



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday, 5 April 2017

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 5 April 2017

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

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Visitors

VISITORS

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

[Notices of motions given.]

Bills

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (TRANSPORT ENTITIES) BILL 2017

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 29 March 2017.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (10:09): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017. This bill speaks volumes about the New South Wales State Government. It speaks to its character, its organisational capabilities and its belief systems. It also speaks to this Government's complete and utter disdain for the ordinary citizens of this State. In early January Gladys Berejiklian was appointed Premier and since that time her feet have been slipping from underneath her. It is as if she has been running on ice. The Premier has set no new agenda. There has been no sense of movement, no reform and no improvement to the lives of the citizens of this State. Indeed, under Premier Berejiklian we have a continuation of the Baird Government.

I will start by listing a few of the challenges that the people of New South Wales are facing today—challenges in the Health and Education portfolios, dismantling of TAFE and the destruction of its capabilities, overcrowding of our prisons and unprecedented congestion on our roads which motorists are suffering from seemingly all day in all parts of Sydney. Major projects are also in complete disarray, characterised by blowouts and regular adverse reports from the Auditor-General. People are subject to higher electricity prices because of electricity privatisation, domestic violence in this State gets worse by the day. Together with the Aboriginal disadvantage, the ice epidemic and so on, the problems and challenges that this State and its citizens face go on and on and on. What do we have before us today? Madam Speaker, could I ask the failed Attorney-General not to mumble under her breath while I am speaking? If she wants to say something, she can stand up and say it so all the world can hear.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will return to the leave of the bill.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: With all of the challenges that the State faces, what are we dealing with today? It is another privatisation by stealth. More secrecy, more budget trickery, more privatising of valuable State assets. That is what this bill is all about. I recall when I was shadow Treasurer and having a briefing with Treasury officials about the Transport Asset Holding Entity (TAHE). I have to say in all of my time here as a Minister and shadow Minister, it was one of the most opaque briefings I have ever had. The Treasury officials might be forgiven because they were briefing me in the presence of a minder from the Treasurer's office and they were being mindful, under instruction, of what not to tell me. It was apparent that there were more questions about TAHE than answers and there was more secrecy about TAHE than there were disclosures. Nothing has changed in that respect.

The tone of this Government over the last six years has been one of an obsession about privatisation, a boundless sale of public assets and public land, and questionable treatment of public assets and public land. By my count, \$40 billion of valuable assets have been sold and privatised, many to overseas interests. One of the overarching themes that runs through every activity of this Government is its secrecy. Every Government information public access application, GIPA, by the Opposition and by the media is increasingly met with a reply that it may or may not be Cabinet-in-confidence but you are not getting it anyway because it is contrary to the public interest. More and more, day after day, the Opposition and the media are having to go to the NSW Civil and Administration Tribunal [NCAT] to find the answers. It speaks volumes about this Government and about the arrogance of this Government in all that it does.

Yesterday the Government came in here with its tail between its legs, having to retreat from one of its most arrogant attacks on the citizens of New South Wales with the Greyhound ban repeal bill. There are also the forced council amalgamations and the continued privatisations, which are loathed by the people of this State, not to mention the absolute cock-ups in the transport and infrastructure cluster with blowouts, sackings of capable staff and massive loss of expertise which have exposed this State and its citizens to billions and billions of dollars of expense. There has been mismanagement of contracts. The fact is the transport cluster, despite \$40 billion worth of asset sales, is scratching around for cash. It is running out of money. The fact is that WestConnex, the Sydney gateway, still does not exist on paper. All of these things should ring alarm bells with the citizens of New South Wales.

This legislation, the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017, should ring alarm bells for every member of Parliament whose citizens live on or use a rail line, because in due course those services will be privatised, safety will be compromised and citizens will pay more every time they board a train. People will get in their cars and the Government will sting them; they will hop on a train and the Government will sting them. We know the reason the Government wants to rush this bill through Parliament after it having laid on the table for only seven days. The privatisation of the biggest transport entity in the nation has major implications for the budget. When the Premier was the Treasurer in 2015 she created this construct, the TAHE, which was set up as a stalking horse, a Trojan horse for privatisation. But it also had the ancillary effect—a lovely one—that it artificially made the budget figures look better.

It did not change the cash position one cent but it saved this Government—along with the purchasers of homes in New South Wales, who are getting obliterated by rising house prices, no thanks to this Government—by artificially making the budget papers look better. One of the things we knew at the time is that the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] classifies government agencies using government finance statistics classification. The TAHE was originally set up on 1 July 2015 as a public non-financial corporation that would generate a commercial rate of return. In the 2015-16 budget, the Treasurer stated the ABS was satisfied with this arrangement and the TAHE would make a commercial rate of return. I do not know how, given that train operations in this State are subsidised by the Government to the tune of more than 70 per cent.

It seems now that the ABS does have an issue with this arrangement and is not satisfied that the TAHE will make a sufficient commercial rate of return. We now know that the ABS has grave doubts that what the Government is trying to achieve with its budget trickery of a year ago and this legislation can be achieved. If this bill does not go through—and possibly even if it does—the TAHE will need to be unwound and all of the budget trickery will need to be unravelling and that will put red ink all over the State budget, retrospectively and prospectively. The Government is rushing this bill through today to make the TAHE a statutory owned corporation [SOC]. It has changed its mind. The original plan did not work and it is changing tack now. It is like WestConnex—a design has not been settled on and the Government has changed its mind in an attempt to satisfy the ABS. There are still questions that the Government and people working within the Government do not have answers to. What is the rate of return? What is the hurdle rate?

When I was briefed, the Treasury advised that the artificially enhanced improvements to the budget position would cease to have effect at the end of the forward estimates. Now they do not even know whether the TAHE will make money over the 10-year period if this bill is passed. What are the four-year and 10-year projections for this new State entity? As usual, the Premier and the Treasurer have been very secretive about this. The bill changes the way NSW Trains and Sydney Trains are established. At the moment, they are both subsidiaries of RailCorp under the Transport Administration General Regulation 2013. They were created in 2013 as subsidiary corporations to RailCorp. The New South Wales Government did that by utilising section 55C of the Transport Administration Act 1988. The Government at the time preferred to do that to avoid bringing legislation to the Parliament because it was having trouble getting bills through the Legislative Council.

From 1 July 2013, RailCorp remained in existence as a statutory corporation and owned effectively all of the public transport rail assets. Sydney Trains and NSW Trains had the right to control and manage railway infrastructure on which they operated railway passenger and bus services on the RailCorp-owned network under the terms of contracts and licences between RailCorp and subsidiary corporations. Sydney Trains and NSW Trains will now become statutory corporations in their own right. Both Sydney Trains and NSW Trains will be rail authorities, under schedule 6A, clause 1B (2) of this bill. Each of them will be what is called a rail infrastructure owner. The land on which the rail infrastructure facilities are situated, which they manage and control, will continue to be owned by RailCorp until it becomes the Transport Asset Holding Entity, presumably at some later date. Also, we presume that the current contractual arrangements under which Sydney Trains and NSW Trains control and manage the rail infrastructure on which they run services will continue in existence. Once the amendment to schedule 2 commences and RailCorp is converted into a TAHE this can potentially change.

Under item [23] of the bill, government funding of Sydney Trains and NSW Trains will be by sums advanced from recurrent revenue by the Treasurer and from sums appropriated by Parliament for Transport for NSW purposes and allocated by Transport for NSW or as otherwise appropriated by Parliament for each agency specifically. NSW Trains and Sydney Trains will still collect revenue from their commercial activities, from various investments, and from fines and penalties. Item [27] of the bill will permit both of those entities to make orders setting charges, and that includes fares. These powers are similar to those in the Transport Administration Act under section 85 for RailCorp, Sydney Trains and other purposes.

However, there is a big change to the power for the Minister for Transport to transfer assets, rights and liabilities out of those transport authorities. Currently section 94 (1) of the Act empowers the Minister to transfer assets, rights and liabilities from rail authorities to another rail authority, a subsidiary of a rail authority, a State-owned corporation, the Crown or any other person or body acting on behalf of the Crown or a local council. The current definition of a "rail authority" includes, firstly, RailCorp, Transport for NSW or any other person or body prescribed by the regulations, and, secondly, SRA Residual Holding Corporation, the Transport secretary, and any other person or body prescribed by the regulations.

Items [34] and [35] of the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017 seek to change the power in section 94 (1) of the Act so that assets, rights and liabilities of a transport authority may be transferred by ministerial order. The new definition of a "transport authority" will include, firstly, a rail authority—that is, RailCorp, Transport for NSW or any other person or bodies prescribed by the regulations—and, secondly, SRA Residual Holding Corporation, State Transit Authority [STA], Roads and Maritime Services [RMS], Sydney Ferries, the Transport secretary and any other person or body prescribed by the regulations. The Government does not want people to know this but it is a significant change because it will allow the assets, rights and liabilities of all operating agencies in the Transport portfolio to be transferred out simply by ministerial order, not by legislation. It can be done under the cover of the darkness, which is how this Government loves to roll.

Assets, rights and liabilities include real property, personal property, plant and equipment, structures severed from ownership of the land, contracts, licences and legal liabilities. Because the definition will include any other person or body prescribed by the regulations, the Government will be able to make a simple regulation prescribing any person or organisation as a transport authority. For example, a private sector bus operator could be prescribed in a regulation and assets of the STA could be transferred to it. Alternatively, and this should ring alarm bells, the Sydney Motorway Corporation—which is a Government-owned, private sector, ASIC-incorporated company designed to hide things, like how much CEO Dennis Cliche is being paid—could be prescribed in a regulation and RMS assets could be transferred to it. The Sydney Motorway Corporation could then be sold by the New South Wales Government to the private sector.

Item [53] contains some further potentially significant changes. It contains a number of amendments to the current schedule 4 in the Act which apply to section 94 (1) of the Act about transfer orders. These major changes include, firstly, inserting clause 13 (1) which will permit the Minister for Transport to make an order that severs fixtures from land. This would include buildings but may also include rail infrastructure facilities. Secondly, the bill inserts clause 13 (2) which says that, once severed, the asset may be dealt with as personal property. This means it can be sold, leased or licensed to anyone as long as there is a power to deal with personal property. Thirdly, the insertion of clause 14 (2) means that such an order transferring assets, rights and liabilities to RailCorp, which will become TAHE when schedule 2 of the bill commences, the Residual Transport Corporation, Transport for NSW or any of their subsidiaries will not constitute the closure of a railway line. We need to remember the problems we had with that in Newcastle—

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: Hear, hear!

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: "Hear, hear," says the member for Newcastle, and well may he. We had problems with that in Newcastle within the meaning of section 99A of the Transport Administration Act. This is hugely significant because once the TAHE provisions in the amendments to schedule 2 commence and TAHE becomes a SOC, it will own RailCorp's rail infrastructure facilities because RailCorp will be replaced by TAHE. Under section 20W of the SOC Act, SOC's can, with the prior written approval of the voting shareholders, such as the Minister for Roads and the Minister for Transport—not any shareholders that the public has any power to scrutinise—form or participate in the formation of private corporations, acquire interests in private corporations and sell or otherwise dispose of interests in private corporations whether or not the activities or proposed activities of any such private corporation are related to the functions of the SOC as set out in its foundation character.

Fifthly, section 20W contemplates that the investment in a private corporation could be in a subsidiary of the SOC. Sixthly, a severance order could be made and rail infrastructure facilities owned by Transport for NSW could be transferred to a subsidiary of TAHE or a subsidiary SOC. New section 14 (1) would mean that if a ministerial order were made severing the rail infrastructure from the land, TAHE could then privatise the operation of those rail infrastructure facilities, for example, by a licence or operating agreement with a private

sector operator such as MTR, because they are severed from the land. Seventhly, TAHE will not be able to sell or transfer those rail infrastructure facilities directly to a private sector operator because once schedule 2 to the bill commences, item [38] says that new section 14 (1) protection only applies to a transfer by TAHE if it is to a public transport agency, which, under the Act, means Transport for NSW, RailCorp, RMS, the State Transit Authority, Sydney Ferries and their public or private subsidiary corporations. However, if a TAHE subsidiary was formed under the SOC Act, under section 20X the voting shareholders can approve the sale of fixed assets and investments of a statutory SOC or, under 20Y, of the main undertaking of the SOC.

Therefore, after a ministerial severance order, the rail infrastructure facilities will not be fixed assets and, arguably, the subsidiary SOC could privatise those rail infrastructure facilities because the amendments to the Act say that they can be dealt with as personal property. Under new section 14 (1) those assets would not be affected by section 99A of the Act, which prohibits the closure of a railway line by a rail infrastructure owner; the shares in the subsidiary SOC could be sold with voting shareholder approval; and all assets of the subsidiary SOC would go to the purchaser of the shares. That all sounds very complicated but it can be summed up as follows. It makes it easy for the Government—under the cover of darkness and without having to walk back into the people's House in this Parliament or into the Legislative Council, which has the power of review—to sell, privatise or do whatever it sees fit with rail assets.

Clause 14 of the bill deals with the matters on which the terms of an operating licence may be granted: compliance with network and asset standards set by Transport for NSW; a pricing regime; lease of access requirements; safety integrity; integration of transport modes; transport services to TAHEs or others; capital works programs; procurement and asset lifecycle, including maintenance or maintenance outsourcing; business and activities conducted outside New South Wales; and development, use or disposal of TAHE real property or transport infrastructure. Interestingly, under item [49] of the bill, TAHE will be exempt from State taxes for 12 months. What a hypocritical approach this is. This is the party of free enterprise that says that government entities should operate with commerciality in mind. This party says that these entities, within the confines and strictures of government regimes, should therefore pay all of the fees and charges to make them act as commercial corporate entities, except when they are being fattened up for sale.

It would be an understatement to suggest that the New South Wales Government has a track record of privatising public assets. The creation of TAHE as a SOC and the ability for subsidiary SOC's to be created and rail infrastructure facilities transferred to them without section 99A of the Transport Administration Act gives the voting shareholders extensive powers to privatise public transport assets without having to get the Parliament's scrutiny or approval. One of TAHE's statutory functions is to lease or make available transport assets vested in or owned by TAHE to other persons or bodies. Because Sydney Trains and NSW Trains will be rail infrastructure owners as defined in section 3 of the Act in respect of rail infrastructure facilities they manage or control, RailCorp-owned railway lines that are transferred by ministerial order, under section 94 (1) (i) of the Act, to TAHE can be removed from their management and controlled by TAHE and then TAHE can offer them to private operators under contractual arrangements.

When the Coalition Government came to power in 2011 a major policy reform that it spruiked to all and sundry was the creation of an independent transport authority, Transport for NSW, and the abolition of a number of other transport agencies, the Government said, to allow better coordination and direction of public transport in New South Wales. Transport for NSW was about as independent as Infrastructure NSW was, and that is why Max Moore-Wilton, Nick Greiner and Paul Broad ran for the hills when they saw what was being foisted upon them by then Premier Barry O'Farrell, then Treasurer Mike Baird and the current Premier. In fact, the Premier, as the Minister for Transport, said in her agreement-in-principle speech on the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 in the Legislative Assembly on 6 September 2011:

The bill establishes a new integrated transport authority, called Transport for NSW, which will be responsible for the coordinated delivery of transport services across all modes and a renewed focus on the customer. ...

... Transport for NSW will bring together the coordination, procurement, policy and non-service delivery planning functions currently performed by the Department of Transport, RailCorp, the Roads and Traffic Authority, the State Transit Authority, Sydney Ferries, the Maritime Authority of New South Wales, the Transport Construction Authority and the Country Rail Infrastructure Authority.

... The bill clearly states that the objectives of Transport for NSW are: to plan for a transport system that meets the needs and expectations of the public; to promote economic development and investment; to provide integration at the decision-making level across all public transport modes; to promote greater efficiency in the delivery of transport infrastructure projects; and to promote the safe and reliable delivery of public transport services.

... including for the integrated rail network, the road network and maritime transport and land-use strategies for metropolitan and regional areas; the administration of the allocation of public funding for public transport agencies ... including prioritising of expenditure and projects across the transport system; the coordination of capital works programs and budgets across the transport sector ...

This bill is intended to move the ownership of all public transport assets into TAHE. TAHE will make the decisions about these assets. TAHE will buy, sell, lease and license public transport assets. TAHE will be a commercial, independent statutory state-owned corporation with a mandate to operate independently and commercially. As a SOC, the voting shareholders—that is, the Ministers—can approve assets sales. The bill gives the Minister for Transport the power to sever fixtures from public transport land so they can be sold or leased as personal property outside the scrutiny of Parliament. The TAHE and not Transport for NSW will have the statutory functions of establishing, financing, acquiring, constructing and developing transport assets to be vested in it or owned by it—see clause 11 of the bill. The integrated transport agency that Premier Berejiklian spruiked in 2011 will no longer have any say.

The Government's much lauded so-called reforms in 2011 will be scrapped. We know that when these entities are privatised—and we have seen this in the electricity sector all over Australia—transport safety will be the first casualty. Following the tragic rail accident at Glenbrook in 1999 the special commission of inquiry into that accident was very critical of the Government's reforms to the public rail sector in 1996 and 1997. The integrated railway authority was split into four separate entities: —a freight operator that was later sold, a railway passenger services operator, a rail infrastructure owner and a rail infrastructure maintainer. Ultimately each of the four rail entities became SOCs and they operated commercially. The rail infrastructure maintainer even started operating outside New South Wales, which TAHE will be able to do. So it took the death of numerous railway workers and the tragic Glenbrook rail accident for it to be understood that public passenger rail operations should not be split up but should in fact be integrated—quite the opposite of what this Government is trying to do.

The former Labor Government combined the rail infrastructure owner and rail infrastructure maintainer in 2001 and then combined them with the passenger rail services operator for the metropolitan area in 2005. This Government is now splitting up rail operations again. One of the things missing from the bill is that TAHE is not prescribed as a public authority under the Roads Act. This means that if TAHE needs to compulsorily acquire a public road from the council for a public transport project it will have to compensate the council for the full valuation of the land. Other SOCs are exempted from this under the Road Transport (General) Regulation 2013, but not TAHE. New South Wales laws, regulations and planning instruments require consultation with or concurrence by RailCorp before railway land can be impacted. The bill does not appear to address any of these requirements.

We know that one of the reasons the Government wants to proceed down this path, as it is doing with the Sydney Metro City and Southwest and others, is that the Government hates the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU]. The Government is willing to go through these legislative contortions and waste millions and millions of dollars of hard-earned public money, which should be spent on those challenges I enumerated at the outset of my contribution, because it wants to rid the entire rail network of the RTBU and all those who watch over the rail network. The RTBU is the union that looks after the staff on the rail network. It is the watchdog, along with other bodies, for safety on the rail network. If I had the choice of trusting the people who run the RTBU and trusting the shysters and charlatans who run this Government, obsessed with privatisation as they are, I will trust the RTBU every day of the week.

This is history repeating itself. So far in the four months of the Berejiklian Government, it has not manifested itself. This is the Baird Government's program still being put into action. I say to the Premier: Be more than Mike Baird; stick your head up and show us what you believe in personally. At the moment, Gladys as Premier has not emerged. She is simply doing the work of the most right-wing Premier this State has ever seen, Mike Baird, who was hunted out of town by a plummeting approval rating. He ran for the hills because he could see the reality. Gladys Berejiklian is sticking around and simply completing his legacy. That is all that is happening. I urge members of this place, particularly members who have a rail line, to object in the most strenuous terms to this bill, a bill that privatises the rail network in New South Wales by stealth.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (10:44): I will speak to the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017. As foreshadowed by the shadow Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Labor has serious concerns about this bill and will not support the underhanded way this Government is moving to privatise transport in New South Wales and undermine public transport safety. According to the Government, this bill amends the Transport Administration Act of 1988 to, one, ensure that NSW Trains and Sydney Trains are not subsidiaries of Rail Corporation New South Wales (known as RailCorp); two, convert RailCorp into a State-owned corporation to be known as the Transport Asset Holding Entity; and, three, establish a new corporation, to be known as the Residual Transport Corporation, and outline this corporation's objectives and functions.

I do not intend to review the detail of the bill, as that has been done by the shadow Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. I will start with Labor's concerns about safety. As has been highlighted by the shadow Minister, it is important to reflect on the lessons learned by government in the wake of the Glenbrook and Waterfall rail

disasters which each claimed seven lives. In 1999 at Glenbrook in the Blue Mountains a State Rail Authority inter-urban train heading to Sydney from Lithgow collided with the rear of the Indian Pacific tourist train on the main Western line. Justice Peter McInerney headed a special commission of inquiry into that accident. In his report he was critical of what he called the "disaggregation" of transport agencies. He stated:

The Glenbrook rail accident and these other rail accidents, with the other material to which I have referred, together illustrate the way in which disaggregation has been unsuccessful and has created an inefficient and unsafe rail network. I will illustrate that by reference to a number of the accidents that have been referred to me.

Further, he said:

In a matter where the safety of persons working on or near the track is critical, there cannot, and should not, be any deterioration in the safe working culture, nor can, or should, there be any ambiguity or inconsistency in relation to the procedures that should be followed. To the extent that disaggregation has produced either or both of those two outcomes, it is undesirable.

This bill is clearly about disaggregation. Everyone in this House should be concerned about the disregard the Government has for safety. Important lessons, born from tragedy, are being wilfully ignored. As has been mentioned, this bill allows for NSW Trains and Sydney Trains to be cleaved from the Rail Corporation New South Wales, the entity which we know as RailCorp. This comes at a time when the Government has abolished the Independent Transport Safety Regulator.

Mr Michael Johnsen: What did you say to Daley when you did that last time?

Ms JODI McKAY: If the Opposition interrupted as the Government members are doing, we would be placed on a call to order. If members wish to debate the issue they should stand up and do so. I note that no Government members will debate the bill, as they know what the bill entails. This means that not only does the New South Wales regulator no longer exist but under this bill there is a significant and concerning fragmentation of the way transport in this State is delivered and managed. As mentioned, this is in direct conflict with the findings of Justice McInerney, who highlighted the safety risks posed by fragmentation. Related to safety is the move by this Government to privatise transport and at the very least to make transport commercially driven above all other imperatives. If this bill is about what is best for the operation of transport in this State, it would have been introduced by the transport Minister. Instead, it has been introduced by the Treasurer—a sure sign of the intention of this Government to develop an operational structure that allows for a much easier transition of transport to the private sector.

This is what you would expect from a Government that has been hell-bent on privatising the core activities of government. Recently, the sale of the lands title registry caused insurmountable concern in the community. If this is not the case, I urge the Treasurer to commit in the House today that it has nothing to do with privatising transport in New South Wales. If he refuses to do that in his speech in reply, then we know that this is in fact one intention of the bill. I ask him to categorically rule out the future privatisation of public transport. I stated earlier that this bill presents a significant risk to safety. The bill allows the objective of operating commercially and profitably to take precedence over safety. It allows for the centralisation and consolidation of New South Wales transport assets into one central management body, the Transport Asset Holding Entity. It is colloquially, but not warmly, known as the TAHE. The Treasurer has indicated to the House that the TAHE will "reflect modern governance and financial practices". He states:

The bill will support the consolidation of transport asset ownership to enable...a more effective, efficient and commercial approach to the management of transport assets, particularly property. Perhaps the Treasurer will be kind enough to elaborate on the type of assets this bill will allow to be transferred instead of speaking in general and meaningless terms. Interestingly, the Treasurer's second reading speech justifies TAHE because it allows "transport operating entities to focus on their core functions of operating transport services and delivering improvements to customer service, and delivering on capital and recurrent budget targets". Nowhere does he mention safety. Why does he not mention safety? It is because the obligation to deliver safe, reliable and commuter-oriented public transport is not in the frame for this Government, nor is it delivered in this bill. This bill is all about money. As we have seen time and again with blowouts in the budgets of major transport and road projects in this State, the Government is not doing a very good job of managing that money.

This bill establishes TAHE as a State-owned corporation with a chief executive officer and a board of directors appointed by the Minister and the Treasurer. The Secretary of Transport for NSW will also be on the board. Again, I come back to the conflict that exists when the overwhelming imperative is profit. It will be interesting to see who the Minister and the Treasurer appoint as directors. I would put money on them all being bankers and financiers. This is clearly a Treasury bill. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure has been sidelined, and I doubt that he or any other member opposite will speak in this debate. Transport safety, reliability and the role of government to provide public transport services are clearly not priorities in this legislation.

The bill also establishes the Residual Transport Corporation [RTC] of NSW. I must admit that I am a little confused about what assets this body will manage. It appears that it will manage assets that are no longer required for the delivery of transport services. Perhaps the Treasurer can provide an example of what this might be, that is, what might no longer be required. I note that the second reading speech barely mentions the RTC,

so we have little information on its role and functions, other than disposal of assets. We now know that assets will be disposed of under the new governance structure. I again ask the Treasurer to detail the assets that have been identified for transfer to this corporation and the assets identified for disposal.

We have no idea how TAHE and the RTC will operate. Will there be staff attached to the new bodies? What will be the operating budget? These are basic questions that are not answered in this bill. The lack of detail in the second reading speech is concerning given the significance of this bill and the governance and operational changes it will bring to the transport sector. That again makes members on this side of the House suspicious, because we know that secrecy is a trademark of this Government's operations. As we have seen with the establishment of the Sydney Motorway Corporation, all is not as it seems nor what the Government says it will be. The Opposition opposes this bill in the strongest terms.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (10:52): I oppose the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017. This bill proposes to separate the transport entities that are responsible for the delivery of railway passenger services and asset management. It also seeks to convert the Transport Asset Holding Entity [TAHE] into a State-owned corporation. A staged approach will be adopted for the delivery of passenger services by Sydney Trains and NSW Trains; RailCorp will be the asset manager and will assign further asset management functions; the Residual Transport Corporation [RTC] will assist in the wind-up of activities in transport agencies no longer needed to be undertaken; and RailCorp will become a TAHE and be converted into a State-owned corporation.

The use of the term "administration" in the bill is misleading and does not reflect the enormity of its scope. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said, this Government has an obsession with privatisation. Newcastle knows that because the Government sold off the port for \$1.75 billion. It is now privatising our buses, ferries and the light rail system which is yet to be delivered. Look out Sydney, look out New South Wales, here it comes. The Opposition has huge concerns about this legislation. It is concerned about the safety issues, privatisation, and the proposed overhaul of management of the State's rail assets. The proposed changes would move rail, such as tracks, train stations and land owned by RailCorp, to a State-owned corporation with a commercial focus.

We believe the proposed changes in this bill could help facilitate the future privatisation of rail services. As the member for Keira, our Treasury spokesman, said, this bill makes it easier and essentially sets it up. The trigger for this overhaul, however, seems to be advice from the Australian Bureau of Statistics that the current treatment of the State's rail assets and liabilities is insufficient for them to be listed off the budget books. The changes in the bill, therefore, are needed to preserve the Government's position. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure said, "Franchising is not the purpose of this bill". I question that.

Mr Andrew Constance: I haven't spoken to it yet.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP: I am quoting you from today's *Sydney Morning Herald*. You might want to take it up with them if that is incorrect. I also question the safety impact of the changes. Having worked in mine safety for 10 years for the regulator, I have concerns about legislation such as this. Under the current Transport Administration Act, maintaining safe and reliable rail services is an objective of RailCorp, which owns rail assets, and that is more important than other objectives. I believe the Government is trying to rush this bill through Parliament before the June budget. As I said earlier, the changes in this bill are needed to preserve the Government's budget position.

As my accounting lecturer once said, "There appears to be a bit of a cooking of the books going on here", and due to the Transport Asset Holding Entity [TAHE] accounting changes the budget result has been improved—surprise, surprise—by the following amounts: in 2015-16 an increase of \$1.8 billion, in 2016-17 an increase of \$2.4 billion, in 2017-18 an increase of \$1.8 billion, and in 2018-19 an increase of \$1.4 billion. As the old methodology is not reflected in the 2016-17 budget, the 2015-16 budget is the best source that has been used to compare approximately how TAHE improves the bottom line. Certainly the reactions of stakeholders have not been positive. Alex Claassens, Secretary of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union NSW, said that this should come as a major concern to commuters and workers. He continued:

This reeks of yet another step towards the privatisation of our public transport services.

The Baird Government must come clean with the NSW public about any future plans to privatise our public services.

Even the conservative broadsheet the *Australian* commented:

The NSW budget reminded us governments, with their vast array of on and off-balance sheet entities, can. Were it not for the creation of an independent agency (the TAHE) to oversee transport infrastructure, the much-flaunted surplus would have crashed from \$2.1 billion ... to \$700 million next year.

Instead, the surplus is rising to \$2.5bn then \$3.2bn. Almost 70 per cent of the \$10.6bn of surpluses projected over the next four years depends on a new Transport Asset Holding Entity, a public trading enterprise similar to Landcom or Sydney Water, outside the general government accounts, that will manage the State's public transport assets on a consolidated basis.

Even the conservative broadsheet the *Australian* has exposed the Government, as many others are doing. I have significant concerns about safety. The separation of asset ownership from rail service delivery is what a Labor government introduced in response to national competition reforms of 1996-98. In 2000-01 we witnessed the risks with that approach. For example, the asset holder at the time, Rail Access Corporation, dropped the ball on ensuring that its assets were maintained properly because of the need to operate commercially and return dividends to Treasury. One way to achieve this was to reduce costs by extending the maintenance cycles as part of its asset management strategy. The risk is even higher with the objectives of TAHE, which is 100 per cent focused on being commercially successful and maximising its net worth to New South Wales.

It is the classic asset manager with no service safety responsibility. This may be appropriate for a property fund, but it is not appropriate when managing assets to run rail services. The objectives and functions of Sydney Trains and NSW Trains do not compensate for this. The primary objective of both is to provide safe services in an efficient, effective and financially responsible manner. While the bill says that that objective supersedes all others, the other objectives also require them to be commercially successful and maximise their worth. There is a risk therefore that the combination of these commercial objectives with the need within the primary objective to operate efficiently and in a financial responsible manner will inevitably mean that safety is not a primary focus of management. The aftermath of rail accidents has shown that the more competing objectives and functions agencies have, the less focus there is on safety. That is of major concern.

The protections referred to in the second reading speech to ensure the primacy of safety have all failed previously and led to the merging of every agency into one entity. It took the death of numerous railway workers in the tragic 1999 Glenbrook rail accident to understand that public rail passenger operations should not be split up. They should not be integrated. In 2001 the New South Wales Government combined the rail infrastructure owner and the maintainer and then combined them with the passenger railway service operator for the metropolitan area. The Government is now splitting up rail operations again. Labor will oppose the bill due to the serious safety issues and ramifications of this new management. Why are those opposite privatising the Transport Asset Holding Entity?

Mr Michael Johnsen: Because you ignore the advice of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, that's why.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP: You tell me to look at the figures, but the TAHE will run out of money by year four. Therefore, in 2020 and beyond the Government will be running an entity that drains significant amounts of expenditure. By setting up the TAHE as a State-owned corporation, the main objective of which is to run a successful business, the Government is preparing the TAHE to be privatised. New section 10 (1) provides that the principal objectives of TAHE are:

- (b) to be a successful business and, to this end:
 - (i) to operate at least as efficiently as any comparable businesses, and
 - (ii) to maximise the net worth of the State's investment in TAHE,

After selling off the Land and Property Information land titles registry and our wonderful ports, the public will no longer tolerate further privatisation by this Government. Due to the reasons and issues I have highlighted, we oppose this outrageous bill.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (11:02): I am disappointed that as I stand to speak on the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017 the good member for Newcastle runs straight out the door. He failed to indicate to the House that as a Newcastle City councillor he voted in support of a motion to explore the ability of the private sector to assist in the development of a new transport network for Newcastle. In Sydney he has said something completely different from what he said in the Newcastle council chambers. We have heard mind-blowing hypocrisy from Crackers this morning. I again say that if he wishes to make a contribution he should at least be consistent in his argument.

This is important legislation. I do not know whether Labor Party members have woken up to themselves, but this was first flagged in the 2015 State budget. In fact, we even put a break-out box in the budget papers to indicate to those good members opposite that we would establish the Transport Asset Holding Entity [TAHE]. I am bewildered that it has taken them a couple of years to read that document. A key reason for the establishment of the holding entity is that it enables the Government to manage these assets appropriately. It also brings consistency between us and Labor jurisdictions in Queensland and Victoria in terms of the accounting of these assets. Whilst it is quite amusing to hear members opposite attack the Government, they should perhaps contact their Labor counterparts interstate to see how they treat these assets in their budgets. They might then curb their

attacks on the Victorian and Queensland governments, which happen to be Labor in persuasion. Members opposite might not have pointed that out.

