuinely believe that the industry can stop the issues of animal cruelty then I urge them to support this amendment with respect to the review.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Newtown has the call. The member for Prospect will come to order. I remind the member for Campbelltown that he must be seated when he is in the Chamber.

Ms JENNY LEONG: The amendment simply adds a requirement for there to be a consideration of whether greyhound racing should be banned on animal welfare grounds. That is a simple requirement for the review in three years time. I urge the Labor Party to support The Greens amendment because it is a sensible amendment that goes some way to addressing the issues of animal cruelty that we have seen in the industry.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! Members take their seats. Standing Order 54 requires all members to be seated when in the Chamber. Members who do not wish to do so will remove themselves from the Chamber.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (20:46): I strongly support the amendment moved by the member for Newtown to require the review to consider whether greyhound racing should be banned on animal welfare grounds. The shocking revelations from the special commission of inquiry and media exposés of extreme cruelty included thousands of dogs being bred and then killed for being too slow; dogs kept in seclusion and subjected to cruel training practices, which included live baiting; horrible injuries on the track, leading to dogs being destroyed; dogs killed on retirement because there are not enough homes for them; and others being turned into breeding machines, then suffering the same fate.

We know that members of the Government and the Opposition are not concerned about this. We know that members of the Opposition are not concerned enough even to have a position on this amendment. These concerns led the Government to ban this cruel and archaic industry last year. That was the right decision, and it had broad community support. It was not a knee-jerk reaction, as Opposition members have said tonight. It followed a thorough investigation with private and public hearings, over 2,000 submissions, 151 pages of evidence and 115 hours of recordings.

In October last year, the Government made it clear that its decision to overturn the ban was about a final chance, and the Premier stated that the industry understood that this was its last chance. In August last year, during the debate on the Greyhound Racing Prohibition Bill 2016, the Leader of the Opposition stated:

If the industry were to be put on notice and given a fair period—perhaps two years—to meet clear benchmarks set down in black and white by the Parliament on injury rates and wastage levels and it fails to meet those parameters within the required time frame, we on this side of the House would say that the time had come to shut down the industry if such antisocial features continued and were incapable of being resolved and addressed to modern community standards. That is all that the amendment of the member for

Newtown seeks to do; it seeks to put into place the position of the Leader of the Opposition. It will be interesting to see if any Opposition members choose to speak in response to the amendment of the member for Newtown.

All of us in this House agree that this is one final opportunity for the industry to prove that it can operate without causing suffering. For those members who want the industry to continue, supporting the amendment will show faith that the provisions in the bill will work to create a sustainable industry that does not rely on suffering. If the bill can prevent cruelty, the amendment will not result in the closure of the industry. It is appropriate, after three years of implementation of reforms in this bill, for the Minister to consider whether the industry should continue or not based on animal welfare grounds. I strongly commend the amendment.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Ms Jenny Leong has moved The Greens amendment No. 1 on sheet C2017-020. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

Division called for and Standing Order 181 applied.

Ayes, 3
Mr A Greenwich
Ms J Leong
Ms T F Smith

Amendment negatived.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that clauses 1 to 102 be agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 102 agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): The question is that schedules 1 to 8 be agreed to.

Schedules 1 to 8 agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Private Members' Statements

ILLAWARRA ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (20:55): I have long considered that the economic, business and job opportunities for the Illawarra lie over the Illawarra escarpment in south-west and Western Sydney. I touched on these themes in my inaugural speech, and my thoughts are incorporated in the Illawarra Jobs Action Plan launched during last year's Wollongong by-election. I want to see Wollongong, as the regional capital city of the Illawarra, linked in every possible way with the nation's third-largest economy and a population of more than a million people. I want to see it linked with 150 of the top 500 listed companies, 160,000 small and medium-size businesses and 8,500 manufacturing firms.

These links will come from enhanced transport investment, such as the completion of the Maldon-Dombarton rail link and the upgrading of the Appin Road. Labor has committed to invest \$100 million in those two projects—with \$50 million in foundation capital to work on the Maldon-Dombarton project, and to finish the job the Coalition Government cancelled in 1988, and \$50 million to upgrade Appin Road. This rail link, which every Government agency at State and Federal level agrees will be needed in the years ahead to ease increasing congestion between commuter and freight handling, will provide south-west and Western Sydney with their own port of choice—the Port of Port Kembla—in the heart of the electorate of Wollongong.

But other links are developing because leaders in both regions recognise their necessity and the opportunities they present the populations of both regions. I have joined with my colleague the member for Campbelltown recently in calling on the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure to provide more bus services on route 887 to benefit students studying at the University of Wollongong who live in Campbelltown. Students who catch the 887 service now are forced to stand because of overcrowding. The member for Campbelltown, other members and I have all made representations to the Minister, but so far our calls have fallen on deaf ears. It is simply not good enough. I note the member for Campbelltown has given notice of a motion, and I look forward to making further comments when we debate it. I contrast the Government's lack of leadership in building the Wollongong and south-west Sydney connection with the approach of the University of Wollongong.

