



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 6 April 2017

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Bills	1
Greyhound Racing Bill 2017	1
Returned.....	1
Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017.....	1
Returned.....	1
Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017.....	1
First Reading.....	1
Second Reading	1
Greyhound Racing Bill 2017	3
Consideration in Detail	3
Budget.....	3
Budget Estimates and Related Papers 2016-17	3
Bills	5
Discount Rate Reduction (Miscellaneous Acts Amendment) Bill 2017	5
Second Reading	5
Securing NSW Steel Industry Bill 2017	6
First Reading.....	6
Second Reading	6
Suitors' Fund Amendment (Costs of NCAT Appeals) Bill 2016.....	8
Second Reading	8
Visitors.....	11
Visitors.....	11
Bills	11
Suitors' Fund Amendment (Costs of NCAT Appeals) Bill 2016.....	11
Second Reading	11
Visitors.....	12
Visitors.....	12
Bills	12
Suitors' Fund Amendment (Costs of NCAT Appeals) Bill 2016.....	12
Second Reading	12
Motions	17
North Coast Floods	17
Camden Local Area Command.....	22
Greyhound Racing Industry Ban Advertising Campaign	23
Visitors.....	25
Visitors.....	25
Motions	25
Greyhound Racing Industry Ban Advertising Campaign	25
Visitors.....	27
Visitors.....	27

TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Announcements.....	28
Director, Table and Chamber Services.....	28
Question Time.....	28
Woy Woy Underpass.....	28
Central Coast, Manly and North Shore By-Elections.....	28
Woy Woy Underpass.....	29
Taxation.....	31
Parklands Community Preschool.....	33
Central Coast Roads.....	33
North Shore By-Election.....	35
North Shore Transport Infrastructure.....	35
Plastics Pollution.....	37
Short-Term Holiday Letting.....	38
Committees.....	39
Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development.....	39
Chair.....	39
Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics.....	39
Chair and Deputy Chair.....	39
Committee on Community Services.....	39
Chair and Deputy Chair.....	39
Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission.....	39
Chair and Deputy Chair.....	39
Members.....	39
Parliamentary Secretaries.....	39
Committees.....	40
Legislation Review Committee.....	40
Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 33/56.....	40
Legislation Review Committee.....	41
Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 34/56.....	41
Matter of Public Importance.....	42
Thiruvizha Festival.....	42
Community Recognition Statements.....	45
Manning Base Hospital.....	45
Prospect Assyrian New Year Festival.....	45
Bowral High School ArtExpress.....	45
Tribute to Terry Wand, OAM.....	46
Tribute to James Brush.....	46
Tribute to Ryan Teasdale.....	46
Riverstone Dolphins RSL Youth Swimming Club.....	46
Sri Durgadevi Devasthanam Sydney.....	46
Royal Australian Air Force Ninety-Sixth Anniversary.....	47
Nova for Women and Children.....	47

TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

St Ives Rotary Club and Dementia Care	47
Tribute to Marion Gosper, OAM	47
Marine Rescue Ulladulla	48
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Primary School Senior Choir	48
Tribute to Zane Norris	48
Ching Ming Festival	48
Australian Surf Life Saving Championships	48
Marathi Community Language School, Westmead	49
Retirement of Joan Saxby	49
Pacific Healthier Eating Active Stronger Together Group	49
Champion Equestrian Vaulteer Charlotte Lee	49
<i>Women of Pyrmont</i> book launch	50
The School of St Jude	50
Blackheath Public School	50
Terrigal Rotary Community Award Recipient Ramazan can	50
Chaldean League	50
Tribute to Cricketer Maitlan Brown	51
Cabramatta Assyrian New Year Festival	51
World's Greatest Shave	51
Saint Sava Serbian Youth Festival	51
Reaching 4 Korina	51
Rulings	52
Community Recognition Statements	52
Private Members' Statements	52
Construction Worker Mental Health	52
Goulburn Electorate Events	53
Dalton Power Plant	53
Camden Electorate Student Leaders	53
Camden Show	53
Myall Lakes Electorate Roads and Bridges	54
South Coast Infrastructure and Tourism	55
Canterbury Electorate School Maintenance	56
Maclean Flying Fox Management	57
Holsworthy Electorate Community Building Partnership Grants	58
Israeli Prime Minister Visit	59
Cardiovascular Disease	62
Warnervale Town Centre	62
Coffs Harbour City State Emergency Service	63
Loreto Normanhurst 120th Anniversary	64
Palestine	65
Rulings	66
Private Members' Statements	66

TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Committees	66
Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission	66
Membership	66

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 6 April 2017

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

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Bills

GREYHOUND RACING BILL 2017

Returned

The SPEAKER: I report a message from the Legislative Council returning the abovementioned bill with an amendment. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendment be set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (TRANSPORT ENTITIES) BILL 2017

Returned

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the abovementioned bill without amendment

[Notices of motions given.]

GAS AND ELECTRICITY (CONSUMER SAFETY) BILL 2017

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Mark Coure, on behalf of Mr Matt Kean, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (10:12): On behalf of Mr Matt Kean: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017. This bill will deliver on the Government's commitment to reduce red tape for the industry and will also increase protections for consumers with respect to gas appliances. Currently, the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, on whose behalf I speak today, has sole responsibility for the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2004, the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2015 and the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2012. He also has responsibility for section 83A of the Gas Supply Act 1996, while his Cabinet colleague in the other place the Hon. Don Harwin, Minister for Energy and Utilities, has responsibilities for the remainder of the Act.

There are many similarities between the existing Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2004 and the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2012. They both provide for the safe use of gas and electricity by consumers and prescribe and enforce minimum safety standards for gas and electrical equipment and installations in New South Wales. Gas and electricity are absolutely essential to our daily lives but poorly manufactured goods and substandard installations can present major hazards. The consolidation of these consumer safety laws into a single piece of legislation will provide a clear, consistent and strong regulatory framework. This bill will also ensure the enforcement powers are consistent and significant to safeguard the safety of consumers regarding both gas and electrical products and services.

Many of the clauses in the bill retain the language of the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act, the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation and the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Regulation. The purpose of this approach is to ensure that there is stability in the legal effect of these provisions. There are a number of clauses which make new provisions with respect to gas consumer safety. The purpose of these provisions is to increase the consumer safety protections and ensure that there is consistent approach across both gas and electricity. This will simplify compliance obligations for businesses. Consistent compliance and enforcement provisions will also enable NSW Fair Trading to utilise the full range of compliance mechanisms now available for electricity consumer safety to enforce consumer safety standards in the gas industry. The bill harmonises penalty of gas and

electricity safety breaches. Penalties for gas-related offences have been increased to match those for electricity-related offences. These will provide a greater deterrent for breaches concerning consumer safety concerns.

I turn now to the substance of the bill. As this bill is largely a consolidation of existing provisions I highlight a limited number of matters only. Part 1 of the bill deals with preliminary matters, including the definitions of the bill. The definition of "sell" applying to electrical articles is extended to include gas appliances. This will ensure that gas appliances displayed for advertising will be treated as being displayed for sale. While it is already an offence to sell a gas appliance that is not certified, this offence does not extend to capture the display or the offer for sale of the uncertified appliance. This means that currently NSW Fair Trading investigators must purchase an uncertified gas appliance to prove the offence of sale. Applying this definition to both gas and electricity related offences will also enable authorised officers to carry out compliance and enforcement in the gas appliance retail industry more effectively.

Clause 6 is also important. It has been inserted to address a number of safety issues that have arisen with respect to hoverboards. Clause 6 will confer to the secretary a power to declare that a battery article, such as a particular model of hoverboard or a battery article of a class—such as hoverboards in general—are a "high risk battery article". Such a declaration will have the effect of bringing that article or class of article under the provisions of the Act. Importantly, this provision will safeguard consumers against some types of rechargeable batteries and products that incorporate rechargeable batteries. This clause is targeted. The purpose of the words "high risk battery article" is to ensure that this power is limited to cases where there is a real or material risk of damage to property, injury or death, not simply where the risk is far-fetched. Another purpose of that language is to ensure that the classes of article covered by such declarations are targeted and do not extend to products which are not high risk. Overall this provision will help to establish a consistent and cohesive approach to gas and electricity safety in the marketplace and will ensure that the laws operate effectively and efficiently.

Part 3 concerns gas appliances. Division 2 of part 3 concerns the certification of gas appliances. Under clause 23 the secretary may grant applications for a person to hold a certificate of authority. Under clause 26 such certification authorities may be cancelled. Under clause 26 (1) (a) the secretary will be able to cancel an authority following a show cause notice. The effect of a show cause notice is that a certification authority-holder's certification authority will be suspended for a period of no longer than 21 days. During that time he or she can make submissions to the secretary, which the secretary will need to consider in making a final cancellation decision.

Importantly, while that process is underway, the public will be protected from any risk of that person engaging in substandard certification. Under clause 26 (1) (b) a certification authority may be cancelled without first being suspended. This power gives the secretary a broad power to cancel certification authority for the purposes of the bill, namely, safety. Of course, the secretary will be able to give certification holders a chance to make submissions without having the certification authority suspended first. These provisions are substantially a re-enactment of the secretary's present powers under the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2012.

The next aspect of the bill to which I wish to draw the attention of the House is division 2 of part 7 of the bill, which contains a number of important compliance and investigatory powers. Clause 49 (d) will confer on authorised officers the power to seize and remove unsafe gas appliances. Currently, Fair Trading officers have to purchase unsafe gas appliances to ensure that they are not sold to the public. This will bring Fair Trading's powers with respect to gas appliances in line with Fair Trading's existing powers of seizure contained in the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act.