Members opposite seem to be opposing this bill in a somewhat piecemeal fashion. They seem to have forgotten a key element in it, which is the establishment of a National Rail Safety Regulator and new national rail safety law. Everybody is required to meet their obligations under that law and, regardless of whether or not it is in a holding entity, there are a number of safety protections. This Government is committed to ensuring that everything is done to protect passenger safety on the transport network, particularly on rail. I will alleviate the somewhat feigned outrage of members opposite about passenger safety.

Firstly, the transport secretary not only retains his or her direction powers over Sydney Trains and NSW Trains but also takes a seat on the board of the holding entity. I hasten to add that the secretary of the department probably has passenger safety on his or her agenda. The second significant safety protection is that the Transport Asset Holding Entity will need to comply with the terms of an operating licence issued by the Minister. That licence will clearly set out terms dealing with, among other things, safety integrity, compliance and integration of transport modes, and compliance with network and asset standard requirements issued by Transport for NSW. The operating licence will be an effective tool that will allow government to respond to new circumstances, particularly emerging safety issues. The Minister has the ability to issue a binding direction to the board to take certain identified actions in the public interest. That is also a significant power for use in exceptional circumstances. I reiterate that there is full obligation on all transport agencies to meet the requirements of the National Rail Safety Regulator.

The introduction of this bill comes at a time of unprecedented investment in the transport network. The system is being transformed from what was essentially a transport business to a technology business. New kinds of services are being delivered, and the information relayed to customers is changing. The existing fragmented asset base is also changing because of the way in which we are deploying innovation and technology to bring about better outcomes. All this requires reform of organisational structures surrounding the management of the currently fragmented asset base. The provisions in this bill are a sensible way forward. As part of this process, we are keen to ensure that with technological developments and changes in people's use of transport services now and into the future we have the right governance structures in place.

In the future we will see new on-demand personalised transport services. This Government has already deregulated the point-to-point transport market, which has allowed innovations to the taxi industry and legalisations of organisations such as Uber. In our Future Transport Strategy we are trying to ensure an innovative approach moving forward. This will not only capitalise on existing infrastructure but also enable us to continue to deliver new innovative services such as our open data approach. Customers will be provided with real-time information in a way that has not been seen before. As the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, I will continue to work with the Treasurer to make sure that we manage our assets well, and with the introduction of this legislation we are setting about achieving that. But we are faced with some difficult challenges because that infrastructure is very much silo-based across the whole network. We want to see better integration and asset management.

We also want to see more modern governance applied and consequently improved financial practices in that asset base. The consolidation of transport assets and the ability to optimise our existing base is a sensible way forward. Those opposite talk about privatisation of this and that. That is all rubbish. They forget that I do not need this legislation to franchise an asset. The Government has no plans to franchise rail, yet those opposite continue to run their silly scare campaigns. Indeed, they ran a similar scare campaign last year about commuters being charged up to \$1,000 more per year because of increased Opal card fares. Labor told lies to everyone about that. Indeed, the good accountant opposite, the member for Rockdale, knows better than anybody that the accounting system for this will bring us in line with the Labor governments of Victoria and Queensland.

Mr Stephen Kamper: I represent New South Wales.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: You know that this accounting system will bring consistency across the board. Labor's arguments do not stack up. The functions of the Transport Holding Asset Entity are spelt out in the bill. Instead of squawking, I encourage those opposite to read the legislation. Labor are hypocrites. Labor members know that their counterparts in Victoria and Queensland are doing the same thing. They should change their approach and support the bill.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (11:12): I oppose the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017 and express my disappointment that the Government continues to attempt to mislead the people of New South Wales through dodgy bookkeeping and tricky accounting. I state at the outset that despite what those opposite might say, this bill represents a disgraceful con on the part of this Government that hits at the core of its credibility and the foundations of public trust. When the Government established the Transport Asset

Holding Entity it did so with entirely unjustified arrogance. It thought it could get away with hiding more than a billion dollars a year in recurrent expenditure in a public non-financial corporation [PNFC]. Unfortunately, like with many things, this Government's lack of basic financial literacy meant that it did not actually understand what a PNFC was, and it has rightly been pulled up on it. With the dodgy PNFC strategy having failed, the Government's bright new idea is to continue the con to a dodgy State-owned corporation.

Mr Andrew Constance: Are you attacking the Australian Bureau of Statistics?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I am supporting it. You are changing this structure because it pulled you up. Sadly for the Government it does not matter what acronym it attempts next, it will not change the underlying fraud it is trying to perpetrate. This bill, like its predecessor, seeks to enable two things. First, the Government wants to continue its ideological crusade against the ownership of public assets. If the Liberals and The Nationals want to flog off the rail network to the Cayman Islands with the rest of our public assets, they should just come out and say it rather than trying to hide behind backdoor enabling legislation such as this. Secondly, the Government wishes to continue to misrepresent the financial performance of the State by reclassifying recurrent expenditure as capital works. This is accounting 101. Consumable costs are not profit or investment; they are an expense that needs to be deducted from the budget bottom line. This would be like a private business identifying the rental costs of their premises not as a cost but as an investment in the future. In 2015, when those opposite started to perpetrate their disingenuous accounting, Adam Creighton wrote in the *Australian*:

The New South Wales budget reminded us governments, with their vast array of on and off-balance sheet entities, can ... [avoid a big slump in income by switching to a different accounting system]. Were it not for the creation of an independent agency to oversee transport infrastructure, the much-flaunted surplus would have crashed from \$2.1 billion this financial year to \$700 million next year.

Instead, the surplus is rising to \$2.5bn then \$3.2bn. Almost 70 percent of the \$10.6 billion surpluses projected over the next four years depends on a new Transport Asset Holding Entity ...

If the Government were running a publicly traded company as it seeks to run its own balance sheet, it would not be talking to the public about its outstanding budgetary position—it would be answering questions at the Australian Securities and Investments Commission. The Government has recently been criticised for the youth and inexperience of its Ministers but, frankly, I think it is good to see some of the young guns having a go. I will give them a crash course, totally free of charge, about a few others who thought they could massively increase the value of their companies through tricky accounting. Back in the 1990s there was an aspiring telecommunications company in the United States called MCI Worldcom. It, like this Government, was too clever by half. Worldcom grew rapidly throughout the 1990s, embarking on an aggressive series of takeovers and acquisitions which ultimately led to its \$37 billion merger with MCI, then the largest corporate merger in US history.

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order—

Mr Stephen Kamper: Worldcom MCI was viewed as an incredibly successful company in an exciting and dynamic industry.

Mr Andrew Constance: I love the performance of the member for Rockdale but he is well outside the leave of the bill.

Mr Stephen Kamper: You have not heard the rest of it.

Mr Andrew Constance: I wish I could have him as my accountant, but I ask that the member be directed to return to the leave of the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I uphold the point of order. The member for Rockdale will return to the leave of the bill.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I am positive that the Minister does not want this message to get across but it is important that I continue to express what is going on here. My comments are relevant.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I remind the member for Kogarah of my previous ruling.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Sadly, not unlike this Government, the management of Worldcom held an unfounded belief—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Rockdale will return to the leave of the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: My contribution is about transport administration. It is about the way in which the Government is administering it and about what it is intending to do.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Rockdale will return to the leave of the bill or resume his seat.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I do not understand why I am being cut short from detailing—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Rockdale will cease arguing with the Chair. The member for Rockdale will return to the leave of the bill or resume his seat.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Fred Hollows said, "Every eye is an eye." What I am trying to say is that a cost is a cost. It is not investment; it is not capital expenditure. Why cannot I get that message across? The problem we are facing is that the Government is attempting to continue to inflate the bottom line. It has been caught out in this exercise and can no longer continue, so it has come up with another strategy and developed another State-owned corporation [SOC] to inflate the bottom line of the budget. The Government will spruik here about billions of dollars that are not bottom-line profit to the State. A company that might be a little better known to those opposite was trading in energy at a similar time. It was lauded for its massive growth and huge market capitalisation. One of Enron's favourite tricks was to establish—

Mr Andrew Constance: Point of order: The member for Rockdale is not speaking to the legislation before the Parliament.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I am speaking directly to the legislation.

Mr Andrew Constance: It has nothing to do with Enron. You do not know the difference between equity and a grant.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I draw the member for Rockdale back to the leave of the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The accounting tricks that the Government is attempting to pull off are not in any way new, and they only ever end one way. Those opposite can rub their hands together over how clever they are, but at the end of the day the only people they will fool are themselves. It will be those of us on this side of the Chamber who are left to clean up the Government's mess on behalf of the people of New South Wales. Beyond the scope of this bill as a budgetary rort is the underlined purpose of carving up the State's transport assets for eventual sale, and that is equally objectionable. There is a point in the process of corporatisation and privatisation where there ceases to be an argument on which reasonable minds may differ and all that is left is an ideological drive to pull apart the essential services of this State. Contrary to the laughable comments of the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure recently, population growth and urban sprawl have seen a trend towards an increasing dependency on our mass transit system. The idea that the private sector will be able to deliver these services in an equitable manner certainly does not pass the pub test.

Mr Andrew Constance: What did you do with bus contracts?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Can I have an opportunity to finish my speech?

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

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There is a hint in the name: a transport network is a network, and trying to pull it apart and sell it off in portions is never going to provide a good outcome for the State. This all comes back to the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government having lost touch with this State and forgotten why it is in government in the first place. What else could explain the disastrous waste of taxpayer funds that are currently being poured into the light rail project that Premier Berejiklian forced through against the advice of every government department, the private sector and the community? This Government will end up selling off the productive parts of our rail network to cross-subsidise the useless new transport infrastructure the Government is choking up our city streets with, and those opposite should be absolutely ashamed of this. For all the bluff and bluster of those opposite we always have to remember that we live in a time of record State revenue due to a boom in stamp duty for which this Liberal-Nationals Government holds little responsibility. [*Extension of time*]

It is no wonder the Government feels the need to claim a surplus of billions of dollars when it can only deliver a fraction of that. You can only hide your financial mismanagement for so long before you are found out and collapse. This whole ridiculous process began when the Government perpetrated a \$10 billion-plus accounting fraud on the State budget by establishing the Transport Asset Holding Entity in an attempt to hide its financial mismanagement. At this rate, it will only end when there are no assets to sell off and the State of New South Wales ceases to be a going concern. It is exceedingly clear to me why Mike Baird did a runner. He was aware of this and many other looming problems, so he jumped ship and left the B team of Berejiklian and Barilaro in charge.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (11:24): The Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017 will separate the transport entities responsible for the delivery of railway passenger services and those responsible for asset management. This bill will realign the delivery of rail services in New South Wales, with Sydney Trains delivering metropolitan services, NSW Trains delivering regional passenger services, RailCorp acting as asset manager, and the Residual Transport Corporation winding up obsolete activities for transport agencies. Finally, the bill will turn RailCorp into the Transport Asset Holding Entity and convert it into a State-owned corporation. Like my colleagues I have significant concerns about this bill, and indeed the intentions behind it. After six years, the community has this Government's number. We know exactly what its priorities are and we are right to raise a red flag when it comes to this Treasurer getting involved in transport administration. New South Wales residents know that when it comes to offloading publicly owned assets this Premier and Treasurer are a double act. This Government has not seen a public asset it does not want to sell.

At the same time, they are seeking to sell off the Land and Property Information office—something that the community now is rightly engaged with and very concerned about—and seemingly everything else in New South Wales that is not bolted down. Today the Treasurer has presented a bill that converts the Transport Asset Holding Entity [TAHE] into a State-owned corporation. This follows the creation of the TAHE on 1 July 2015 as an off-budget public non-financial corporation required to make a commercial return of at least 7 per cent. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has warned that it is unlikely that the TAHE will make that return, given that rail assets are rarely profitable. The Government is relying on keeping the TAHE off the books as a way to preserve its cherished bottom line—something that the member for Rockdale very eloquently put to the House this morning. It is clear the Government will do anything to stop the TAHE from going back into the budget, even if it means privatising it.

Let us be very clear, this bill is nothing more than a tricky fix designed to save the Government's bottom line, and nothing more than that. It is not about improving services and safety on our rail services. The community will be worse off for this dodgy bill. The integration of public rail transport operations is not born out of political ideology, it is born out of hard evidence. Inquiries that followed the horrendous Glenbrook rail accident in 1999, where seven passengers were killed and another 51 hospitalised, made the clear assertion that rail passenger operations should not be split up. Safety is always compromised when we force rail providers to focus on commercial imperatives above their aim to provide safe, convenient and dependable transport options for all New South Wales citizens. In the wake of the Glenbrook disaster, the then Labor Government acted to integrate rail operations—a move that was later backed by former Premier O'Farrell and the now Premier who was then Minister for Transport. Disgracefully, we now see the Government turning its back on that evidence, all in the name of its precious bottom line and making a quick buck.

That is incredibly disappointing and I think it is pretty clear for everyone to see what this is all about. It is clear that the privatisation of our rail networking is on the agenda. Like my colleagues on this side of the House, and like residents who have spoken to me about this issue, I am troubled that our public transport system is slowly being eroded. Our public transport network is held in trust by this Government on behalf of the people because we know how important affordable, dependable and safe public transport is for social equality. Effective transport removes barriers to participation in the workforce and the community and it reduces isolation for the most vulnerable, including the elderly and those with disability. Effective transport is vital to ensuring that each and every person in New South Wales is able to reach their full potential. I believe those clear principles are more important than selling off our assets to the highest bidder, which is what this Government is all about.

Visitors

VISITORS

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I welcome to the gallery the winners of the young people in emergency services awards, guests of the member for Cootamundra. I congratulate them on their work.

Bills

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (TRANSPORT ENTITIES) BILL 2017

Second Reading

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (11:30): I have a number of concerns with the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017. As has been highlighted by previous speakers in the debate, the bill is mainly about a budget fix—moving things outside the budget so that it can remain in surplus. To do that during a building boom when there are record stamp duties is most concerning. If the budget has to be propped up by moving transport entities off budget, it raises serious concerns about this State's finances. This action is being taken on the advice of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, but it requires transport entities to make a 7 per cent return. Transport entities do not generally make a 7 per cent return; they usually run as subsidised entities and

could possibly make that kind of return only if they were to be outsourced—and even then it would extremely difficult.

The objects of the bill are supposedly to deliver railway transport services and asset management. The term "administration" does not reflect the enormity of what the bill proposes. The Transport Administration Act is wideranging; it covers the entire transport system and a number of different modes of transport, how they operate and how they are integrated. But to consider this in the context of fixing the budget is very tricky. It is proposed to turn RailCorp into a State-owned corporation to make it deliver a more commercial return and to prioritise that commercial return at the same level as, if not greater than, safety. Currently, safety is the primary concern in the operation of the transport system, particularly the rail system following the Glenbrook and Waterfall disasters. This is not the direction the Government should be heading in.

The object of the Transport Administration Act in section 2A (b) is to promote the integration of the transport system. Yet this bill will make the transport system less integrated by creating the opportunity to prioritise parts of it and to separate the management of the assets and operations, which has not worked in the past—in fact, it created huge problems. To go as far as allowing in schedule 4 the ability to sever the ownership of fixtures from the land on which they sit—which would allow their sale or lease—is hugely problematic and completely at odds with the objects of the Act. The overall objects of the Transport Administration Act are to enable efficient planning and delivery of transport infrastructure and services. That is very hard to do when commercial entities are established and outsourced.

Within the framework of contracts, a public transport agency is limited in what it can do to plan and deliver transport services effectively. An agency always runs the risk of legal action by the contract operator to maintain their entitlements under the contractual arrangements and not what is in the public interest. It also severely limits an agency's ability to do what is set out in section 2A (e) of the Act, which is to coordinate the activities of those engaged in the delivery of transport services if the agency does not manage them itself. I am concerned that RailCorp is being set up to be turned into a State-owned corporation as part of the process of privatisation down the track, and that privatisation will undermine the objects of the Transport Administration Act and the delivery of transport services in this State.

As the shadow Minister for Transport noted, the Treasurer introduced this bill, not the Minister for Transport. That reflects the commercial focus of the bill. This bill is about fixing the budget. It is not about improving and changing rail service delivery, which it sets up to be outsourced in the future. The second reading speech lacked details about what the Government is trying to do with this legislation. Given that we are here so infrequently—Parliament is sitting for only 16 weeks this year, which is two days more than the bare minimum—and we have so little to debate, any legislation that comes before us is of great consequence. To pretend that this amendment to the Act is just a minor housekeeping matter is not reflective of what the bill is about. Everything this Government does is of consequence. If the Government can make changes by way of regulation or by otherwise working around the accountability of Parliament, it will.

This is a complete fudge. The Government is trying to fudge the budget and fudge the fact that it is preparing the transport system, particularly the rail system, for outsourcing or privatisation. That is extremely disappointing. The Government should be upfront about its intentions. It is clear that the commercial objectives and the idea of making a commercial return of 7 per cent if the Transport Asset Holding Entity [TAHE] is taken off budget is not the full story. The TAHE is never going to deliver a 7 per cent return. If the transport system is outsourced in whole or in part, if service levels can be dropped and if obligations to the community can be reduced, then somehow such a commercial return could be achieved. But that is extremely difficult for a transport entity to do, and it certainly appears that the Government is preparing for privatisation. It is extremely concerning that the Government is doing this at a time when it is reducing the emphasis on rail safety.

I represent the electorate of Granville and every year I attend the Granville train disaster memorial ceremony. While that was not part of the Glenbrook inquiry, we have seen over many decades the importance of rail safety. It must be singularly the most important aspect of maintaining and managing a rail system. If we do anything to put safety on the same level as commercial accountability we will undermine the importance of safety, and that should never happen. We should not forget the lessons of the past. We must maintain rail safety as a priority and we must retain rail transport in public ownership. The Government should not try to fudge the budget by taking the rail system off budget, especially at a time of record stamp duty revenue. I urge members to reject the bill.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I welcome to the Parliament the student leaders from high schools in New South Wales who are attending the Secondary Schools Student Leadership Program conducted by the Parliamentary Education unit. Welcome to the oldest Parliament in Australia. I hope you enjoy the day.

*Bills***TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (TRANSPORT ENTITIES) BILL 2017****Second Reading**

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (11:38): On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017. I share the concerns of Opposition members about the commercialisation of public assets. It is a catchcry of the Government that to commercialise is to improve. But that is not what has happened in many cases. One such example, which is particularly relevant to my region, is the Crown Holiday Parks Trust—and I mean no disrespect to the people who work in that industry. Local communities have lost their voice and control of those public spaces. The Greens believe this bill establishes the groundwork for the loss of rail corridors and public ownership of those corridors. Therefore, we oppose it. The bill will establish NSW Trains and Sydney Trains as standalone entities; they will no longer be subsidiaries of RailCorp. It will create a new State-owned corporation called the Residual Transport Corporation. The Government states that this is the conclusion of a longer process to separate the assets and running responsibilities of public transport. Why?

Sydney Trains and NSW Trains for regional transport were created in 2012. Previously RailCorp ran trains under the CityRail and CountryLink brands. Many of the objectives and functions that will be ascribed to Sydney Trains and NSW Trains are similar to those of other government transport brands, such as Sydney Ferries. While the Treasurer said in his second reading speech that this will not have any implications for staff or for public transport fares, the Government has not mounted a strong case for why this change should occur. Given its insatiable appetite for privatisation, one can only assume that there is something on the agenda. Sydney Trains and NSW Trains were separated from RailCorp some time ago, with the former running Sydney services and the latter running country trains. They will now become statutory bodies similar to the Barangaroo Delivery Authority and the Audit Office of New South Wales. RailCorp will become a State-owned corporation with a status similar to that of Sydney Water or Forestry Corporation NSW, and on a date to be set by the Minister it will convert to the Residual Transport Corporation. This will occur after RailCorp has consolidated all transport assets.

According to the 2015-16 budget papers, RailCorp is responsible for all asset upgrades, such as Wynyard Walk, automatic train protection and the Rail Operations Centre. The Transport Asset Holding Entity [TAHE] will manage all of this, including rail tracks, trains, stations and land. The Government's justification is that the TAHE will manage the State's portfolio of transport assets more commercially to create a single, dedicated asset manager for the State's public transport sector that is responsible for procuring and selling assets. It is unclear whether the powers of sale will be different from those under the current system. The Minister also claims that the Australian Bureau of Statistics has asserted that RailCorp does not meet the definition of a non-financial company and that this change is required. The Greens' concern is that it is likely this will further the Government's privatisation and sell-off of public spaces. In his second reading speech, the Minister referred to:

... amending the Transport Administration Act to support the consolidation of transport asset ownership and development of a TAHE by optimising—

it is a long sentence—

the existing transport asset base to enable a more effective, efficient and commercial approach to the management of transport assets, particularly property.

Wow! That is a lot of motherhood statements. My electorate has about 150 kilometres of rail corridor that the community wants very much to remain in public hands. Whether it is rail trail or cycle paths alongside the track, the community wants them to remain in public hands. We think public transport, like public education, has little to do with the single bottom line; it is the triple bottom line. We have heard about the Government selling the farm. Rail corridors should remain in public ownership; they belong to everyone. Recently I had the great pleasure of cycling the rail trail in Otago Central in the South Island of New Zealand and also the Queenstown Trail.

They are owned by the public but administered and maintained by the Government; they have not been outsourced or commercialised. It is interesting to note that in the North Island the Hauraki Rail Trail near Auckland is commercially owned. This privatised model has been completely cut off from public ownership and is now administered by a corporation. According to those working in this space who analyse the incredible benefits of

cycle tourism—such as the reinvigoration of small, isolated towns that faced extinction before cycle tourism in New Zealand—this model is not working because it is not about the big picture; it is not about retaining assets in perpetuity. That is what this conversation is about for The Greens. This bill is completely unnecessary, and we oppose it.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (11:45): I speak against the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017. We all know that the bill is about the Government getting rail transport ready for market. After six years in office, the O'Farrell, Baird and Berejiklian governments should realise that they are not a board of directors but a Cabinet that is responsible to the people. They have full ministerial responsibility and must answer to the people. Government is about protecting the safety of the community, but unfortunately this Government is putting profits first. The bill will have a detrimental effect on rail network safety protocols. The insertion of the objective for RailCorp to model its administration as a successful business is in direct contradiction to the principles of a strong, publicly owned transport network.

A key reason for a publicly administered rail network is to ensure that safety always comes before profit and to provide a good, efficient public service. Reports into the terrible Waterfall train incident and the Glenbrook rail accident by the Hon. Peter McInerney contradict the intent of the bill. I am concerned that those who drafted the bill have neither read nor analysed the recommendations of the Hon. Peter McInerney in those reports. The first recommendation of the report into the Glenbrook rail accident was that the two previously disaggregated bodies be re-combined to form a single statutory authority. A Labor government had combined them in 2001 to improve safety and protect passengers across New South Wales. The bill seeks to separate the bodies once again, which will inevitably degrade cross-communication and coordination between key transport authorities.

The same report found that separating the two functions of managing assets and delivering services led to an inefficient and unsafe rail network. The evidence is in the report. In the name of safety, a report into a rail accident advised directly against what the Government is doing in this bill. The report into the Waterfall train accident outlined the tension between pursuing commercial objectives and ensuring safety and reliability. The Government is taking steps to put commercial objectives before safety. The Glenbrook and Waterfall accidents were tragedies that had a huge emotional impact on the families affected and on those who attended the hearings. The reports' findings were about safety, but this bill is not.

I warn the Government that it is wrong and is putting lives at risk. It should reconsider its proposal and seek further legal advice. This is about the safety of hundreds of thousands of train commuters. My motivation is not political when I urge the Government to seek further advice. The bill is riddled with illogical decisions. The Government is ruled by commercial objectives rather than public objectives. Government members are public servants and they should place people above commerce. The Premier says the public come first, but she must walk the talk. The true motivation of the bill is to prepare the public rail network for market. The Government recently did the same thing with the Land and Property Information service and the State's electricity network. When this Government leaves office, its legacy will be worse than that of the Greiner Government and there will be nothing left to sell. This bill is a path to privatising the rail network, which will place the safety of families at risk. I call on the Berejiklian Government to rule out privatisation of the rail network.

There are issues with the creation of the Transport Asset Holding Entity [TAHE]. The Government is creating this public non-financial corporation to remove it from the budget and to establish a \$7.4 billion addition to the budget over the next four years. It is dishonest and clueless, as is evidenced by the bill we are debating today. The Government cannot deny that the TAHE has not fulfilled the criteria necessary to qualify as a public non-financial corporation. It should never have been converted into a public non-financial corporation. The Government is determined to dress mutton as lamb and is using the bill to salvage the failed policy.

The amendments include new section 10 (1) (b), which states that the TAHE is to be a successful business and to operate at least as efficiently as any comparable business, and to maximise the net worth of the State's investment in TAHE. These salvage attempts will not lead to the TAHE becoming a public non-financial corporation. The changes will achieve the reduction of safety in the name of commerce. The Government will not admit its policy failure. It was warned by the Rail, Tram and Bus Union and by other stakeholders that it would fail. The Government cannot be allowed to take this irresponsible action. The transport network must be built on the pillars of safety and reliability, not profit and commercialisation.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (11:53): I add my opposition to the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017. As we have heard in the debate, the bill seeks to convert the Transport Asset Holding Entity into a State-owned corporation. I acknowledge the thoughtful and considered contribution by the member for Canterbury. The member elucidated clearly the concerns of the community with regard to the potential privatisation of the public transport system. Contributors to this debate have spoken about the separation of transport entities. Experience has shown that separation in this State does not end well. It will create issues within the budget, with transport services and with the integrity of the public transport system.

In 2011 the Coalition was elected on a platform of opposing the separation of transport entities. A cursory glance through the 2011 *Hansard* reveals that, as transport Minister, Premier Berejiklian spoke many times about improving transport services by breaking down administrative silos in the transport sector. The bill will create silos and contradicts what the Premier said when she was Minister for Transport. That will remain in the *Hansard* forever. During debate about the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2011, the now Premier said she was pleased with the Liberal-Nationals policy that referenced the February 2008 discussion paper entitled, "Towards One Network". That discussion paper advocated major reform. The then transport Minister and now Premier—she is in the top job—spoke about heading towards one network. However, the present Treasurer is creating silos and separating transport entities.

The integration of entities is about safety. The member for Canterbury and many of my other colleagues raised this issue during debate. The bill is nothing more than a clever accounting trick. Labor fears that it will pave the way and set the scene for further privatisation, which was the stock in trade of the O'Farrell Government and the Baird Government, and now the Berejiklian Government. I do not know why I am disappointed; this Government is addicted to privatisation—and I do not say that lightly. I note that the member for Wyong is in the Chamber. The communities of the Central Coast are up in arms about the privatisation of Wyong hospital. This Saturday the Central Coast communities will have something to say about that proposal. Whether it is the land titles registry, electricity or TAFE colleges, which are within my shadow ministry—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Londonderry that the House is debating the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017. While second reading debates may be wideranging, I ask the member to confine her remarks to the leave of the bill.

Ms PRUE CAR: I will return to the bill, which paves the way for the privatisation of the public transport system. The Government's protection racket does not disguise the intent of the bill.

Mr Brad Hazzard: Are you in Young Labor?

Ms PRUE CAR: Many years ago. We thought it could not get worse, but the Liberals are now going to privatise public transport services. I believe Government members protest too much. As the member for a Western Sydney electorate with thousands of commuters, I can describe for the community what the privatisation of public transport will look like: higher fares, lower safety standards and less services. As the member for Londonderry, I oppose the privatisation of public transport. Removing the TAHE from the budget books is nothing more than an accounting trick. Since its creation the TAHE has been plagued with accounting errors, and the Government is attempting to solve the problem. The Government has prematurely banked savings to the tune of \$7.4 billion. If only this were an accounting error.

The situation with the TAHE will lead to safety issues with train services, with the pressure on the entity to become commercially viable. Under the Act, the main objective of RailCorp is to maintain safe and reliable rail services, something that is considered more important than other objectives. We know from earlier contributions to debate on this bill that it will lift each of the objectives of the TAHE to be of equal importance. That will mean that commercial objectives will be as important, if not more important than safety, which is of great concern to members of the Opposition. We know what this spells for the future of transport services.

We know that the TAHE will not be concerned with quality and safety first but, instead, will be focused on cost cutting and turning a profit. That is not good for the constituents that I represent in this place, and I will not be silent about it no matters who heckles me in this Chamber. We are all aware of tragic accidents that occurred over the previous decade and the lessons we have learnt from them, which this Government seems to be ignoring. We know that public transport operations should not be split up, and once upon a time this Government knew that too. We should be integrating these services when instead the Government is now splitting them up. Shame on it for doing so.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:00): I speak to the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017. I will summarise three key points. The first is it makes the Government's budget over the past two years a big fat lie. Secondly, it brings into question the safety of every passenger who boards a train. Thirdly, it causes great uncertainty about the future pricing structure for train transport. In making those comments, I draw the attention of members to the second reading speech of the Treasurer, comments of the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure in the *Australian Financial Review* dated 20 March 2017 and page 1-2 of the Budget Statement 2015-16. Yes, there is some substance to the claims that I have just made.

I declare the budgets of New South Wales in 2015-16, 2016-17 and potentially for the next two years as a big fat lie. They are predicated on the concept that the Transport Asset Holding Entity [TAHE], the rail infrastructure assets, could be parked off to the side, at the time, as a public non-financial corporation [PNFC]. Why would the Opposition think that was okay? Why would the Government think that was okay? Why would

we now not think that was okay? Earlier in his contribution, the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure suggested that somehow Labor had not been paying attention two years ago and had just now woken up. The truth is that because the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] has called out the lie, the Government has now been forced to wake up to what it can and cannot do. In the Budget Statement 2015-16, page 1-2, Box 1.1, Transport Asset Holding Entity, it states:

... the Australian Bureau of Statistics has classified TAHE as a commercial Public Non Financial Corporation (PNFC).

That statement of fact was in a budget paper and shows the ABS classified TAHE as a commercial PNFC and it cannot be interpreted in any other way. The now Premier, and then Treasurer, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian delivered that budget paper. The second reading speech of the current Treasurer last week referred to the same ABS interpretation of that TAHE. He said:

The Government first flagged its intention to create a TAHE in the 2013-14 half-yearly review and announced the initiative more formally as part of the 2015-16 budget.

Earlier the Treasurer said:

Under the GFS manual, the ABS sets the criteria, definition and guidance for how all entities should be classified for all Government agencies nationally.

He went on to say essentially that the TAHE in its current structure and over the past two years has failed to satisfy the ABS criteria. We now find ourselves dealing with the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017 to try to address—some might say cover up, some might say adjust, some might say seek a new application to have this accounting trickery come into effect. If it does not, the budget bottom line of New South Wales is affected to the rate of about \$1.5 billion per year for the past two years and for the next two years, totalling about \$6 billion. To put that into context for people, the entire New South Wales budget over that same four-year period would be about \$240 billion, so \$6 billion from it is quite significant.

It is important that we deal with the issue of the legitimacy, certainty and truth of the budgets that have been introduced over the past two years and that we might well be dealing with in the next two years. People need to understand that even if this bill is passed the Government still has to convince the ABS that this new entity is capable of producing a profit of about 7 per cent per year. Most people in the community understand that providing rail services, rail infrastructure and public transport costs the State money. It does not produce a profit. In fact, the returns are about 20 per cent of the costs. It is not that it just does not produce a profit but it is nowhere near producing a profit—80 per cent loss and 20 per cent return. How will this new entity potentially be able to return a 7 per cent dividend?

My next point is about the cost of ticketing. If a charge is levied on using a facility and a profit has to be made what are the options for ticketing for Sydney Trains or NSW Rail? Commuters will have to pay more than they currently pay for the use of those facilities. Where will they get the money from? I suspect it will come from the ticket prices for customers. A couple of years ago I had the good fortune to travel around the United Kingdom on its privatised rail system. I did not enjoy paying £30 or about \$A60 for a one-hour train trip. Imagine if the commuters from the Central Coast in the electorate of the member for Wyong had to pay \$60 to travel to Sydney.

Mr Adam Crouch: Are you going to try to scare people? You tried last year and it didn't work.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: The member for Terrigal has interjected, and I have been waiting for interjections from the Government members because I want to put on the *Hansard* the fact that Government members have been instructed not to come into this Chamber and talk about this bill. Only two members of the Government have been given permission to debate this incredibly significant bill, which has to be in the top five most important bills to go through in the six years I have been a member of Parliament. In the past couple of hours members of the Government have sat in the Chamber and at different times interjected, but will they make a contribution? No, because they are not allowed. Why? I wonder what they were told in the party room and what they might accidentally say in this Chamber—and will be on the record—which is the concern of the Government. I come back to safety. I will not spend too long on it because most members have already spoken about it. What the inquiries found from those terrible tragedies at Waterfall and Glenbrook is well documented. In relation to safety, page 265 of the Waterfall accident final report states:

The report identified that many of these had arisen as a result of disaggregation of the rail industry in 1996. Disaggregation and the failure to manage the process resulted in a fragmentation of safety knowledge and expertise. The State owned corporations with particular business objectives were required to pursue these business objectives.