Earlier today the University of Wollongong opened its South Western Sydney Campus, located in Liverpool. This campus joins the university's global network of campuses, including campuses in Dubai—it is the New South Wales Government entity that has been trading in Dubai the longest—Hong Kong, mainland China and others. This has allowed it to grow considerably since it was established as an independent institution in 1975. Now with more than 32,000 students—28,000 of which are located in Wollongong itself—and nearly 132,000 alumni spreading across 175 countries, including a number in this place, the University of Wollongong is a global leader in higher education. It has recognised something that the Government is dragging its feet on—that is, the futures of the Illawarra, and south-west and Western Sydney are linked.

The university is not stopping at this initial and somewhat temporary campus located in Liverpool council buildings; it has plans for growth. Over the next few years it will establish a permanent campus in south-western Sydney, in Liverpool, that is expected to accommodate more than 7,000 students by 2030. This is yet another impressive achievement by the university and once again shows that from humble beginnings as a branch outlet of the University of New South Wales this institution continues to grow, with the support of successive investments by previous New South Wales and Federal Labor governments. It is now a world-leading teaching and research university in the top 2 per cent of universities around the globe.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Paul Wellings is setting about a capital program that includes increasing student accommodation and investment in the Molecular Horizons project, which will establish a microscope of considerable power—the only one of its type in the country. This will lead to more outstanding research outcomes from that institution. It is the university, Professor Wellings, Professor Judy Raper and others who are "Standing for purpose" in the words of the university's newly adopted slogan. They are building on the work of predecessors including former Vice-Chancellor Professor Gerard Sutton to help more people have access to high-quality education and the bright future that that brings. I look forward to continuing to work with the university and to build on its hard work and effort as it continues to advance research and deliver high-quality higher education outcomes.

YOUNG DISTRICT HOSPITAL MENTAL HEALTH SAFE ROOM AND SECURITY SUPPORT

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (21:01): I speak again this evening about the urgent need for a designated mental health safe room and security support at Young District Hospital in my electorate of Cootamundra. The hospital is the mental health referral point—a declared mental health facility—for the Murrumbidgee Local Health District, which includes the nearby towns of Boorowa and Harden. The need for a mental health safe room and security support at Young District Hospital was first raised with me by the Cootamundra Local Area Command some six months ago. Since that time I have been hearing more and more accounts of the experiences of staff and police at Young District Hospital that further indicate the urgent need for action.

For example, just this weekend I am reliably informed that there was an incident where an individual, referred to by health professionals as a homicidal psychotic, presented at Young District Hospital. There was just one doctor and one nurse rostered on at the time. The lack of security support at the hospital and a designated mental health safe room in this situation meant that the only option available to staff was for the patient to be conveyed by ambulance to the Wagga Wagga Rural Referral Hospital, which is two hours away by road. However, out of concern for their safety, local paramedics understandably refused to transport the patient. Having one ambulance officer in the rear with the patient while the other was driving would have posed a significant safety risk to them both. Another option was for the ambulance to have a police escort. Again, due to significant associated safety concerns, this was refused. The outcome was that a private security officer drove from Wagga Wagga to Young—again, a two-hour drive—to provide support at the hospital.

I am aware of another incident where a teenager presented at Young District Hospital heavily under the influence of drugs and in a very agitated state. This was also a very difficult case for staff to handle and when the patient had calmed down—the effect of the drugs wore off—the patient just got up and walked out of the hospital. There was no opportunity for medical staff to do the necessary follow-up or to make referrals. These are the latest in a string of examples where, had there been adequate security support and a designated mental health safe room, the situation could have been managed much better—and more safely—for all concerned. We should consider also the safety of other patients at the hospital when staff are trying to deal with such cases. I understand that local staff who have been involved in or are aware of such instances at the hospital are extremely worried, with some refusing to work night shifts due to the lack of support.

We need to give peace of mind to our local hospital staff, doctors, police, paramedics and members of the public who happen to be present in the hospital when such cases present. While I understand that NSW Health is currently seeking feedback on new guidelines for the use of safe assessment rooms, it is time for urgent action. As Young is the declared mental health facility for this part of my electorate, action must be taken in response to the need for a mental health safe room and capable, local, on-call security support for the hospital. I thank both

the Minister for Health and the Minister for Mental Health for looking into and acting urgently on this most serious matter in my electorate.

SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (21:04): I draw to the attention of the House three events occurring in my electorate of Seven Hills to coincide with Anzac Day commemorations. First, I will speak about my Anzac Day Poem competition; secondly, I will speak about the commemoration planned by the Seven Hills RSL Sub-branch; and, finally, I will speak about the Government's fantastic soil collection project. This year I conducted my inaugural Anzac Day Poem competition for children in year 5 from the Seven Hills electorate. All the entrants should be so proud of their efforts, and I was genuinely taken aback by the quality of the writing submitted. This is no doubt thanks to the great work of local parents and teachers who have not only invested in the writing skills of local kids but also invested in their knowledge of such pivotal events in the framing of our national character.

The spirit of the Anzac lives through us and through our children. It was the sacrifices made by the Anzacs that ensured the freedoms of all here today and of those in our community. I believe we too readily take for granted all that those brave young men gave us, so it is incredibly important for us as a community to take the time to reflect on the Anzacs and the values for which so many of them paid the ultimate sacrifice. This Friday I will announce the inaugural winner of the competition and I look forward to congratulating the winning entrant on their outstanding effort.

Last month I attended the annual general meeting of the Seven Hills-Toongabbie-Wentworthville Returned Serviceman's League Sub-branch to present members with a New South Wales flag on behalf of the Government. It was an honour to be in a room with so many locals who were willing to sacrifice everything for their families, their friends and their country. These men and women continue to give back to our community through the sub-branch, supporting the next generation of local returned service personnel as they rejoin civilian life. I look forward to seeing our State flag and the Australian flag flying high on Anzac Day this year when I attend the magnificent dawn service hosted by the sub-branch and the club. I am sure that members of this House will join me in thanking them for everything they have done, and everything they continue to do, for our community.

This year, as all members in this place well know, marks 99 years since the end of the Great War. Remembrance Day next year will represent the culmination of four years of Centenary of Anzac events and memorials. This will be a very special day in our nation's calendar, and I am buoyed by the announcement of the good Minister for Veterans Affairs that on that day the Hall of Service inside the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park will be completed and unveiled to the public. Inside the Hall of Service an artwork by Fiona Hall will also be unveiled. This artwork will contain a plaque from every town, suburb and locality around New South Wales from which men enlisted for the First World War and gave as their address.

Soil will be collected from 1,699 different sites across our State, including from Seven Hills and Northmead in my electorate. These are just two places from which so many young men went to war to fight for their country. The Minister has already begun the soil collection process, with a ceremony at the Geographical Names Board of NSW in Bathurst just last week. The Minister has informed me that the Office of Veterans Affairs has been working closely with the names board to identify the exact sites where soil samples will be collected to coincide with World War I memorials and other places of historic importance. I look forward to engaging local sub-branches and other community organisations in my electorate of Seven Hills for our very own soil collection ceremonies.

The Minister also announced that the New South Wales Government will contribute \$37.9 million to this project, which will include an education and interpretation centre beneath the memorial and the southern water feature that was part of the original 1930s design. The Pool of Reflection at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park has already been renovated and reopened to the public. The redevelopment of the memorial will be the primary legacy of New South Wales for the Centenary of Anzac commemorations, and this is something of which we can all be very proud. I am sure that this House will join me in encouraging any parent or grandparent to consider including a stop at the War Memorial on a day trip to the city during the school holidays. I look forward to updating this House on the winner of my Anzac Day Poem competition, on what I am sure will be another great dawn service at the Seven Hills-Toongabbie-Wentworthville RSL, and on the soil collection ceremonies at Seven Hills and Northmead. Lest we forget.

NSW TRUSTEE AND GUARDIAN

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (21:09): The Government's decision to make cuts to the NSW Trustee and Guardian department was supposed to make services easier to access, but the closure of multiple branches,

including Hurstville, Miranda and Penrith, has had the opposite effect. The NSW Trustee and Guardian is designed to help vulnerable and disadvantaged people who require assistance with trustee and executor services and managing their financial affairs, but those branch closures severely limit the department's ability to fulfil its mandate.

The cuts to the NSW Trustee and Guardian will leave those living with mental illness, dementia and homelessness vulnerable and without local access to essential services. Those changes are driven by cost-cutting rather than by a desire to improve the delivery of Government services to those who need it most in our community. It is a move to push people into using private financial managers, which places vulnerable people at risk of excessive management fees, rather than comprehensive and reliable estate management. Rural communities will be hit the hardest by these changes.

Government department closures in rural communities always have a major impact on local economies and families. The Government has made no effort to consider the impact that the closure of offices in regional centres will have on people living in those areas. Many people living in rural New South Wales will now be forced to travel multiple hours in order to reach the nearest branch. This is inconvenient, costly and time-consuming. The Government has not carried out an impact study on the effect these cuts will have on vulnerable community members. The Government claims these changes will put clients first and make it easier and simpler for clients to access services. However, closing branches and moving services online only creates a disadvantage for the elderly and those living with dementia.