Clause 51 (b) confers on authorised officers the power to disconnect electrical articles and gas appliances from installations being used in a manner that presents, or is likely to present, a significant risk of damage to property, injury or death. Clause 52 of the bill will repose in authorised officers the powers necessary to address situations in which gas or electrical installations or articles are being used in a way which poses a real risk of harm. These powers are important. Fair Trading has received reports of people using LPG-fuelled barbecues indoors or in fully enclosed balcony spaces.

These types of gas appliances are designed for outdoor use only, and when used indoors can lead to incomplete combustion, a by-product of which is carbon monoxide, which can be lethal. Other examples have been instances of gas hot water heaters situated on balconies of units where the balcony has been fully enclosed, not allowing for proper ventilation, again leading to the build-up of carbon monoxide. Under current laws, Fair Trading investigators are unable to require owners to cease using LPG barbecues in this dangerous manner or require them to properly ventilate an area. The bill will remedy this problem.

Clause 52 will more generally confer on an authorised officer the powers necessary to address situations in which gas or electrical installations or articles are being used in a way which poses a real risk of harm.

Currently, if a Fair Trading investigator encounters a situation that is fundamentally unsafe, the only available remedy is to seek the assistance of the relevant energy provider to shut down the power supply to the installation. There was a case where Fair Trading investigators became aware of an LPG installation in a caravan park that was using natural gas regulators instead of LPG regulators. Gas regulators control the pressure and output of gas, and an installation being used with the wrong type of regulator is non-compliant and can cause an explosion. The investigators requested that the regulators be exchanged for the correct type, but when the owner refused to do so they were powerless to address the issue. This problem will be remedied by these powers.

Clause 53 concerns the investigation of serious gas or electrical accidents. It is an example of how electrical article consumer protections have been extended to serious gas accidents. The clause will enable an authorised officer to enter any place where a serious electrical or gas accident has occurred and to exercise certain investigative powers in that place. Clause 66 authorises the issuing of penalty notices for selected gas-related breaches. This is another example of bringing the gas regulatory scheme in line with the existing scheme for electricity. Allowing penalty notices to be issued will address a key compliance issue, as current laws do not provide for penalty notices for gas-related offences.

Penalty notices are an effective compliance tool which send a clear and immediate message about the importance of consumer safety requirements. Fair Trading's ability to efficiently and cost-effectively administer the gas consumer safety provisions will be significantly enhanced by the ability to issue penalty infringement notices. The alternative to penalty infringement notices is to initiate court action, which can be disproportionately costly and time-consuming for less serious offences. Although I have spoken a lot about gas, I emphasise that the merger of the two energy sources will not weaken or reduce the existing consumer safety regulation of electricity and electrical products.

The current level of electricity consumer safety regulation will be maintained and gas consumer safety regulation will be strengthened to a consistent level. A clear, consistent consolidated Act will highlight to the community the importance of consumer safety for gas and electricity work and products. The provisions of this bill will give NSW Fair Trading appropriate and necessary powers to deal with gas and electricity consumer safety. Information and education will be provided prior to the introduction of the new Act to advise and inform stakeholders of the changes that will affect them and to make them aware of their rights and obligations. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

GREYHOUND RACING BILL 2017

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendment.

Schedule of amendment referred to in message of 5 April 2017

No. 1 **CDP No. 1 [c2017-023]**

Page 14, clause 36 (3), line 13. Insert "An amendment to the code may only be made if it has been submitted by the Commission." after "practice."

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendment.

Motion agreed to.

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2016-17

Debate resumed from 9 March 2017.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (10:29): I am generally not a jealous member of this Parliament. When others have good things happening to them I usually say good luck to them but after all the speeches from those opposite about all the good things happening in their areas through the delivery of infrastructure and funding, I cannot help but feel that my electorate and I are being hard done by with continuously being given nothing by this Government. The people of Cabramatta had to endure Barry O'Farrell's premiership when he claimed he was the Minister for Western Sydney but refused to visit Cabramatta or honour previously committed infrastructure funding.

Unfortunately, after we saw the back of Barry O'Farrell we saw the front of Michael Baird, who was too busy writing tweets about *The Bachelor*, destroying the democracy of local councils through amalgamations and trying to kill off the greyhound industry to care about what was happening in Cabramatta or Western Sydney. I do

hope the new Premier, whom I have had the pleasure occasionally to welcome to Cabramatta for various functions, continues her verbal support for the area and that the Berejiklian Government will be able finally to give Cabramatta the funding it has been crying out for.

When Labor was in power in New South Wales it committed to 300 commuter car parking spaces across the road from Cabramatta station. Unfortunately, in 2011 with the election of the Coalition Government under Barry O'Farrell it was decided that the people of Cabramatta did not deserve a new commuter car park and the project was cancelled. That project had been fully funded and budgeted for and the plans had been completed, but the contract was not yet signed so the O'Farrell Government took that opportunity to cancel the project. The project would have eased the chronic shortage of parking in Cabramatta but unfortunately it was not to be.

I hope that under this new Premier, a Premier who once had the portfolio of Transport and who is very knowledgeable about the importance of commuter car parks, this problem can be remedied. There is an opportunity at the John Street car park in Cabramatta to do what was done with the council car park at Canley Vale. The State Government gave funding to Fairfield City Council to build an additional three levels at Canley Vale station to ease the chronic car parking issues there and we have the opportunity in Cabramatta to do the same. Council has stated on numerous occasions that it would welcome such an approach and the people of Cabramatta also would welcome that. If the State Government were to see fit to give funding to Fairfield City Council to build another two or three storeys on top of the council car park at Cabramatta, it would certainly ease parking congestion in Cabramatta.

Canley Vale station is another example of the Government's uncaring attitude towards Cabramatta and its people. For a long time Canley Vale station has been crying out for increased access for disabled people. About two years ago a ramp was installed, but what is needed is an easy access lift to assist pregnant women, the elderly, the infirm and the vulnerable to get from one platform to the other platform. Canley Vale has an aged care home on either side of the station and the elderly need to get across the station. In this day and age it is a bit much to expect them to walk up the steep stairs of the station. People have pointed out that the station already has a ramp, but when I have asked where it is they have said, "Just walk 200 metres up the road along one side of the railway, go across the bridge and then walk 200 metres back down the other side; it is ramped." I pointed out that would require elderly people to walk 400 or 500 metres just to cross over. An easy access lift would make the situation much better.

In the last year around 5,000 refugees were settled in the Fairfield local government area. It is expected that this trend will continue this year with the Federal Government's special humanitarian refugee intake. I point out that we welcome all of these refugee families and individuals, many from Syria and Iraq, who come to this country to find a new way of life, piece their lives back together and build a future for their families. I have no problem with the new intake of the new arrivals as my family and I were refugees to this country many years ago. I was born in a refugee camp in Egypt where three of my siblings did not survive the harsh conditions.

Over many years Australia, New South Wales and Cabramatta in particular have welcomed the arrival of new immigrants to this country from Asia, parts of Europe and England. However, the Berejiklian Government must fill in the gaps by providing more funding to our schools, hospitals and police. We need infrastructure and services. We cannot just bring in 6,000 people, land them on the doorstep of Western Sydney and Fairfield and say, "Here you are, guys. All the best. Do what you can." No other area in Sydney will experience the growth that Fairfield city is expecting with the influx of up to about 12,000 new arrivals. It is like a brand-new suburb appearing on the doorstep overnight. Schools need more buildings to house our new students so that overcrowding does not occur.

Mr Rob Stokes: Hear, hear!

Mr NICK LALICH: I acknowledge the Minister for Education is at the table. All our children deserve the best start in life, whether or not they are refugees. Our hospitals and health infrastructure will definitely be strained, particularly as the colder months set upon us, so there need to be more beds and more staff to cater to community needs. We should not forget the Government's gutting of funding to Fairfield Hospital which resulted in it being ranked as the worst in New South Wales for women giving birth, according to the Bureau of Health and Information. Less funding means fewer staff and fewer resources, resulting in a lower standard of care to patients, mothers and families at Fairfield Hospital.

The *Daily Telegraph* reported that Fairfield Hospital received the most negative feedback regarding communications, patients being able to be involved in decisions, receiving conflicting information and trust in staff during birthing. Other areas to receive below-average levels of positive feedback were cleanliness, having enough say about pain relief, and waiting times at antenatal check-ups. We cannot blame the professional staff at Fairfield Hospital who work their guts out trying to make sure the experience of patients is up to standard. We can

assume that the gutting of funding has increased pressure on staff, who are already giving 110 per cent, and things are starting to fall through the cracks.

The Berejiklian Government needs to step up and give Fairfield Hospital and Western Sydney their fair share. Is it any wonder the hospitals in south-west Sydney scored lower than other hospitals throughout the State when this Government continues the follies of Premier O'Farrell, Premier Baird and former Minister Jillian Skinner in totally neglecting the needs of the people of Western Sydney? I have to be fair: In the last 12 months they have given boom gates to the car park at Fairfield Hospital, so I thank them for that. Resources are stretched to the limit and staff are doing their best to keep everything together. The Government needs to do its bit and increase funding so that hospitals like Fairfield get their fair share. After years of nothing I hope that the new Premier and her Cabinet will see fit to give Cabramatta and Western Sydney the attention, the funding and the infrastructure it deserves.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (10:38): I speak on the 2016-2017 New South Wales State budget and the positive impact it will have on the local residents of the Holsworthy electorate. This budget is not just important for the people of Holsworthy but also for everyone across New South Wales due to the record levels of funding provided for infrastructure and services. This achievement has only been able to be delivered through the strong economic management of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government and particularly through the leadership of the then Treasurer and current Premier, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, MP. This budget is important for the State in a few different ways as it provides strong financial and economic management, delivers record funding to infrastructure and delivers more services.