Those business objectives were about profit. Essentially, the report says that those tragic accidents and deaths might have been prevented if safety was treated as a top priority instead of being secondary to profit. [*Extension of time*]

The report continues:

There was a tension between the commercial objectives of the infrastructure owner and the infrastructure maintainer to maximise their profits and increase the return to the government, and the need of the then SRA to provide safe and reliable train services to the travelling public. Various examples of this tension can be cited from the Glenbrook Inquiry, where there was evidence that when track maintenance was necessary to keep services operating efficiently, the infrastructure owner's assets management plan could not accommodate the necessary works.

It does not get any plainer than that. The problem was identified in 2005. It was put in motion in 1996 when the train and public transport infrastructure entities were split up and the tragedies occurred almost 10 years later. Afterwards this report identified exactly why they happened and said that they could have been prevented. With that knowledge, it is hard to understand why a bill that could cause that tragic history to be repeated is before this House. It is a sad potential outcome of this bill. If we did not know that was a possible consequence the Government could be excused for introducing this bill. However, knowing the consequences and still supporting this bill is distinctly different. I end my contribution on a final salient point. In the 20 March 2017 edition of the *Australian Financial Review* the Minister for Transport said the following in regard to public transport services:

They will be all private. In 10 to 15 years' time government will not be in the provision of transport services. It will be all on demand, private sector driven, underpinned by innovation in technology.

It is there for all to see. Some interjectors have been saying that we are scaremongering about privatisation, we are not telling the truth or we are reading too much into it. Hang on a minute. This transport administration bill allows for privatisation and the transport Minister has been directly quoted as saying that privatisation is a certainty, and yet we are accused of scaremongering. All we are doing for the good folk of New South Wales is joining the dots. The name of this bill makes it seem a little bit ho hum. The Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill sounds like the most boring bill imaginable. The truth is it should be called the Public Transport Privatisation Bill. That might wake up a few people and call them to arms.

I repeat my questions about Government members. Why have they been gagged? Why are none of them allowed to speak on this bill? It could be because they do not understand the significance of the bill, but I hardly think that is true because about 50 of them came in a conga line to talk about the Library Amendment Bill. Maybe it is because they have been purposely gagged and told that they cannot speak in this debate. That is a blight on democracy and on their integrity, ticker and spine. Government members must talk about what we need to talk about for the people of New South Wales. Should there be a tragic death on our rail network in coming years because of a failure to properly address safety issues, the blood will be on their hands. I oppose the bill.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (12:15): The Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017 proposes to clearly separate which transport entities are responsible for the delivery of railway passenger services and asset management. This bill has serious implications for the people of the Central Coast, where rail is incredibly important. When trains run late on the Central Coast sporting events do not go ahead, training for kids does not happen and the lives of local families are thrown out of kilter. We are already unhappy that the entities were split into Sydney Trains and NSW Trains. At the time the local papers described NSW Trains as the poor cousin of the rail network. People of the Central Coast and the Hunter as well as the Blue Mountains have missed out under the new structure. The Government has since found out it did not separate those entities appropriately.

This is all about the budget and the Government bottom line. This Government is all about crowing over surpluses, even if those surpluses are gained through ill means and accounting tricks. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has called the Government out and told it that it cannot classify rail in the way it has. That is significant, because rail holds a huge amount of debt. The entity does not make money; it loses money and needs a large amount of infrastructure investment. However, it is vitally important. The member for Cessnock ably outlined the reasons why we are being asked to vote for what might be called NSW Trains 2.0. The fact that the original entity did not fly in accounting terms is a concern for the budget and raises some important issues. The member for Cessnock and Labor members and The Greens spoke about the privatisation agenda. Government members mocked them—as they often do just before they privatise things.

It is important that people understand the history of this matter, which begins in 2012 when Infrastructure Partnerships Australia commissioned a report and commenced to push the Government towards privatising parts of the New South Wales rail network. The easiest way to do that is by breaking it into smaller parts. They would then say, "It would be much better if this smaller part was being operated by the private sector." The cost would be then shifted from the Government to the private sector and back to the taxpayers—who had already paid for the rail infrastructure—and the fares increased. In 2012 Infrastructure Partnerships Australia said that RailCorp was costing about \$10 million per day. That lobby group said that taxpayers were paying about \$2.5 billion a year to keep City Rail and CountryLink running. A blowout in staff numbers was given as one of the reasons for that. That is of concern, given the staffing cuts in the network. So that was the initial discussion about privatisation.

In April 2016 the member for Keira called on the Government to release any documents in its possession about privatisation. It was found that officials at New South Wales Treasury had found 97 documents relating to privatisation. The Government declined to release those documents under freedom of information laws because of an "overriding public interest against disclosure". Both documents were declared cabinet-in-confidence. They were also likely to impact the Government's commercial interests and have "ramifications beyond the public sector". That shows the Government was formulating plans in 2016 to further privatise the network.

Mr David Elliott: This bill has nothing to do with privatisation.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: If this is a long stretch, one only has to look to the privatisation of the bus, ferry and rail services in the Hunter, which were done without any consultation. The Government has said that it is going to divide this all up but we should not be concerned because it is not going to privatise it. The community no longer trusts this Government. If the Government has nothing to hide then it should release those 97 documents. The public will then know whether or not the Government is planning to privatise the network. Importantly, the people on the Central Coast are concerned about safety. As the member for Cessnock said earlier, the reports on the rail accidents at Waterfall and Glenbrook talk about what happens when silos are created and different entities are pushed into separate groups—namely, one loses the ability to have an overriding pressure on safety.

Another example is the Hawkesbury River railway bridge. That bridge had structural problems but the urgent maintenance it needed was pushed back because the Government did not want to reduce its profit margin. But the Government was finally pushed into doing it because the former member for Gosford, Kathy Smith, got the information into the public domain. I repeat, safety is removed as the prime consideration when things are siloed in the rail network to try to make the budget bottom line look better. As the member for Cessnock said, the Government talks about scaremongering but there are dots and the public are starting to join those dots.

It is not a long stretch knowing that there was a report recommending to the Government that it be privatised. The Government is hiding documents that talk about privatisation. It may be pure chance that the Australian Bureau of Statistics said that these entities were not setup correctly, but that has allowed the Government to again look at breaking these groups into smaller entities and then farming out those entities. We know there has been discussion about the Eastern Suburbs and Illawarra line and that the Sydney Metro will be run by the private sector. This Government is totally obsessed with privatisation, not safety. It is not concerned about the important things that concern my constituents.

Mr David Elliott: You guys are the kings of privatisation.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! Members will come to order.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Unlike you, we learnt the lesson.

Mr David Elliott: You wanted to privatise Cessnock jail.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: If the Minister is saying that he is advocating the privatisation of the rail network, which is what it sounds like to me—

Mr David Elliott: You are morally bankrupt.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! The Minister will cease arguing across the table. He will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate. The member for Wyong has the call.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: As the member for Cessnock said, all Government members had the chance to talk to this bill but many chose not to. That deafening silence tells a very big story, as do those 97 secret documents about privatisation. The public no longer trusts this Government and this bill reinforces the public's fear about this Government's agenda.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (12:25): Mr Temporary Speaker—

Mr Mark Coure: He wants to run for Oatley.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I grew up in Oatley. That would be fantastic. I understand they have got a brand-new lift. How much was it?

Mr Mark Coure: Quite a bit.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: It cost \$23 million. That is where a lot of this Transport Asset Holding Entity [TAHE] money must have gone. I oppose the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017.

Mr Mark Coure: I will know when he is getting a lift.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: How much is that going to cost?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! The member for Kogarah will return to the leave of the bill.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The member for Oatley keeps distracting me. I could be within the leave of the bill because we are speaking about the potential consequences of where this revenue is being spent. As I said, I oppose the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017.

Mr David Elliott: You are above this, Chris.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: It is interesting that the Minister—

Mr Mark Coure: Sorry, it included a commuter car park.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! The member for Oatley will cease interjecting.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The Minister said that I am better than this.

Mr David Elliott: I said you are above this.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I would humbly disagree. In January 2016 I spoke about the TAHE in this place when the former Premier kept insisting that backbenchers should read the budget. Do members remember that? In box 1.1 Transport Asset Holding Entity on page three of the 2015-16 budget, hiding in plain sight, it said:

TAHE will procure and sell assets consistent with Government requirements and lease those assets to the operators (both government and non-government) under negotiated leases and other contracts. As a result public transport assets will, in time, be managed on a portfolio basis, generating greater efficiencies ...

Until now, the Government has paid recurrent grants to Rail Corporation to deliver its capital program. From 1 July 2015, new funding for capital projects will be provided by equity injections ...

That is a clever piece of bureaucratic speak.

Mr Michael Johnsen: A bit like the Newcastle transport that the member for Newcastle supports.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! The member for Kogarah will address his remarks through the Chair.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: With respect, it is absolutely nothing like that. But you are welcome to make a contribution.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! The member for Kogarah will address his remarks through the Chair.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I have got 7½ minutes to kill. We should indulge ourselves.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! If the member for Kogarah has concluded his contribution he will resume his seat.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: That piece of bureaucratic speak was designed to throw us off the scent of the intention of the legislation, in particular the budget moves in 2014.

Mr David Elliott: We did it on the internet.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: If the Minister was in the Cabinet at the time—I do not know if he was or not—he would know that there were genuine concerns within the Government about the application of this state-owned corporation. State-owned corporations have to have an independent board, which could be inconsistent with the administration of transport.

Mr Mark Coure: You have got us worked out.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: It is a bit above your pay grade. I do not expect that you would have known. At the time this entity was set up with an independent board. That independent board needs to make commercial decisions in the interests of the Transport Administration Holding Entity, which may not be consistent with what the Minister desires in terms of transport priorities for New South Wales. That is why we see such a huge lag between the application of box 1.1 in the 2015 budget statement and the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017, as moved in this Parliament today. There was a dispute in the Government. There is no other explanation for it. The reason for that is because of the very tricky language used within the budget papers in 2015.

Mr David Elliott: Just like the dispute when you tried to sell electricity.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: You say that. You criticised us over the sale of electricity.

Mr David Elliott: I never did. I was on Morris's campaign team.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: You voted against it. The truth is the Liberals voted against it. They thought tricky dealings were taking place. One of their first acts when they assumed the Treasury benches was to pursue exactly the same subterfuge. There is no difference between an equity injection and what used to be termed funding for capital projects, with one exception: It comes from the recurrent budget, or you magically flick a pen and call it an equity injection and it comes off the spending line of your budget. It produces billions of dollars a year in terms of the budget figure, as it is produced every year.

Mr David Elliott: Just like you did when you sold the Commonwealth Bank.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The Minister says, "Why didn't you say it at the time?" I did say it at the time.

Mr David Elliott: I did not say that at all.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The Minister says "Why didn't you say that at the time, member for Kogarah?" I thank the Minister for that interjection, as I did say it at the time. It is a valuable interjection and I appreciate it. That is what has happened here: A budget dodge to try to boost the budget year in, year out. I do not know whether there will be private sector involvement in the administration of the Transport Asset Holding Entity. I do not know who it would be doing deals with. I suspect it will operate similarly to how it is currently operating—it will procure, run and finance servicing and capital for transport assets across New South Wales. The big difference here is to the budget bottom line. This is more of an issue for the finance of New South Wales than it is for transport administration. That is particularly worrisome because when you pursue finance dodgers like this, or when you come up with holding entities that basically park equity injections inside assets, you give everybody a false sense of the true state of the budget.

Many members of this Parliament probably do not care about that but with such a volatile tax as residential transfer duty driving so much of the revenue projections and the money available for spending over the forward estimates, if something in the budget papers gives an artificial \$2 billion a year then it does not give the full state or accounts of the New South Wales budget. The Government says it is roughly \$1.5 billion or \$2 billion greater than it currently is, but as the budget papers note from this year—and it is written very small:

The residential component of transfer duty is expected to grow by an average rate of 4.7 per cent per annum over the four years to 2019-20, excluding the foreign investor transfer duty surcharge. While the current housing cycle is longer than previous cycles, historically low interest rates, strong population growth and continued supply limitations are expected to support activity.

It goes on to suggest that it is highly volatile—some years you can have a 5 per cent growth in residential transfer duty, and some years you can have a 15 per cent growth in residential transfer duty. Two years ago when I was elected to this House there was a 20 per cent growth in residential transfer duty. This is a highly cyclical, highly variable revenue measure and the Government's entire spending plan rests largely on it. I put this in perspective: When members were elected to this House they collected around \$5 billion in transfer duty from New South Wales home owners. According to the forward estimates this year they are expected to collect \$10.5 billion and in the year after that \$10.9 billion. That is \$5 billion growth in variable income in the short space of time that the Liberal-Nationals members have sat opposite. That is the definition of a volatile revenue measure.

The Transport Asset Holding Entity does nothing to further the budget discipline or the revenue flowing into government. It is not a new tax; it is not a new spending measure. All it is, is a tricky accounting method to change the definition of how you spend money in the transport portfolio. That is going to give everybody a false sense of the true state of the budget. When volatile revenue is coming in it could be \$5 billion or \$10 billion, it could jump by 4 per cent, as the Treasury is predicting for this financial year, or it could be 13 per cent, as it was last year. That is a big problem for the administration of finance in New South Wales.

The Government is doing this because it saw the other States had done it and thought, "We can artificially boost the budget result by \$1.5 billion." That does not make it right. It should be transparent about the reasons it has pursued it. The Government should do what it did in the 2015 budget and include pre-TAHE and post-TAHE budget results in every budget paper delivered in this House through the forward estimates. The people of New South Wales, those making decisions about policy measures and the Opposition will then know the true impact of what the Transport Asset Holding Entity does for the budget bottom line and how much money is available to spend on behalf of the people of New South Wales.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (12:35): I contribute to the debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017. I will address the Berejiklian Government's early-stage attempts to ready the public transport system for privatisation. Last week in this place I spoke about the toxic, twisted priorities of the Berejiklian-O'Farrell-Baird Government as it relates to public transport. In six years there have been three Premiers but the agenda remains the same. Privatisation is the mantra of this Government and

every Liberal Government that has come before it. It is disgraceful that its reason for being is to take public assets owned by the people of New South Wales and through crooked deals then hand those assets to the private sector at a discount price.

This bill is about separating the rail transport system. Naturally there is some jiggery-pokery going on to make the budget appear to have a healthier surplus, but that sleight of hand is almost a sideshow to the main event. What we see here is the beginning of the rail system being broken up so that it can be privatised. Just as we saw with Sydney Ferries, the unprofitable assets are hived off into a separate company and the service delivery side of it—the frontline staff, ticketing, customer service—is franchised to the private sector. This will happen with the trains too—by moving the unprofitable and costly asset management functions into a different organisation, the frontline service delivery can be sold off to the private sector.

Last night, whilst preparing for today's parliamentary sitting, I read an article in the *New York Times*. In that article columnist Owen Jones reminded us of the words of Conservative United Kingdom Prime Minister John Major who said privatisation will bring "better, cheaper and more effective service for the commuter". Owen Jones observed that to repeat that claim to the beleaguered passengers travelling on the hopeless British rail system today would provoke mirthless laughter. Recent polling in Britain reveals that 58 per cent of Britons believe rail privatisation is a complete or partial failure, while only 13 per cent rate it as a success. A 2013 report by the United Kingdom Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change found that British taxpayers are spending far more on funding the privatised system than they ever did on the nationalised system of old.

There you have it—a railway system that is unreliable and inefficient, which passengers rate as a complete failure and which costs the taxpayers more. The only beneficiaries of such an absurd arrangement are big businesses and private sector chums of the Tory politicians who signed off on these crooked deals. Faced with a similarly crooked deal being cobbled together by these Tory politicians opposite, Labor has no choice but to vote against this legislation. We have very grave concerns about the shady motives of this New South Wales Liberal Government. We can see it fattening this pig for market, and we are calling it for what it is. My comrades in the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU] are similarly appalled by the idea. Alex Claassens of the RTBU says:

This reeks of yet another step towards the privatisation of our public transport services. The Baird Government must come clean with the NSW public about any future plans to privatise our public services.

Mr Claassens has belled the cat there for us all. It is a very common rhetorical flourish of the shonky merchants in this Government to tell New South Wales taxpayers that there are no current plans for this or that. The Government said there were no current plans to privatise Wyong Hospital, but it is privatising it. The Government said there were no current plans to sell Land and Property Information, but it is selling it this week to some of its Cayman Island connections. The Government said there were no current plans to sell Sydney Water, but we should not count on that. The list goes on and on.

When this Government says there are no current plans for something, it is thumbing its nose at us and saying we cannot prove anything. It is trite to say so but actions do speak louder than words. The actions of this Liberal Government, aided and abetted by the lapdogs in The Nationals, speak volumes. The Government is desperately looking for government assets and public service agencies it can sell off before it gets thrown out of office in 2019. Those opposite know they are going to lose the next election—we can see it on their faces in the corridors and in question time. They have the look of dead members of Parliament walking. They are thinking about what they will do after their political careers are over and I suppose their minds wander to what they can privatise or sell in the meantime. We have not seen crookery like this since the dark days of the Bob Askin Liberal Government. This is what we are dealing with.

The implications of this privatisation push are profound. If assets such as track, wiring and signal equipment are hived off and service delivery privatised, we can be sure that safety and reliability of the train network will suffer and that the private operator will jack up prices. Already we have the Opal ticketing system run by a private company. People cannot buy a ticket at most railway stations. Every year prices are jacked up and a private company skims profits off the top. That is no way to run a public transport system. I reiterate: Labor opposes this privatisation push. We will fight back against the privatisation agenda being put forward by this shonky Government. This is bad legislation being put forward by a bad government.

Earlier in the debate, the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure sat here listening to the contribution of Labor members, occasionally raising points of order and generally having a good time. He has made himself scarce now that I am in the Chamber. He refuses to face me and to answer to his myriad failures as a Minister. This attempt to carve up our transport system is an admission of another failure. Lately I have been giving the Minister a hard time. He does not have the guts to debate me in this Chamber on the details of his portfolio. This is a Minister who said recently that in 10 years time he did not think government would be providing a public transport system.

The solution to the Minister's incompetence and to his disinterest in and antipathy for public service is not to sell it off. Indeed, the solution to the Liberal Party's philosophical opposition to public service and public transport is not to privatise it. The solution is to get rid of the Liberals, elect a Labor government and let the grown-ups fix the mess that has been left for us after six miserable years of this Liberal Government. By the time the Liberals are done it will have been eight years of crooked Cayman Island deals, eight years of incompetence and eight years of failure. Perhaps the greatest failure of this incompetent Minister was his decision to buy a new train for the Blue Mountains that does not fit the tracks.

My community in the Blue Mountains relies on efficient, reliable and safe public transport; it is integral to our day-to-day lives and to the local economy. But this Government cannot deliver efficiency, reliability or safety. Instead, the Government is buying trains from South Korea that do not fit the tracks and will not squeeze through the narrow tunnels out to Lithgow. It beggars belief. But, of course, when the Government privatises the transport system, the narrow tracks and tunnels requiring costly upgrades will remain a State Government liability, while the service delivery is handed over to the private sector.

Once again, the taxpayers cop the costs while the private sector runs off with the revenue-generating side of the business. This is the most crooked of deals. Let us call this for what it is: The legalised theft of public assets by the New South Wales Berejiklian Government. The Government has no mandate for these privatisations, none whatsoever. I reiterate that Labor opposes this bill. We oppose the privatisation of public transport and public assets, and we hold very grave fears for what will be left in the public estate for New South Wales when we return to government. There are two long years left to go before the next election and the parliamentary burglars opposite are trying to knock off everything they can between now and 2019.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (12:45): I make a contribution to debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017. I endorse the remarks of the member for Maroubra and I particularly endorse the remarks and sentiments of the member for Rockdale and the member for Kogarah. This bill highlights a pretty major public policy failure of governments for some years—not only State governments but also Federal governments. Governments have been doctoring their budget papers for years in an effort to give the impression—

Mr David Elliott: Why did Labor sell the Commonwealth Bank?

Mr RON HOENIG: I suggest the soprano mug continue his contribution to Gilbert and Sullivan where it might be more welcome. For some years governments have been doctoring the bottom line of their budgets to give the impression that they are sound economic managers by creating state-owned corporations—in other words, taking the expenditure off the budget bottom line and off the books. In theory, state-owned corporations, which stemmed from Margaret Thatcher's Government and were adopted by the Greiner and successive governments, were designed, in effect, to try to make certain public sector operations operate efficiently and as if they were private sector corporations. Governments have been utilising competition policy as an excuse. I have never been able to understand how competition policy applies to a state-owned monopoly but, in any event, that was one of the excuses—

Mr David Elliott: Australian national wine?

Mr RON HOENIG: The soprano could perform in *Carmen* with that high-pitched voice. A Minister of the Crown who has absolutely no idea about this legislation might learn something if he listens—I wish he would, because the people would get the benefit. State-owned corporations turned out to be simply a vehicle to remove things from the budget bottom lines so that governments could proclaim either that they had major surpluses or that they were minimising the amounts of their deficits so that they could parade the rating agencies around, which would look at the budget bottom line numbers. It has been a sleight-of-hand rort that has been going on with governments for quite some time.

I will give an example of how state-owned corporations operate and the rorts that are visited upon the people of New South Wales. When the transmission and distribution networks were state-owned corporations, the theory was that they were to operate as the private sector would—namely, they would return dividends from the profits these organisations make and the State would be the beneficiary of those profit-making dividends. In reality the amounts of money Treasury was taking from the state-owned corporations were not dividends declared from the profits of these corporations; they were amounts Treasury determined in May, before the end of the financial year—namely, amounts Treasury arbitrarily dictated had to be provided to the Government from those State-owned corporations.

They simply have been a cash cow that has enabled governments to hide their expenditure from the bottom line. However, in this case the Government has been caught with its fingers in the cookie jar by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The Government has moved the railway assets off budget to this entity. When the Government established this entity it said that the entity would run at a surplus, but railways were never going to

run at a surplus. As the Government was having to prop up the finances in the entity, it actually called it an equity or capital injection—with funds being injected as a capital expense—so that it did not affect the budget bottom line. Rather than being a revenue expense, the Government called it a capital expense.

As a result, without any more income or expenditure, there was suddenly a change to the budget bottom line. The Government was required to show it in the 2015-16 budget. The effect of the budget sleight of hand has disappeared from the Government's latest budget. There has been no more income and no more expenditure, so the budget bottom line should not change, allegedly. However, one can see from the Government's budget papers that in 2015-16 this sleight of hand shows the surplus increasing by \$1.8 billion, in 2016-17 by \$2.4 billion, in 2017-18 by \$1.8 billion and in 2018-19 by \$1.4 billion. That is with no increase or reduction in expenditure and no increased income. All of a sudden, by a little accounting mechanism, the New South Wales Government can show this budget bottom line figure.

Governments have been able to get away with this for a long time because, according to the way in which politics operates, nobody is looking beyond what the Treasurer says is the bottom line. The rorts of state-owned corporations and the doctoring of these figures, designed to get rating agencies to give them a big triple-A plus, has been going on for some time. An example—I will not even blame the New South Wales Government—of the greatest rort of a state-owned corporation being off budget is the Australian broadband network where \$40 billion worth of Commonwealth expenditure is off budget. Is that right or wrong? Is it right or wrong for the expenditure of railways not to be in budget but off budget? Is it right or wrong that the income from public transport should be off budget when one has the responsibility of managing railways, with Sydney being the largest rail network in the world? Why are they off budget? It is because the Government is trying to doctor the bottom line.

It is time Government members stopped buying a bill of goods from their political leaders who are just getting hand-up briefs from Treasury boffins, and instead asked whether it is right or wrong. Is it right or wrong to doctor the books? Is it right or wrong that governments of the day, both Commonwealth and State, have been doctoring the books of state-owned corporations to give artificial budget figures? The answer is that it is not right. Either the state-owned corporations are genuine state-owned corporations operating independently and giving a return to the Government, or they are a rort to hide bottom line expenditure and income. In this case the Government has been caught out by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which said that the rort by the Government in 2015 in creating this entity and transferring the assets to take the expenditure off budget to give the bottom line figures that the last budget produced could no longer be done. [*Extension of time*]

It was the Government's plan to make a commercial return of 7 per cent from the transport administration holding entity being taken off budget. We all know there is no way that the railways in this State will give a commercial return of 7 per cent—that is a joke. The audacity of the Government to say that when it introduced the bill I will not say borders on dishonesty because the Government of the day would not have a clue, but it bought a bill of goods from its own bureaucrats. Now the Australian Bureau of Statistics has said that the current arrangements are insufficient to allow it to be taken off budget. The Government has been told that it can no longer take the expenditure of railways off budget; it can no longer with a sleight of hand call its expenditure on railways capital expenditure.

The Government desperately needs to create a state-owned corporation to hide its activities and justify continuing to perpetrate this myth. One of the great benefits of public policy nationally is that at least the Government has been caught. For the first time the Australian Bureau of Statistics has caught a government in this country doctoring the books to give a better bottom line. Governments pay rating agencies to give them a big tick. The time has come for all governments, not only this Government having been caught with its finger in the till, to either allow state-owned corporations to operate the way the Hon. Nick Greiner initially envisaged or alternatively have some truth in accounting. If the Government were a director of a public company it would probably end up going to jail.

Mr David Elliott: With Eddie Obeid.

Mr RON HOENIG: He is in one of your jails, mate, so you can take responsibility for him, but at least have some consideration. The Minister interjects; he is a member of the Executive Government. He should look at the public policy issues at stake, not just in respect of this bill, because with this bill the Government has been caught out doing what governments have been doing for far too long. One of the problems is that everybody is keen to give the impression of a surplus and of being great economic managers. The Government should pull these doctored figures off its budget bottom line and its stamp duty will return to normalcy. Then, at the end of the day, the Government is in deficit. All that happens with these figures is that the Minister for Corrections probably wants to build a new jail. Ministers are all bidding for expenditure in this year's budget from all this extra money but the extra money is not there. It is only an accounting entry. It is about time this House started to apply itself to what the Government is doing and expose this sleight of hand. People cannot govern their own

household income or a business this way; the Government certainly cannot govern the State of New South Wales this way.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:58): I make a contribution on the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017. The object of the bill is to separate which transport entities are responsible for the delivery of railway passenger services, to asset manage and to convert the transport asset holding entity [TAHE] into a state-owned corporation [SOC]. Stakeholder consultation has remained consistent, with a high degree of concern that the bill reeks of another step towards the privatisation of our public transport services. As many Labor members have noted, the Government is hell-bent on privatising everything it can get its hands on, believing that privately run entities are better than publicly run entities.

Mr David Elliott: You hypocrite.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: I note the interjection by the member for Baulkham Hills. It is an inherent risk that any entity that is focused solely on commercial success and maximising its net worth will hold a different focus to that of its predecessor. History shows that once the objective is to maximise profit, safety and service quality suffers as a result. There is only so much fat that can be trimmed before the situation becomes dangerous. It is evident that the Government's focus is on turning a profit rather than on the service quality and community safety. The Government cannot be so naïve as to believe the public will stand for this. My constituents have been disappointed time and again by the Government's inaction regarding Carramar, Villawood, Yennora and Canley Vale railway stations.

Those stations have been overlooked for easy access upgrades. The mobility impaired, elderly and parents with prams are excluded from utilising their local train station due to the lack of access to and from the platforms. A litany of transport Ministers in this Government have faced questions and motions about this issue but they have failed to get residents of my electorate onto platforms. History shows that splitting passenger services and operational services ends in failure. If the focus is shifted from service delivery and safety it will cost lives. Quality service and a high level of safety must be maintained for the customer—I prefer the term "commuter" but the Government has used the term "customer" for six years. Labor has grave concerns about what the Government intends to do with this bill.

It is expected that the Transport Asset Holding Entity will run out of money by year four. In 2020 the Government will begin hemorrhaging significant amounts of expenditure. Privatisation will assist only in covering the losses that occur from year four onwards. The main objective of the Transport Asset Holding Entity and state-owned corporation is to run a successful business. It is clear that the Government is preparing the Transport Asset Holding Entity to be privatised. New section 10 (1) (b) states that the Transport Asset Holding Entity is to be a "successful business". It is to operate at least as efficiently as comparable businesses and maximise the net worth of the State's investment in the Transport Asset Holding Entity. This bill does not provide confidence that its primary objective is to improve service and prioritise safety.

The Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs, who is at the table, will recall debate on the library bill. A cavalcade of Government members spoke to the bill. The Temporary Speaker, the member for Coojee, thought very highly of it. Where are those members now? Where are the members speaking up for quality service delivery and safety on our trains? The member for WallSEND and other Opposition members have spoken in the debate. Labor does not want lives to be lost or the public transport network destroyed as a result of the Government's failings. Government members know that is true. Today many Opposition members have voiced their concerns and given detailed reasons for opposing the bill. The *Hansard* will show a distinct lack of government contributions to the debate. It is evident where Government members stand on this important matter. The Government has a privatisation agenda. I urge members to stand up for the people who use our public transport and to ensure they have a quality service with safety at the forefront. For those reasons I oppose the bill.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (13:05): I make a contribution to debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017. The member for Maroubra outlined the mechanics of this bill and the reasons that Labor opposes the legislation. The Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017 proposes to clearly separate the transport entities responsible for the delivery of railway passenger services and for asset management. The bill also seeks to convert the Transport Asset Holding Entity [TAHE] into a state-owned corporation [SOC]. A staged approach will be adopted whereby Sydney Trains will deliver rail passenger services in the city and NSW Trains will deliver rail passenger services in the regions; RailCorp will be the asset manager and will be assigned further asset-management functions; the Residual Transport Corporation will assist in the wind-up of activities that transport agencies no longer need to undertake; and RailCorp will be turned into the TAHE and converted into a SOC.

The member for Maroubra pointed out that use of the term "administration" in the bill is misleading and does not reflect the scope of the bill. The member for Strathfield raised a valid point when she asked, "If this bill is genuinely about transport, why was the bill introduced by the Treasurer and not the Minister for Transport?" This bill is about privatising yet another government asset—but more on that later. We have to feel a little sorry for the Minister for Transport; he has clearly been sidelined on this one. A point of concern with this bill is that billions of dollars will be erroneously removed from the budget. On 1 July 2015 the Government created the Transport Asset Holding Entity—namely, a public non-financial corporation responsible for managing the rail assets, separate from providing rail passenger services. This was done in order to remove it from the budget papers.

At that time the Government and then Treasurer said this was consistent with the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] classifications. For the TAHE to be taken off budget it needs to make a commercial return of at least 7 per cent, and this will be difficult to achieve as rail assets are generally not profitable. As the member for Maroubra pointed out, this has added at least \$7.4 billion to the budget position over four years and the Government has already banked those savings. But the ABS has informed the Government that the current arrangements regarding the TAHE are insufficient to allow it to be taken off budget. Therefore, the Government has erroneously banked the Transport Asset Holding Entity savings.

The Government wishes to convert the TAHE into a SOC with the objective of its being a "successful business". If the bill is not enacted, the Transport Asset Holding Entity must be added back into the budget. This will significantly deteriorate the Government's budget position and possibly lead to a budget deficit. The member for Kogarah eloquently outlined this point in his contribution to the debate. I support his position. If the bill is enacted, there is still a possibility that the ABS will be unsatisfied that the TAHE-SOC arrangement can make a commercial return of 7 per cent. So the TAHE would need to be added back into the budget. We oppose the bill due to the incorrect accounting procedures used by the Government to separate the two entities.

The TAHE is expected to run out of money by year four. Therefore, the Government in 2020 and beyond will be running an entity that is draining significant amounts of expenditure. Privatisation will assist in covering up losses that will be made from year four onwards. By setting up the TAHE as a state-owned corporation whose main objective is to run a successful business, the Government is preparing the TAHE to be privatised. According to the bill, the TAHE is to be a successful business and is to operate at least as efficiently as any comparable business and maximise the net worth of the State's investment in the Transport Asset Holding Entity. Following the sale of the Land and Property Information land titles registry, the public will not tolerate another privatisation by this Government. Mr Alex Claassens, Secretary of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union NSW said that the inclusion of the TAHE in the budget should come as a major concern to commuters and workers. He continued:

This reeks of yet another step towards the privatisation of our public transport services.

The ...Government must come clean with the NSW public about any future plans to privatise our public services.