We have an ageing population and with that comes an increase in the number of people who are reliant on the NSW Trustee and Guardian for power of attorney, guardianship and estate management. There are more than 400,000 Australians living with dementia. Alzheimer's Australia NSW Chief Executive Officer John Watkins has expressed concerns that the services and protections provided by the NSW Trustee and Guardian could be reduced and fewer dementia sufferers will be secure against financial abuse. In order to combat the issues created by having fewer branches, the Government has shifted services online.

As most clients are elderly, homeless or suffering from mental illnesses this is not an adequate solution. These people are immediately placed at a disadvantage with limited computer and internet access and they potentially lack the skills to utilise such a service. Not only do those cuts affect customers across the State, but all staff members were told to reapply for their jobs, with an estimated 150 to 200 jobs being cut. Eight of those are from the Hurstville branch. Cuts to those lower grade jobs means working families are hurt. It will add to unemployment issues, particularly in rural areas. Governmental services need to be provided to the people regardless of the economic circumstances, and in this case the Government has failed to adequately serve the most vulnerable people in our community.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (21:12): As I stand here in the Parliament today, the cost of buying a home in my electorate of Lake Macquarie slips further from the reach of yet another family. According to property monitoring services Domain and RP Data, the median house price in the area will creep over half a million dollars in the coming months. Double digit annual growth has been the norm in some suburbs for many years and while that median price may seem relatively lame compared to those in Sydney, it is among the highest median prices in regional Australia. Average incomes in my area, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, are well short of what is required to buy a house in that median range. This all adds up to the fact that the great Australian dream is being moved further and further away from young people and families.

Increasingly, people are turning to shared, subsidised or social housing to find a way of putting an affordable roof over their heads. As we know, that is not easy. My electorate, which has one of the highest median house prices, also has the longest waiting list for public housing. The latest data from Family and Community Services shows that the waiting list for social housing in my electorate is among the longest in the State. The current waiting time for a one-bedroom, two-bedroom or three-bedroom home in Lake Macquarie is more than 10 years. It is only slightly shorter for those seeking a four-bedroom home. There is a large and growing population in Lake Macquarie. People choose to live there because it is located between the major employment centres of Sydney and Newcastle and the cost of building a home is somewhat cheaper than it is in those major cities. As it stands, less than 10 per cent of those on public housing waiting lists in Lake Macquarie are actually being housed each year.

I have applauded recent initiatives taken by the Government. Recently it introduced the Social and Affordable Housing Fund, which is expected to provide about 3,000 much-needed additional homes for the socially or financially disadvantaged throughout New South Wales. The scheme is widely lauded by non-government agencies and housing advocacy groups in my electorate. However, this approach is a bit like attacking a bushfire with a garden hose. We must do more and we must start thinking outside the square. We must start

looking at innovative ways to provide affordable housing and to run programs that will allow more people to realise that dream of owning their own home or, at the very least, putting an affordable roof over their heads.

Without question, we must look at housing densities in our existing communities, and the red tape and stamp duties that are adding to the price of a home across this State. We must look at negative gearing and the private investment sector, which is also having significant impacts on the availability and affordability of housing. As we know, buying a first home has become increasingly difficult. While there have been some good policies such as stamp duty exemptions, First Home Owner Grants, new land releases and unit developments, the problem is growing.

I recently moved a motion in this place to discuss a range of issues impacting on housing affordability, including possible short- to medium-term accommodation options in under-utilised government buildings. A number of buildings in my electorate alone could be used to provide managed, crisis accommodation for those in need. An array of unused buildings at the old Morisset Hospital—where I once worked—is among them. If managed properly, they could provide short-term accommodation at low cost to those who need it.

We must do something different. Other elements of that debate should include a proper investigation of the impacts of negative gearing, and even the possibility of an equity buy-in scheme for renters. We should be looking at potential partnerships between buyers, developers, financial institutions, and government. These are not new ideas. However, they are ideas that I believe have sat for too long on the sidelines while the problems continues to worsen. Buy-in schemes were last discussed at a national level when former Prime Minister John Howard received the final report from his housing taskforce. It was later endorsed by the current Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, but very little is being done at a national level, while the efforts at the state level are only marginally better.

We must discuss the option of superannuation schemes investing in the housing market. All of these schemes carry risks, and among those risks is sending housing prices further skyward. However, we must have these discussions and break this seemingly endless cycle of house prices continually moving beyond the reach of more and more people, of people waiting decades for social housing, and of people simply not finding a roof to put over their heads. If we do not, the great Australian dream will have become the great Australian shame.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 21:17
until Wednesday 5 April 2017 at 10:00.**