The budget outlook currently is for strong surpluses of \$3.4 billion in 2015-16 and \$3.7 billion in 2016-17 and surpluses across the forward estimates. This has led to net debt close to zero in the general government sector. It is a monumental achievement not seen in any other State, Territory or Federal governments. It also means that this State will maintain its triple-A credit rating. Through this outlook there has been a jobs surge of 141,800 in the last year. In the last 12 months New South Wales has created 63 per cent of jobs added across Australia and now has an unemployment rate of 5.2 per cent, the lowest of any State. Over the past five years this Government has delivered 3,004 more teachers, 1,109 more police and 4,724 more nurses and midwives. This budget reaffirms that the New South Wales economy is continuing to lead the nation in jobs, State final demand, consumer confidence and business investment.

Over four years this budget will provide record levels of funding to non-financial public sector infrastructure to the tune of \$73.3 billion. We are continuing to invest in essential education infrastructure. I note the Education Minister is present in the Chamber. Over the next four years almost \$1 billion extra will be invested for infrastructure, bringing the total capital spend to \$2.6 billion for new schools and classrooms. That is an increase of 50 per cent from the forward estimates of last year's budget. Over next two years this budget will more than double funding for backlog maintenance from \$160 million to \$330 million to address priority maintenance needs in schools. Over the next two years the total maintenance budget will total \$900 million.

Debate interrupted.

Bills

DISCOUNT RATE REDUCTION (MISCELLANEOUS ACTS AMENDMENT) BILL 2017

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 23 February 2017.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (10:41): I will continue my second reading speech on the Discount Rate Reduction (Miscellaneous Acts Amendment) Bill 2017. I will briefly recap the intent of the bill. Currently, those people who are deemed permanently injured and receive a lump sum payment have their future earnings on that amount assessed at 5 per cent. It is fact that for many years no-one has been able to earn 5 per cent on their earnings and, according to the government bonds, that will remain the case for the next 10 years. The rate of 5 per cent is unacceptable. This bill presents 3 per cent as the correct rate.

I have done considerable research to understand what rate is appropriate. I have previously referred to a report titled "Review of the Law of Negligence. Final Report", written by David Ipp and others. One of the arguments to negate this bill is that the cost of paying injured people will increase and therefore the cost of insurance premiums will increase. Mr Ipp was tasked with the responsibility to find ways to drive down the cost of insurance at that time. Following thorough investigation and access to actuaries, the report supported 3 per cent as the correct rate. At the time the report was published it was possible to earn 10 per cent on future earnings. Regardless of the impact on insurance premiums, 3 per cent is the correct rate. That is the argument I am making.

On page ix of the report the opening paragraph of the "Terms of reference: Principles-based review of the law of negligence" states:

The award of damages for personal injury has become unaffordable and unsustainable as the principal source of compensation for those injured through the fault of another. It is desirable to examine a method for the reform of the common law with the objective of limiting liability and quantum of damages arising from personal injury and death.

Government members will seek to refute the bill, but the foundation of their argument will be the same argument I rely on to support the bill: the impact on insurance premiums. These esteemed academics were charged with the responsibility to drive down the size and scope of insurance premium payments. In the face of this basic fundamental instruction they found a discount rate of 3 per cent was appropriate. The Government's arguments to oppose the bill have been considered and dealt with by a panel that was tasked with achieving insurance affordability. I will repeat that in the face of this objective the panel decided that 3 per cent was an appropriate discount rate. That leads to the conclusion that, regardless of the current insurance premium rate, the 5 per cent discount rate is inherently unfair. Why have insurance? Why have the respective Acts? Why have the option of damages if it is fundamentally unfair?

If you want to artificially drive down insurance premiums, you can lift the discount rate to 7 per cent, 10 per cent or 12 per cent, cap the damages or remove access to damages claims altogether. That would achieve an artificial effect on insurance. That is not the intent of the insurance itself. It is a question of justice and fairness, and there is an unspoken expectation of the purpose of that insurance, which is that if you are injured the outcome will be reasonable and realistic. At the moment there is no justice, fairness or reasonable realistic outcome with a 5 per cent discount rate applied to the compensation. In truth, the discount rate should have been changed in 2002 when the Ipp report was handed down. At the time, long-term government bonds and bank rates were well above 5 per cent, at 10 per cent or more—there was no appetite to change the 5 per cent to 3 per cent as recommended.

Politically it was convenient to have insurance premiums at an artificially lower rate. I say artificially because ignoring the compelling case for a 3 per cent discount rate was an act of negligence by governments of both political persuasions and an act of dishonesty with respect to the insurance premiums we pay. If we fast-forward from 2002 to 2010 the world experienced a financial crisis and interest rates and government bonds crashed. They fell quickly to 6 per cent and then to 3 per cent, and over 12 months the discount rate became inadequate. It occurred regardless of the desire to keep insurance premiums artificially low.

Recognising that the years immediately after the global financial crisis were financially challenging for all jurisdictions of local, State and Federal government and that the discount rate might not have been at the top of the agenda for States and Territories, the Parliament has dropped the ball for the past seven years. I bring this bill before the House to address the injustice, whether an error or an oversight. This bill is esoteric and beyond the interest of many who come into this Chamber. The truth is that, for all the huff and puff occurring in this Chamber, this legislation is incredibly important and must be seriously dealt with in detail the purpose and intent of the bill is straightforward and its logic is sound. Please do not dismiss this bill simply because it has been introduced by the shadow Minister for Finance in the Opposition. The experts have considered and decided on the correct course of action and all that is left is for us to support this bill.

Debate adjourned.

SECURING NSW STEEL INDUSTRY BILL 2017

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Ryan Park, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (10:50): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

We are back. That is how it works for us in the Illawarra. The Labor Party may get defeated once but it does not crawl back into a corner and cry, whinge and get upset; it comes back to the oldest Parliament in this country and introduces new legislation. Today I have heard that in the corridors of power everyone is grateful the Opposition has bills otherwise we would have gone home yesterday at about 4.00 p.m. They say, "We are a big Government of reform" but I cannot believe the Government's reform agenda. Bring back the library bill! I thank the member for Cessnock, the shadow Minister for Finance, for assisting the Government and the Parliament to ensure that work goes on. In the next couple of weeks the Opposition will probably introduce a bill to reduce the number of sitting days for the rest of the term just to save some costs—in this place we are about economic responsibility and fiscal management. At this rate Parliament does not need to sit three days a week so we will introduce a Fiscal Management (Reduction in Parliament Hours) Bill.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: The Securing NSW Steel Industry Bill 2017 is a bill that my great friends and colleagues, the member for Wollongong and the member for Shellharbour, and myself are glad to have re-introduced. We are so proud of and passionate about this bill because it not only gives security to tens of thousands of jobs, which one would think is reasonably important, and hundreds of small businesses and contractors who rely on the steel industry, but it also ensures that this nation and its economy have a strong, robust and vibrant steel industry going forward. That is critical to the region I am fortunate to represent and to the men and women that my colleagues, the member for Wollongong and the member for Shellharbour, are so grateful to represent. It is critical to the hardworking local communities in the Illawarra, south-western Sydney and Western Sydney who rely on a strong and vibrant steel industry.

I will outline the key objectives of this bill. We will mandate for the first time in the history of this nation at least 90 per cent use of Australian-made steel in publicly funded infrastructure projects, a policy that my colleagues and I are very proud of. The hardworking men and women of the Illawarra are proud of that policy. The mood of the men and women in communities across New South Wales is that the Government should use its purchasing power to drive stronger economic and social reforms. That will mean that when we make those significant purchases with taxpayers' money to build significant infrastructure projects we will get more than a road, bridge, hospital or a school and will support apprenticeships, long-term traineeships, small businesses, contractors and suppliers.

That concept is not new; it is happening around the globe as we speak. There is a shift in the way countries are looking at using taxpayers' funding to make sure they drive beyond a low price for a product, but this bill does more than that. This bill also ensures that we have a New South Wales Steel Industry Advocate to certify the use of Australian-made steel and monitor its use in publicly funded projects. It is critical, important, sensible reform. I thank the Government for basically adopting that reform. We dragged the Government down to the Illawarra kicking and screaming. No-one was talking about steel until my friends, the member for Wollongong and the member for Shellharbour, brought it to this place. The economic rationalists on the other side basically said, "Too bad, so sad—we'll hit the wall."

Recently we had a roundtable discussion with a report due back in 30 days. Hopefully the report will not be secret like most of their reports. Apparently it is a report back to the member for Kiama, who prefers nowadays to be called the Parliamentary Secretary for Parliamentary Secretaries. The member for Wollongong ably represented us, because the member for Shellharbour and I were not allowed to attend this secret meeting, and made it clear in written correspondence that we want to see the advice and the report. This reform is not driven by the member for Kiama; it is not his decision.

It is a bipartisan issue, and we want to make sure the men and women of the communities we represent are getting a fair deal. At the moment we do not believe they are getting a fair deal because if they were, the Government would have supported this bill a few weeks ago. If they knock it off today, I will re-introduce the bill again. This bill will be continually re-introduced until Labor gets elected in March 2019 when we will introduce it from the government benches. This bill is the first plank in securing tens of thousands of jobs in one of the key strategic industries in not only the New South Wales economy but also the Australian economy.

I acknowledge that the member for Kiama is in the Chamber. As I always say, on my signature block I put the "Member for Keira" above everything else. Representing our electorate is the most important job we have in this place. The Steel Industry Advocate, as outlined in this bill, will be located in the Illawarra region because the Illawarra has steelworks and a very large manufacturing base. We will make sure that the watchdog, the advocate, is close to the industry and to stakeholders in the Illawarra, at the centre of the steel industry in this country, and not in Sydney. This is the first time that this has been proposed in New South Wales. It is a Labor reform and this Government should support it.