I agree with Mr Claassens. I oppose the Government's rampant, unfettered privatisation. It seems that nothing is off the table; everything seems to be for sale in this State. Whenever the Government brings before the House yet another bill to privatise assets owned by the people of New South Wales it is my duty to inform residents of the Swansea electorate of the Government's track record on privatisation. I have been a member of Parliament for only a short while and already I feel like I have worn out the carpet coming to the dispatch box to talk on this topic.

What a record it has been! Since 2011 under the Liberal-Nationals Government we have seen the sale or privatisation of the Sydney Desalination Plant; Sydney Ferries; Port Botany, Port Kembla and of course the Port of Newcastle; Bligh House, Sydney; McKell Building, Sydney; Maritime building, Sydney; Penrith government office block; Wollongong government office block; Queanbeyan government office block; and Newcastle government office block. The Government has sold the ground lease for the Sir Stamford Hotel. It has sold off the Queen Mary Building, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital campus—

Mr Jonathan O'Dea: Point of order: The bill is not about privatisation. I ask that the member for Swansea return to the leave of the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! I remind the member for Swansea of the long title of the bill. However, the member is entitled to interpret the meaning of the bill.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: Government privatisation is clearly a delicate topic, and I understand why because it is so unpopular. However, public transport is critical for people who live in regional areas. The suggestion of its being privatised scares residents in my electorate and those in the electorates of the member for Wallsend and the member for Mount Druitt. It is my obligation to remind Government members, whose memories are often very short, of all the things that have been sold. In October 2013 the Government flogged off more than 500 government-owned properties. It sold off Eraring Power Station in my electorate, Shoalhaven Hydro Power Station, Delta Electricity's Mount Piper Power Station and Wallerawang Power Station.

The Government has sold the Ausgrid building in Sydney, Green State Power and Macquarie Generation. It has flogged off many properties at Miller's Point and 13.5 hectares of vacant land in the Caddens Release Area. The Government has privatised the Parramatta Justice Precinct and Hunter Water. It has sold the Newcastle waterfront offices and, of course, Colongra Power Station in the Swansea electorate as well. ServiceFirst NSW has been privatised, as has the Home Care Service of New South Wales.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: What a disgrace.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I note the interjection of the member for Newcastle, and I thank him for his support. In November 2015 the Liberal-Nationals Government sold off the Australian Technology Park and Vales Point Power station in my electorate for a very small amount of money, and now it will privatise the entire Hunter transport network. Not once did any of us ever imagine that there would be a suggestion to privatise our public hospitals, but that is the current state of affairs. Wyong hospital is certainly targeted for sale by this Government.

Debate interrupted.

Community Recognition Statements

HILLS KNIGHTS FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (13:15): As the member for Baulkham Hills, I am honoured to be appointed a patron on the Hills Knights Football Club's inaugural board of patrons. The Hills Knights Football Club began in 1974 and has since grown to more than 900 players. I look forward to working with the club and other patrons, including the Federal member for Mitchell, Alex Hawke, MP, and Hills Shire councillor Dr Michelle Byrne to ensure the sporting future of the Hills. I thank and commend Knights President Jay Marshall for the invitation, as well as the new Hills Football Association for all its work to ensure that the Hills shire remains an active community and a fantastic region for growing sports such as football to make their mark.

REVEREND ANDREW JOHN EATON COMMISSIONING CEREMONY

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (13:16): In February I was fortunate to be invited to the historical Commissioning Ceremony of Reverend Andrew John Eaton at St Luke's Anglican Church, Wallsend. Parishioners showed up in force. In a spirit of harmony that is just like Wallsend, multiple denominations were welcomed, including Wallsend Mosque's own Diana Rah and other members of our local Muslim community. I take this opportunity to thank all those who attended and displayed the sense of community in our area. I thank the Right Reverend Dr Peter Stuart for officiating on the evening. I also thank Monica Njoroge-Eaton, secondary teacher and wife of the new reverend, and their daughters, Njeri and Wanjiku. Of course, I thank Reverend Andrew John Eaton himself, whom I look forward to spending time with in my electorate.

NSW YOUNG ACHIEVERS AWARD NOMINEE MARK NIELSEN

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (13:17): I acknowledge the remarkable achievements of Mulgoa resident Mark Nielsen. Mark was recently nominated for a NSW Young Achievers Award for his commitment to serving the community through his incredible work with local charities. At only 13 years old, Mark is an active member of his school community. He attends Penrith Anglican College and engages with various school fundraising activities, including the Jump Rope for Heart program and Clean Up Australia Day. Last year Mark raised more than \$1,400 to help rebuild and purchase essential supplies for a remote school in Nepal that had been affected by a severe earthquake.

In addition, Mark is currently developing his own appeal named "Sleep Sound", which will aim to provide local homeless people with new and used sleeping bags, blankets, bedrolls and one-man tents during winter. Mark hopes to become Australia's Ambassador to the United Nations one day, which will allow him to continue supporting and advocating for those in need. On behalf of the people of Mulgoa, I thank Mark for his outstanding contributions to his local community. I congratulate him on being nominated for a NSW Young Achievers Award and I commend his dedication to helping others across our region.

FAIRFIELD ELECTORATE ASSYRIAN NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:18): On Sunday 2 April 2017 I had the great privilege of celebrating Assyrian New Year at the Fairfield Showground with so many members of our incredibly diverse community. It was great to see an abundance of Assyrian culture and festivities on display throughout the day. I congratulate the organising committee on yet another successful Assyrian New Year celebration in Fairfield. I give special thanks and acknowledgements to Mr Hermiz Shahan of the Assyrian Universal Alliance and Mr David David of the Assyrian Australian National Federation for their tireless work in the Assyrian

Community. I also thank all the performing artists, stallholders, sponsors, volunteers and, last but not least, the community for making these celebrations bigger and better than ever before. Happy Assyrian New Year 6767.

PENRITH LIONS CLUB SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (13:18): I congratulate the Lions Club of Penrith, which celebrates its sixtieth anniversary this month. In its 60 years the Lions club has donated approximately \$1.5 million to many local projects and causes. For many years the club's signature project has been to support the neonatal unit at Nepean Hospital. The Lions Club of Penrith holds regular fundraising barbecues and provides encouragement awards to local school students. During the festive season its much-loved Christmas cakes are sold and profits are distributed to those in greatest need in the local area. The Lions club is a prominent presence at many environmental events in Penrith, including National Tree Planting Day and Clean Up Australia Day. It has also made contributions to the Luke Priddis Foundation and other local autism initiatives. The Lions Club of Penrith and the Lions Club of Emu Plains both make outstanding contributions in my community. I congratulate the Lions Club of Penrith on its sixtieth anniversary and wish it every success in the future.

MOUNT DRUITT COMMUNITY HERO AWARD RECIPIENT DEBBIE HIGGISON

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (13:20): I congratulate Debbie Higgison of the Mount Druitt Learning Ground on receiving the 2017 Community Hero Award. Debbie has dedicated the past 11 years of her career to working with at-risk youths as a family liaison officer in the Mount Druitt Learning Ground behavioural change program. Debbie aims to keep families together and strives to provide opportunities for kids who do not connect with school life. Over the past 19 years Debbie has built a network of community events and festivals across the 11 suburbs of Mount Druitt, including the Reconciliation Walk and Concert. She is a true community hero for the people of Mount Druitt and her award is well deserved.

MID COAST REGION EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:20): State Emergency Service [SES] and Rural Fire Service [RFS] members from the mid Coast region have been working hard to help clean up Lismore after the area was devastated by flooding. Members from across the region have been assisting with incident management and community engagement. The RFS mid Coast region has provided 42 people, 10 tankers, a bulk water tanker and two command vehicles to assist in the clean-up efforts. RFS members and vehicles in my electorate from Pacific Palms, Tuncurry, Marlee and Mitchells Island joined members from Pindimar, Limeburners Creek, Booral, Port Macquarie, Lake Cathie, King Creek and Lake Innes to provide assistance in an area that was described as looking like a war zone. Due to the scale of the disaster, neither the SES nor the RFS are sure when their assistance will no longer be required in Lismore. I commend our SES and RFS members for travelling north to support the relief effort. I also commend the people of Lismore and surrounding areas who have shown incredible resilience throughout this devastating event.

DADS AND DAUGHTERS EXERCISING AND EMPOWERED PROGRAM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (13:21): Professor Phil Morgan is a great educator, lecturer and resident of Newcastle. Professor Morgan is the founder of the pioneering Dads and Daughters Exercising and Empowered [DADEE] program at the University of Newcastle. DADEE has recruited approximately 270 fathers and 350 daughters since its launch in January 2015. It was the first international study to target the father-daughter relationship as a key strategy to improve girls' self-esteem and physical activity. The program also received the national award for "Best study in physical activity and health promotion" at the 2015 ASICS Sports Medicine Australia Conference. Physical education and primary education students at the University of Newcastle can now be taught the philosophies and strategies of the program to become accredited DADEE facilitators as a part of their course. Professor Morgan is reshaping his discipline and is a credit to Newcastle.

PICTON HIGH SCHOOL ANZAC SCHOLARSHIP TRIP

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (13:22): I congratulate Picton High School on its recent success in securing a place for one student to take part in the exciting Anzac scholarship program this year. That student will be selected to represent Picton High School on a 12-day tour of the Western Front in Europe, travelling to significant Australian battlefields in Belgium and France. He or she will also take part in commemoration events in the town of Ypres in Belgium and pay their respects to the 38,000 Australian soldiers who lost their lives there 100 years ago. Picton High School has done a wonderful job in securing this position for one of its students. Out of 130 schools that entered the ballot for the scholarship, only 21 schools were selected to take part.

THE HILLS DAY CLUB

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (13:23): I pay tribute to an organisation that does so much for senior members of the Seven Hills community. The Hills Day Club is a place for seniors to socialise and find companionship through group activities, exercises and entertainment. I recently had the privilege of presenting club members Jackie Figueira, Vicky Muscat, Joyce Muscat, Felicity Graviana, and Doris Grech with a 2017 NSW Seniors Week Local Achievement Award. These awards celebrate the achievements of seniors and seniors groups like The Hills Day Club and present an opportunity for the community to say thank you for their enthusiasm and commitment to our community. The Hills Day Club was one of the few successful recipients of the Hills Achievement Awards in the Seven Hills electorate. I commend it for its generosity of spirit and meaningful engagement with seniors in our community. The Hills Day Club operates out of the community centre down the road from the Seven Hills Toongabbie RSL Club. I am sure that members will join me in encouraging all seniors in Seven Hills to get to the club on a Monday between 9.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. to join friendly faces for light entertainment and a hearty lunch.

BANKSTOWN CITY NETBALL ASSOCIATION

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:24): On Saturday morning I was delighted to attend the Bankstown City Netball Association 2017 season launch at Deverall Park, Condell Park. Hundreds of players, parents and volunteers from the 15 local clubs were in attendance to celebrate the start of the season, along with my colleague the Federal member for Blaxland, Jason Clare, and representatives from Bankstown Sports Club and Revesby Workers Club. Netball continues to be one of the most popular sporting choices in Bankstown, with the sport experiencing a resurgence in playing numbers this year. I thank the executive of the Bankstown City Netball Association for inviting to me to the season launch, including president Wayne Chesterton, vice president Lisa Trevithick, secretary Jessica Cherry, registrar Helen Lee, coaching coordinator Margaret Stone, umpire convenor Nicole Oram and representative liaison officer Virginia Riseham. I also thank Leah Lewis for coordinating the event. I wish all the players the best of luck for the 2017 season.

SOUTHERN BORDER REGION RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (13:25): At the end of last week I attended the opening of four Rural Fire Service [RFS] stations in the southern border region of the Albury electorate. Along with senior RFS officers and council representatives, we opened new facilities at Cookardinia, Redlands, Buraja and Daysdale. While it was a great occasion for the dedicated volunteers and their communities, it was even more memorable because 46 of those brave firefighters received medals or clasps for long service totalling 1,764 years. I congratulate all the RFS medal recipients, and particularly recognise those with more than 50 years of service.

The impressive list of longest-serving members included James "Fred" Kingston from the Buraja brigade for 64 years of service; Rosemary Hulme of the Cookardinia brigade for 65 years of service, along with her colleagues John Ross for 61 years of service and Graham Schultz for 62 years of service; Donald Rhodes of the Daysdale brigade for 67 years of service; and Russell Black from Redlands brigade for 54 years of service. I congratulate all recipients. Their dedication, hard work and service to the community is commendable, and we salute them.

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE YOUNG VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR ALEX SLADE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:26): I recognise young Port Stephens man Alex Slade, who was this morning awarded the NSW Rural Fire Service Young Volunteer of the Year Award in the 12 to 15 years category at the 2017 Young People in Emergency Services Awards. It was wonderful to meet Alex, his mum and dad, Sue and Andrew, and his sister, Aimee. They are all volunteers with the Williamstown-Salt Ash Rural Fire Service [RFS]. The Williamstown-Salt Ash Rural Fire Service covers the largest area of any RFS in the lower Hunter region.

Members of Alex's brigade are the first responders to motor vehicle accidents along the busy Nelson Bay Road and provide a vital line of defence during our often busy bushfire season. There is a strong link among all local RFS brigades, with everyone doing a champion job on behalf of our community. I congratulate and thank Alex and his family for their commitment to protecting our community alongside Brigade Captain David Thomas. I was so pleased to see Alex recognised today because our young RFS volunteers are the firefighters of the future.

LOCAL SPORT GRANT PROGRAM

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (13:27): This year the Local Sport Grant Program will increase opportunities for regular and healthy participation in sport and recreation activities in New South Wales. Funding has been provided to support seven sporting groups in my electorate. East Roseville Bowling Club will receive \$4,730 to go towards the purchase of small bowls for children, disabled and small-handed players. Forest Districts

Australian Football Club will receive \$5,000 to help increase participation in Junior AFL. Killara and District Softball Club will receive \$2,950 to go towards new softball equipment.

Killara Bowling Club will receive \$1,000 to purchase small bowls for coaching. Killara Lawn Tennis Club will receive \$2,000 to go towards resurfacing six courts. Roseville Junior Rugby Union will receive \$5,000 for training equipment. Finally, St Ives Junior Cricket Club will receive \$17,000 to go towards a coach education program, an upgrade of the cricket pitch at Hassall Park and a girls in cricket promotion. I look forward to seeing the benefits of this sports program for my community of Davidson.

EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (13:28): With the official bushfire danger period ending last Friday, many local residents and emergency services personnel are glad to see an end to the 2016-17 bushfire danger period. Extreme conditions in the Hunter Valley over the summer months have kept our emergency service personnel busier than ever. A catastrophic fire danger rating was declared when the region experienced temperatures in excess of 45 degrees Celsius over several days. Every day our emergency service personnel from the Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue NSW and State Emergency Service go above and beyond to keep our community safe. In doing so they put their lives on the line to save people and property. Many of them are volunteers. As shown in the recent flood and cyclone events, our emergency workers have no real downtime. They are always on alert and working together for the safety of our community. I take this opportunity to thank them for the valuable service they provide and the incredible difference they make to our lives.

GUYRA VOLUNTEER RESCUE ASSOCIATION

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (13:29): Today I recognise the wonderful members of the Guyra Volunteer Rescue Association [VRA] for their outstanding commitment to the Guyra community since 1981. I acknowledge their extraordinary contribution to the Guyra Lamb and Potato Festival each year, through four nights of night watch and security, and the provision of first aid each day of the festival. That expertise was called on at this year's festival in January. They were the first on the scene after a dramatic storm threatened to cancel the festival. The VRA is made up of a wonderful group of volunteer men and women dedicated to serving their community, often during the most difficult conditions, including dealing with motor vehicle accidents along the New England Highway. Finally, I wholeheartedly thank the current and experienced long-serving president Arthur Atkins, secretary Caroline Atkins, treasurer Ann Thrift and their equally dedicated team.

CENTRAL COAST BICYCLE USERS GROUP

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (13:30): On Saturday 1 April I attended the launch of the Central Coast Bicycle Users Group [CCBUG] RidesAssist program. The CCBUG is a volunteer, not-for-profit organisation affiliated with Bicycle NSW. The RidesAssist program aims to provide people with vision impairment and other disabilities the opportunity to experience the joys of riding a bicycle in a safe and supported environment. CCBUG accredited riders "pilot" people using tandem bicycles to give vision-impaired riders and riders with other disabilities the opportunity to join in the social activity of bicycle riding. Program participants will be able to engage with other riders before, during and after the rides, and to enjoy a post-ride coffee, which seems to be a feature of bicycle rider groups on the Central Coast and elsewhere. I congratulate Wayne Mead, secretary of CCBUG, and all the members of the group on this initiative. I wish them all the very best.

ILUKA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (13:31): Today I offer my congratulations to students from Iluka Public School for their positive action against bullying. Jade and Jack Simon, along with Malachy Holmes, each received a highly commended for their posters in the Interrelate Say No to Bullying poster competition. Jazmyn Adey, who was one of ten regional finalists in New South Wales in the running for the major prize has recently been named the winner of the New England region. This is a huge achievement for the Iluka school. It is underpinned by their peer support and personal support lessons to ensure that the whole school community is aware and understands that bullying should not be tolerated.

CAMPBELLTOWN ARTS CENTRE

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (13:31): I ask the House to acknowledge the wonderful contribution that the Campbelltown Arts Centre provides to the city of Campbelltown. Recently the Campbelltown Arts Centre showcased the powerful pieces by Myuran Sukumaran, titled "Another Day in Paradise". As an indication of the importance of the arts in our society, the exhibition saw more than 20,000 people from across the country visit our city. When I attended the exhibition I was taken back by the sincere regret and contemplation Mr Sukumaran had managed to convey in his work. I extend my thanks to the dedicated staff at the Campbelltown

Arts Centre. I make special mention of director Michael Dagostino. I have also had the opportunity to join Mr Luke Foley and the Hon. Walt Secord at the Western Sydney Arts and Cultural Lobby to discuss the important role their commitment and drive has in our society. I ask the House to join me in congratulating and thanking the Campbelltown arts community for making our lives that little bit more colourful.

YOUTHFLIX

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (13:32): Today I recognise the wonderful work of Emma Spencer, a local clinical psychologist who is starting up her own free mental health program for teenagers in the Hornsby community called Youthflix. Youthflix is centred on the creation of a safe space for teenagers experiencing difficulties with mental health problems and making support networks from the friends they make who understand their struggles. The youth program involves watching a film that is relevant to a specific teen issue or mental health topic that acts as an icebreaker for the discussion of those themes and then later the discussion of how those issues resonate with oneself.

Emma launched this program after realising that there was a lack of youth groups that her own daughter could join to find support during a challenging time. As a clinical psychologist, Emma is well suited to the role as facilitator and her passion for helping others is amazing. Youthflix is such a brilliant idea that truly serves to support the youth in society and offer them the skills or knowledge they may need to implement changes in their lifestyles or to improve their own mental health. Showing the initiative and the sincere concern for the youth in the community who may feel disenfranchised with their own mental health related issues is exceptionally admirable. I thank Emma for her incredible work. I look forward to hearing more about Youthflix and its success.

EARLWOOD WANDERERS FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (13:33): Today I recognise the wonderful contribution of the Earlwood Wanderers Football Club, its executive and volunteers. It is a flourishing club, with more than 700 registered players. It has a great tradition of success in competing and winning club championships, and it has a proud history dating back to 1946. The Wanderers teach children of non-competitive ages to develop basic football skills; with competition ages ranging from under 10 through to 18 years. Players then move on to Open Men's, Super League, All Age and Over 35s, and All Age Women's. With soccer being a fast-growing sport for girls, I am proud that girls' soccer is strongly represented at Earlwood Wanderers. I also commend the Wanderers for its excellent new initiative—establishing a special needs program with 16 young players enrolled this season. Last Saturday Linda Burney, the Federal member for Barton, and I attended their first training session. The Earlwood Wanders do an amazing job for local families but its facilities are stretched. I call on the Canterbury-Bankstown Council to upgrade its facilities. I thank the Wanderers for all they do.

NOWRA MEN'S SHED TENTH ANNIVERSARY

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (13:34): Today I congratulate the Nowra Men's Shed on its tenth anniversary. On Friday 24 March 2017 I joined with the community at the Shoalhaven Ex-Servicemen's Sports Club to celebrate the club's birthday. This tremendous group is part of the Australian Men's Shed Association that focuses on men's health by offering a safe space to gather, share experiences and knowledge. The group was founded by the Nowra Uniting Church and UnitingCare Ageing. The group first began working in a single car garage and then rented a shed at Terara. In 2013, thanks to a New South Wales Government Community Building Partnership Program grant of \$60,000, plus an additional \$10,000 for the upgrade of amenities and services, the club moved into a newly erected shed at the Nowra showgrounds.

The group is very active in woodworking projects of all kinds and some metalwork projects. They create beautiful masterpieces and often lend their skills to community-based organisations. I particularly acknowledge long-time member Les Chittick and offer my condolences to his family. Sadly, Les passed away three days before the club's anniversary. I was honoured to be invited to attend. It was a very enjoyable day. Congratulations to the Nowra Men's Shed on its tenth anniversary.

PALM BEACH GOLF CLUB

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (13:35): Today I congratulate the 2017 division 4 metropolitan pennant winners from Palm Beach Golf Club. After being undefeated, the mighty Palmy Army went on to defeat Warringah Golf Club in the semi-final and, ultimately, the Asquith Golf Club in the final this past Sunday 2 April. It was a well fought final with 15-year-old, Jackson Upton going to a fifth play-off hole. This is the first time that a nine-hole golf club has qualified for division 3; it will play alongside the likes of Royal Sydney and Manly Golf clubs. I recognise the team captain Olli Hugill, team manager Mark Upton and the rest of the team, including Matt Gordon, Scott Ebsary, Tommy Clinton, Keiran Clough, Jackson Upton, Chris Seymour and Phil Rudd. Well done, boys, and good luck next year.

CRONULLA HIGH SCHOOL

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (13:36): I congratulate Cronulla High School students on their outstanding dedication to raising funds for the 2017 Sutherland Shire Relay for Life, which will take place in May. In 2016 Cronulla High's fundraising contributed around \$18,000 towards the Cancer Council's Relay for Life. On 8 April Cronulla High will be holding a car wash on school grounds from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., with all proceeds going to Relay for Life. I encourage anyone around the area to drop in, have their cars washed and help the school to raise money for a worthy cause. I look forward to seeing the Cronulla High students at Relay for Life and again congratulate them for their efforts in supporting the Cancer Council.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

The SPEAKER: A very warm welcome to Councillor Lilliane Brady, mayor of Cobar Shire Council, who is accompanied by General Manager Peter Vladkow, guests of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business, and member for Monaro. A very warm welcome to Superintendent Mark Williams and Superintendent Greg Wardle, who are regional managers of the NSW Rural Fire Service for the Shoalhaven and Illawarra districts respectively, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, Parliamentary Secretary for Education, and member for Kiama. I welcome Audrey Blunden, lecturer in international law at the University of New South Wales, and her students, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, Parliamentary Secretary for Education, and the member for Kiama.

I welcome also the students I met earlier—but I am not sure that they are all still here—from Elderslie High School, Elizabeth Macarthur High School, Mount Annan High School, St Benedict's Catholic College, Mount Annan Christian College, St Gregory's College, Magdalene Catholic High School and Camden High School. In particular, I welcome the following students—who I think are with us this afternoon—who attended the Camden Electorate High School Leadership Forum: Hannah Trethewy, Deni Hoxha, Tahlia Broadstock, Daniel Krakue, Dominique Willes and Kyle Taylor, , guests of the Government Whip and member for Camden. It was a delight to meet you all earlier.

I welcome also the Velocity Team from Engadine High School, who recently competed in Adelaide at the Australian National Finals of the F1 STEM Challenge and were named Best Managed Enterprise, achieving second place over call—wonderful—guests of the member for Heathcote. I welcome to the Chamber the members of the Lake Macquarie University of the Third Age, guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. I acknowledge and welcome Brendan Swann, president of the Southern Cross University Law Association, guest of the member for Ballina. I welcome also Professor Paul Wellings, Vice Chancellor of the University of Wollongong and Mr Canio Fierravanti, Director, Government Relations, University of Wollongong, and Mr Brian Dellit, guests of the member for Wollongong. Finally, I acknowledge the 53 public sector officers who are here today to participate in a seminar on the procedures of the Legislative Assembly. We welcome you all to the Chamber and hope that so far you have enjoyed the day.

*Bills***FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY BILL 2017****MOTOR ACCIDENT INJURIES BILL 2017****Assent**

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of messages from the Governor notifying His Excellency's assent to the abovementioned bills. [*During the giving of notices of motions*]

*Notices***PRESENTATION**

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

[*During the giving of notices of motions to be accorded priority*]

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will be removed from the Chamber if she continues to interject. Members will come to order.

*Question Time***GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY GIANTS AND WESTCONNEX SPONSORSHIP**

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:25): My question is directed to the Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex and Minister for Sport. In light of the WestConnex sponsorship of the Greater Western Sydney Giants AFL club that the Minister and club officials announced recently, could the Minister advise the House how much the Sydney Motorway Corporation is spending on this sponsorship?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (14:26): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. He has identified to the House one of the partnerships that the WestConnex organisation has across Western Sydney. WestConnex also funds a number of other community groups, including the Wests Tigers. I was recently at one of the Wests Tigers home games where they supported the multicultural round. The Minister for Multiculturalism was also there showing his support on that day. Sydney Motorway Corporation takes its responsibilities in supporting community groups very seriously.

We recognise that as an organisation, which is creating a degree of disruption in the community with a project that is going to deliver quite significantly for the community, Sydney Motorway Corporation has a responsibility to invest in community groups. The partnership between Sydney Motorway Corporation and the Greater Western Sydney [GWS] Giants was negotiated directly between the chief executive officers of both Sydney Motorway Corporation and the GWS Giants. The GWS Giants is a local football club and it is proudly Western Sydney. It is a natural partnership for an organisation like the Sydney Motorway Corporation and WestConnex to support clubs like the GWS; in the same way it supports Wests Tigers and a number of smaller community organisations. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to know that information he could ask the Sydney Motorway Corporation.

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

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (14:28): My question is addressed to the Premier. What has been the impact of this Government's housing policy?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:28): I thank the member for Riverstone for his question. It is hard to go to any part of his electorate without noticing the massive construction that is going on, especially in new homes. I know that housing affordability is an issue in his community, as it is for the communities of all members of this place. I take this opportunity to welcome the very many special guests in the gallery today. It is not often the gallery is so full. I hope they enjoy their time at Parliament House today. It is no surprise and no secret that in the year before Labor came to office in 1995, more than 57,000 homes were approved for construction. In the year prior to Labor coming to government 57,000 homes were approved for construction but, unfortunately, in Labor's last term in office building approvals had plunged to an average of fewer than 32,000 a year. Labor came to government when approvals were 57,000; in its last term they were only 32,000 a year. Members opposite do not like to hear this, but by the time Labor left office housing approvals had fallen by 45 per cent.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We know that the housing affordability challenges we have today in New South Wales did not happen overnight. They happened because for 16 long years those opposite underinvested in construction and infrastructure.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In relation to the motion moved by the member for Kogarah today, let us remind the House of Bob Carr's policy in saying that Sydney was full.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Labor did not want anybody else moving to Sydney. They said that Sydney was full. Labor did not invest in infrastructure, and it certainly did not invest in supporting housing approvals. Labor certainly did not support land releases such as those occurring in the electorate of Riverstone as well as many other parts of Sydney. This is a stark demonstration as to why those opposite can never be trusted to address housing affordability. Let us compare that to our record. We have worked tirelessly since the day we came to government to address housing approvals and housing affordability. I am pleased to say that on Monday, just a couple of days ago, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that there had been more than

75,000 housing building approvals in New South Wales in the last 12 months. That is almost 140 per cent higher than what we inherited when we came to government.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I understand this is the highest rate in New South Wales' history. Not only are approvals higher but also importantly construction is higher. The latest figures show that more than 53,000 new homes were completed in New South Wales in the last year. That is a 90 per cent rise from the average in Labor's last term in office—almost double. I know that the member for Maroubra sometimes gets confused with numbers. He was confused on radio when he said that home completions were 30,000 when in fact they were 54,000—almost double what he said. Unfortunately, when Labor was last in power just 28,000 homes were completed. But, of course, he is not alone in getting confused when it comes to housing affordability. Who can go past the member for Keira when it comes to housing affordability?

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

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was not about the member for Keira; it was about Riverstone. Will the Premier answer the question?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier made an introductory remark early in her answer. There is no point of order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In case the member for Maitland does not realise, the member for Keira is the shadow Treasurer and is supposed to come up with Labor policy on housing affordability.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If the member for Maitland does not think that is relevant we have a big problem. [*Extension of time*]

Last year when I was the Treasurer we introduced the foreign investor surcharge. The member for Keira came out and said, "I don't believe for one second that it will make an impact on housing affordability." I agreed with him at the time because it will not; it is a revenue raiser. He said that last year. On the record he said he does not support the policy that we introduced last year.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: But then I read an interesting tweet. Last June he said he does not support the policy and will not address housing affordability—a policy we introduced—but then in a tweet he said, "Housing affordability is a statewide issue that continues to get worse under ... Today I met with my colleague Jo Haylen—"

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Then he said, "Labor's foreign investor tax is a step in the right direction and we are determined to keep developing and implementing policies to help improve housing affordability." Last year he said that he did not support the policy. This year not only does he support the policy but he says also that it is his policy. The tweet is here.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: Madam Speaker, I need a lot more than 23 seconds. Can we give the Premier another two minutes, please? This is fantastic.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I do not agree with much that Mark Latham says but he did say that Ryan Park needs to go to economic school.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Keira that he is on three calls to order. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the third time. I call the member for Londonderry to order for the third time. They will cease their incessant interjecting.

GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY GIANTS FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:35): My question is directed to the Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport. Will the Minister assure the House that he has disclosed all gifts provided to him by the GWS Giants AFL club?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (14:36): I thank the member for his question. I am a very proud Minister for Sport in New South Wales. It should come as no surprise to members of this Parliament, members of the gallery and everyone watching that I do go to sporting events. For all those people watching who may not have caught up with it, I am also the Minister for Western Sydney so I do support sporting teams from Western Sydney. I am very proud of my support for those teams and the Greater Western Sydney Giants is one of those teams.

I am also a proud Panthers fan, even though, as I said in response to an earlier question, I was at the multicultural round for West Tigers, another Western Sydney based club that WestConnex is also supporting. What I can say in response to the member's question is that I do declare all of my gifts and hospitality as per the requirements set out for Ministers. I also provide a diary disclosure of all the meetings that are set out. I adhere to those at the time that they are required. They are published online and the member can look at them there too.

BUSINESS START-UP PROGRAMS

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (14:38): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier inform the House of any outcomes about start-up programs?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:38): I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his question. He is a member who understands the importance of small business and innovation in driving jobs for the economy. In the region of Upper Hunter that he represents, off the back of the mining boom we saw some of the greatest innovative changes and transformations. Businesses today that are the legacy of the mining boom are part of the new world and new opportunities through robotics, innovation and advanced manufacturing. They are creating jobs, exporting products and setting up Australia and this State to be in a successful position in innovation and technology.

Ideas start from a small place. The Government, through Jobs for NSW, has always supported innovation in this State. It supports businesses looking to start up, scale up and innovate. If you are not embracing technology and innovation you will not compete in a global market. The start-up program through Jobs for NSW comprises the minimum viable product and the building partnership grants. To date those grants have helped more than 107 new start-ups in New South Wales. Those ideas are the early stages of new entrepreneurial businesses of the future. They transform the economy and create jobs for the future.

As a government it is important to support the start-up world. This State represents 41 per cent of the start-up community across Australia. Sydney is the capital for start-ups. Investment by this Government reaches regional areas. The Boosting Business Innovation Program provides \$12 million for university sector research and data to partner with entrepreneurs as part of the start-up story. This morning, together with North Shore candidate Felicity Wilson, I visited a start-up called Ruppells Griffon. The Minister for Finance loves data and analytics. I encourage the Minister to visit Ana Ouriques at Ruppells Griffon. Ana will match the Minister's love of data and analytics.

Her business uses geospatial analytics technology to help the NSW Department of Education map future needs for schools. It brings together data from across government to map resources in order to match spend and investment with areas of growth across the State. That is an example of someone looking to technology. Ms Ouriques had a career in the technology sector prior to backing herself and starting the company. Presently she has four employees and is looking to employ another two. Government funding provides the seed money. It is not much.

Mr Chris Minns: How much?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: It was about \$14,000. It will ensure that Ruppells Griffon is part of the great start-up story. Rather than seeing the brain drain of graduates to other shores, Ms Ouriques has emigrated from Brazil to start a company in Australia and will shortly start a company in Brazil to tap into the South American market. Ana Ouriques is a great example of the innovators this State requires to remain the powerhouse for start-ups, research and innovation. It is not only the hipsters of Sydney but also people in the regions who are investing in ideas such as robotechnology, agriscience and digital innovation.

In Merimbula, in the electorate of Bega, a company called SlasherTeck is developing traffic drones and a robotic rubbish collection unit that could revolutionise maintenance of highways and roads for councils across Australia. The ideas are coming from the bush. It is not always about Sydney. The Government is committed to working with SlasherTeck. [*Extension of time*]

SlasherTeck is working with Transport for NSW. It is about Government; it is not just about the seed money for SlasherTeck of \$98,000. There are patents pending, but working with Transport for NSW creates an

opportunity for the product to be exported to the United States and Europe. It is about partnering and ensuring that new ideas are part of this economy. This is a nation of innovators and ideas and we should not hide from the opportunity to be a leader in this space and export ideas. We can match the world in advanced manufacturing. We have the expertise and by upskilling young people we will set up the workforce for the future. Presently there are more than 7,000 small businesses in this State, which create jobs that are important to the economy.

I will use this opportunity to touch on the natural disaster in the Northern Rivers region. Based on information from people on the ground, such as the Office of the Small Business Commissioner, it is clear that small businesses in Lismore, Murwillumbah and other areas will struggle. I note the Minister for Emergency Services has been advocating for individuals and communities. I assure the people of the Northern Rivers that they are in our thoughts. Within the next few days I will visit those areas and meet with small businesses to see what this Government can do to support those businesses and communities into the future.

GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY GIANTS FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (14:45): I direct a question to the Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex and Minister for Sport. Will the Minister inform the House that he has failed to disclose corporate hospitality provided to him by the Greater Western Sydney Giants AFL Club including—

The SPEAKER: Order! There is an imputation in the question and I rule it out of order. I refer the member for Londonderry to the standing orders. Members will come to order. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (14:46): I address my question to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer inform the House how the Government's strong economic management is helping to address Labor's decades of neglect in the area of housing affordability?

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: That question contains imputations.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cessnock will resume his seat. There is no point of order. The member for Cessnock should inform himself of the standing orders before taking a point of order.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: My point of order is relates to Standing Order 128, which clearly states that questions should not contain argument, inference, imputation, nor should they ask for an expression of opinion or confirmation of rumour or media report.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (14:47): I thank the member for his question. He is the best member on the Central Coast. New South Wales has never been under better financial management than with the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: In six short years the Government has accomplished three key goals: It has cleaned up Labor's economic mess, taken control of the budget, and made the New South Wales economy the engine room of the country. The Government has positioned New South Wales for future success. The Government has been successful because it plays the long game. The decisions that it makes today will impact the generations of tomorrow.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Maitland to order for the second time. This is my final warning.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It is because of that vision and foresight today that we are building the harbour bridges of the future. That is why around the world this Government has a leading reputation as a state-building Government, with the largest infrastructure program the world has ever seen. As the Premier said earlier, we are taking strong action on housing. This Government recognises the challenges posed by housing affordability. People can be assured that this Government is taking action: It has cut red tape, it is building infrastructure and housing approvals are at record levels.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: But let us not be under any false illusions. The challenges the people are facing today are a legacy of the New South Wales Labor Party. It did not build any houses. It did not build any infrastructure. It did not plan for the future. All it did was play the politics of the day. One day when history books are written about how great this administration has been, they will not be kind to those opposite.

Every single measure that this Government has taken to make New South Wales the premier State has been opposed by those opposite. They opposed every budget control. They opposed policies to improve housing. They opposed policies to make better use of our assets and they opposed policies that ensure we can build the infrastructure of the twenty-first century.

In fact, the Opposition has opposed every single thing that this Government has done to make this the leading the State in our nation. There is not one significant budget reform that those opposite have supported—that is because they put politics before people, populism before principle and protest before progress. They talk a lot but when Labor is in government it never delivers anything. Sadly, the great Labor days of Hawke and Keating have become a distant memory. The last time a Labor Treasurer delivered a Federal budget surplus was way back in the last century, in 1989.

[Interruption]

That is right: I was seven years old and I still remember the day. It has been a long drought since. That 30-year record of economic failure should disqualify those opposite from ever being in government again. We should make Labor members across this country personally liable for the debt and deficits they leave behind every time they leave government. Then they will feel firsthand the pain that people across this State and this country feel every time a Labor Government is in office.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Maitland from the Chamber under Standing Order 249 for the remainder of the day.

[The member for Maitland left the Chamber at 2.52 p.m. accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I have never seen a party so completely and utterly out of touch with the aspirations of working people than the New South Wales Labor Party.

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

[Extension of time]

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Maybe I have been a little harsh. Maybe it is not quite fair to say Labor did nothing in 16 years. Instead of governing for the people, we all know they had their snouts in the trough with Sir Lurchalot. The Leader of the Opposition grandstands on social media about knowing nothing about nothing. But we know that Ian Macdonald is a wholly owned subsidiary of the New South Wales Labor Party. He was a member of that party for 40 years. He was a member of Parliament for 20 years. He was a Minister in a Labor Government for 10 years. They praised him, protected him, promoted him, dined with him, entertained with him and we know they fraternised with him.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Port Stephens will come to order. This is her final warning.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. I am not sure what Ian Macdonald has to do with housing affordability.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Ian Macdonald was their godfather and their Messiah who nurtured every Labor member in this House. There is a little of Macca alive in every single one of them. I warn the member for Prospect that they are coming after him. The reactionary Labor Party is always on the wrong side of history.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about housing affordability and the Minister is straying way beyond it.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: They would rather play the politics of today than address the problems of tomorrow. There is only party that can answer housing affordability in this place and it is the Liberal-Nationals Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Canterbury from the Chamber under Standing Order 249 for three hours.

[The member for Canterbury left the Chamber at 2.56 p.m. accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. If Ministers incite Opposition members they will get what they deserve—that is, noise and interjection while they are trying to give their answers.

GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY GIANTS FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (14:56): Madam Speaker, I have taken your advice and redrafted my question. I direct my question to the Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport. Has the Minister disclosed all corporate hospitality provided to him by the Greater Western Sydney Giants Australian Football League Club, including, but not limited to, all corporate box hospitality at the Spotless Stadium and the Melbourne Cricket Ground?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (14:56): I am glad Madam Speaker helped the member for Londonderry with her question. As I said earlier, I am the Minister for Sport and as such I attend sporting events. The Greater Western Sydney Giants and WestConnex have partnered together to promote both the Giants and WestConnex across Western Sydney. It is worth noting a couple of things that the WestConnex partnership supports. It supports the Giants Care Program, including a 12-week men's health initiative where they work with 30 members of the Giants who live across Western Sydney to tackle type 2 diabetes. It is about finding people who can take their personal experience and demonstrate leadership in their community about how they can change type 2 diabetes, which most of us know is having a big impact across Western Sydney.

I have already mentioned the work of WestConnex in relation to the Tigers. I will talk about some of the other programs that the Giants and WestConnex support. We support the Ready, Set, Go program of The Shepherd Centre, which is about supporting parents and children in schools, particularly those who suffer from deafness. We also support Breakfast Point Men's Shed. We are providing \$10,000 for the society to provide services to neglected and needy children.

Ms Prue Car: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The Minister is not being relevant to my question, which was about disclosure of corporate hospitality. The Minister has not had one iota of relevance in his answer.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. The Minister will return to the leave of the question.

Mr STUART AYRES: If we wish to talk about disclosures, the only disclosure that is required in this Chamber about WestConnex is whether the people on the other side support the M4 or M5. That is the only disclosure required here.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will cease arguing across the Chamber. What is the member's point of order?

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about disclosures, not about the M4-M5 Link. We would like to know about that as well but we want to know about disclosures, please.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the question.

Mr STUART AYRES: We are being asked questions about the disclosures of the GWS Giants based on the partnership between the GWS Giants and WestConnex. That is the inference being made here. Those opposite are trying to put a sporting club alongside property developers. For the people in the gallery, this is the tactic of members opposite. They throw mud on this side and leave us with an opportunity to explain the detail and they do not have to worry about anything. The only detail that needs to be explained by members opposite is how they will fix roads and traffic across Western Sydney. They have made no commitment to support the M4 or the duplication of the M5. Their policy position is to not support the M4-M5 Link.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: The Minister is flouting your ruling.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is endeavouring to remain relevant to the question he was asked.

Mr STUART AYRES: This is absolutely about WestConnex. That is what my portfolio is about. We have a disclosure regime that allows us to put everything on the public record. Anybody can look at it; it is all on public display. If members opposite have an accusation, they should make it. My accusation about them is that they do not support WestConnex or the M4-M5 Link. They want every person who drives along the M5 and M4 to hit another roadblock—the same one they put in place 25 years ago when they sold off the M5 and M4 corridors and did not build the M5 wide enough.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. This is about the Minister's personal disclosures regarding GWS.

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

Mr STUART AYRES: This is an Opposition without policies, without ideas. Its members do not have the trust of the public and they have come here to throw mud.

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (15:02): My question is addressed to the Attorney General. What steps has the New South Wales Government taken to secure the future for community legal centres in New South Wales, and are there any related matters?

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

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (15:02): I thank the member for Coogee for his question and in particular for his advocacy on behalf of the Kingsford Legal Centre. I also thank those in the gallery from the University of New South Wales for their great work in providing free legal services through their community legal centre for the people of south-eastern Sydney. I thank all members who have advocated on behalf of their local community legal centres [CLCs], even the member for Lake Macquarie as late as yesterday. Every year since 2011 the New South Wales Government has increased its core funding to community legal centres. But in 2017-18 community legal centres in New South Wales were facing Federal funding cuts of around \$3 million each year. As a result, a number of CLCs feared that they would have to reduce services, cut staff and perhaps even close their doors in one or two cases.

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

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I was delighted to announce today in Gosford, with Tracy Howe from the NSW Council of Social Services and Linda Tucker and Polly Porteous from Community Legal Centres NSW, that the New South Wales Government will step in to fill the breach and provide another \$6 million in funding to community legal centres over the next two years. That represents a 50 per cent increase in New South Wales Government funding for the sector, which is the largest increase in two decades. As we know, community legal centres provide free legal assistance for disadvantaged people in communities and some legal representation in courts and tribunals. In the last financial year these legal services were provided to around 55,000 disadvantaged people in New South Wales. Linda Tucker said today:

With this funding, some of the most disadvantaged people and communities in NSW will retain access to the kind of legal assistance that can be life changing. CLCs ensure everyday problems don't become major health, financial or justice issues.

As a government we recognise the important work of CLCs. That is why we are stepping in to fill the gap. To give members an idea of how CLCs touch the lives of disadvantaged people I will give a couple of examples of their work. I thank the member for Tweed, the member for Lismore and the Hon. Ben Franklin in the other place for advocating on behalf of the Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre. The social work section of Tweed Hospital regularly refers work to it. One such referral was a 38-year-old man with an intellectual disability who had lived in group housing for a long time. He was sold funeral insurance over the phone when he was 23 years old, as all of the residents of the home had been.

He wanted to cancel the insurance because his premiums were rising year after year, but the insurer said he was not allowed to. He had paid around \$4,000 in premiums since taking out the policy. The Northern Rivers CLC wrote to the insurer, cancelled the policy on behalf of the gentleman and demanded and obtained a full refund, saying that the insurer had failed to uphold its duty of utmost good faith. Had we not had that active CLC the gentleman would never have got his refund. He would have continued to pay premiums that did not represent good value for money and that he could not afford.

Another example is the Aboriginal Health-Justice Partnership between the Redfern Legal Centre and the Sydney Local Health District. Twice a week a Redfern Legal Centre solicitor provides legal assistance to patients at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and trains hospital staff in identifying legal issues. In the first six months 62 vulnerable patients have received legal assistance and 220 health staff have attended 12 training sessions. Almost 50 per cent of the patients who were seen were experiencing domestic violence. The second most common issue was child protection.

This partnership is directly assisting Aboriginal people who may not otherwise seek legal support. It is also training healthcare workers so they can provide patients with legal referrals at an early stage. We have stepped in to fill the gap because it is right thing to do in terms of fairness, equity and access to justice. It also makes good economic sense. The member for Coogee also helpfully asked me whether there are any related matters. There are indeed. Today's announcement was made outside Gosford Courthouse, where I am pleased to announce the Government is installing two new secure, glass-enclosed docks as part of improving security across busy regional courthouses. [*Extension of time*]

We have also appointed an extra Sheriff's Officer at Gosford, taking the total number there to 15, which is part of a \$5.2 million program to strengthen security at major New South Wales courthouses.

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

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Last month we announced we would increase the number of Central Coast magistrates from three to four, which will ensure speedier and more efficient justice across the Central Coast. Justice delayed is justice denied. We want to keep our regional courts, in particular, as efficient as possible. Last year we installed high-definition audiovisual links in all courtrooms in Gosford, which means the court can hear testimony from interstate and overseas witnesses as well as from defendants in custodial facilities.

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

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: On matters related to the announcement at Gosford, I was joined this morning by our sensational candidate for Gosford, Jilly Pilon. Unlike members opposite, who on Twitter announced their Gosford candidate as their candidate for Wollongong, Jilly Pilon is very clear on where she is running and why she is doing so. So if electors at Gosford want someone inside the Government, rather than fringe-party protesters like those opposite, who will deliver a \$340 million upgrade to Gosford Hospital—

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

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: —and who will deliver a \$200 million upgrade to Wyong Hospital, major road upgrades and improved access to justice and the court system across the Central Coast, then they can do no better than to vote for Jilly Pilon on Saturday.

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

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:09): I direct my question to the Premier. Given the Premier's comments that increasing housing supply is the best way to address housing affordability, and despite the responses by the Premier and the Treasurer earlier in question time today that we are seeing record housing supply, we are still seeing record-breaking house prices. At what point will that increase in supply result in stabilising or reducing house prices?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:10): I thank the member for Newtown for her question. The Treasurer has informed me that recently Treasury did some numbers which suggested that, because of the rate at which housing approvals and building constructions are being granted, the mean price of an average house in Sydney would have been \$50,000 higher were it not for our policies.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: Will the Premier table that research?

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Cessnock will resume his seat. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We would be pleased to make that information available but those opposite merely need to do the maths. Let us contrast the number of housing approvals granted by this Government with the number of housing approvals granted under the previous Labor Government. The member for Newtown's question was about housing affordability and supply, but housing supply construction needs to be done in concert with extra spending on infrastructure. Extra housing cannot be supplied unless the rail lines and other infrastructure is supported.

Not everybody can afford to live in the Inner West; some people choose to live in other parts of Greater Sydney. I remind the member for Newtown that not everybody has access to a rail line, a light rail network or a ferry. That is why we need WestConnex. So to ensure that people will live in south-west Sydney and in Greater Sydney we need to build not only the public transport of the future but also the road network of the future. I am very proud that in New South Wales our extra housing supply is not only in units in the central business district—as it is in Melbourne and Brisbane—but also at Bankstown, Blacktown and Penrith.

Dr Geoff Lee: And Parramatta.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: And also Parramatta. I believe the member for Newtown genuinely cares about housing affordability but any clinical analysis of a comparison of our record with that of those opposite will show that our record is much stronger.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: That is why I get very disappointed when The Greens chose to preference the Labor Party. That is fine, but if The Greens care about housing affordability they should perhaps consider putting the Liberals ahead of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in Gosford. I appreciate that the member for Newtown cares about this issue and that she also cares about her community, but it is the responsibility of this Government to address housing affordability across the entire State. This is an issue not only in the Greater Sydney metropolitan area but also in our regions, and that is why supply and construction are at record levels.

Not only do we have record levels of construction but also we have record job creation. Thousands and thousands of jobs are being created in the construction industry. Not only did those opposite not increase approvals but also they never built anything to support the extra housing. I urge the member for Newtown and her colleagues to think carefully when they are giving their preferences because only the Liberals and The Nationals can address housing affordability.

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

MANLY EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (15:15): My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. What is the Government doing to deliver quality education infrastructure in Manly whilst protecting the local environment?

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind members that those who are directed to leave the Chamber will be removed for the remainder of the day.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (15:16): Good afternoon, ladies, gentlemen, Professor Piccoli. I thank the member for Davidson for his question and commend him for his passionate support for the wonderful schools that form part of the electorate of Davidson, many of which are located in environmentally sensitive locations like the schools in Manly about which he has asked me to provide some details. I am proud to comment on this Government's record in the provision of school infrastructure. One of the great things that we have been able to do as a result of getting the budget back in balance, which has also been enabled by asset recycling, is to inject unprecedented amounts of capital into school redevelopment and maintenance.

Since coming to government, this has totalled more than \$4.9 billion. This has enabled us to provide funding for 32 rebuilds or relocations of existing schools and 67 major projects, which has allowed for expansion of other schools. This has a real impact upon our ability to provide better education for our young people throughout New South Wales. In real terms, this equals more than 1,500 extra classrooms accommodating an additional 29,000 students.

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

Mr ROB STOKES: We know that in the future we are going to have to redouble our efforts because of the huge growth that is being experienced in New South Wales, and is also projected for decades to come. Over the next couple of decades we are expecting enrolments in government and non-government schools in New South Wales to increase by about 200,000 young people, whom it will be our enormous privilege to accommodate and to educate. In the last State budget almost \$1 million in additional funding was committed for capital works in public schools, which will bring the total school capital spend to \$2.6 billion over the next four years.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Summer Hill will cease shouting across the Chamber.

Mr ROB STOKES: The member for Davidson asked me to comment specifically in relation to Manly, and I am pleased to do so. It is well known that Manly is a beautiful part of the world and over the coming years it is projected to receive more school-age children than ever before, with a 17 per cent growth in school-age children over the 15 years to 2031-32. More and more local families are choosing to enrol their children in our excellent local public schools. We are looking at a number of schools in the Manly electorate. There has been significant expenditure—about \$52.9 million—over the past five years on maintenance and redevelopment of excellent public schools in the Manly electorate.

Mr Brad Hazzard: What about my old school, Manly West?

Mr ROB STOKES: The Minister for Health refers to Manly West Public School, one of the schools that has seen significant investment to cater for significant growth. It was my privilege to attend that school with the Premier just the other day to open a redevelopment—effectively a rebuild of a large part of the school that saw an additional 18 new classrooms displacing many multiple demountables, as well as a new library facility based on new flexible learning principles because we know that great school design can incubate positive learning outcomes.

We know that many of our State's public schools form much of the great heritage architecture that many of our communities are proud of. We want to make sure that school architecture into the future provides those sorts of great architectural places that produce great learning outcomes for schools and inspire real pride in the community, as well as landscaping and opportunities for all types of new pedagogical approaches, which are necessary to ensure that our children are prepared for the jobs of the future. I am surprised that I have to speak over members of the Opposition when talking about the need for improved schools infrastructure. I would have thought this was something every member of this House would agree with, certainly in relation to Manly Vale Public School.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Port Stephens from the Chamber under Standing Order 249. If the member continues to interject she will not be permitted to return to the Chamber tomorrow.

[The member for Port Stephens left the Chamber at 3.20 p.m. accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

The SPEAKER: Order! Members who are not interested in education may leave the Chamber.

[Extension of time]

Mr ROB STOKES: One of the schools it is my privilege to be able to speak about—a great school that has been well led by principal Tina Lee—is Manly Vale Public School. This is a local school with a great history, particularly in environmental education. Well it might, because Manly Vale Public School is located on the urban bushland interface in a particularly sensitive location. It is a school that has experienced strong growth in the past few years and a school that many in the community are passionate about. It is important that we get the school's redevelopment right and strike the correct balance. I acknowledge the great advocacy provided by former principal David Tribe, who is a passionate environmentalist and who wants to make sure that the redevelopment of the school has as little impact as possible on the adjoining Manly Warringah War Memorial Park.

As part of that redevelopment—effectively, it is a brand-new school—there will be 40 additional classrooms, new library, four flexible learning areas, new communal hall, new canteen, new staff facilities, new games court and refurbishment of existing administration areas. We are redeveloping the school in a way that recognises the beautiful and sensitive environmental location of which it is part. As a result of these conversations, and through the intervention of the Minister for Lands and Forestry, we were able also to identify the need to better protect the surrounding bushland in a new State park, which will sit well with the environmental education focus of Manly Vale Public School. We will see a great new school developed for future generations of children.

GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY GIANTS AND WESTCONNEX SPONSORSHIP

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:23): I also pay homage to Professor Piccoli—it is good of him to join us. My question is directed to the Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport. What steps will the Minister take to comply with the New South Wales Ministerial Code of Conduct requirement that a Minister must not accept any gift or hospitality that could reasonably be expected to give rise to a conflict of interest in light of the WestConnex sponsorship of the Greater Western Sydney Giants Australian Football League club?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. The member for Strathfield has the right to ask a question. The question is in order.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (15:24): For the purpose of allowing us to proceed to the reordering of business and debate on the motion accorded priority, I inform the House that I will adhere to the Ministerial Code of Conduct.

Documents

PARLIAMENTARY ETHICS ADVISER

The SPEAKER: In accordance with clause 6 of the resolution of the House relating to the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser, I table a copy of correspondence from the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser enclosing advice provided to Mr Adrian Piccoli, MP, former Minister, dated 4 April 2017.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Chair

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 4 April 2017 Eleni Marie Petinos was elected Chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

The SPEAKER: I announce that the following petition signed by more than 10,000 persons was lodged for presentation:

Safe Schools Program

Petition requesting the implementation of the Safe Schools Program in New South Wales be stopped and that any future anti-bullying programs be run by the Department of Education, received from **Mr Damien Tudehope**.

The SPEAKER: I set down discussion on the petition as an order of the day for a future day.

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

Pet Shops

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

Powerhouse Museum Ultimo

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

Ferry Services

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

Elizabeth Bay Marina Ferry Services

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

Social Housing

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

Inner-city Social Housing

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

*Business of the House***NORTH COAST FLOODS****Reordering**

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (15:26): I move:

That the General Business Notice of Motion (General Notice) given by me this day [North Coast floods] have precedence on Thursday 6 April 2017.

This motion in recognising the role of volunteers and other emergency services personnel who served our community so valiantly in recent days on the North Coast deserves to be given precedence tomorrow. The Government has many responsibilities but none can be greater than doing everything reasonably possible to protect our community and keep it safe from natural disasters and to provide whatever assistance it can to people who have been affected by those disasters.

In recent days we have seen the effect of ex-tropical cyclone Debbie on our North Coast communities. It is hard to fathom, but up to 900 millimetres of rain fell on some parts of the North Coast. The predictions of 300 millimetres or 400 millimetres were scary enough, but having that volume of rain in the region meant that inevitably there would be vast devastation in the area and, sadly as it turned out, great risk to life. Major flooding was experienced across three river basins in New South Wales, including the Tweed, Richmond, Wilsons and Brunswick rivers.

As usual, the New South Wales State Emergency Service [SES] and other emergency services personnel were quick to respond. The SES received 10,185 phone calls in a seven-day period and has responded to 2,886 requests for assistance since the event began. Remarkably, there were 491 flood rescue activations. When

one knows what is involved in rescuing people from a flood, one can appreciate that even a single call is pretty dramatic, but 491 rescues underlines the extent of the drama, the calls upon those personnel and the heroism they displayed. Sadly, as we know, six people died as a direct result of the floods. Yesterday police recovered from the Tweed River the bodies of Stephanie King and two of her children, aged seven and 11. Their car veered off Dulguigan Road in Tumbulgum and into the river. It is believed the heroic efforts of Ms King enabled her eight-year-old daughter to survive.

We all offer our condolences to the families and friends of those who have lost their lives as a result of the North Coast floods. It is imperative that this House comes together tomorrow to debate this issue and to send a strong message of support to all the communities on the North Coast that we should stand together to recognise the service, heroism and generosity of all those who have done so much to protect our communities and to lend a helping hand in a time of distress.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Woyong) (15:29): This weekend there will be a very important by-election in the electorate of Gosford. The people of Gosford will be asked to make a decision about the Government's record in supplying local services and projects over the past six years. It is most telling that the man who is responsible for securing some of the Government's projects in the electorate, former Liberal member for Gosford Chris Holstein, is one of the loudest critics of this Government. Following the 2015 election, Mr Holstein resigned from the Liberal Party in disgust. When the Government failed to deliver on its promise to complete the Woy Woy underpass Mr Holstein—who is now chair of the Central Coast Taskforce—said that the Government needed to justify canning the project just days after Premier Mike Baird had declared the State had billions of dollars for infrastructure. Mr Holstein said:

I am seeking to remind the NSW Government that when you make a commitment you honour it and here is a fine example of a commitment that was made that is not going to be honoured.

One of the Government's biggest critics in the Gosford electorate is the ex-Liberal Party member for Gosford who has lost confidence in this Government. In Gosford during the past six years the Government has closed the Office of Fair Trading, Roads and Maritime Services, Woy Woy Motor Registry and the courthouse used by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This Saturday the Government is going to ask the people of Gosford for its support after it has taken away all those services.

It is telling that, following those closures, the Government quickly opened a kiosk and called it Services NSW. The only problem is that yesterday my father went to a Services NSW office to renew his licence and he was told, "Sorry, Mr Harris, you don't have an account. You have got to go to Gosford." That is the problem: There is a Services NSW office but it does not do anything. The former member for Gosford, Kathy Smith, tried to make the Government understand that many pensioners in Woy Woy and elsewhere on the peninsula can drive only five or eight kilometres because they have restricted licences. Guess how far away the Gosford office is? It is 15 kilometres away.

This Government is about tokenism. This is a Government that does not want to address people's needs; it just throws out little grants. The Labor Party came up with a whole plan—a future, a vision—for Gosford, but those opposite intend to stand before the voters of Gosford and tell them with a straight face who to vote for on the weekend. What an absolute joke. Unlike the Liberal candidate, only our candidate can vote in the by-election. The Liberal candidate does not even live in the electorate. [*Time expired.*]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): The question is that the notice of motion standing in the name of the member for Riverstone have precedence on Thursday 6 April 2017.

Motion agreed to.

Motions Accorded Priority

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Consideration

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (15:33): My motion should be accorded priority because there is a systemic problem of the Labor Party, the union movement and the Leader of the Opposition disregarding the law. In recent years, more than 10 Labor members of Parliament from New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia have been convicted of serious offences with jail penalties. The offences have included corruption, theft, misconduct in public office and serious sexual offences—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! The member for Blacktown will come to order.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: —and they have been committed by members of Parliament, including Eddie Obeid, Ian Macdonald, Milton Orkopoulos, Craig Thompson, Rex Jackson, Brian Burke, Keith Wright, Bill D'Arcy and Gordon Nuttall.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! I call the member for Bankstown to order for the third time.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Recent events have shown that there is now a contagion of support for illegal conduct by the union movement and its political arm, the Australian Labor Party [ALP], in New South Wales. Since 2003 the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union [CFMEU] has been fined a total of \$8.2 million for its breaches of the law. It has also breached court orders on more than 100 occasions. The union movement controls the selection of ALP members in this House. The union movement donated a total of more than \$2 million to the ALP at the New South Wales 2015 State election, and the CFMEU's share was about \$200,000. The Opposition leader and the new Australian Council of Trade Unions secretary, Sally McManus, are very close. Sally McManus was asked recently whether she believed in the rule of law, given the CFMEU's criminal history and connections to organised crime. In order to be in lock step with the CFMEU, she said:

I believe in the rule of law where the law is fair and the law is right. But when it's unjust, I don't think there is a problem with breaking it.

Malcolm Turnbull, Bill Shorten and Daniel Andrews all immediately denounced her comments. But the anarchy advocated by Sally McManus has been endorsed by her friend the New South Wales Leader of the Opposition, the member for Blue Mountains, the member for Port Stephens, the member for Prospect, and the Secretary of NSW Labor. The disrespect for the law contagion spread today when the leader of the NSW Teachers Federation was reported as saying that he supported illegal strikes. He said, "Civil disobedience is not our problem—our problem is civil obedience." We need to know whether the Leader of the Opposition supports our laws, including laws to keep the people and property of this State safe, or whether he says it is okay to break those laws. We need to know whether he will support people who obey the law or whether he will keep supporting unlawful unions and keep receiving their tainted money as ALP donations. These matters scream out for priority consideration.

ONE NATION PREFERENCE ARRANGEMENTS

Consideration

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (15:36): My motion is designed not to attack the Premier but to issue a plea to her once great party to do the right thing and put Pauline Hanson and her party last on its how-to-vote card. When will the Government realise that it is just dealing with a failed *Dancing With The Stars* contestant? The following are some of the things that Pauline Hanson has said. She has said that Australia is bringing in too many people from Africa and that a huge amount of them have AIDS. She has said that Asians are swamping Australia and that they form ghettos. She has said that Aborigines used to eat their young, and that Islam is a disease. Some commentary suggests that politicians are afraid to call this rhetoric racist. If that is not racist nothing is, and we should get the word "racist" out of the dictionary because it appears the term does not exist anymore.

I do not think the Premier is a racist; I believe she is an opportunist. The Premier sees this as part of the culture war—the Right versus the Left. It is not culture war; it is right versus wrong. Pauline Hanson is wrong when she says that Asians are forming ghettos, she is wrong when she says that Islam is a disease and she is wrong when she says that vaccinations lead to autism. It is incumbent on the Premier to stand up and condemn Pauline Hanson's commentary. We expect bigotry from Pauline Hanson but we expect leadership from the Premier of New South Wales. Yet what has the Premier given us in the way of leadership on this issue? She gave us Ray Williams as the Minister for Multiculturalism. During a period of unprecedented attacks on New South Wales ethnic communities, guess how many times Ray Williams has attacked Pauline Hanson?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! The member will refer to the Minister by his correct title.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Not once has the Minister for Multiculturalism attacked Pauline Hanson on social media, in Parliament or via media release in a time of unprecedented attack on ethnic communities in New South Wales. That is the level of commitment of this Government to ethnic communities in New South Wales. The Government has been derelict on this issue for the last two years, the Minister in particular. It is about time the Minister told the people of this State that he is comprehensively against this form of bigotry. Some Government members actually became involved in politics to fight this kind of bigoted ignorance but they are now signing up to it. In relation to section 18C and One Nation the Premier recently said:

I am proud that 1,500 people attended the Premier's Harmony dinner, which this Government established.

We had a dinner with some dim sims and falafel and racial harmony was accomplished! It takes more than that to stand up for ethnic communities. The Premier has been found wanting. She should do the decent thing and put One Nation last.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): The question is that the motion of the member for Ku-ring-gai be accorded priority.

The House divided.

Ayes45
Noes33
Majority..... 12

AYES

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Lee, Dr G
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Roberts, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Davies, Ms T
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

Barilaro, Mr J
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Fraser, Mr A
Grant, Mr T
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Pavey, Mrs M
Piccoli, Mr A
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

NOES

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McDermott, Dr H
Minns, Mr C
Robertson, Mr J
Warren, Mr G

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
Mehan, Mr D
Park, Mr R
Scully, Mr P
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Donato, Mr P
Greenwich, Mr A
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
Mihailuk, Ms T
Piper, Mr G
Smith, Ms T F
Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Anderson, Mr K
George, Mr T

Foley, Mr L
McKay, Ms J

Motion agreed to.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Priority

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (15:45): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Condemns the Leader of the Opposition for his deafening silence in response to statements by his former colleague and current Australian Council of Trade Unions Secretary Sally McManus endorsing illegal conduct including illegal industrial action.

- (2) Condemns the Leader of the Opposition for breaking his election commitment to disclose his diary every two months, including a complete failure to disclose it for seven months until called out by the Premier.
- 3) Condemns the Leader of the Opposition for saying nothing about his friend Ian Macdonald for years after he first held serious concerns about the former Minister's conduct.

What would a world look like if people only respected laws that they liked or thought were acceptable? Imagine what would happen if someone went to watch their favourite sporting team play a game and the competitors played only by the rules that they thought were fair? How would the umpires and referees adjudicate? Our complex society surely can only operate if we all follow the same rules made by Parliament and the courts. Otherwise, for example, people would be driving on different sides of the road. It would be impossible to predict the behaviour of others. It would be chaos. But a world without the rule of law is what the union movement and the Leader of the Opposition think should be the case in New South Wales.

I have already spoken to the House today about the ideas of rampant unlawfulness that are endemic to the union movement and the Australian Labor Party [ALP]. The Leader of the Opposition and the new Australian Council of Trade Unions [ACTU] Secretary Sally McManus are very close. They are both from the New South Wales Socialist Left faction of the ALP and spent seven years working together at the New South Wales branch of the Australian Services Union. The Leader of the Opposition publicly supported McManus for her new job. On 12 March 2017, McManus posted this on Facebook:

Today the front page of the ... Telegraph in Sydney exposed the shocking plans of unions. It alleged the Unions have the ALP and their leader Luke Foley in their pocket ... We have been exposed and have had to concede they are right.