I understand that about 48 hours ago my friend the member of Wollongong did some good investigative work into a very complex thing—street signs. They are a unique product that very few people can manufacture. The member for Wollongong saw a large street sign recently and noticed something interesting: It had a big label down the middle saying "Made in Vietnam". He thought that was unusual, because our good friend the lord mayor, who is all of a sudden a big advocate for steel and has a strong steel procurement policy in council, was caught out. The reality is that Labor is doing the work to drive this reform and secure the steel industry. If this bill does not pass today, I and my friends the member for Wollongong and the member for Shellharbour will be back. We will keep introducing legislation on this issue and debating it. Because of its critical importance, I declare this bill to be an urgent bill.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that this bill be considered an urgent bill.

The House divided.

Ayes30
 Noes43
 Majority.....13

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Car, Ms P
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Doyle, Ms T
 Harrison, Ms J
 Hornery, Ms S
 Leong, Ms J

Atalla, Mr E
 Catley, Ms Y
 Dib, Mr J
 Finn, Ms J
 Haylen, Ms J
 Kamper, Mr S
 Lynch, Mr P

Barr, Mr C
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Donato, Mr P
 Harris, Mr D
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Lalich, Mr N (teller)
 McDermott, Dr H
 (teller)
 Minns, Mr C
 Scully, Mr P
 Washington, Ms K

McKay, Ms J
 Park, Mr R
 Smith, Ms T F

Mehan, Mr D
 Robertson, Mr J
 Warren, Mr G

NOES

Aplin, Mr G
 Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
 Coure, Mr M
 Dominello, Mr V
 Gibbons, Ms M
 Greenwich, Mr A
 Henskens, Mr A
 Lee, Dr G
 Notley-Smith, Mr B
 Pavey, Mrs M
 Piper, Mr G
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Taylor, Mr M
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Mrs L

Ayres, Mr S
 Conolly, Mr K
 Crouch, Mr A
 Elliott, Mr D
 Goward, Ms P
 Gulaptis, Mr C
 Hodgkinson, Ms K
 Maguire, Mr D
 O'Dea, Mr J
 Perrottet, Mr D
 Roberts, Mr A
 Speakman, Mr M
 Toole, Mr P
 Ward, Mr G

Barilaro, Mr J
 Constance, Mr A
 Davies, Ms T
 Evans, Mr L
 Grant, Mr T
 Hazzard, Mr B
 Johnsen, Mr M
 Marshall, Mr A
 Patterson, Mr C (teller)
 Petinos, Ms E
 Rowell, Mr J
 Stokes, Mr R
 Tudehope, Mr D
 Williams, Mr R

PAIRS

Cotsis, Ms S
 Daley, Mr M
 Foley, Mr L
 Mihailuk, Ms T
 Watson, Ms A
 Zangari, Mr G

Anderson, Mr K
 Berejiklian, Ms G
 George, Mr T
 Kean, Mr M
 Piccoli, Mr A
 Provest, Mr G

Motion negatived.**Debate adjourned.****SUITORS' FUND AMENDMENT (COSTS OF NCAT APPEALS) BILL 2016****Second Reading****Debate resumed from 30 March 2017.**

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:10): I make a contribution to debate on the Suitors' Fund Amendment (Costs of NCAT Appeals) Bill 2016. The bill demonstrates that the Opposition does not have a lot to contribute and is obviously clutching at straws. It has tried to find something remotely relevant to talk about and the issue it has raised does not contribute anything in the grand scheme of things. The Suitors' Fund exists to assist people who require financial assistance to make an appeal. That is unlikely to be the case at the NSW Civil

and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] because the tribunal is a low-cost forum and the issue of legal costs preventing justice being served through appeals will not apply.

In January 2014 the NCAT consolidated the work of 22 former New South Wales tribunals into a new one-stop shop for specialist tribunal services. The tribunal's divisions deal with a broad range of matters, from tenancy issues and building works to decisions on guardianship and administrative review of government decisions. Its broad and diverse jurisdiction and matters are dealt with in four specialist divisions: Administrative and Equal Opportunity Division, which reviews administrative decisions made by New South Wales government agencies and discrimination matters; Consumer and Commercial Division, which resolves a wide range of everyday disputes such as tenancy and other residential property issues, and disputes about the supply of goods and services; Guardianship Division, which determines applications about people with a decision-making disability and who may require a legally appointed substitute decision-maker—I have had some dealings with that division at times—and the Occupational Division, which reviews decisions by government agencies about licensing and complaints concerning professional conduct and discipline.

I turn now to the substance of the bill. As the member for Liverpool said in his second reading speech, the Suitors' Fund was established by the Suitors' Fund Act 1951. So the Act has been on the books for a long time. It existed throughout the term of the last Labor Government. During that time Labor had plenty of opportunities to amend the Act in various ways, and some amendments were made. But the amendment proposed in the bill were never made in the 16 years Labor was in government. If it is so important to make this amendment now one wonders why it never mattered to the tribunals that existed when Labor was in government. The purpose of the Suitors' Fund is to compensate parties to court proceedings who incur legal costs through no fault of their own—the underlying principle being that parties should not have to have two sets of court proceedings to determine the one matter.

Parties may apply for payment from the Suitors' Fund in three circumstances: in successful appeals under sections 6 and 6B; in aborted or discontinued trials under section 6A; and where a payment from the Suitors' Fund would be within the "spirit and intent" of the Act but is not otherwise authorised under the Act, and those applications may be made under section 6C. A large proportion of applications for Suitors' Fund payments are made in relation to appeals. The Act applies to appeals to the High Court, Supreme Court, Land and Environment Court and District Court from decisions concerning a question of law. It also applies to appeals to the Supreme Court from decisions concerning a question of fact. My advice is that the Act likely applies to appeals from NCAT to those courts, but does not apply to internal appeals within NCAT.

As I said, NCAT was established only recently, in 2014, and is an amalgamation of 22 former tribunals. Prior to 2014 the Supreme Court held that the Act applied to appeals in the Supreme Court in relation to decisions made by some of those former tribunals, including appeals from the Administrative Decisions Tribunal, Equal Opportunity Tribunal, and Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal. The precedent set in the case of those former tribunals is the basis on which I say that the Act likely applies now to appeals from NCAT. In particular, I note that no other jurisdictions in Australia apply equivalent schemes to internal appeals within tribunals. That is contrary to the assertions of some Labor members who have spoken to the bill and claimed that that was the case interstate. Equivalent schemes to the Suitors' Fund in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory and the Commonwealth apply only to appeals to courts, not within the tribunal system. South Australia does not have equivalent legislation.

For those reasons the Government opposes the bill. It does not achieve anything of substance, nor does it meet a need that is demonstrated in reality because the purpose that it is intended to serve in the courts simply does not apply in the case of low-cost tribunals. The costs incurred in having a case heard twice, which is the underlying principle, do not apply here because the costs at the tribunal are minimal at best. I am sure that the member for Liverpool thought it important to find something to say to make himself seem relevant but this bill does not do that. It gives the member for Liverpool an opportunity to say a few things in this place, but nothing of substance will be improved or changed in pursuing such a direction. In fact, it would be inconsistent with what is happening in every other State and Territory in the Commonwealth. I oppose the bill.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (11:16): I make a contribution to debate on the Suitors' Fund Amendment (Costs of NCAT Appeals) Bill 2016. I state at the outset that I oppose the bill. I join the member for Riverstone in giving credit to the member for Liverpool for at least putting an issue on the table. It might not be a substantial issue but, unlike most of his colleagues, he has given it a bit of a go. However, I would have thought things like roads, rail, hospitals and so on would have been a better choice.

I commence my contribution by informing the House of the history of the Suitors' Fund. In 1953, two years following the commencement of the Suitors' Fund Act in November of 1951, C. S. Coleman commented that the Act "received a pacific passage through the Houses of Parliament and has not caused great excitement either among members of the legal profession or the community in general." I suspect that Mr Coleman would be

glad that it is causing some excitement in this place today. In the second reading speech of the Suitors' Fund Bill 1951, then Attorney General Clarence Martin noted that the principle underlying the bill was "quite novel" but that the thought underlying it was not original. Indeed, that is the case.

The thought underlying the scheme is that the unnecessary costs that accrue to a respondent as a result of an error of law by the judiciary should not be borne by the respondent. The concept is not unrelated to the line of authority that a superior court will not order costs against a judicial officer who appears on appeal merely to submit in respect of any judicial determination that they may have made in error. I refer those members interested in a discussion of that principle to *Ex parte Herman; Re Mathieson* (1961) 78 WN (NSW) 6 or indeed *Willessee v Willessee* (1974) 2 NSWLR 275.

In plain language—and perhaps to the disappointment of those disaffected by the judiciary—people cannot seek costs from a judicial or quasi-judicial officer for a mere mistake they have made in law. The benefit of the Suitors' Fund has been recognised in other Australian jurisdictions. The Commonwealth has the Federal Proceedings (Costs) Act 1981, Queensland has the Appeal Costs Fund Act 1973, Victoria has the Appeal Costs Act, Western Australia has the Suitors' Fund Act, Tasmania has the Appeal Costs Fund Act 1968, and the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory are captured by the Federal Proceedings (Costs) Regulations 1991. Somewhat surprisingly, at least as of December last year, South Australia had not established a Suitors' Fund—although our southern friends once threatened to do so.

The Appeal Costs Fund Act 1979 was assented to on 15 March 1979 in which section 4 would have established the requisite fund. For reasons I am not aware of, the Act was not proclaimed and has now been repealed. Thankfully, there is a Suitors' Fund in New South Wales. It is administered by the Secretary of the Department of Justice, who also has the responsibility for its proper functioning and compliance with audit requirements. It is the secretary who must consider all applications made under the Suitors' Fund Act. There have been many amendments to the Suitors' Fund over the years. Given that the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] was created in 2014, this is the first set of amendments proposed with respect to the tribunal.