It is no coincidence then that the Leader of the Opposition has not prior to today denounced Sally McManus' views on anarchy and disrespect for the law. I remind the House of what she said:

I believe in the rule of law where the law is fair and the law is right. But when it's unjust, I don't think there is a problem with breaking it.

The behaviour of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union [CFMEU] in breaching over 100 court orders and receiving \$8.2 million in fines since 2003 should be condemned by any person who claims to be fit to lead the Government of our State. The CFMEU has 47 current proceedings against it for breaking the law and not one of them involves protesting against a fatality on a work site. The CFMEU has been convicted of many offences unrelated to industrial protest, including offences involving violence in people's homes. The CFMEU is the successor organisation to the Builders Labourers Federation, which was deregistered for its links to organised crime.

Amazingly, the CFMEU has nearly \$90 million in assets and concerns persist about its links to organised crime, including outlaw motorcycle gangs. With this background, the Leader of the Opposition must abandon his mate, Sally McManus, and denounce this unlawful union. With these connections to the ALP, it should be no surprise that its culture of unlawful behaviour would breed an Ian Macdonald or an Eddie Obeid. It is very concerning that Ian Macdonald was the political father of the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition supported Ian Macdonald at his preselection meeting and said nothing about his concerns about Macdonald's probity. The whistle was blown by Labor Senator Doug Cameron who was also at the meeting. On 27 March 2013, Senator Cameron said this on ABC radio:

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?

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. And I have to say to you if then at that meeting people like myself, George Campbell, Anthony Albanese and Paul Bastian 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 it two years ago.

The other aspect of this motion is the election promise by the Opposition leader to disclose his diary every two months that he did not honour for seven months. The Opposition leader only disclosed it after being pushed by the Premier. It shows that the Opposition leader is not fit to lead this State. The motion condemning the Opposition leader should be upheld by the House. [*Time expired.*]

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (15:51): I have been known to get fired up in this House—it must be my Irish heritage. This is as underwhelming a motion as I have ever been involved with. I feel sorry for the member for Ku-ring-gai because he has been suckered. How the mighty have fallen. I was a junior backbencher too. It must irk senior counsel to sit with the riffraff and flotsam and jetsam waiting for his turn on the front bench. If the member for Ku-ring-gai cannot get a start in the C-grade outfit that this factional Premier has stitched up the member must be doing something wrong.

Someone in the Premier's office is trying to stitch up the member for Ku-ring-gai. I recall being a junior backbencher and becoming excited when the Premier's office called and asked if I could lead the motion accorded priority—previously an urgency motion. You run down to the Chamber all enthused but after you read the *Hansard* you ask, "What the hell was I doing?" And, "Why did I not send it back and say 'Give it to some other sucker'?" I predict that in a few years time when the member for Ku-ring-gai is on to the front bench with the F team he will look back and realise he was today's sucker. If the Premier was concerned about this she would be present in the Chamber. If the Government had any gumption there would be more than the three amigos on the other side of the Chamber looking like a bad episode of *The Muppets*. Years ago the member for Ku-ring-gai was paid \$3,000 or \$4,000 a day for appearing in court.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 76. The House is awaiting an august defence of the Leader of the Opposition. I ask you to call the member for Maroubra back to the leave of the motion. I know it is difficult for him because they cannot stand each other, but I ask the member to give it a go.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! I uphold the point of order and direct the member for Maroubra to return to the leave of the motion.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: One thing I am sure the member for Ku-ring-gai learnt at law school was not to be loose with the truth. The member for Ku-ring-gai says that the Leader of the Opposition has been silent with regard to Ms McManus' comments. Let me set the record straight. On 17 March in the *Daily Telegraph* Jason Tin reported Bill Shorten as stating:

I do not agree with her... if you think a law is unjust or unfair, then you change the law. We are very lucky to live in a country like Australia which has a democratic process. If you don't like the law, change the government and then change the law. That is the way to do business, not to break the law.

Jason Tin sought comment from the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition is reported as saying:

I agree with Bill. The best way to change the laws that you don't agree with is to change the Government at election time.

Jason Tin reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, "Mr Foley echoed Mr Shorten's remarks." I do not understand the member for Ku-ring-gai's comment of "deafening silence". Labor should move an amendment stating "condemns the Leader of the Opposition for his deafening silence, except for his comments in a national newspaper condemning Sally McManus for her comments".

Mr Alister Henskens: The best way to change the law is to change the Government—that is what he agreed with.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: The member for Ku-ring-gai should be interjecting. The member is turning red and has every right to turn a bright shade of red. He has been sucker punched by his own team. They are not content to leave him withering away on the backbench but have the member delivering embarrassing motions such as this. This is an embarrassing day for the member for Ku-ring-gai. It speaks volumes of a government confronted with a litany of problems such as hospitals, schools, TAFE, overcrowding in prisons, congestion on roads, debacles on major projects and housing affordability. Where is the vision? Where are the bold announcements? Where are the reforms? Where is the narrative of the Berejiklian Government? There is none. They send suckers into the Chamber to move motions such as this. It is a siren call to everyone in New South Wales that the Berejiklian Government has stalled and is waiting for the bus to arrive.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (15:56): This is an important motion. I support everything that the member for Ku-ring-gai has said. A fundamental privilege of being elected to Parliament is that we have an opportunity to represent the interests of the people of this great State. The electors of New South Wales have a right to expect those they elect to act with integrity. This includes the commensurate obligation of behaving in a way which demonstrates that they believe in the rule of law and the importance which they attach to the citizens of this State acting in accordance with that rule of law. In many respects this is the greatest test of character which is imposed on us all as a result of our election.

Character is everything in this place. It is on display in our belief system, which is evidenced by the issues we support and those where we remain silent. The motion brought today by the member for Ku-ring-gai calls into question the character of the Leader of the Opposition, a person who seeks to be identified as the alternative Premier of this State. Three issues have been identified in the motion: the failure to condemn the statements of the Secretary of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, Sally McManus, about the legitimacy of ignoring the rule of law; the failure of the Leader of the Opposition to stand by a commitment to act in a transparent manner in respect of those persons with whom he has dealings by ensuring that his diary is available in the same way as members of the Government are required to make their diaries available; and, finally, his failure to act in

a way in which an ordinary citizen would be expected to act in respect of the wrongdoing of his colleague Ian Macdonald.

These are questions that go to the heart of the character of the Leader of the Opposition. In this place we have the benefit of formulating the laws by which the citizens of the State are to conduct themselves for the orderly conduct of civil affairs in New South Wales. It is fundamental that members believe the laws, as passed by the Parliament, should be observed by members of the community. In failing to condemn the Secretary of the Australian Council of Trade Unions the Leader of the Opposition stands condemned as a man completely lacking in character. It is worth reminding the Leader of the Opposition of the truth contained within the maxim: The standard you walk past is the standard you accept.

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (15:59): I participate in this debate in opposition to the motion moved in what passes for parliamentary debate in the dog days of a declining Tory Government by the member for Ku-ring-gai and seconded by the member for the eighteenth century. I should note just how far the member for Ku-ring-gai has fallen. He was once important. He was a senior silk at the Sydney bar. He was Hartcher's silk at the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC]. He has been at ICAC more often than Eddie Obeid.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: The member is reflecting on another member and it is not relevant to the motion. I ask him to come back to the leave of the motion. He is a very good man.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! I uphold the point of order.

Mr PAUL LYNCH: If that is coming from you about me, I deny it. I note that the member for Epping condemns the Leader of the Opposition for not condemning Sally McManus. The member for Epping should check his speech because that is not what the motion says. The motion actually says, "Condemns the Leader of the Opposition for his deafening silence." He should put his hearing aid on. There was actually quite a loud noise coming from the *Daily Telegraph*. As the member for Ku-ring-gai and the member for Epping are lawyers they know they have to get their empirical facts right before they start launching into rhetoric. They got their basic facts wrong. There was no deafening silence; there were clearly comments made and that flies in the face of what the motion states. As for stating that the Leader of the Opposition did not do enough about Ian MacDonald, those of us in the party know that the Leader of the Opposition was obsessed about getting Ian MacDonald out of this Parliament House. He spent a great deal of time trying to remove the bloke.

Mr Damien Tudehope: How did Doug Cameron miss it then?

Mr PAUL LYNCH: Maybe he has got a thing with the *Daily Telegraph* like you do. I will go to a more objective source about the attitude of the Leader of the Opposition in relation to Macdonald. I will go to ICAC, Commissioner Ipp and the report prepared by the bloke that actually makes the decision about these things. I know the member for Epping has a thing about ICAC but the rest of us normally accept that they get the reports right. Commissioner Ipp said a number of things. He said that "Mr Foley gave evidence carefully and candidly". The commissioner regarded him as a reliable witness and accepted his evidence. He goes on to say that "Foley's evidence in relation to factional matters was supported substantially by Mr Cameron, and is accepted by the Commission."

The Leader of the Opposition testified on a number of things about shafting Macdonald and Commissioner Ipp accepted every one of them. The Leader of the Opposition then gave evidence against MacDonald. If members of the Government want to congratulate anyone for MacDonald hitting the deck, it is the Leader of the Opposition more than anyone else. I know that does not suit the speeches that are written in the Premier's office and handed to these poor blokes who cannot get on the front bench—they are on the backbench of a government that has the member for Hawkesbury and the member for Mulgoa on the front bench—but that does not change the reality of it.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:02): In reply: The House should note a couple of basic facts that have arisen today. Firstly, the Leader of the Opposition has not only not denounced Sally McManus' statements at any time but he did not come into this Chamber to vote against a motion condemning him for not doing so. The member for Maroubra said the Leader of the Opposition denounced Sally McManus but the Leader of the Opposition said, I agree with Shorten "the best way to change the law is to change the government." He did not say that Sally McManus was wrong to incite people to break the law. With the greatest respect, although they really do not deserve any, the member for Maroubra and the member for Liverpool have completely failed to understand that very fundamental and basic point.

The first paragraph of the motion that seeks to condemn the Leader of the Opposition for his deafening silence has not only been made out historically but has also been made out by his failure to come into this Chamber and vote against the motion, or to stand up and condemn what Sally McManus said. Sally McManus incited people to break the law. It is nothing short of a civil insurrection to encourage people to break the law. It is a complete

disgrace that the alternative Premier of this State would not defend the laws of this Parliament and the laws of the courts of this State in this Chamber.

The member for Liverpool, the man who thinks 18C is eighteenth century, is in the Chamber. He clearly cannot read his own notes. What was very telling in this debate is what the member for Epping said: The standard you walk past is the standard you accept. The fact that the Leader of the Opposition has not denounced the incitement to disobedience of the law by the ACTU Secretary, Sally McManus is a real problem and is particularly important because of the rivers of gold that flow from the unions to the Australian Labor Party. It is the \$2 million worth of donations during the last New South Wales State election. It is \$200,000 that was given by the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union [CFMEU]. It is the almost \$90 million in assets that the ALP wants the benefit of, which is held by the CFMEU. That is why the House ought to agree to this motion.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): The question is that the motion as moved by the member for Ku-ring-gai be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes44
Noes32
Majority.....12

AYES

Aplin, Mr G
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Davies, Ms T
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Fraser, Mr A
Grant, Mr T
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Pavey, Mrs M
Piccoli, Mr A
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Barilaro, Mr J
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Lee, Dr G
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Roberts, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

NOES

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Doyle, Ms T
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Scully, Mr P
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Finn, Ms J
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Park, Mr R
Smith, Ms T F
Zangari, Mr G

Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Donato, Mr P
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Robertson, Mr J
Warren, Mr G

PAIRS

Berejiklian, Ms G

Foley, Mr L

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (TRANSPORT ENTITIES) BILL 2017****Second Reading****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:11): The Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017 amends the Transport Administration Act to establish the Transport Asset Holding Entity [TAHE]. The bill also makes Sydney Trains and NSW Trains standalone entities instead of RailCorp subsidiaries. In the 2015-16 State budget the Government committed to the introduction of TAHE, a dedicated asset holding entity intended to manage the New South Wales portfolio of transport assets more commercially. TAHE will hold assets transferred from transport cluster agencies. It will finance and acquire future assets, manage and maintain the assets that are held and provide access to them on a commercial basis, which will enable public transport operators such as Sydney Trains and NSW Trains to operate in an appropriate way. The Government, under the leadership of Premier Gladys Berejiklian, is delivering more than \$40 billion worth of transport projects which will vastly improve New South Wales as a place to live, work and visit. That is a fantastic investment in the future of our State.

The member for Rockdale described this investment as "useless", which is indicative of Labor's lack of support for New South Wales commuters. The 2015-16 budget contained a commitment from the Government to TAHE. This bill delivers on that commitment. It also complies with the general finance statistics classifications determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which apply to all government agencies. The creation of TAHE as a dedicated transport asset manager in this legislation shows the Government understands that the people of New South Wales deserve the best infrastructure in the country, and it knows how to deliver it. Members opposite have tried to say that this bill is about privatisation. It is not. They have said things such as, "we can assume", "I suspect" and "connect the dots". They have also said, "I don't know but I suspect", "these are the fears of my union comrades" and "we don't really understand it, therefore we will oppose it".

This bill is not about privatisation. If an issue of privatisation comes up at some stage let us have that debate then. That is not the intention or motivation of this bill. Indeed, I am happy to say the Government is open to working with private sector organisations to deliver excellent outcomes and outstanding service delivery for the public. But that is not the motivation of this bill. The fearmongering, scaremongering and conjecture from members opposite is inappropriate in the context of this bill. In relation to finances, the bill complies with the rulings determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. It also provides greater benefits for the State by consolidating the transport asset base through the TAHE.

By doing that, the Government will ensure that all taxpayer assets are used efficiently and effectively while optimising existing commercial arrangements and identifying new opportunities that could unlock value and increase quality in the existing asset base to deliver great outcomes. That is what this is about. It is about using the transport asset base to deliver safe and reliable passenger services in an efficient way. Finally, I will address some of the quality and safety issues. During question time I was reading through some correspondence on behalf of the Premier. Mr Parkin of Westleigh, who is one of the many people very happy with our transport system, wrote:

I have travelled into Sydney on a couple of occasions recently and wish to compliment you and the team that run Transport NSW on the massive improvement on the train service.

The trains run frequently, are very clean, whisper quiet, the station staff are friendly, the stations are clean, there is no graffiti, the trains are modern and comfortable.

The Opal card works like a dream, and even the rail corridor between Hornsby and the City has been cleaned up.

Great work to all concerned and please stay in power we do not want to go back to the dark days of labor where the rail system was a disgrace.

With all the improvements it is no wonder you are facing a massive increase in commuter numbers as we all appreciate a great job well delivered.

That is legitimate, quality feedback from a member of the public. A range of other safety controls and measures are built into the system—including those put in place under the 2013 rail reforms—that likewise will ensure we have a quality and safe system. I commend the Minister for this bill and his great financial management. I urge members to support a sensible piece of legislation that should not be subject to the scaremongering and fearmongering that members opposite have attempted to bring to this debate.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (16:18): In reply: The establishment of the Transport Asset Holding Entity [TAHE] as a dedicated transport asset manager is an important step in our commitment to deliver the best transport infrastructure for the people of New

South Wales. In the 2015-16 budget this Government committed to the introduction of a TAHE to manage the State's portfolio of transport assets better and more commercially, and to help deliver the record \$40 billion of transport infrastructure projects currently underway. To deliver this record infrastructure program we need our back office working as efficiently as possible.

The bill will establish new arrangements for transport asset management in New South Wales that reflect both modern governance and financial practices. It adopts a staged approach to amending the Transport Administration Act for the establishment of TAHE. This staged approach is required to ensure that we get this right. The first stage of the reforms contained in schedule 1 to the bill formally constitutes Sydney Trains, NSW Trains and a new Residual Transport Corporation as standalone entities under the Act. Transport assets that will eventually be owned by TAHE will be transferred to RailCorp and the amendments in schedule 1 will give RailCorp additional functions in relation to these assets. In schedule 2 to the bill we find the major structural reform proposed by the Government. Schedule 2 will change the name and constitution of RailCorp so that it converts to a statutory state-owned corporation named Transport Assets Holding Entity.

The bill will introduce new arrangements for transport asset management that will benefit New South Wales by establishing the right structure to optimise the existing transport asset base, which will result in a more effective, efficient and commercial approach to the management of transport assets. TAHE will also allow transport operating entities to focus on their core functions of operating transport services and delivering improved customer service whilst delivering on capital and recurrent budget targets. I will now turn my attention to some of the issues raised in today's debate.

In opposing the bill, all those opposite have confirmed today is their brazen willingness to shamelessly incite fear, drum up hysteria and try to terrify the people of New South Wales based on unfounded claims that are simply not true. It highlights their economic ignorance and their addiction to opposing good reform. They cannot help themselves. Let me be absolutely clear—the introduction of TAHE has nothing to do with the privatisation of rail; it is about responsible financial management. It is about getting the most out of our assets and improving the transport system. Those opposite know nothing about these matters. TAHE will be a state-owned corporation. If those opposite are not aware of what that means, let me help them out—the clue is in the name. State-owned corporations are owned by the State. The Government has no plans to privatise rail in New South Wales and TAHE makes no difference to the Government's ability to do so.

Like all state-owned corporations, TAHE will be run within the confines of its operating licence. That licence will be developed by the Government. Like all state-owned corporations, TAHE will be responsible to its shareholders. Its shareholders will be the Treasurer and another Government Minister. The Secretary of the Department of Transport will sit on the board of TAHE. The bill will see the Government retain control and ownership over its rail network. The Opposition has suggested that this bill splits up operational responsibility for rail—that is completely false. TAHE will have no operational role in delivering rail services. Sydney Trains and NSW Trains, as operators, will retain complete responsibility for safety.

The Opposition has cynically exploited rail disasters at Glenbrook and Waterfall to make a cheap political point. The TAHE bill has been specifically designed to maintain the high safety standards currently in place across New South Wales and will, of course, remain consistent with national rail safety regulations. In fact, this bill explicitly states that safety remains the primary goal of both Sydney Trains and NSW Trains—the actual operators. To suggest that safety is not foremost in the Government's mind is ridiculous. There are numerous other ways in which passenger safety is protected under the proposed new framework.

The Transport Secretary will retain his or her direction powers over both Sydney Trains and NSW Trains, and TAHE will be required to comply with the terms of the operating licence issued by the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. That operating licence will set out, among other things, safety integrity and compliance with network and asset standard requirements issued by Transport for NSW. Finally, as for all state-owned corporations, the portfolio Minister will be able to issue binding directions to the board in the public interest. The Opposition is so confused about what is going on that one Opposition member brazenly suggested—sorry, bizarrely suggested that TAHE will run out of money in four years.

Mr Gareth Ward: Brazenly.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Brazenly, bizarrely, the lot. This followed another member attacking us for turning our rail assets into a commercial entity. Perhaps those opposite should have had a quick chat with each other before they came into the Chamber. They cannot even decide what they do not like about this bill. Those opposite have asserted that this is merely an accounting exercise because, to those opposite, managing assets more efficiently, eliminating waste and improving services is inconceivable. They have never done it, they do not know how to do it, and when time and again this Government delivers they refuse to believe it. It is no accounting trick to turn inefficient government practices into efficient ones; it is called good government, and we

are delivering. Of course there is a positive budget impact, and that is what the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] has confirmed. Those opposite have claimed this bill will not meet ABS requirements. That is simply untrue; it does. We have worked with the ABS every step of the way since 2012, and we will continue to do so.

As I said previously, nothing in this bill will change staff employment arrangements in Sydney Trains or NSW Trains. Nothing in this bill will change the framework for setting public transport fares, as this will remain to be determined by Transport for NSW. The bill will simply complete the separation between service and asset-owning entities that commenced in 2012 with the creation of Sydney Trains and NSW Trains as subsidiary corporations. Despite the lack of quality contributions from those opposite, I still thank them for their contributions to this debate. The bill is a sensible way of unlocking the vast potential of transport assets owned by a multitude of State agencies and is a vital step towards delivering the Government's future transport plan for the people of this great State. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

The House divided.

Ayes46
Noes34
Majority.....12

AYES

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Donato, Mr P
Fraser, Mr A
Grant, Mr T
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Pavey, Mrs M
Piccoli, Mr A
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Davies, Ms T
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Lee, Dr G
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Roberts, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

Barilaro, Mr J
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

NOES

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

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

Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Greenwich, Mr A
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Park, Mr R
Scully, Mr P
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.**TATTOO PARLOURS AMENDMENT BILL 2017****Second Reading****Debate resumed from 30 March 2017.**

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (16:32): Today I speak on behalf of the NSW Labor Opposition with regards to the Tattoo Parlours Amendment Bill 2017. We do not oppose this bill. The aim of this bill is to strengthen and streamline the Tattoo Parlours Act 2012 which was enacted to clamp down on outlaw motorcycle gang involvement in the tattoo industry and to prevent their use of tattoo parlours as a front for their criminal activities. In the lead-up to today, the Labor Opposition undertook consultation with industry stakeholders to determine the impact the principal Act has had on the industry and to gauge how the proposed amendments before us today would impact on legitimate business owners, operators and professional tattoo artists. We were surprised to learn that no industry consultation had been taken into consideration during the drafting of either the Tattoo Parlours Act 2012 or the proposed amendment bill before us today.

Several key issues were highlighted during the consultation process, including the onerous regulatory burdens placed upon small legitimate businesses which impede their ability to operate and do not take into consideration the nature of the industry itself or the way in which their businesses operate. I do not believe any member of this House would say we want to be soft on outlaw motorcycle gangs; however, the Government's reluctance to liaise, listen to and engage with the industry to come up with a sensible, industry-specific solution to an ongoing issue will only hurt the industry and small businesses in the long run. The industry is more than willing to work with the Government to come up with a working solution that suits everybody. The industry presently lacks the appropriate regulatory framework with the appropriate pathways for individuals to enter the industry with the correct checks and controls in place to weed out the criminal element altogether.

Presently, the lack of regulatory control has welcomed a number of amateur operators who are untrained in the industry and do not have the same professional standards and integrity that would be expected of a professional artist. Such operators exist because they were eligible to apply for a licence under the current legislation, which has no stringent checks and balances with regard to their competence or industry knowledge. I dare say it would be possible for many of these operators to be completely unaware of basic hygiene and cross-contamination standards, which can have an adverse impact on the health of the community. In the second reading speech the member for Tamworth, Mr Kevin Anderson, on behalf of the Minister for Police, the Hon. Troy Grant—who is in the Chamber today—noted that:

... the scheme has helped reduce biker involvement in the tattoo industry. However, there is still more work to be done.

The industry agrees with the member for Tamworth and would welcome an approach by Government which involved the industry as part of the solution, rather than leaving it in exile. I turn to the leave of the bill and note that schedule 1 section 13A sets out that licences may now be renewed and sets out the renewal criteria. Allowing renewals to take place will help streamline the process in a way as it removes some of the tedious red tape from the principal Act. Forcing licensees to lodge a whole new application each and every time their licence is set to expire does not make much sense. This is an amendment we can all agree upon. It is also worth noting that under this section, any licences which would be due to expire will remain current and active while the renewal determination is outstanding.

As part of the licence application and renewal processes an applicant must also provide information detailing their close associates, which will be set out under schedule 1 section 12 of the legislation. However, it is worth noting that this information does not need to be provided each and every time a licence renewal is lodged if there are no changes to declare concerning an applicant's close associates. Should there be any changes disclosed in a licensee's application regarding their associates or the licensed premises where they carry out their body art, the application must be referred to the Commissioner of Police. Section 17 sets out that a licence remains in force for a period of three years unless it is sooner suspended or cancelled. The suspension of a licence does not affect the duration of the licence.

New section 22 of the bill sets out that a licence holder must provide within 14 days in writing any changes to their particulars, including close associates. Any updated information provided to the regulator must be accompanied by three forms of personal identification. This includes three forms of personal identification for known associates as well. Failing to provide the necessary information within the allocated time frame can result in the cancellation of a licence. A licence application or renewal may subsequently be refused based on the grounds that the applicant or any of their close associates is determined to not be a fit and proper person, or that it would be contrary to the public interest for the applicant to hold a licence or have their licence renewed. For the purposes of making a determination of an application the commissioner may consider information relating to spent

convictions, criminal charges—whether or not they were heard, proven, dismissed, withdrawn or discharged—and any other information relating to offences. Should a licensee be unhappy with a determination made by the commissioner to decline or cancel their licence, they may apply to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] for a review.

It is worth noting the following amendments prescribed in new sections 20 and 27. Any sensitive information that is included in police criminal intelligence or police criminal information will be better protected from public disclosure during an NCAT hearing. This will be achieved by allowing the commissioner to recall any such sensitive information before it is used by NCAT in a hearing where the information may be publicly available. This helps to protect the integrity and security of sensitive police information. Under the existing legislation, the NSW Police Force has been provided with powers to search businesses to ensure they are complying with their legislative requirements. These kinds of spot checks give police greater oversight of the industry and afford them the necessary powers to keep any outlaw motorcycle gangs on their toes should they intend to strongarm their way into the tattoo parlour industry.

New section 30C provides for authorised officers to lawfully enter a premises for the purpose of an examination and inquiry. New section 33A sets out a number of provisions relating to the requirements to furnish records or information or to answer questions. This new section clarifies that warnings are to be given to an individual who is guilty of not complying with the requirements set out in new section 19A or new section 30C. Further, new section 33A sets out that a person is not excused from cooperating on the grounds that the information provided would be self-incriminating. Should an individual have committed a penalty notice offence, an authorised officer may subsequently issue a penalty notice. This is done using the guidelines set out under the Fines Act 1996. Last, but not least, new section 39 provides for the various manners in which any documents may be served to individuals and/or to licensed premises that are authorised or required by the bill or the regulations.

Nobody wishes to see the tattoo industry return to its heyday, when it was a rough and tumble environment controlled primarily by organised criminal groups who used the industry as a front. However, it is worth noting that, since the inception of this legislation, the Government has done very little to engage and work with the industry to clean it up and provide the appropriate regulatory framework to allow the industry to flourish. Simply strongarming the industry into submission while hoping to find a few crooks along the way is not the best way to resolve what is considered to be an ingrained problem.

If the Government took the time to work with industry bodies it might be surprised to find that there is a plethora of solutions that reputable artists and businesses would be willing to discuss with the Government. The industry pointed out to us during our consultations that it is willing to work with the Government to devise lasting solutions that would appropriately address the real issues at hand while simultaneously stamping out organised crime involvement in the industry for good. As I said at the beginning of this contribution, the New South Wales Labor Opposition will not oppose the bill.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (16:42): I speak in support of the Tattoo Parlours Amendment Bill 2017, and I congratulate the Minister for Police on introducing the legislation. This bill amends and improves the tattoo parlour reforms that were introduced in 2012. Although the Government has achieved success through the reforms, there is more that can be done. It is yet another indication of the Liberal-Nationals Government's commitment to bringing to justice anyone who supports organised crime. This Government continues to deliver the necessary legislation and resources to police to protect the safety of the people of New South Wales.

Before the reforms were implemented biker gangs in New South Wales posed a much greater risk. According to media reports, in 2012 alone there were a total of 52 shootings between biker gangs and other organised crime groups. One avenue for their violence and illegal activities was tattoo parlours. At the time police were quoted in the media as saying that one in four tattoo parlours in New South Wales were biker affiliated, with 189 crimes recorded at tattoo parlours over the previous five years. The involvement of biker gangs in tattoo parlours resulted in them being at the centre of standover tactics, extortion and money laundering activities, as well as arson attacks, shootings and violent turf wars. Tattoo parlour owners were extorted for money; they were attacked and their premises were firebombed if they did not pay up. There were shootings, attacks and firebombings at tattoo parlours in Mount Druitt, West Ryde, Coogee, South Windsor and Hurstville, just to name a few.

The Tattoo Parlours Act 2012 helped bring this biker infiltration of the industry into line through licensing, regulation and strong police enforcement. Regulating the tattoo parlour industry, which other States are now emulating, has been a lengthy and tough business. I congratulate the co-regulators—NSW Fair Trading and the NSW Police Force—on their hard work and dedication in administering and enforcing the tattoo parlours regime. Many shady former operators have been refused licences, and new market entrants with no biker affiliations have been granted licences. The bill makes some fairly small but important amendments. We cannot

afford to relax in the fight against organised crime and outlaw motorcycle gangs. The amendments represent a small part of this Government's efforts to tackle outlaw motorcycle gangs.

The Government has modernised consorting laws and restricted premises legislation to break up criminal gangs and to close down clubhouses where illegal activity occurs. The Government has brought back firearms prohibition orders to keep criminals from owning guns. We have enhanced criminal group participation and drive-by shooting offences to deter and punish violent and organised crime. We have introduced serious crime prevention orders to restrict the activities of persons or businesses involved in serious crime. We have allowed senior police officers to issue temporary public safety orders to prevent people from attending places or events where they are expected to engage in violence or present a serious threat to public safety or security. We have improved our ability to confiscate the assets of serious criminals, and we have enhanced money-laundering offences in relation to dealing with the proceeds of crime.

Ensuring that the Tattoo Parlours Act remains up to the job is part of our unceasing efforts to disrupt and dismantle organised crime. This is another example of the Liberal-Nationals Government getting serious about cracking down on criminal behaviour, and I commend the Minister for Police for his outstanding and unrelenting pursuit of crooks in this State. Not a day goes by when he does not think about how we can make the streets safer for residents across New South Wales. As the Minister for Fair Trading, I appreciate the opportunity to work hand in glove with the Minister for Police to bring an end to the scourge of criminal bikie gangs in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:47): I contribute briefly to debate on the Tattoo Parlours Amendment Bill 2017. It is unacceptable to this House and to the community that outlaw motorcycle gangs continue to operate within tattoo parlours. The Government's 2012 reforms were important but, as the Minister for Police fairly conceded, five years later more work needs to be done. Outlaw motorcycle gangs are still infiltrating tattoo parlours to some extent. As the Minister said in his second reading speech, with the explosion in the number of people using the services of tattoo parlours and engaging with the industry, there is a community expectation that the Government will be vigilant in this area. I express my concern that NSW Fair Trading has any role to play in respect of an industry that historically has been infiltrated by organised crime, and that continues to be so infiltrated. I believe the industry should be regulated by the Commissioner of Police and that police intelligence needs to be applied in the determination of the process.

As a rule, I am the last to advocate anything other than the doctrine of the separation of powers. Certainly I maintain that view in respect of criminal proceedings. However, whatever the level of success, it is never enough when it comes to infiltration by outlaw motorcycle gangs. I made some observations in this House about deregulation of commercial licences. I thought deregulating commercial licences and leaving it strictly within the control of Fair Trading would enable criminal organisations to infiltrate the collection of outstanding debt. The Government and police must be always vigilant. The Minister for Police will know better than I that outlaw motorcycle gangs do not need a close association with a licence holder; they can continue to operate at a remote distance.

Outlaw motorcycle gangs engage in a number of legitimate businesses that law enforcement authorities, despite their best endeavours and resources, have great difficulty shutting down. However, in the industry covered by this bill, if the police know their location they can deal with them. The member for Fairfield made the commonsense suggestion that there should be consultation with legitimate operators within the industry with a view to seeking guidance on what regulations could be implemented to lock out these criminals. Any involvement by outlaw motorcycle gangs is anathema to the community. I do not advocate throwing the baby out with the bathwater, but after five years the gangs continue to operate—although to a reduced degree. They have demonstrated over decades—probably since the advent of the motorcycle—that they can keep one step ahead of law enforcement agencies.

I am not sure whether documents for renewal should be required on the basis that there will be no change. A criminal will have no difficulty saying, "There is going to be no change." I do not know how the matter will be brought to the attention of the police again unless the operation is under some level of surveillance. I do not want to ask that question specifically of the Minister—for obvious reasons. I do not mind improvement but in an industry like this, and subject to consulting legitimate operators within the industry, the regulatory approach could be far tougher than the Government has proposed.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:52): I speak in support of the Tattoo Parlours Amendment Bill 2017 and congratulate the Minister for Police and member for Dubbo, the Hon. Troy Grant, on bringing this legislation forward. The object of the bill is to amend the Tattoo Parlours Act 2012 as follows: first, to enable licences under the principal Act to be renewed rather than requiring an application to be made for a new licence when the licence expires; secondly, to provide that the privilege against self-incrimination does not excuse a person who is required to furnish records or information to police and other authorised officers or to

answer questions under the principal Act from furnishing that information or those records or from answering those questions; and, thirdly, to make a number of other amendments of a minor, administrative or consequential nature.

The Parliamentary Secretary, the member for Tamworth, in the second reading speech highlighted that the purpose of the bill is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the principal Act by reducing the involvement of organised crime in the tattoo parlour industry. In 2012 tattoo parlours reforms were introduced to address concerns about the influence that outlaw motorcycle gangs had over the tattoo industry in New South Wales. As explained at the time, removing bikies from the tattoo industry reduces the reasons for rival gangs to fight turf wars because the businesses will no longer be symbols of a gang's territory. When tattoo parlours are no longer controlled by bikies they are no longer so closely associated with serious acts of violence, such as shootings and firebombings.

Other risks associated with bikie influence within the tattoo industry include standover tactics, extortion and money laundering. While we have achieved success through the 2012 reforms, we cannot be complacent. I understand that the joint regulators of the tattoo industry, the NSW Police Force and NSW Fair Trading, have identified the need for these amendments. One change in particular strikes me as being essential. That is the amendment to ensure the Commissioner of Police may make an adverse security determination on the ground that a close associate of the applicant or licensee is not a fit and proper person. There is not much point barring outlaw motorcycle gang members from holding a licence to operate a tattoo parlour if they can use a cleanskin to do so on their behalf. If close associates of the operator or would-be operator fail the commissioner's probity tests it should be grounds for revoking or refusing a licence.

In this context, we should recall that there is always a right of appeal to the NSW Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal [NCAT]. A member of NCAT should, of course, be able to see material that the commissioner relied upon in making the adverse security determination. However, this may include highly sensitive information, including the names of people who have informed against bikie gangs. The consequences of such information reaching the outlaw motorcycle gang would be catastrophic, up to and including the murder of such informants. Accordingly, the bill strengthens the protections the Act already contains against disclosure of sensitive criminal intelligence.

We cannot afford to relax in the fight against organised crime and outlaw motorcycle gangs. These amendments represent a small part of this Government's efforts to tackle outlaw motorcycle gangs. Amongst other things, we have modernised consorting and restricted premises laws to break up criminal gangs and close clubhouses where illegal activity occurs, brought firearms prohibition orders back into action to keep criminals from owning guns, enhanced criminal group participation and drive-by shooting offences to deter and punish violent and organised criminals, introduced serious crime prevention orders to restrict the activities of persons or businesses that are involved in serious crime, allowed senior police officers to issue temporary public safety orders to prevent people from attending places or events where they are expected to engage in violence or present a serious threat to public safety or security, improved our ability to confiscate the assets of serious criminals, and enhanced money-laundering offences concerning dealing with the proceeds of crime.

Ensuring that the Tattoo Parlours Act remains up to the job is part of our unceasing efforts to disrupt and dismantle organised crime. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government will continue to support our police with the legislation and resources they need to break up criminal bikie gangs and to bring to justice anyone who supports organised crime. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:57): I speak in debate on the Tattoo Parlours Amendment Bill 2017, which amends the Tattoo Parlours Act 2012 and is designed to minimise the influence of outlaw motorcycle gangs in the tattoo industry. Schedule 1 [3] will now provide tattoo licensees with the opportunity to renew their licences instead of having to reapply every three years. This is responsible, as the existing regime contains an unnecessary administrative burden without any additional benefit to the regime. New section 22 makes it compulsory for a tattoo licence holder to notify the regulatory agency of any close associates they may have within 14 days. Such a measure will have two benefits. First, it offers the potential for licensees who are associated with people deemed not to be fit and proper, or where the association is against the public interest, to become known to the regulatory authority. Individuals or associates who are red flagged can then be identified and this may impact on their licence applications or renewals.

Secondly, fewer police resources will need to be spent identifying associates unless they change between applications. That was not the case under the previous legislation. Failure to disclose such associations can result in an application being declined or a licence being cancelled. That is a worthwhile punishment that addresses the problem of outlaw motorcycle gangs in this State. Furthermore, new section 30C allows authorised officers to search tattoo parlours, which will allow them to ensure that criminal activity is not taking place alongside the provision of legitimate tattooing services. Members in this place are united in our opposition to outlaw motorcycle

gangs. Their criminal activities undermine the safety of the people of New South Wales and confidence that the law is being upheld.

That brings me to another amendment in the bill. New section 33A prevents an individual from excusing themselves from cooperating with the regulatory regime on the grounds of self-incrimination. This means that should criminal activity occur, or affiliations with outlaw motorcycle gangs be found, the licensee must be accountable for their actions and assist any investigations that take place. This is a sensible amendment as it prevents outlaw motorcycle gang affiliates from hiding their activities from the authorities. The legislation is yet another example of the Liberal Government failing to consult with stakeholders on an issue. The trend has been illustrated in other area over the past 12 months as the Government assumes it knows better than the people at the forefront of industries such as the tattoo industry. If the Liberal Government had taken the time to consult with the industry, instead of dictating from above, it would be aware that the Australian Tattooists Guild is willing to work with it to develop a regulatory framework alongside the industry.

With the tattoo industry experiencing rapid growth, one would think working with the industry to create a regulatory regime that is both fair and has industry support would be a priority. It would appear not. This Government simply does not understand the importance of consultation when formulating policy. Notwithstanding the way this policy was formulated, any action geared towards minimising the influence of outlaw motorcycle gangs in the tattoo industry is a welcome contribution to the industry and to New South Wales as a whole. The Opposition will not oppose this bill.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:00): I support the Tattoo Parlours Amendment Bill 2017, which was second read in this place by the member for Tamworth on behalf of the Minister for Police, Troy Grant, who is in the Chamber. On the topic of policing, I take this opportunity to put on record my best wishes to the former police commissioner, Mr Andrew Scipione, APM, for his lifetime of service to policing and law enforcement across New South Wales. It is also appropriate to recognise and congratulate Mr Mick Fuller on his appointment as Commissioner of Police. Having been in the organisation at the same time as Mr Fuller, I am confident that he will make an outstanding contribution for the people of New South Wales. Commissioner Fuller and his office will continue to be directly involved in the operation of the Tattoo Parlours Act 2012 when the bill passes into law.

In terms of functionality, the bill takes what is already a hallmark of this Government's approach to stamping out organised crime and refines it to make it more effective in achieving its purpose. The object of the bill is to end the use of tattoo parlours by organised crime. For too long, what is otherwise a lawful business—tattoos and body art—has been overrun by organised crime syndicates that use the premises and the facilities of the business to carry out organised crime. It is not what a local community wants. Such crimes included the supply of drugs, weapons trading and money-laundering activities. Of course, not only tattoo parlours are involved. The tragedy is that law-abiding tattoo parlour licensees and tattoo enthusiasts are having their industry and interests brought down by those who seek to use parlours as a veil for crime. This no doubt affected the trade and livelihood of law-abiding tattoo parlours that, like most small businesses in New South Wales, are owned and run by hardworking, honest people.

The bill amends six key parts of the primary Act to ensure that the Act continues to achieve for our community and small business all that it set out to achieve when the Liberal-Nationals Government brought the legislation to this place only five years ago. The amendments in the bill cover close associates of the licensee, licence renewals, disclosure of criminal intelligence, the change of particulars, the grounds for cancellation of a licence, and, finally, miscellaneous provisions. I begin with the amendments that affect the close associates of the licensee. The bill uses the phrase "close associate" on a number of occasions. It refers to a person who holds or who will hold any relevant financial interest, is entitled to exercise power in the business or is able to exercise a significant influence over people who do. Any application to renew an operator licence is to be accompanied by a statement containing details of any of these close associates, and subsequently a determination is to be made as to whether the associate is deemed to be a fit and proper person to associate with the licensee of a tattoo parlour.

Applicants for new licences, those who have changed their close associates or those who have had changes to the premises where the licensee conducts their business will have their applications referred to the Commissioner of Police for investigation. The investigation may include considering spent convictions, criminal charges or offences. This may result in a notice in writing being served on the close associate and a request for further information or records. If the associate is not a fit and proper person to be a close associate of a tattoo parlour licensee an adverse security determination will be made. This process should be of concern only to those who have something to hide. Honest, law-abiding parlour licensees have nothing to fear and will likely only have their application investigated in the first instance and then not until the business changes location or the close associates of the licensee change for one reason or another.

These changes to the Act are about making it easier for the police to have direct communication with suspected criminals so they can build the foundations for a more comprehensive criminal investigation, should it be required. The next area of reform allows for licence renewals to occur instead of the current process of reapplying for new licences. This will be of great benefit to all parlour shop licensees and reduces the amount of red tape involved in operating a business. As I mentioned earlier, if no changes occur, there is no need for an investigation. This improves the efficiency of police resourcing. I am passionate about that issue as I have experienced the red tape that sometimes binds the hands of police officers who are attempting to do a difficult job on the front line. The Government has shown its commitment to the community, small business, the Police Force and due process.

If an adverse security determination is made against a licence applicant there is an opportunity to have the matter reviewed at the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] if the licence has not been approved or renewed 60 days after lodgement. This is an important feature of the amendments proposed in the bill. However, this Government understands where to draw the line and how to avoid hindering the work of the police. The amendments provide that the Commissioner of Police is not required to disclose the reasons for a determination or licence decision that is based on any criminal intelligence. Further, NCAT will not be able to disclose such information, except with the approval of the police commissioner. The New South Wales Government is not in the business of handing out vital information to organised crime.

Another measure contained in the bill is the new emphasis on notifying police of any changes relating to the operation of the parlour business, including but not limited to names and contact details. In addition, the secretary will require copies of three forms of personal identification for each individual identified in the notice as being a close associate. The bill will ensure that crime is kept out of what is an otherwise lawful industry. It is only right that the law is tough on organised crime in order to protect customers, law-abiding parlour licensees and the community at large. The amendments in the bill will ensure that the Act is even better equipped to achieve its goals. I hope that all members in this place will join me in thanking the member for Tamworth, who delivered the second reading speech on behalf of the Minister for Police, Troy Grant. I thank the Minister and his office for their hard work in preparing this amendment bill. It is an important bill that will keep organised crime out of tattoo parlours and out of our electorates. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (17:08): I support the Tattoo Parlours Amendment Bill 2017. Since the 2011 election, successive Liberal-Nationals governments have taken strong and effective action against organised crime in general, and outlaw bikie gangs in particular. In 2012 the O'Farrell-Stoner Government could not sit back and allow the tattoo industry to be owned or controlled by outlaw bikie gangs. At that time tattoo parlours were either owned and operated by bikies or were forced to pay protection money to their local gang for the privilege of doing business in "their territory". I remind the House of some examples of activities of outlaw motor cycle gangs [OMCGs] and their involvement with tattoo parlours.

My first example is the operation of the Rebels at a parlour at Miranda. In 2006 police were advised that a person who had opened a tattoo business in Miranda was assaulted in the toilets of a local restaurant. The victim was approached by a person who identified himself as a member of the Rebels OMCG and asked why he had not obtained permission from the Rebels to open the tattoo parlour. When the victim asked why he should obtain the Rebels' permission, the victim was punched in the face, breaking his nose. A friend of the victim approached the Rebels member a short time later and was told that the location of the tattoo parlour was in Rebels territory and that the owner should have approached the Rebels and paid them \$200 a week.

At Brighton-Le-Sands in relation to the Hells Angels and Comancheros, on 24 June 2008, when police responded to reports of loud noises at a tattoo business in Bay Street, Brighton-Le-Sands—known to be owned and operated by members of the Hells Angels OMCG—they found a number of bullet casings in the street. On 10 July 2008, police responded to a further report of shots fired in the area and recovered more projectiles. Witnesses reported a male on a motorcycle leaving the area shortly after the shooting. On 24 August 2008 police received information of 60 to 70 motorcycle riders congregating on Bay Street, driving continuously around streets, ignoring red lights and abusing people. When police attended they found that the riders were wearing Comanchero OMCG colours. On 25 August 2008, police observed the letters "ACCA 1% ACCA" painted on the window of the Bay Street tattoo parlour. These were painted in black and yellow—Comanchero colours—and stand for "Always Comanchero, Comanchero Always".

On 20 October 2008, the parlour was firebombed and sustained extensive damage; several nearby buildings had to be evacuated. A member of the Comanchero OMCG has since informed police that the Hells Angels and Comancheros had been fighting a turf war for some time, and Bay Street, Brighton-Le-Sands had been considered Comanchero territory. The Hells Angels had refused to seek permission from or pay the Comancheros for the right to operate the business on Comanchero turf. This turf war ultimately led to the murder at the Sydney Airport domestic terminal in March 2009.

My last example relates to Christopher Hudson, a case of tattoos as gang insignia. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported on 7 May 2009, that it had been informed that a Hells Angels OMCG insider said gang members used a blowtorch to burn a Hells Angels tattoo from the arm of now convicted murderer Christopher Wayne Hudson, as part of a ritual of punishment for bringing police attention to the club. Hudson had surrendered to police in June 2007 and was later jailed for 35 years for the murder of lawyer Brendan Keilar and shooting Dutch tourist Paul de Waard and his girlfriend Kaera Douglas. This incident shows how intrinsic tattoos are within biker culture and the importance OMCG members place on their club tattoos in particular. They are just three examples of the culture which existed when the O'Farrell-Stoner Government said it was necessary to act in relation to the manner in which tattoo parlours were being operated.

The Tattoo Parlours Act 2012 for the first time therefore began to bring this industry into line through licensing, regulation and strong enforcement by police. The bill we are currently considering proposes some relatively minor amendments to the current legislation. I understand that these changes were requested by the regulators, that is, the Department of Fair Trading, or the Department of Innovation, and the NSW Police Force. The bill makes amendments to section 22 of the Tattoo Parlours Act 2012 to make it a condition of tattooist licences issued under the Act that the holder must give written notice to the regulator of a change in particulars within 14 days of the change. This is already a condition of an operator licence and this bill will extend the requirement to tattooist licence holders.

The main reason for that, as outlined by the Parliamentary Secretary in the second reading speech, was that often OMCGs were hiding behind so-called cleanskins for the purpose of operating tattoo parlours. The requirement to provide the particulars of those who have an interest in the operation of a tattoo parlour means that those persons are brought within the ambit of police checks in the same way as the registered owner of the parlour. That is a licensing provision which applies in respect of other licence holders, including hotel licences, where it is a requirement that all persons who have an interest in the operation of the business be the subject of a check to ensure that they are fit and proper persons for the purposes of operating that business.

Another measure being introduced by this bill is the insertion of section 33A, which provides for the statutory abrogation of the privilege against self-incrimination in regard to the tattoo parlour regulatory scheme. This provision causes some controversy. Removing the right of silence in relation to material which might be incriminatory has generally been seen as a step which should be used very lightly indeed in respect of impacting on the rights of citizens. The impact of OMCGs on the operation of tattoo parlour businesses is such as to justify the inclusion of these provisions. It is unacceptable that an owner of a tattoo licence can hide behind a suggestion that the material may incriminate them with a view to avoiding disclosing those persons who have an interest in, or are obtaining a profit share from, the operation of the business.

While it is contentious and I am aware that it is a matter which occupies the mind of the Minister for Police in some detail, there are justifications for including it in the bill. It will ensure that these businesses, which have been at the forefront of criminal activity, do not hide behind purported defences which seek to hide the real operators of those businesses. This provision addresses the current situation where a person could refuse to answer questions or produce documents requested by enforcement officers if so doing was likely to incriminate them. This is an easy option as I have indicated.

The provision in the bill is similar to provisions that exist in a raft of other legislation providing for industry regulation and it is appropriate that the legislation that regulates an industry which historically has been infiltrated by organised crime is similarly strengthened. I continue to maintain that this provision ought to be used very sparingly and there is a need to ensure that the ambit of these provisions is looked at closely. This bill represents a small part of this Government's efforts to tackle outlaw motorcycle gangs. There is a raft of provisions which have been outlined by the member for Myall Lakes in his speech. The bill represents an efficient way of licensing tattoo parlours. It has been well drafted and the Minister's office and the department ought to be congratulated. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (17:18):
In reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate on the Tattoo Parlours Amendment Bill 2017. I thank the Opposition spokesman for the Police portfolio, the member for Fairfield, Mr Guy Zangari, and the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, and member for Hornsby who co-regulates this industry with me through the department of Fair Trading, and the NSW Police Force through the Security Licensing Enforcement Directorate. I also thank the member for Heffron, the member for Seven Hills, the member for Cabramatta—misguided as his contribution was—and the member for Epping.

I will not repeat the examples and case studies the member for Epping gave to justify this bill and the new approach the Government is taking to regulation of the tattoo industry. However, I can endorse his words. Whilst there has been significant improvement in the industry and absolute justification for this type of legislation and regulation in New South Wales, we are not there yet. It is time the regulation was strengthened and I am

confident this bill will go a long way towards achieving that. The bill builds on the regulation of tattoo parlours in New South Wales. It is not a big bill, but it is an important one. It aims to ensure that the Tattoo Parlours Act remains fit for purpose to stamp out criminal infiltration into the tattoo parlour industry. I thank Parliamentary Secretary Kevin Anderson for delivering the second reading speech for this bill on my behalf.

I start with the contribution from the member for Fairfield which was added to by the member for Heffron and the misguided member for Cabramatta. They observed that the Government was not prepared to consult on the drafting of this amendment bill. There is no peak body with which to have formal or specific consultation. However, this bill was drafted based on feedback and consultation with the good individuals and operators in the tattoo parlour industry. It is an acknowledged fact that many individuals operate lawfully and provide a service to the community. They believe this bill is in their own interests. They corresponded with members of the State Crime Command, the Security Licensing and Enforcement Directorate, NSW Fair Trading and the Department of Justice and have asked for this tightening of the regulation.

Whilst the usual broader consultation has not been done with peak industry bodies because there are none, there can be no more appropriate way to act than to respond directly to those good people in the industry who have asked us to strengthen the regulation. I reject absolutely the contribution that this bill is "strongarming" this industry. It is completely the opposite. This bill supports a regulated industry and provides a regime that will stamp out—not strongarm—those who are doing the wrong thing. As the good member for Epping correctly alluded to when discussing the abrogation component of the bill, this type of legislation should only ever be introduced very carefully, with the proper oversight and only in the appropriate conditions. There is no hiding from the fact that the tattoo parlour industry is high risk. It is convenient for opportune entry and penetration by organised crime and specifically outlaw motorcycle gangs. Those in the industry that are doing nothing wrong have nothing to worry about with regard to the strength of this legislation. I thank those good people for their correspondence to the agencies that has helped shape this legislation.

The Opposition spokesperson, the member for Fairfield, acknowledged the reduction of the regulatory burden. The member for Heffron said he believed it should be entirely regulated by the commissioner of the NSW Police Force. It may give him some comfort to know that the conduct that enables operators to participate in the industry through the licensing regime is regulated by the NSW Police Force. The joint regulation of the industry with Fair Trading means that valuable police time and resources will not be taken up by the administrative payments and paperwork component. That job rightly sits with Fair Trading. I thank the Minister with responsibility for Fair Trading for his strong support of our efforts to make the industry all it can be. It will prosper under a strong but fair regulatory regime. At the same time we will weed out those bad people who seek to use the industry for ill-gotten gains and crime.

The licence renewal process set out in the bill will be more streamlined for existing tattooists and operator licences under the Tattoo Parlours Act. The process is more streamlined because some of the criminal history checks and security determinations relating to close associates of operator licence holders do not need to be repeated if they were performed when the licence was issued. For example, the licence renewal process will not require the licence holder to resubmit for fingerprint checking. That is because the licence holder has already been through that process at licence application and they simply do not need to be fingerprinted again.

Further, the bill provides that applications for a renewal of a licence only need to be referred to the police commissioner for security determination if they include changes to the close associates of the licensee or changes to the licensed premises where the business is being conducted. This will eliminate—much to the pleasure of the good operators in the industry who are asking for these changes—a large amount of the time and resources it takes for police to perform probity checks for straightforward licence renewal applications. For the comfort of the member for Heffron, this Government and the NSW Police Force through the State Crime Command and the Security Licensing Enforcement Directorate are absolutely determined to utilise every legislative and regulatory tool at our disposal to stamp out organised crime and its impacts on our communities. This amendment bill goes a long way to us achieving that goal. I commend the bill to the House.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr TROY GRANT: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

*Private Members' Statements***PENALTY RATES**

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:27): I raise a number of important issues for thousands of low-paid workers in the Swansea electorate. Since Christmas 2015 many of these workers have contacted me with concerns about the effects of the 2015 amendments to the Retail Trading Act 2008. Additionally, the effects of the decision of the Liberal Government to support the Fair Work Commission and cut penalty rates for retail, hospitality and fast food workers in my electorate has also been a cause for concern. Retail, hospitality and food services employ one in five workers in the Swansea electorate. It seems lately that every time I turn on the television or pick up a newspaper it is these workers who are being kicked in the guts by Liberal governments.

The 2015 amendments to the Retail Trading Act 2008 allowed for the expansion of Boxing Day trade across New South Wales, directly affecting retail workers in the Hunter region and forcing those workers to forgo their day off on Boxing Day. As part of the amendments passing the Parliament we agreed to an independent review after their second year of operation to determine whether the policy objectives of the 2015 amending bill remained valid and whether its terms remained appropriate. The Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations, appointed Professor Percy Allan, AM, to undertake the review and a report on that review is to be tabled in Parliament no later than 1 September 2017.

I do not believe the policy objectives of the 2015 amendments remain relevant because I do not believe the amendments were a positive step for our retail workers. In 2015 I joined with the thousands of people forced to work on Boxing Day in labelling this legislation as a disgraceful attack on workers and families in the Swansea electorate. That is why I opposed the bill, and I continue to oppose this legislation. I also said that in my submission on behalf of retail workers in the Swansea electorate to the review. The Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2015 saw retail trading hours extended to include some of the few remaining trading-free days, including Boxing Day. While it sounded like a simple change at the time and the then Minister, and now Premier, assured the hundreds of thousands of retail workers affected by this bill that they would be able to elect whether or not to work, those of us in the real world knew that the idea of "electing" not to work over the holiday period was not founded in reality—and from what my constituents are telling me, the predictions of those on this side of the House appear to be ringing true.

Since December 2015 I have been contacted by many retail workers in the Swansea electorate who are concerned about feeling coerced, and even bullied, into working on Boxing Day. They have told me that despite wanting to spend the holiday period at home with their family and friends, they are being shamed, and even threatened, for refusing to work on Boxing Day. They feel anxious and upset about their decision to spend the holidays with their loved ones and, in my view, that is absolutely wrong. The war on workers in the Swansea electorate continues with the Federal Government's support for stripping penalty rates away from our retail, hospitality and food service workers. Question after question to the Government about its position on penalty rates for our hardworking retail and hospitality workers is being dodged by the Premier. Those on the other side support the big end of town, not the workers of Swansea or the workers of New South Wales.

I commend the Leader of the Opposition for fighting to protect the penalty rates of our retail, hospitality and food service workers. Labor's strong stance on penalty rates is clear and it should be clearly on the record—we 100 per cent oppose the Liberals cuts to penalty rates. Our reasons for opposing this attack on low paid workers are clear: implementation of this decision will reduce the take-home pay and living standards of some of Australia's most vulnerable workers; it will widen the gender pay gap; it will harm the economy, particularly in regional areas; and it flies in the face of the balance of evidence presented to the full bench of the Fair Work Commission. I call on the Government to stop the war on our retail, hospitality and fast food sector workers and to take a fair dinkum look at the real effects of what cuts to take-home pay and the erosion of workplace conditions mean to these workers, particularly those in my electorate.

HEATHCOTE ELECTORATE EVENTS

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (17:32): Tonight I inform the House of a great initiative of the Engadine Rural Fire Brigade. On Saturday 20 May 2017 they will be holding a "try to be a fireman" open day. Basically people just need to turn up and go through the paces of a Rural Fire Service volunteer, including quelling a fire and undertaking various exercises in a smoke tent, et cetera. They want to encourage more Rural Fire Service volunteers and to offer support, camaraderie and friendship. I commend this initiative to the House.

I recently had much pleasure in visiting the Helensburgh Tigers local rugby league club and presenting the club with \$22,000 from the Premier's discretionary fund for a new scoreboard. Even though the club is not located in the centre of the Wollongong area—it is in the northern Illawarra—a number of competitions are still held there. Recently the council upgraded the fence around the oval to stop local youth from doing donuts in the

middle of the rugby league field. The addition of the scoreboard will be a great boon for the club and, hopefully, more competitions will be held there in the future. Indeed, some of those who play at that club eventually become players in the major leagues.

I also commend Engadine High School and its parents and citizens association for raising \$180,000 for a new learning space at that school. Engadine High School has a unit for students with disabilities and this area has become one of their favourite spots. I officially opened this space, which will mainly be used as a concert area, on Harmony Day. A representative of the Dharwad people named the space Nanga Mai Ngoro, which means "dreaming place". I commend this new open learning space.

The Coalcliff Surf Life Saving Club recently received a sports grant with which it purchased a jetski and a couple of Saturdays ago I had the good fortune of witnessing that jetski being put through its paces for the first time. For many years the club had a borrowed jetski from Surf Life Saving New South Wales. The Coalcliff Surf Life Saving Club patrols a stretch of beach more than 2.5 kilometres in length and those familiar with that area know the surf in that area is very rough. A lot of fisherman also fall off the rocks. The new jetski is twice as fast at the old one, so they will now be able to get to those fishermen in double time. I congratulate president Leo Stevens and the Coalcliff Surf Life Saving Club on their advocacy, and I look forward to seeing them in the future.

CANCER COUNCIL UPPER HUNTER COMMUNITY OFFICE

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (17:37): I take this opportunity to inform the House about the wonderful work of the Cancer Council's Upper Hunter community office at Singleton. Situated in John Street, Singleton, the Upper Hunter community office is a local connection point for cancer-related information and services that provide support and hope for many Upper Hunter electorate residents. It provides cancer-related resources, support and information, as well as access information about local and regional cancer services. It is also a place to ask questions about cancer. Some of the local programs and activities include cancer support groups, initiatives for reducing cancer risk, providing information on all cancers, gatherings of cancer and advocacy networks, supportive care information sessions, and a contact point for local fundraising events such as Relay for Life, Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, Daffodil Day, and Pink Ribbon Day.

This community office receives no direct government funding; it relies on the ongoing and generous donations from the community to fund its health and support programs, research and advocacy. Volunteering is an integral part of the daily operations of the office and six office volunteers give up their time to help. I thank the following volunteers for their community contribution: Margie Mitchell, Sue McLennan, Katherine Sullivan, Nicole Black, Debbie Rae and Carol Hamilton. A big thankyou also to Glen Parsons, the Community Programs Coordinator, Clint Ekert, the Community Relations Coordinator, and Shayne Connell, the Regional Manager, at the Upper Hunter community office.

On 9 March 2017 the Upper Hunter community office launched the McNerney Room within the office as a place for residents to discuss and facilitate the many and varied activities organised to beat cancer. It is a place for anyone to go, have a cup of tea and talk to someone when in need. The McNerney family are dedicated long-term supporters of the Singleton Relay for Life and other local initiatives to help raise money and awareness of cancer. It is fitting that this room is dedicated to this wonderful family and the amazing work they have done throughout the community in their fight against cancer.

The Cancer Council's Upper Hunter community office has been operating for nearly five years. In that time it has contributed \$6 million in research grants and has recently signed off on transport options for patients who need to attend treatment. No-one from within the Upper Hunter electorate will have to pay transport costs associated with their treatment. On behalf of the Upper Hunter electorate I again thank and acknowledge Glen, Clint, Shayne and the volunteers of the Upper Hunter community office for their dedication and commitment in helping the residents in the community who may face a cancer diagnosis.

The Cancer Council office in Singleton has recently teamed up with corporate sponsorship and community transport providers. Funding is available to provide free transport from around the electorate for cancer patients. This is a huge benefit to not only the patients but also their friends and families who care for them. The carers, friends and families of cancer patients are often forgotten and their daily lives are hugely affected as well. The benefits of free transport to treatment for cancer patients cannot be underestimated, and they are benefits to not only the cancer sufferer but also their friends and family. This is a huge initiative.

I recently attended two Relay for Life events, one in Dungog and one in Merriwa. Both were very successful days. It is very heartening to see the local communities come out in full support of the Cancer Council and its initiatives. There is a campaign underway to engage 129 more nurses and 10 more specialist doctors. I fully support this campaign and thank our local Cancer Council.

PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (17:42): This week my federal colleague, Michael Sukkar, called on the Turnbull Government to formally recognise the Islamic State massacre of Christians in Iraq and Syria as genocide. I intend to do the same in this place. The British and US governments have both passed similar motions. In Australia we have seen recently a growing anti-Christian bias in public discourse. The Coopers Brewery was boycotted and bullied into apologising for a video made by the Bible Society in which marriage was debated and Coopers beer featured. The video gave both sides of the debate and was fair and balanced, yet that was not good enough for the intolerant left. Coopers had associated themselves with a Christian organisation, the Bible Society—Australia's oldest charity.

Then we saw IBM executive, Mark Allaby—whose employer refused to back him when he was targeted for his Christian faith—forced to resign from the board of the Lachlan Macquarie Institute. Macquarie University senior research associate Dr Steve Chavura found himself the target of a similar campaign. It has reached the point where the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission has agreed to keep the boards of the Lachlan Macquarie Institute and the Australian Christian Lobby off the public record because publication could endanger public safety. It is frightening to think that, in a country where Christmas and Easter are national holidays, it is now considered offensive to be a Christian in public life. Declaring your Christian faith publicly appears, ironically, to be the modern-day equivalent of blasphemy. This, of course, is nothing in comparison to the persecution of Christians in the Middle East and what they have been facing for a very long time. It is a problem we in the west are only just waking up to now. Thankfully awareness is increasing. As Jennifer Oriell recently reported in the *Australian*:

According to not-for-profit group Open Doors, last year was the worst on record for the persecution of Christians since it began reporting 25 years ago. Each month, an estimated 322 Christians are killed for their faith and 772 suffer serious violence. In addition, 214 Christian churches and properties are destroyed.

Of the 10 countries ranked worst for Christian persecution, nine are Muslim majority nations. The other is communist state, North Korea.

...

... Christians in Lebanon are too afraid to enter UNHCR refugee camps in the region. There are many emerging reports of Muslim attacks on Christian asylum seekers in transit to Europe and in refugee camps across the continent.

Much like the viral "Where are your Jews?" speech given by United Nations Watch recently to a UN Human Rights Council meeting reflecting on the decline of Jewish populations in Muslim-majority countries, the same question could be asked: Where are your Christians? Overall, the proportion of Middle Easterners who are Christian has dropped from 14 per cent in 1910 to 4 per cent today. In Iraq, where Christians are being exterminated by the Islamic State, their number has plunged from one million to just 275,000 in the last 12 years alone. Christians face being wiped out from the Middle East within 10 years as increasing numbers are killed by Muslim extremists or forced to flee persecution, according to the charity Catholic Charity Aid to the Church in Need.

In 2015 I took a delegation of Assyrian Christians to see the former Minister for Immigration, Philip Ruddock. He was a valuable source of encouragement and advice as we listened to them recount the challenges faced by their people in Syria and Iraq. There is a real and genuine concern that this ethno-religious minority will soon be wiped out. They not only face persecution in their homeland but they also need to deal with unsympathetic neighbouring countries, unsafe refugee camps and a general reluctance of the rest of the world to assist. Whether I speak to Assyrians, Coptics, Maronites or others the story is the same—they feel that they are second-class citizens in their homeland and the rest of the world does not want to know about it. I am proud to be a voice for these communities and will be calling on this House to give appropriate recognition to the genocide of Christians and other minorities currently taking place in Iraq and Syria. Sadly, in relation to Christian persecution the silence of many of our elected representatives is deafening.

ST MARY'S RAILWAY STATION COMMUTER CAR PARK

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (17:47): This evening I raise an issue in the lead-up to the upcoming State budget, an issue that I raised this time last year in the lead-up to the State budget in the previous year—the overdue need in my electorate of Londonderry for an urgent upgrade to the commuter car park at St Marys railway station. I say to the Treasurer and the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure via my contribution in the House that if I need to get up here every year in the lead-up to the State budget and argue on behalf of my community and the commuters that I represent that this should be in the State budget every year, I shall do that every year until we get the upgrade that we deserve.

It will not be a surprise to members, and it is certainly not a surprise to the communities that I am fortunate to represent, that we are in the heart of Sydney's growth in greater Western Sydney. We have the lion's share of

the growth in greater Western Sydney. But unfortunately this growth is simply not being matched with the public transport railway station infrastructure such as the commuter car park at St Marys. It gets worse every week. Every day my office has been inundated with complaints from commuters about how the car park is chockers at 7 o'clock in the morning. I represent a set of communities that are commuters; they either get in their car and sit on the M4 or they have to catch a train from stations like St Marys. As Western Sydney continues to grow we are not seeing investment by the Government in car parks like St Marys to enable people to simply catch the train. The upcoming Western Sydney Airport will put greater pressure on the growth of Western Sydney and on station infrastructure such as the St Marys commuter car park.