That being the case, one would expect Opposition members to have consulted with the tribunal to get its take on the need for amendments. Did they do that? No, they did not. One would have thought the Opposition would have costed the impact of their proposal. Did they do that? It is a sensible thing to do. Those opposite want to be in government and cost proposals would impact on their bottom line in delivering real services such as roads, transport and community facilities. They are the services that we on this side of the House provide. So did those opposite cost the proposal? No, they did not. I give credit to the member for Liverpool for raising this issue, but unfortunately it is not significant. I oppose the bill.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (11:28): I speak in debate on the Suitors' Fund Amendment (Costs of NCAT Appeals) Bill 2016. As to the background of the bill, the work of 22 separate tribunals was brought together under the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] in January 2014. On 29 January 2014 NCAT officially opened and the then Attorney General of New South Wales, Mr Greg Smith, SC, said:

NCAT untangles the State's complex tribunal system and provides a single entry point for tribunal services.

I think it is fair to say that it has done just that. In 2015-16 more than 82,400 hearings were held in 70 venues across New South Wales. It is a staggering amount. The matters considered are broad, and range from tenancy issues to building works, decisions on guardianship and administrative review of government decisions. In the words of the former Attorney General:

NCAT will conduct hearings around NSW on a range of cases, from the bride whose big day was ruined when her wedding dress didn't arrive...

Some people might see that as an omen.

Mr Paul Lynch: Others may see it as sexist.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: It was a quote from the former Attorney General. NCAT provides important services to the people of New South Wales. It is a reform that the Government is proud to have implemented. The Government has continued to support the important work of NCAT by providing \$9.6 million in the 2016-17 budget for the relocation and upgrade of NCAT facilities. I note the high-quality resources available for members of the community on the NCAT website, including fact sheets. The Opposition seeks to extend the Suitors' Fund to parties to NCAT proceedings. The Suitors' Fund is established by the Suitors' Fund Act 1951.

The purpose of the fund is to compensate parties to court proceedings who incur additional legal charges through no fault of their own. The circumstances in which the fund may apply are limited under the Act. These circumstances include where there is a successful appeal against a court decision or where a hearing is discontinued due to the death of a judge. The Opposition bill amends the Suitors' Fund Act so that it applies to

internal appeals within NCAT. The bill potentially makes the Suitors' Fund available in relation to discontinued NCAT matters and confirms that the Act covers appeals from NCAT to a court.

There are differences between NCAT and the courts. The Suitors' Fund Act 1951 currently applies only to appeals heard by courts, including the High Court, the Supreme Court, the Land and Environment Court, and the District Court. The effect of the Opposition's bill would be that the Act applies to internal appeals heard within NCAT. These are appeals made to NCAT's Internal Appeal Panel. NCAT is intended to provide quick, informal and cheap access to justice, especially in comparison with courts. Key features of the NCAT jurisdiction make it unclear why the Opposition seeks to apply the Act to NCAT. It is important to consider the purpose of the NCAT jurisdiction and what it was intended to do when it was established by the O'Farrell-Stoner Government in 2014. As the Attorney General outlined, the Government opposes the bill on five grounds.

Mr Paul Lynch: He actually said four.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: There is a bit of discussion as to whether it is four or five. First, NCAT is a significantly different jurisdiction from the courts to which the Act currently applies. Secondly, extending the Act would have funding implications—an issue that the Opposition has not addressed. Thirdly, the impact of the Opposition's proposed amendment is unclear. Fourthly, there is no need to clarify the application of the Act. Fifthly, the Opposition has not undertaken appropriate consultation on the development of this bill. It is also important to note a number of the key features of the NCAT jurisdiction. There is no general entitlement to be legally represented in NCAT proceedings. Parties may be represented by another person only if NCAT grants leave. This is intended to keep costs down for parties. However, there are some exceptions for internal appeals. NCAT has estimated that around 70 per cent of internal appeals have legal representation on at least one side. Parties in NCAT proceedings who are not legally represented usually have very minimal legal costs.

Mr Paul Lynch: You're trying to talk it out, aren't you?

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: Not at all; it is quite exciting. Generally, the legal costs are no more than the cost of the application. The Attorney General also outlined that there is a range of arrangements relating to fees in place at NCAT to ensure access to justice for those who experience hardship. This includes that no fees are payable in certain NCAT jurisdictions. Eligible pensioners are only required to pay fees at a concession rate, which is set at 25 per cent of the full fee for any application for which a fee is payable. The principal registrar may fully or partially waive or postpone the payment of fees if paying the fee would cause the applicant serious hardship. I would like to seek an extension of time to talk about NCAT being a no-cost jurisdiction, however, I believe it has been well covered, and I am sure that the member for Drummoyne will do the same.

Visitors

VISITORS

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I welcome—buon venuti—our Italian tourists. As you can see, this Parliament is just as lively as the Italian Parliament. I apologise if any of you nodded off to sleep while the member for Camden was speaking. I call the Italian member for Drummoyne.

Bills

SUITORS' FUND AMENDMENT (COSTS OF NCAT APPEALS) BILL 2016

Second Reading

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (11:32): Welcome to all our special guests in the gallery from Alliance in Italy, which is always great to see. There is a whole host of them—they do us proud. The purpose of the Opposition's bill, the Suitors' Fund Amendment (Costs of NCAT Appeals) Bill 2016, is to extend the current law that makes government compensation available to parties to court proceedings who incur legal costs through no fault of their own, to parties to NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] proceedings. On 3 October 2016, the member for Liverpool introduced the Opposition bill into the Legislative Assembly. The Opposition bill would amend the Suitors' Fund Act 1951.

The Act establishes the Suitors' Fund, which is administered by the Department of Justice and funded by government. The Suitors' Fund compensates parties to court proceedings who incur legal costs through no fault of their own—for example, where there is a successful appeal against a court decision originally in their favour as a result of an error by the original judge or where a hearing is discontinued due to the death of the judge. The underlying principle is that parties should not have to pay costs incurred due to some error or misfortune, where no responsibility lies with the party.

The Suitors' Fund is not for the purpose of assisting parties who experience hardship in paying legal costs. Vulnerable people are assisted by Legal Aid and court, or NCAT, fee waiver and reduction policies. The Act

applies to appeals heard by the High Court, the Supreme Court, the Land and Environment Court and the District Court. The Department of Justice accepts applications to the Suitors' Fund concerning appeals from NCAT to those courts. However, the Act does not apply to internal appeals within NCAT—that is, from a decision of a single member of NCAT to the NCAT Appeals Panel. NCAT was established because the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice found that tribunal users and stakeholders found the tribunal system in New South Wales complex and confusing. Enabling those tribunals to exist as a network, rather than in isolation, allows for improved quality, transparency and consistency of tribunal services in New South Wales. The work of 22 separate tribunals was brought together under NCAT in January 2014.

The NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal consolidated the work of 22 New South Wales tribunals into a new one-stop shop for specialist tribunal services. The tribunal's divisions deal with a broad and diverse range of matters, from disputes about residential tenancy and building works to guardianship, professional discipline and administrative review of government decisions. The tribunal's broad and diverse jurisdiction and matter types are dealt with in four specialist divisions. The Administrative and Equal Opportunity Division reviews administrative decisions made by New South Wales government agencies and discrimination matters.

The Consumer and Commercial Division resolves a wide range of everyday disputes such as tenancy and other residential property issues and disputes about the supply of goods and services. The Guardianship Division determines applications in relation to people with a decision-making disability and who may require a legally appointed substitute decision-maker. The Occupational Division reviews decisions by government agencies in relation to licensing and complaints concerning professional conduct and discipline. In 2015-16, 69,456 applications were lodged; 82,471 hearings were held over 70 venues across New South Wales; 69,861 applications were finalised; and 158 community consultations, stakeholder group meetings, and tribunal member and staff training events were held.

The Opposition bill would amend the Act so that it applies to internal appeals within NCAT. The Opposition bill also potentially makes the Suitors' Fund available in relation to discontinued NCAT matters. The Government opposes the Opposition bill on the basis that NCAT is designed to provide quick, informal and cheap access to justice. It is a tribunal, not a court, and therefore is a significantly different jurisdiction from the courts to which the Act currently applies. For example, proceedings at NCAT are not subject to the rules of evidence, and parties must usually seek NCAT's permission to be legally represented. In addition, NCAT is a "no cost" jurisdiction, which means each party usually pays their own costs. By comparison, courts are more formal: the rules of evidence apply, parties have a right to legal representation and courts are "cost" jurisdictions, meaning an unsuccessful party usually has to pay both parties' legal costs.

Equivalent Suitors' Fund schemes in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth do not cover internal appeals within tribunals. South Australia does not have equivalent legislation. There are funding implications for government as the extension of the Act to NCAT would likely lead to an increase in Suitors' Fund applications and payments. The proposed amendments in the bill would appear to have broader application to NCAT than what is suggested in the explanatory memorandum and the second reading speech. The Opposition has not consulted with NCAT or other relevant stakeholders on the Opposition bill. The Government therefore opposes the bill.

Visitors

VISITORS

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): I welcome to the gallery students from various New South Wales schools attending the Secondary Schools Leadership Program conducted by the Parliamentary Education unit.

Bills

SUITORS' FUND AMENDMENT (COSTS OF NCAT APPEALS) BILL 2016

Second Reading

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (11:39): I speak in opposition to the Suitors' Fund Amendment (Costs of NCAT Appeals) Bill 2016. The NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] is a one-stop shop for specialist tribunal services in New South Wales. It was first established on 1 January 2014 to consolidate the work previously dealt with by 22 separate tribunals. NCAT retains the specialist expertise and services of those former tribunals, streamlines back-office administration and enhances ease of access by providing a single service gateway to tribunal services. NCAT is committed to timely, fair, high-quality dispute resolution and decision-making and to the continuous improvement of its services.

NCAT deals with a broad range of matters, from tenancy issues and building works to decisions on guardianship and administrative review of government decisions. The tribunal is a broad and diverse jurisdiction. The matters are dealt with in four specialist divisions. The first jurisdiction is the Administrative and Equal Opportunity Division, which administers divisions made by New South Wales government agencies and discrimination matters; community services, State revenue, job and firearm licensing, discrimination, Working With Children Checks, privacy, access to government information, victims services, charity referees, land matters and equal opportunity.

The second jurisdiction is the Consumer and Commercial Division, which resolves a wide range of everyday disputes such as tenancy and other residential property issues and disputes about the supply of goods and services. It looks at consumer claims, commercial matters, home building, motor vehicles, residential communities, dividing fences, retirement villages, strata and community schemes, tenancy and social housing, boarding houses and retail leases. The third jurisdiction is the Guardianship Division, which determines applications about people with a decision-making disability and who may require a legally appointed substitute decision-maker. Matters dealt with under this division may be the appointment of a guardian, appointment of a financial manager, review of enduring guardianship, review of a power of attorney and revocation, medical or dental treatment, clinical trials and review of orders.

The fourth jurisdiction is the Occupational Division, which reviews decisions by government agencies about licensing and complaints concerning professional conduct and discipline. That division looks at taxi licences, real estate agent licences, motor dealers and repairer licences, licensed conveyances, health professionals, legal practitioners, veterinarian practitioners, architects and building professionals. I turn now to what NCAT has done over the past 12 months: 69,456 applications were lodged, 57.9 per cent of all applications were lodged online, 70.1 per cent of applications in the Consumer and Commercial Division were lodged online and 602 internal appeals were lodged from final, ancillary and interlocutory decisions of the tribunal.

There were 82,471 hearings held in over 70 venues across New South Wales, with 34 per cent of hearings in regional areas. There were 69,861 applications finalised, which meant that it achieved an overall clearance ratio of 100.6 per cent. In addition, there were 158 community consultations, stakeholder group meetings, and tribunal member and staff training events. The House would be interested to know that there were more than 2.25 million website page views. The top 10 terms searched on the NCAT website during the last year were hearing notes, fees, appeal, costs, warrant, summons, forms, urgent, bond and tenancy.

NCAT's Facebook had 624 likes and 626 followers on Twitter, and there were 1,974 subscribers to NCAT online alerts and e-newsletters. The bill proposes amendments to extend current law that makes government compensation available to parties to court proceedings who incur legal costs through no fault of their own to parties to NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal proceedings. On 3 October 2016 the member for Liverpool introduced the bill into the Legislative Assembly to amend the Suitors' Fund Act 1951. The Suitors' Fund compensates parties to court proceedings who incur legal costs through no fault of their own.

For example, where there is a successful appeal against a court decision originally in their favour as a result of an error by the original judge or where a hearing is discontinued through no fault of their own, such as the death of the judge. The underlying principle is that parties should not have to pay costs incurred due to some error or misfortune where no responsibility lies with the party. The Suitors' Fund is not for the purpose of assisting parties who experience hardship in paying legal costs. Vulnerable people are assisted by Legal Aid and NCAT fee waiver-reduction policies. The Act applies to appeals heard by the High Court, the Supreme Court, the Land and Environment Court and the District Court.

The Department of Justice accepts applications to the Suitors' Fund concerning appeals from NCAT to those courts. However, the Act does not apply to internal appeals within NCAT, that is, from a decision of a single member of NCAT to the NCAT Appeals Panel. The bill would amend the Act so that it applies to internal appeals within NCAT. The bill also potentially makes the Suitors' Fund available in relation to discontinued NCAT matters. The Government opposes the bill on the basis that NCAT is designed to provide quick, informal and cheap access to justice. It is a tribunal not a court and therefore is a significantly different jurisdiction from the courts to which the Act currently applies.

For example, proceedings at NCAT are not subject to the rules of evidence and parties must usually seek NCAT's permission to be legally represented. In addition, NCAT is a no cost jurisdiction, which means each party usually pays their own costs. By comparison, courts are more formal, the rules of evidence apply, parties have a right to legal representation and courts are costs jurisdictions, meaning an unsuccessful party usually has to pay both parties' legal costs. Equivalent Suitors' Fund schemes in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth do not cover internal appeals within tribunals. South Australia does not have equivalent legislation.

There are funding implications for the Government as the extension of the Act to NCAT would likely lead to an increase in Suitors' Fund applications and payments. The proposed amendments in the bill would appear to have broader application to NCAT than is suggested in the explanatory memorandum and the second reading speech. The Opposition has not consulted with NCAT or other relevant stakeholders on the bill. The Suitors' Fund has always applied to court proceedings. It applies to those higher level courts where often there is a need to assist people because of the costs involved in proceedings in those higher level courts—as mentioned, the District Court, Supreme Court, the High Court and the Land and Environment Court. When proceedings have to be recommenced they can apply for assistance with those costs. I support that. To extend that right to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal is not appropriate. There should not be the same costs as those in higher courts and I oppose the bill.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (11:49): I make a contribution to the private member's Suitors' Fund Amendment (Costs of NCAT Appeals) Bill 2016. As the member for Liverpool is aware, the Government does not support the Opposition's bill. The Opposition bill intends to extend the Suitors' Fund to parties in NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal proceedings. In his second reading speech for this private member's bill the member for Liverpool stated that it was a "blindingly obvious" proposal which the Government should have pursued when it introduced the legislation to establish the NCAT.

Dare I say to the member for Liverpool if it was so blindingly obvious why did Labor support the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Amendment Act 2013 when it was debated in Parliament in 2013? Why did Labor not move an amendment to include this blindingly obvious proposal? Why did Labor not raise this blindingly obvious error during debate of the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Amendment Bill 2013 cognate with the Civil and Administrative Legislation (Repeal and Amendment) Bill 2013? Fortunately for the Government, this bill is a classic Labor screw-up. It is big on ideas but is not across the detail. It does not suggest a way to deliver or implement the bill.

There are funding implications for the bill but does Labor consider them? No. If it sounds good that is good enough for Labor. In 2011, when the Liberal-Nationals Coalition won the election, it inherited from Labor an ad hoc disaster of a tribunal system. That is why NCAT was established. For 16 years Labor sat on its hands and did nothing to address the proliferation of tribunals in New South Wales. In 2011 the Government knew that New South Wales had a problem and took steps to fix the problem. In October 2011 this Government asked the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice to consider opportunities—

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: I have listened patiently to a conga line of Government backbenchers say things like this but it is entirely irrelevant to the bill. My point of order is that the comments that the member is making do not go to the leave of the bill before the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Clarence is being generally relevant to the long title of the bill.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: I acknowledge the interjection by the member for Liverpool.

Mr Paul Lynch: It was a point of order, if you read the standing orders.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: I thank the member for Liverpool for pointing that out. It is the only thing correct in relation to this debate—it is a point of order and not an interjection. For 16 years Labor did nothing to address the proliferation of tribunals in New South Wales.

Mr Paul Lynch: Why are you frightened of voting against it?

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: You did not do anything, which is why we introduced NCAT.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! The member for Clarence will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: In 2011, the Government knew New South Wales had a problem and took steps to fix it. It asked the Legislative Standing Committee on Law and Justice to consider opportunities to consolidate tribunals in New South Wales. In March 2012, the committee published its final report recommending the establishment of a new tribunal consolidating the existing proliferation of tribunals. That is what the Government did. In 2012 the Government introduced the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Bill 2013 to consolidate 22 tribunals and other bodies into a one-stop shop for fast, fair and efficient justice; that is NCAT.

The 22 tribunals include: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Tribunal, Aboriginal Land Council Pecuniary Interest and Disciplinary Tribunal, Administrative Decisions Tribunal, Charity Referees, Chinese Medicine Tribunal, Chiropractic Tribunal, Consumer Trader and Tenancy Tribunal, Dental Tribunal, Guardianship Tribunal, Local Government Pecuniary Interest and Discipline Tribunal, Local Land Boards,

Medical Radiation Practice Tribunal, Medical Tribunal, Nursing and Midwifery Tribunal, Occupational Therapy Tribunal, Optometry Tribunal, Osteopathy Tribunal, Pharmacy Tribunal, Physiotherapy Tribunal, Podiatry Tribunal, Psychology Tribunal and the Vocational Training Appeals Tribunal. The member for Liverpool was oblivious to the extremely wide powers that the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal has to fully waive, partly waive or postpone payment of fees including—

Mr Paul Lynch: Explain section 37, then.

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: Clearly you are not across NCAT. Clause 6.4 of the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Regulations 2013 provides that if the Principal Registrar of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal considers there are special reasons for doing so, the principal registrar may direct any fee be waived wholly or in part. Any fee that has been paid can be refunded. Any fee that has been fully imposed can be postponed wholly or in part. It is clear. Special reasons could be included where proceedings before the tribunal have miscarried.

Further, a number of applications to the NCAT are free to ensure accessibility to all members of the community. Examples of free applications include: under the Antidiscrimination Act 1977 and the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 and all applications for guardianship proceedings. Before I conclude I will take the opportunity to acknowledge the substantial contribution of the President of the NCAT, the Hon. Justice Robertson Wright. Justice Wright has been the president of the NCAT since it commenced on 1 January 2014. When Justice Wright was sworn as a Justice of the Supreme Court he stated:

For many people in New South Wales making application to NCAT will be their sole or principal means of obtaining access to justice. As president of NCAT it is my duty to do all I can to ensure that the tribunal's processes are efficient, transparent and proportionate to the subject matter of the claims.