It is very timely for me to make this contribution this evening because the electorate of the Minister for Western Sydney and member for Penrith abuts my electorate and he gave a private member's statement yesterday about car parking in his electorate. Issues with car parking in Penrith also affect many of the commuters that I represent in this place. Very oddly, the Minister blamed Penrith City Council for the car parking issues. I am quite perplexed and cannot understand why that would be the case because it has been the Minister's Government that has failed to invest in commuter car parks at places like St Marys and surrounding areas, which has put pressure on stations like St Marys. Penrith City Council is not to blame.

Every day, this Government crows about housing approvals and an increase in housing supply, but it is not willing to match it with the station infrastructure that we so desperately need. The 500-space car park at St Marys must be upgraded urgently, which will require funding in the upcoming budget. People are going to St Marys, but by 7 a.m. or 7.30 a.m. they cannot park their cars. So to catch the train they are being forced to double-park and are being fined for doing so. Let us get this straight, this is what this Government says to communities like mine in Western Sydney: either they get on the M4 and are slugged with \$2,000 a year for a new toll on an existing road, which the Government said it would not impose but was brought to us by the Minister for Western Sydney himself, or they get fined for trying to park their car to catch the train.

As the new toll comes in and more and more people want to catch the train, it will put more pressure on the commuter car park at St Marys. It is not brain surgery, it just makes sense, and the only people who cannot see it are the Cabinet Ministers of this Government and the Premier. I note the great support of my friend Councillor Todd Carney from Penrith City Council, who moved a motion at the recent meeting of the council calling on council to advocate for the Government to resolve the situation at St Marys, and I support that motion 100 per cent. I hope that the Minister for Transport, the Treasurer and the Premier listen to our pleas on this issue. We need an upgraded St Marys commuter car park because more and more pressure is being put on Western Sydney and we simply cannot have a situation where people are being punished for living in the western suburbs of Sydney.

OXLEY ELECTORATE EVENTS

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (17:52): On behalf of the mid North Coast community, I acknowledge the tireless and selfless work of the North Eastern Zone of the United Hospital Auxiliaries of NSW [UHA], and report on its most recent event. On Wednesday 22 March, some 60 of these hospital volunteers from the Hastings, Macleay, Nambucca and Bellinger valleys in the Oxley electorate celebrated their extraordinary commitment to mid North Coast hospitals and community health centres in Bowraville. Attending dignitaries included the Nambucca Shire Mayor, Rhonda Hoban; the UHA State president, Linda Swales; Bowraville UHA branch president Betty Allan; and Jenny Zirkler from ValleyCAT children's charity. Also attending was the North Eastern Zone representative, Phillipa Passfield. In her last official duty as zone representative—a position she has held for eight years—Ms Passfield spoke in praise of the volunteers, whom she regarded as lifelong friends.

The Zone Day was held at the Bowraville Recreation Club and was most wonderfully hosted by the Bowraville branch of the UHA. These volunteers happily and graciously give their time and energy to support the Mid North Coast Local Health District's seven hospitals and all the patients. They go about this work quietly, methodically and without fuss, day in, day out. The cumulative hours spent providing assistance to patients and staff would be in the order of tens of thousands of hours. Without the volunteers of the United Hospital Auxiliaries, our hospitals would miss that element of human spirit: the kindness and compassion that can make so much difference when one is being treated or is recovering in hospital.

But they do more—for example, fundraising. I was advised on the day that in excess of \$200,000 has been raised for the purchase of equipment donated to local hospitals. Of course, we must also acknowledge that this volunteer force of men and women are in their prime for this work. Being of a certain age—60s, 70s and even 80s—endows them with that unique ability to go about their business in a temperate and objective fashion. They concern themselves with what is in front of them and the outcomes of their work.

I particularly congratulate the Bowraville UHA branch president, Betty Allan, and the secretary, Isabelle Hooper, who did a lot of work in organising the event and had been in contact with me since last December. It was a privilege to be able to attend the function with all members of the North Eastern Zone. I also highlight the work of the Bowraville UHA, who keep the cafeteria at Macksville Hospital operating on a daily basis for visitors to that hospital. It is an enormous amount of work, but they do it with a smile and they are very much appreciated within the community. I acknowledge their work and put on the record my appreciation for what they do. I join with my community in expressing our sincere compassion and concern for the region of the far North Coast through Lismore, Murwillumbah and the Tweed following the enormous impact that floods have had on those communities.

The downpour of 800 millimetres of rain has had a severe impact on those communities. This time floods have affected them; at other times it has affected my community of Kempsey—Kempsey is renowned for having huge floods. The Bellinger River also was on minor and major flood watches during last weekend. It is a river system that goes up and down very quickly. We escaped the worst of it this time, but too often we experience the worst. I acknowledge the work of my local State Emergency Service teams throughout the Oxley electorate. I know that they have worked side by side to help and support those in the far north. It has been a tragic event that has impacted very many lives, and six people have lost their lives. But that is life in our region. We respond to these impacts, but it does not make it less painful when they occur. Our thoughts are with all those communities impacted by the floods.

RIVERINA CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (17:57): The Riverina Conservatorium of Music [RCM] was established by the Riverina College of Advanced Education [RCAE], a predecessor of Charles Sturt University [CSU], in 1981. The RCM was intended to make a valuable contribution to the Riverina community and to be a vital resource for the ongoing work of the university in the region. While the RCM continues to enjoy a strong partnership with CSU, the university has progressively reduced support for the RCM since 2012. At the cessation of the current lease in 2020, CSU will cease to have any financial commitments to the RCM, although aspects of the current partnerships between the RCM and CSU are expected to continue into the future. It means that the RCM will need to find alternative accommodation because the partnership will cease to exist financially.

The RCM is a company limited by guarantee. It is a member of the Association of New South Wales Regional Conservatoriums, a group of 17 independent organisations that provide music resources and services to government, in partnership with the Department of Education. Core funding for the RCM comes from the New South Wales Government through the Department of Education and the Regional Conservatoriums Grants Program. This grant provides the essential administrative and educational support needed to deliver the programs at the RCM, especially with regard to music education in public schools.

The RCM is one of the largest New South Wales regional conservatoriums, recognised for excellence as a leader in distance teaching and the development of curriculum in music education. It is the only full-time professional arts organisation in the Riverina, and is the only provider of regular performances of classical music as well as a range of other music genres in the region. The RCM is supported by significant Australians as patrons. The patrons are the late Professor Peter Sculthorpe, AO, OBE, Australia's leading internationally known composer; Professor Dame Marie Bashir, AD, CVO, former Governor of New South Wales; and Mr Graham Abbott, leading Australian conductor, music educator and broadcaster on ABC Classic FM. The RCM teaches in excess of 1,200 students, with students located across the wider Riverina. The RCM catchment currently stretches from Tumut and Tumbarumba in the Snowy Mountains in the east through to Griffith, Deniliquin and Moama in the west.

The RCM employs more than 40 professional music education teachers as well as administrative and support staff. It operates an annual budget in excess of \$1.6 million and has net assets in excess of \$1 million. It is a large and successful growing regional enterprise. The current initiatives around curriculum and pedagogy at the RCM are highly regarded. The RCM has sought not only to reach distant and remote students but also to rebuild understanding of music education and pedagogy. The resultant new approaches to music education have enormous potential, transforming music education in the region and providing a role model in practice for the wider network. The RCM is located in Wagga Wagga. As I pointed out, the RCM will need to be rehoused at the expiration of the lease in 2020, but we cannot wait until then. The reason I make this private member's statement today is to point out that the Wagga Wagga region is growing. Currently the population is 63,428. The Australian Bureau of Statistics projects growth to more than 80,000 in the next 20 years.

Wagga Wagga is a progressive city that is economically sound and a stable environment in which to invest. There are 1.4 million visitors to the city each year, spending more than \$340 million annually. There are 5,500 businesses operating in the city. The unemployment rate is currently at 3.2 per cent, well below the national average of 5.6 per cent. With those facts and figures it makes sense for further investment to occur to support the

arts. Importantly, communities need investment in infrastructure, rail, transport jobs and manufacturing but in order for a city to grow it must also have a very strong cultural base. I call on the Government to support the conservatorium by ensuring investment in its cultural base. Wagga Wagga can then be a well-balanced, attractive place where people can come, live and enjoy all aspects of the city's strong arts culture base.

GREEN SQUARE HOUSING DENSITY

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (18:02): I take this opportunity to raise in the House my continuing grave concern about the population density in my electorate in the Green Square area which continues to grow enormously without the necessary accompanying infrastructure. I have previously raised my concerns in this House. This is the largest urban renewal project in Australia. If it is completed in the manner anticipated it will have the densest population per square kilometre in the nation. I have previously called for a moratorium on any further population density expansion until there is properly planned associated transport infrastructure for the tens of thousands of people expected to come to the area.

Already the streets within the Zetland-Waterloo area are gridlocked. People are queued at bus stops trying to access public transport. This problem is exacerbated by a planning policy of the city council with which I respectfully disagree. The city council believes that by not insisting on what I consider to be an appropriate level of off-street parking it will encourage people onto public transport. The problem with encouraging people onto public transport is there is insufficient public transport and, in any event, even with additional buses, those buses would not be able to move anyway.

The city council is doing its best to provide as much investment for recreation and open space as possible but it is inadequate. When that is coupled with State environmental planning policy [SEPP] No. 65, which mandates smaller room sizes, it is a recipe for disaster for future generations. I have had discussions with the former Minister for Planning about my concerns with SEPP 65. I reminded him, as I now remind the House and place on the record, that in the 1960s three-storey walk-ups were constructed throughout various working-class areas of Sydney—of course, not the wealthy Tory areas but the working-class areas of Sydney. Eastlakes in my electorate is full of such housing. They were initially garden suburbs, but it took a generation of 20 years before the quality of life of those residents changed and it became a low socio-economic area with considerable social problems.

These days SEPP 65 provides for unit sizes smaller than the three-storey walk-ups of the 1960s. Members need only imagine those three-storey walk-ups being 12- and 14-storeys high to see what we will be handing over to future generations. I fear that in our desperation to provide housing supply to the market to address affordable housing we will impose on future generations a quality of housing for which we will stand indicted, having repeated past failures. In the intervening period a moratorium is needed to address the gridlock. I thank the Government for its cooperation in the education area. When my electorate's schools were full the former Minister for Education responded to address a number of the problems. I am also concerned about the capacity of Prince of Wales Hospital and Royal Prince Alfred Hospital to cater to population density expansion.

However, my most significant concern relates to transport and the ability to move people in and out of the area. It is really at gridlock. There is no point in the Government saying that the WestConnex will fix the problem because it will not. Even if I take the Hon. Duncan Gay's most flowery and rosy picture, that will not alleviate the disaster taking place. There is really only one solution to transport people in that area with that level of density. It is the same solution to be found in major densely populated cities, and that is an underground metro system.

NICOLE FITZSIMONS FOUNDATION

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (18:07): Last weekend the Nicole Fitzsimons Foundation hosted the Colourful Ball fundraiser at the St George Motor Boat Club in Sans Souci. The event, which was compered by television and radio presenter Erin Molan, was a fitting tribute to Nicole and to the things she cherished most in life. The foundation was established in 2012 following the tragic death of 24-year-old Nicole Fitzsimons in a motorcycle accident in Koh Samui, Thailand. She was not wearing a helmet at the time. Nicole's family subsequently established the charity to honour Nicole's memory with the goal of educating young Australians on travel safety and also to assist talented and dedicated young performing artists and sportspeople who need financial assistance to aspire to their dreams. The foundation's website states:

Nicole would never ride a motorcycle in Australia, however, she relaxed her safety standards and adopted local safety standards which tragically cost her life and left her family eternally heartbroken. It is immensely important for young inexperienced travellers to understand the risks associated with their actions in foreign countries and not just to rely on the misguided belief that "it'll be fine". Nicole's sister, Kate, has worked tirelessly to spread this powerful message to more than 40,000 year 11 and 12 students across Australia. The importance of this message cannot be overstated, especially when one considers the alarming statistic that an Australian tourist dies in Thailand every three days, and in Bali every four days. What is more, three in four travellers under 30 admit to engaging in risky behaviour while travelling abroad, and one in seven travellers under 30 did not take out insurance on

their last trip overseas. Kate has researched and designed a travel safety presentation for students that emphasises the importance of travel insurance, road safety and respect of local culture, and highlights the risks associated with drinking.

She successfully secured funding from Jetstar and the Australian Government's Smartraveller initiative in order to deliver the program. Given that the number of people under 25 travelling overseas is higher now than it has ever been, the work of the Nicole Fitzsimons Foundation is critical in ensuring that young travellers are equipped with the information they need to make sensible decisions in relation to their safety. In addition to its focus on travel safety, the Nicole Fitzsimons Foundation provides grants to talented performers and sportspeople who need financial assistance to achieve their goals. The grants program is particularly geared toward assisting people aged 16 to 25 who may have overcome adversity, or who face circumstances that may be holding them back from achieving their potential.

Nicole was a ballerina who also had a great love for rugby league. She had been working as a personal assistant to the executive producer on *The Footy Show* before her untimely death. It was her dream job. The foundation's grants continue Nicole's legacy of helping others to realise their aspirations. Last month, five skiers with intellectual disabilities were assisted by the foundation to travel to, and compete in, the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Austria. Funds raised from the Colourful Ball event last weekend will also support the "Dance from your heart" initiative. The initiative is delivered by professional dance provider Groove Nation and is designed to foster creativity, confidence and growth through dance. The program is targeted at primary school students. I congratulate the Fitzsimons family—Julie, Vince, Matt and foundation director Kate—on everything they have achieved. Their dream to celebrate Nicole's legacy and to pay tribute to her passions and exuberant spirit is manifest in the enormous difference they have made to the lives of countless young people.

SOUTHERN EXPANSION FOOTBALL FRANCHISE

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (18:11): I congratulate the Southern Expansion football club bid on the successful event it held in Parliament House on Wednesday 29 March and on its continued efforts to establish new W-League and A-League sides to represent Sydney's south and the Illawarra. I thank all my parliamentary colleagues who attended the stakeholder briefing. In particular, I thank the member for Oatley, Mark Coure, who has worked with me from the start to bring bipartisan political engagement to this project. I thank all current and former political representatives from the stakeholder councils who made the trip to Parliament to hear about the bid, including those from Georges River, Bayside, Sutherland, Wollongong and Shellharbour.

The Southern Expansion bid is a truly exciting venture that has gained support from soccer greats such as veteran broadcaster Les Murray, former Socceroo Craig "Foz" Foster and Director of Football NSW, Chris Gardiner. With so many strong backers within the soccer community and the support provided by the bid's key financial backer, Jiayuan International Group, it is no wonder the bid has gained momentum. Many within professional football are treating it as a forgone conclusion that the Southern Expansion will enter the A-League competition by the end of next year. It is not just the A-League that the Southern Expansion have their eyes on; it is very encouraging to see that, from the establishment of their bid, they have stressed that their entry into the W-League is just as important as their entry into the A-League.

Women's participation in sport is important, and it is encouraging to see that the Southern Expansion are taking it seriously from the very beginning rather than seeking to tack on a women's franchise at the tail end of their bid, as has so often happened in the past with existing franchises. Additionally, Southern Expansion has proposed the first free soccer academy for skilled young female soccer players. In the past such academies catered predominately to boys. These free academies for both girls and boys are part of an ambitious plan by the Southern Expansion to integrate with the three existing soccer associations—St George, Sutherland and the South Coast—across the southern region to provide players with the training they will need to become future greats of the game.

These academies will be run in purpose-built facilities and on fields, which will involve a large capital outlay across the southern region and bring long-term investment that will be felt throughout our local economies. Seeking consensus within the sporting community is always difficult, so when you achieve it you know you are onto a good thing. That is why Southern Expansion sought the support of all three of the local football associations—St George, Sutherland and South Coast—prior to pushing their bid further. I am pleased to inform the House that all three associations have committed to support the Southern Expansion bid, and I am sure that all three associations will reap the benefits in the future.

The southern Sydney region and the Illawarra have been the home of many fantastic Australian soccer players, and it is only fitting that the region has the best facilities and clubs to keep building future legends of the game. As Chris Gardiner said, "Southern Expansion is the future of professional football, and will play a key role in bringing major infrastructure to our communities." With our diverse community and a strong representation from various European and Mediterranean countries, we are ideally placed to establish a new entrant to Australia's

premier national football competitions. Frankly, it is a shame that nobody has taken up this challenge previously. We are lucky to have some of the largest junior and amateur player pools in Australia, giving us the perfect base upon which to build a new football franchise. I am sure that the Football Federation of Australia will appreciate that when considering the Southern Expansion bid.

BEAR COTTAGE CHARITY CABARET

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:16): Tonight I highlight the outstanding work of a resident from Forestville in my electorate of Davidson. For more than six years John Clement has organised charity cabarets for Manly's Bear Cottage, which is the only children's hospice in New South Wales dedicated to caring for children with life-limiting or terminal conditions. The services are provided in a warm, homelike environment and include palliative care, temporary respite and bereavement support sensitive to the needs of individual families. John's involvement with Bear Cottage began after he organised highly successful fundraising concerts for Seaforth and Belrose bowling clubs and a friend asked him to do the same for Bear Cottage. In 2011, following a visit to the facility, John organised the first Bear Cottage Charity Cabaret. It was so successful that four events a year have been staged ever since. For the first time, the number of events will increase to six in 2017.

With an audience capacity of 200, the next cabaret on 13 May is already fully booked out, with a growing reserve list. Special mention should also be made of John's wife, Sue, who, in addition to her behind-the-scenes administrative skills, organises the catering—including two-course meals—for a small additional cost. The Bear Cottage cabarets place a special emphasis on providing an opportunity for young aspiring artists to perform in a public arena. John is concerned about the apparent diminishing number of venues for young artists, and so ensures that the cabarets provide a platform for young performers to develop their talents, confidence and possible future careers in the entertainment industry. For many of the young performers, a Bear Cottage cabaret provides the first opportunity to receive payment for their performance. John ensures that every performer is paid as an encouragement to pursue their passion to perform and develop their talent to the fullest.

Through John and Sue's links with Campbelltown's Macarthur Country Music Club, along with input from talent scouts within the broader music industry, the standard of entertainment is consistently high. A number of the young artists go on to perform on well-known television talent shows or may already be familiar to the audience through their television appearances. The success of the Bear Cottage charity cabarets is due in no small measure to John's extensive networking and his exceptional organising ability. He also comperes the cabarets. John's outstanding work was recognised in this year's Northern Beaches Australia Day Awards with the Bear Cottage Charity Cabaret being named the Community Event of the Year. It is worth noting that just last Sunday, Premier Gladys Berejiklian announced new government funding for Big Bear Cottage. The current Bear Cottage service extends only to children under 18 years of age while the new facility will provide support services for young people up to 30 years of age. The New South Wales Government will provide \$2 million in recurrent funding each year for Big Bear Cottage.

Public support through such events as the Bear Cottage charity cabarets provides vital additional resources to ensure that the high standard of service offered by Bear Cottage to children in need and their families is maintained. In 2016 more than \$11,000 was raised through the cabarets, setting a new record. With bookings for the 13 May concert sold out seven weeks in advance, the future of the cabarets and the valuable contribution they make to Bear Cottage appears sound. I congratulate all involved, particularly John Clement and his wife, Sue, who are constituents of mine, on their ongoing work in successfully organising these events in the community's interest.

JOHN HUNTER HOSPITAL PARK-AND-RIDE SHUTTLE BUS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (18:20): In September 2015 the very successful and well-used John Hunter Hospital park-and-ride shuttle bus service ceased to operate—another victim of this Government's cuts. In its place 700 new car park spaces were opened at the campus but all they did was bring an already congested road network to a standstill—4,000 more car movements every day on a single lane, in-and-out road network. Patients and visitors, some of whom have mobility issues, are forced to walk further to see doctors, their friends or family at the hospital. The free shuttle bus used to deliver them to the front door; it was a door-to-door service. Traffic jams are now a regular occurrence and the number of staff and visitors caught up in major traffic jams when exiting the hospital has trebled. Staff are stalled for from 20 minutes to up to an hour. This is unacceptable not just for visitors exiting the hospital but also for staff who work very long hours, only to face frustrating delays when simply trying to leave their workplace.

Need I remind the Government that these people have families, children to pick up from school, appointments to keep and social lives to enjoy? The only exit from the visitors car park is onto Kookaburra Drive. This single-lane road carries up to 500 cars exiting staff car park four, another 270 cars leaving car park five and then however many more that might be spilling out of the multistorey visitors car park. Add inbound visitor and

staff traffic to this, and this single-lane service road is gridlocked at almost every peak hour. Earlier this month my office was flooded with calls from staff and patients of John Hunter Hospital. On two occasions in March traffic came to a standstill—no cars could get into the hospital and no cars could get out. An accident outside the hospital entrance left staff and patients stuck in their cars inside the car parks, unable to move for more than an hour.

The patients and visitors who called my office were upset. Some had waited months, if not years, for appointments at the hospital. As a result of the traffic chaos some of them will have to wait even longer for another appointment. Staff missed appointments and were late picking up children from school and child care. All this comes at a cost, including a significant impact on the budget and the hardworking staff of John Hunter Hospital. Some may say that it is just bad luck, but for staff and patients it is just another negative impact of the unworkable road infrastructure at John Hunter Hospital. My concern, and that of staff, and particularly paramedics, is that there will be a major incident when traffic gridlock prevents emergency vehicles from getting in or out of the hospital. This will put lives at risk, and is unacceptable.

There is a simple solution to the problem: The Government must reinstate the park-and-ride service and reduce the number of car movements on the road network. The Government must also build a complete interchange on the Newcastle Inner City Bypass Stage 5 as a second hospital entrance and exit. This will stop all the traffic funnelling out through the current choke point. But Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] loves to tell us that its studies and modelling show there is not an issue around the hospital and there is no need for a complete interchange at the hospital. This Government seems to listen to RMS but not the community. Dozens of staff and patients have contacted me about this problem, and I am sure that thousands more will have plenty to say about it. I ask the Government to fix the problem.

Matter of Public Importance

NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (18:26): National Youth Week started in New South Wales in 1989, and by 2000 it had become a national event. National Youth Week 2017 will run from 31 March to 9 April. The theme for 2017 is "Get involved, be heard, make a difference!" It is important to acknowledge the issues facing our children and adolescents. Mental health issues are particularly important to address as we know that if left unchecked they can have a profound impact on a young person's future wellbeing and success. Signs of vulnerability to mental health issues are often clear by the time a child turns six. Patterns of drug and alcohol misuse and eating disorders commonly start in adolescence, and sometimes earlier. Youth Week is the only mass participation event in Australia organised and managed by young people. The theme "Get involved, be heard, make a difference!" is a perfect call to action for mass participation in youth mental health awareness activities. This energy to get young people involved to raise awareness and look out for each other is a great opportunity for young people to help one another.

We know that half of all mental illnesses manifest before the age of 14 and that three-quarters manifest by the age of 25. That is why identifying and addressing these issues early is critical. In response to the report of the Mental Health Commission entitled "Living Well: A Strategic Plan for Mental Health in New South Wales 2014-2024", the Government is undertaking a decade-long, whole-of-government enhancement of mental health care that includes a focus on young people. The Government is working hard to ensure that protective factors are in place for every child across New South Wales. To this end, in 2016-17 the Government has allocated more than \$120 million to fund adolescent mental health services. This figure includes approximately \$28 million for specialist programs including School-Link, Whole Family Teams, Getting on Track in Time—Got it! and Youth Community Living Support Services.

The Liberal-Nationals Government is committed to investing in our next generation. Through its response to Living Well, specialist community clinical mental health services for children, young people and their families are being enhanced. Coming from a rural electorate, I know first-hand that people in rural areas suffer disproportionate hardship from natural disasters such as drought, fire and flood but, most particularly, as a result of social isolation. The associated stress and mental health issues caused by living in remote and rural areas cannot be underestimated. Access is available to the Mental Health Line for any person—but especially young people—who is worried about mental health issues. To receive expert assistance anywhere in New South Wales the number to call is 1800 011 511. The New South Wales Mental Health Line is a single statewide telephone service that operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week to connect callers to local mental health services for advice, triage and referral to appropriate care.

The Liberal-Nationals Government can provide the best programs and support in the world, but unless our young people and children engage with those programs they remain at risk. Youth Week is an important time for us to challenge young people to talk about these issues, seek information and address the stigma that too often

surrounds mental health issues. I challenge everyone to help smash the stigma of mental illness so that our children and young people can be encouraged to seek help when they are in need and not be judged. Youth Week is a fantastic example of how we are increasing opportunities for young people, harnessing their energy to give back to the community, and raising awareness of the significant issues that younger generations face.

I am very happy that we have youth councils across the electorate of Cootamundra. Perhaps the most active of them is in Temora shire. That amazing youth council meets regularly with the Temora Shire Council. I have also met with them as their local member. I am always impressed with their resilience, their willingness to support other young people in need, and the way they come together when they identify that a young person has a problem. In country areas we tend to stick together, and I commend all the youth councils across New South Wales for the amazing work they do. I also wish them a happy National Youth Week.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (18:31): It is a real pleasure to speak on this matter of public importance, National Youth Week. I thank the member for Cootamundra for bringing this matter to the House and for acknowledging the significance and value of young people to New South Wales, and indeed Australia. Each year we take a week to celebrate the wonderful youth services that are available across the State. We recognise the important and often unappreciated efforts of youth workers. We want to empower young people to express their views, do good work with neighbours and local groups, and make a positive contribution to the health and vitality of their communities. National Youth Week is their week and I am honoured to spend a few minutes recognising the contribution they make.

Youth Week events are in full swing across the State. I am particularly proud to say that in my electorate young people can participate in a range of fabulous activities, including theatre performances, a young people's discussion panel, a skate and scooter competition—I know that scooters are the thing these days; they do some cool things with them—dance events, craft workshops and a three-on-three basketball competition that I look forward to attending at PCYC Marrickville. These events are being organised by some magnificent inner west community organisations that work to support young people. They include the Inner West Council, Inner West Youth Alliance, council libraries, PCYC Marrickville and the Marrickville Youth Resource Centre. In addition, schools are holding events and the Marrickville Legal Service, which does an essential and frankly extraordinary job of working with vulnerable people in our community, is also marking Youth Week. I welcome the announcement by the Attorney General today to fix the Federal Government funding shortfall and ensure that these essential community legal centres can continue to provide their services across New South Wales.

While noting the celebrations, it would be remiss of me not to raise some of the challenges that young people face today. I met recently with some youth workers who are a part of the Barnardos Australia Streetwork team. These workers spend two or so afternoons a week catching trains around the inner west, seeking out young people—particularly young males—and having a chat. These young people often face incredibly complex social needs and pressures, and at times their vulnerabilities manifest in antisocial behaviour. I was invited to spend an afternoon with Leonard, John and Paula. It was an empowering and profoundly inspirational experience. I met them at Sydenham station and we spent a few hours riding on the Sydenham to Bankstown line.

They identified young people and took a few minutes to introduce themselves. They made it clear that they were youth workers and they just wanted to listen. They made sure that each of the young people had the chance to have their say. The importance of their work to ensure that young people feel heard, acknowledged and valued cannot be underestimated. With each interaction it was obvious that the young person felt a renewed sense of purpose. Of course, those small interactions have a cumulative effect. It was heartening to see many of the kids who knew Leonard, John and Paula go out of their way to say hi and talk about the activities they had been involved in. As the youth workers develop trust and form stronger relationships with the young people, Barnardos is able to direct them to specialised services as needed. They form a vital link between young people and important services as well as their families, who may also be in need of support. I was struck by the importance of the youth workers continuing their task. I thank Barnardos for being there for the young people in my electorate.

We know that far too many young people continue to have negative interactions with the law. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, young offenders comprise roughly one-fifth of the total offender population. Often their interactions begin with simple things that sometimes spiral out of control and contribute to complex pressures. A transport fine, a drug detection or an issue with a debt can all lead to far more complex economic and social problems. Unfortunately, they trap young people in crime and poverty. We need to intervene early. The work of Barnardos and other services is critical because they lift young people out of the cycle and help them realise their full potential. Another thing that can make a difference is the passion and resilience of young people themselves. National Youth Week is a celebration of those qualities. I congratulate the youth workers on their efforts. They are unsung heroes. I also congratulate all young people across New South Wales who are doing their bit to make us a more compassionate and stronger State.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (18:36): I make a contribution to the discussion on the matter of public importance relating to National Youth Week. Like previous speakers, I am keen that more is done in our community to allow young people to get involved, be heard and make a difference, as the theme of the week suggests. Youth Week started in New South Wales in 1989 and has become a national event. Activities are organised and managed by young people themselves wherever they occur across the country. Youth Week this year will run from 31 March to 9 April—it is a generous week to ensure the youth have every opportunity to get involved, be heard and make a difference.

National Youth Week presents an opportunity for young people to express their ideas and views, act on issues that affect their lives, and create and enjoy activities and events. In 2016 about 4,000 young people from across the State were involved in planning and organising activities and events such as forums, debates, photography exhibitions, fitness activities, writing competitions, hip-hop dance classes and concerts. More than 100 young people from New South Wales attended the Youth Week Forum at Parliament House hosted by the Youth Week Young People's Advisory Committee and NSW Volunteering. Over the course of Youth Week last year more than 100,000 young people participated in more than 900 local activities and events. In 2016, 150 councils across New South Wales agreed to support National Youth Week and accepted a Youth Week grant. In my backyard, Blacktown City Council received more than \$6,000 funding for Youth Week activities in 2016 and 2017, which the council matched dollar for dollar.

The New South Wales Government provides one-off grants of up to \$50,000 through the Youth Opportunities program to youth and community organisations and local government to support local youth-led and youth-driven projects. More than 32,000 young people have benefited from the program, which has supported more than 2,500 community activities. Since November 2012 the Government has provided \$7.9 million across five rounds of funding to support 148 local projects. In the latest round of Youth Opportunities program funding, which was announced in October last year, 28 innovative grassroots projects across New South Wales received \$1.1 million to help young people realise their full potential.

Whether it is through National Youth Week activities, grant projects, council support or local neighbourhood groups that involve young people, they are all supported by generous volunteers. For example, the Riverstone Neighbourhood Centre runs a youth program. Sporting clubs in my electorate such as the Riverstone Dolphins Swimming Club, Riverstone Razorbacks Rugby League Club, and the local netball or cricket clubs are also run by volunteers who give up their time so that young people have the chance to participate in a team or community activity and to develop their potential for the betterment of all of us.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (18:39): In reply: I thank the member for Summer Hill and the member for Riverstone for their contributions to debate on this matter of public importance about National Youth Week. The member for Summer Hill mentioned Dr Barnardo's Homes, which is something very close to my heart. I remember as a child endless fundraising activities with my mother that went towards Dr Barnardo's programs, which have supported an enormous number of families and children over many years. She also mentioned the need to stem the number of young offenders. The member for Riverstone mentioned many activities that have been undertaken over the years and funding by the New South Wales Government of various youth programs. He also referred to the wonderful club and sport involvement of young people across this great State.

That reminded me of an event here at Parliament House this morning—the presentation of the 2017 Emergency Services Award recipients. I was delighted to join the Minister for Emergency Services at that event. With the indulgence of the House, I will place on record the names of those recipients: RFS Cadet of the Year, Javen Ricevuto, Balranald Central School, Region South; SES Cadet of the Year, Sasha Cox, Broken Hill High School, Far West Region—her principal was there as well; RFS Young Volunteer of the Year, 12 to 15 years, Alexander Slade, Williamtown/Salt Ash Rural Fire Brigade, Region East; RFS Young Volunteer of the Year, 16 to 25 years, Elizabeth Butt, Bendick Murrell Rural Fire Brigade, Region West—in the vicinity of Young, in the electorate of Cootamundra; and SES Young Volunteer of the Year, 16 to 25 years, Yvette Amos, Snowy River Unit, Southern Highlands Region.

I have mentioned those young people because they go out of their way to contribute to their communities. Whenever they are not in school or not at work they are out contributing to their community—whether in a volunteer rescue capacity or attending a traffic disaster on the Hume Highway with their State Emergency Services, they are always there for their community. It is reassuring to know that wonderful young people of such a tender age live all around our State. In my earlier contribution I spoke about real social issues for our young people such as eating disorders, depression, et cetera, but so many are getting out there and just doing it. Indeed, this State has a very bright future if today's award recipients are anything to go by.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I thank the member for Cootamundra for mentioning the names of the 2017 Emergency Services Awards recipients. They are very worthy of mention.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:43
until Thursday 6 April 2017 at 10:00.**