Through Justice Wright's leadership the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal has provided and continues to provide the people of New South Wales with fast, fair and accessible civil justice. On behalf of the Government I thank Justice Wright and all those who work at the NCAT for their dedication to ensuring access to justice for the people of New South Wales. For the reasons I have outlined in my speech I cannot support this bill.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (11:58): I speak to the Suitors' Fund Amendment (Costs of NCAT Appeals) Bill 2016. As other members of the Government have done, I voice opposition to this bill. The reasons have been clearly articulated by previous speakers to the debate. I add my voice and praise the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, which is a consolidation of the work of 22 New South Wales tribunals into a one-stop shop for specialist tribunal services that deal with a broad and diverse range of different interests. It deals with everything from building works to residential tenancies, the administrative review of government decisions and disputes concerning professional discipline.

The tribunal's broad and diverse jurisdiction and matter types are dealt with in four specialist divisions: first, the Administrative and Equal Opportunity Division, which reviews administrative decisions made by New South Wales government agencies and discrimination matters; second, the Consumer and Commercial Division, which resolves a wide range of everyday disputes, such as tenancy and other residential property issues, and disputes about the supply of goods and services; third, a Guardianship Division which determines applications about people with a decision-making disability and who may require a legally appointed substitute decision-maker; and fourth, an Occupational Division, which reviews decisions by government agencies about licensing and complaints concerning professional conduct and discipline.

I thank the member for Liverpool for introducing this bill, because we do not often discuss NCAT and its important roles in this House. It is important for all members to have a good understanding of the difference between what NCAT and the court system undertake. From the performance of NCAT in the past financial year, 2015-16, we can see how quick and thorough—mostly quick—it has been to resolve disputes. In that period it had 69,456 applications lodged, 82,471 hearings held over 70 venues across New South Wales, 69,861 applications finalised and 158 community consultations, stakeholder group meetings, tribunal member and staff training events. It sounds like our very efficient Government in action. That is an enormous workload and one which has to be dealt with quickly and efficiently by people who really know what they are doing, as NCAT does.

This bill would amend the Act so that it applies to internal appeals within NCAT and also potentially makes the Suitors' Fund available in relation to discontinued NCAT matters. The Government opposes the Opposition bill on the basis that NCAT is designed to provide quick, informal and cheap access to justice. It is a good decision-making process. It is a tribunal, not a court, and therefore it is a significantly different jurisdiction than courts to which the Act currently applies. For example, proceedings at NCAT are not subject to the rules of evidence and parties must usually seek the permission of NCAT to be legally represented. In addition, NCAT is a no-cost jurisdiction, which means each party usually pays their own costs.

By comparison, courts are more formal, the rules of evidence apply and parties have a right to legal representation. Courts are cost jurisdictions, meaning an unsuccessful party usually has to pay both parties' legal costs. I am stating the bleeding obvious which we all know, but I am defining where this legislation is intended to go and where we should be drawing the line in the sand in relation to the differences between the court system and NCAT, which it is important to enunciate. People need to have a clear and genuine understanding of the very different powers and the separations between those particular jurisdictions. The courts are very quick to deal with alleged criminals.

I relate an area of legal proceedings in my electorate where we are trying to find a different way forward. Cowra in my electorate of Cootamundra has quite a lot of youth incarceration in areas that are a long way from the offender's home. There is also a large amount of Indigenous incarceration, which I will discuss in the next couple of minutes. For the past three years, together with Dr Jill Guthrie from the Australian National University, Professor Mick Dodson and Cowra Shire Council, we have been discussing the potential to proceed with a Justice Reinvestment Program for the township of Cowra. Cowra has a relatively high Indigenous population and when young people are sent out of town to be incarcerated, mostly for crimes that could be dealt with in a local community environment, with the proper facilities at hand we believe that we can have a good result for those young people and their families.

It is very distressing having to leave your local community due to incarceration, particularly from Cowra. Cowra is not entirely isolated but it is a fair distance without public transport for families to visit young people who have been incarcerated a long way away. I am very proud to have been a member of the committee that has been looking into this matter for the past three years. I am a big supporter of a Justice Reinvestment Program for Cowra. The former and current Attorneys General have certainly been very accommodating and available for me to speak to about this matter which staff in the department are currently investigating. We want to see a Justice Reinvestment Program in the Cowra community.

I know that these things do not happen overnight but I refer members to my private member's statement about this matter on 20 October 2015 and I encourage people to read it if they want to understand how we are re-thinking the justice system in rural New South Wales, particularly in my electorate of Cootamundra. When you have local government, the State member of Parliament and the community on board to see a change in this area then you have got what it takes for something like this to proceed. Once again I encourage the Government to come on board, fund a pilot project for the Cowra Justice Reinvestment Program so that there is a local option available for our young people who fall foul of the law and we understand its consequences. I am very passionate about this matter and I would like to see it succeed during my time as the member for Cootamundra. I thank the House for allowing me to make that brief detour from the leave of the bill.

The reasons this legislation does not suit NCAT are because when we look at equivalent suitors' fund schemes in Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania, Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory and the Commonwealth, we see they do not cover internal appeals within tribunals. South Australia does not have equivalent legislation. There are funding implications for government, as the extension of the Act to NCAT would likely lead to an increase in Suitors' Fund applications and payments. I have been advised by people whose legal knowledge is broader than my own that the proposed amendments in the bill appear to have broader application to NCAT than what is suggested by the explanatory memorandum and second reading speech.

I note that the Opposition has not consulted with NCAT or other relevant stakeholders on the Opposition's bill. For all of those reasons I believe that it is important that as a government we act responsibly in this particular space. I commend Justice Reinvestment to the Government as a way forward for the young people who are currently facing levels of incarceration in other towns and cities that could be provided at home, and. I commend a pilot program for Cowra. Once again I reinforce that the Government cannot support this particular piece of legislation.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (12:08): I refer to the Suitors' Fund Amendment (Costs of NCAT Appeals) Bill 2016 introduced by the member for Liverpool. It is quite clear from the overview of the bill that it is somewhat complicated, but the principles being applied certainly are not. This is about making the use of the law equitable. I am aware that the people who make best use of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT], for example, are those who do not have other resources to take action in other courts to pursue remedy in some other way. Many people are deterred from pursuing justice through the NCAT because they do not have the resources. While the amendment is quite technical, this is a good bill that should be supported.

When a question of law is successfully appealed in the Land and Environment Court, Industrial Relations Commission, District Court, Supreme Court or High Court, the respondent to the appeal—that is, the person who lost—can have some of his or her costs paid. If they are ordered to pay the appellant's costs an indemnity can meet some of that liability. The idea is that the courts should get the law right in the first place and if they get it wrong

the litigants should not be penalised. It is only a partial remedy for litigants because the amount of assistance is capped at \$10,000 for New South Wales courts and \$20,000 for the High Court.

Debate interrupted.

Motions

NORTH COAST FLOODS

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:11): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates the State Emergency Service volunteers, and all other volunteers and emergency services personnel, on providing assistance to victims of the North Coast floods.
- (2) Offers condolences to the families and friends of those who have lost their life as a result of the North Coast floods.
- (3) Supports efforts to help northern New South Wales recover from the floods and notes the appointment of Mr Euan Ferguson as the recovery coordinator.
- (4) Commends and thanks the members who volunteer their time, effort and skill, and who show such bravery in times of crisis, for the benefit of others.

This motion give us an opportunity to stand shoulder to shoulder with those North Coast communities that have been subject to such adversity in the past week. This tragedy, like others which sadly befall communities across our country from time to time, has had a huge impact. Such tragedies devastate not only the physical structure of towns but also the morale of communities due to loss of life. This motion gives us the opportunity to acknowledge those who demonstrate the best of human nature in their response to such calamities: those who volunteer their time, effort, skill and training to reach out to others, help those in need and protect those at risk, sometimes by putting themselves at risk. It is important that we take this time to debate this motion and send a strong message of support to those who have suffered and of recognition, acknowledgement and sincere thanks to those who assisted so much.

The movement of ex-Tropical Cyclone Debbie on 30 and 31 March resulted in enormous rainfall across North Coast catchments. It is extraordinary to think that in some locations up to 900 millimetres of rain fell in a day. It inevitably caused devastation downstream. It was always suspected that the next tropical cyclone would bring rain and perhaps some flooding, yet the scale of it was unexpected. The Tweed, Richmond and Wilson rivers and the Brunswick River experienced major flooding. As usual, volunteers and employees from organisations including the State Emergency Service [SES], the police, the Rural Fire Service, the ambulance service and several other agencies responded quickly, professionally and bravely. The New South Wales SES operations centre received 10,185 phone calls between 28 March and 5 April and has responded to 2,886 requests for assistance since the event began. As I said yesterday, during the event a remarkable 491 flood rescue activations were undertaken. That is a great achievement bearing in mind the risk, skill and courage involved.

The SES continues to provide support and assistance to flood-affected communities in conjunction with Fire and Rescue NSW, the NSW Rural Fire Service, the Ambulance Service of NSW and the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association. Members of the South Australian SES have also come to help. Mr Euan Ferguson has been appointed as the recovery coordinator for the floods. He has more than 40 years' experience in emergency services, including in previous roles as Chief Officer and Chief Executive Officer of the South Australian Country Fire Service and Chief Officer of the Victorian Country Fire Service. Recovery centres are being established in Lismore and Murwillumbah. My notes say they will open on Thursday at noon, which is around about now. I hope they are now offering assistance to the many people who need help. The centres will provide a one-stop shop for affected residents, businesses and farmers to help them access the support and information they need to recover from this flood event.

All members are fortunate to have many people within their communities who work tirelessly and selflessly to help others in need. When faced with a crisis such as the North Coast floods those people volunteer their time, effort and skill to look after others who need help. In my community and the wider region, the SES units at Blacktown, Penrith and Hawkesbury also rescue people from floods on occasion. We know the Hawkesbury and Nepean Valley is subject to a substantial flood risk, just like many other parts of the State. Those SES workers rarely get the recognition they deserve, but they are the heart and soul of our communities. They prepare in good times to be ready in bad times. They do enormous amounts of training and attend to lots of routine things that are not particularly exciting so that they can fine-tune their skills. Their teamwork is rehearsed and well coordinated so that they can protect our communities when the need arises.

Sadly, six people have died as a direct result of the floods on the North Coast. Yesterday we heard about the passing away of Stephanie King and two of her children, aged seven and 11, in the Tweed River. That great

tragedy has no doubt reverberated through North Coast communities. They are places where everybody knows each other, as people often do in country towns. Everybody is touched in one way or another by such tragedies. It is a sad reminder of the dangers of natural disasters and the courage of those who respond to them. They are prepared to go out in the dark, in the wind and rain, to meet the challenges that nature throws at them and reach out their hands to protect others. I hope we will all come together to send a strong message of support to our North Coast communities, offer our condolences to those who lost loved ones in these tragedies and give our sincere and lasting thanks to those who stand up when we need them to.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:18): I join with the member for Riverstone and other Government members in supporting this motion regarding the North Coast floods, the loss of life and livelihood, and the recovery process that is under way. As proud Australians and representatives in this Chamber we know the importance of mateship during these times. No matter where we live, our hearts, thoughts and prayers go out to all North Coast families and communities, especially those who have lost loved ones. An unprecedented amount of rain was dumped in a short amount of time over a vast area on the North Coast as a result of ex-Tropical Cyclone Debbie and the subsequent front that came from the south, and the catchments could not cope.

I thank the member for Riverstone for his motion. We need to place on record our sincere thanks to those people who left their loved ones and homes to go and help these people who were in desperate need—State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Service volunteers. We should not forget the members of the NSW Police Force, the Ambulance Service of NSW, St John Ambulance NSW and Fire and Rescue NSW, who have gone above and beyond what they do in their normal line of duty. Everyone involved has made a tremendous effort. We also thank the families left behind for letting their loved ones volunteer and also the very understanding employers and business owners for releasing their employees to help these people.

I have said before in this place, and I will continue to say it whether or not I am the shadow Minister for Emergency Services, but as the member for Fairfield, we must always acknowledge those people who put their lives on the line for the betterment of the community. Over the next few months primary producers such as dairy farmers and those with livestock will be doing it tough as a result of what has occurred on the North Coast. Other farmers will have to clear and re-level land in order to replant crops so that they can get back on their feet. This effort will not take a day; it will take months. Families will also be psychologically impacted because this is a period of grief. It will be a particularly harrowing time for those who have lost loved ones—to date six deaths have been confirmed.

As the member for Riverstone said, our hearts bleed for the King family on the tragic loss of Stephanie and her two children. We cannot possibly imagine what was going through Stephanie King's mind at that time. It sends shivers down my spine to talk about this. To say the least, it is harrowing. The impacts of these floods will also be felt for months by local businesses that are struggling under the burden of financial pressures. They too need to get back on their feet, and they will. As was mentioned in debate on the motion accorded priority on Tuesday, the Federal and State governments have triggered support for these people to get back on their feet. We need to make sure that the victims of ex-Tropical Cyclone Debbie realise that we are standing with them. I note that the member for Ballina is in the Chamber. The offices of the member for Tweed and the member for Lismore have also been inundated with water and this is adding to their difficulties. Those three members are doing their utmost to support their constituents, and our thoughts go out to them as well.

I am constantly disappointed, and I am sure other members as well, that people do not heed the simple messages about entering floodwaters. As interesting as floodwaters may seem from the sideline, they are very dangerous. Indeed, one never knows where these unpredictable and unnatural currents will lead. Unlike at a beach where one can spot a rip, we do not know what lurks underneath these torrents of floodwater—debris or tree matter. Floodwaters carry many different agents such as chemicals and can result in outbreaks of disease. But, unfortunately, people still continue to put not only their lives but also the lives of the volunteers who have to go out and save them at risk. I repeat, those on this side of the House thank the member for Riverstone for moving this motion. As a community we are at a loss as to what has happened. Our prayers and thoughts go out to the entire North Coast community.

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (12:25): This is a unique Thursday with all sides of this House coming together in support of this motion. I congratulate the member for Riverstone for moving this motion and I commend the member for Fairfield for his heartfelt comments. I note that the member for Ballina is in the Chamber. The member for Tweed and the member for Lismore are not at Parliament this week because they are dealing with such difficult circumstances. They are dealing with incredible inundation and tragic loss of life. I thank the State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Service volunteers. I also thank the police who have faced the most harrowing of situations, some not normally faced in their line of duty.

The heartfelt prayers and thoughts of all at the New South Wales Parliament are with the entire North Coast community and with those in Queensland who face their own challenges today at Rockhampton.

Importantly, we as members of Parliament have our own State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Service. Over the past week volunteers have been travelling back and forward to those areas. Indeed, volunteers from across the Shoalhaven drove fire appliances to Lismore and undertook clean-up duties in the central business district of Lismore whilst they were there.

Those volunteers were: Mark Coombe, David Oddy, Geoffrey Herman, Hayden Murrie, Bill Welch, Terry Burke, Reece White, Ron Clarke, Russell Bell and Christina Rainford. We thank you for everything you have done for our colleagues and friends on the North Coast. Five volunteers from the Nowra unit of the State Emergency Service have been carrying out sandbagging and boating operations, flood-related and tree work in Lismore, Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah. Four of those five volunteers are still there helping out. Those volunteers were Larry Coulthart, Bob Williamson, Alex Kitto, Pauline Kitto and Luke Siedar, who has since returned.

Three volunteers from the Ulladulla unit of the State Emergency Service were deployed to Tweed Heads, including an advanced flood rescue operator, and were involved in a flood rescue. Those volunteers, who have now returned, were Bill Frazer, Geoff Bassford and Vicki Hunt. The St Georges Basin unit of the State Emergency Service has also made itself available. It is at times such as this that State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Service volunteers make themselves available and, as the member for Fairfield said, they have sympathetic employers who allow them to go. I pay tribute to my staff member Adam Carney. He has not been to the North Coast this week, but he is a swift water rescue expert in the State Emergency Service. Adam undertakes a lot of training to enable him to participate in events such as these.

In the Shoalhaven we are prone to floods and bushfires and our troops are very well trained. I have been associated with them for a long time now and I know exactly what they have to do. I congratulate them in general terms for everything they continue to do. I again congratulate the member for Riverstone for everything he has conveyed in his heartfelt comments to this House. I reiterate how pleased I am to see members coming together in a bipartisan way, rather than talking about the sometimes inconsequential and trivial matters that we sometimes talk about on Thursdays. Such comments are important. This motion is important; it is symbolic of the way that all members in the New South Wales Parliament feel about those who are suffering throughout this State. It is crucial that we come together to share our love, our thoughts and prayers with them.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (12:29): I thank the member for Riverstone and all members of the House who have supported this priority motion. I echo the comments of the member for South Coast that all members are genuinely concerned and horrified about the impact that Cyclone Debbie has had in Queensland and on the people in my region. I have spoken about this issue several times this week and I echo what has been said in the House and in the other place about the resilience of our communities, the sense of community and the support provided on the ground by emergency services, volunteers and all areas of government. The cooperation and assistance is amazing.

I mention particularly the two State Emergency Service controllers in my electorate: Mike Davison-Long, who is the SES Controller in Byron shire, and Gerry Burnage, who is the SES controller in Ballina. They have been very good at giving me updates several times a day for the past week. The work of the volunteers has been incredible. I also mention Lieutenant Wesley Bust, who is the leader of the Salvation Army in Ballina. The Salvation Army has been doing wonderful work. I am told that in Ballina alone it provided more than 600 meals in the evacuation centre, mainly for the community of Cabbage Tree Island. Some 180 people were evacuated from the island and 85 came to the evacuation centre. I mention also the police, the NSW Rural Fire Service and everyone else working on the ground.

I have met with staff of the Minister for Emergency Services, who have been most cooperative in providing all the information that I sought. I have spoken also to the Federal Minister for Justice, the Hon. Michael Keenan. Some people in my community have been very upset about the decision that residents of Lismore and Tweed would be eligible to receive the Disaster Recovery Payment, but not residents of the other four local government areas. Today I spoke to Euan Ferguson, who advised me that the Federal Government needs to gather information from those areas. He assured me that they will prioritise that information gathering this afternoon.

I assure my constituents that there is nothing to see here; there is nothing sinister. We would hate to think anyone would play politics in this situation. I urge Minister Grant to ensure that the process moves forward expeditiously. I have staff and family in Mullumbimby who were inundated and who are up to their necks in water. The communities of Ocean Shores, Billinudgel, Wilsons Creek and South Golden Beach were devastated—and I have photographs to prove it, which I am happy to show anyone. The community is hopeful that they will be eligible for the Disaster Recovery Payment if they meet the criteria. I thank the House, but remind members that there is still plenty of work to do in the giant clean-up.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:33): Queensland and New South Wales have copped the brunt of Tropical Cyclone Debbie. The result has been rainfall totalling more than 900 millimetres in parts of northern New South Wales and major flooding across three river basins, including the Tweed, Richmond and Wilsons rivers, and the Brunswick River. Floodwaters are now receding, although minor flood warnings remain in place for the Richmond River and Weir River, and moderate flood warnings are in place for the Moonie River in Queensland. The NSW State Emergency Service [SES] has done an amazing job yet again. It issued four evacuation warnings, 11 evacuation orders and 21 emergency alerts at various stages throughout this event, which at one point impacted more than 25,000 residents in areas such as Lismore, the Tweed and Murwillumbah.

I pay tribute to the member for Tweed and the member for Lismore, who are not in the Chamber today because they are in their electorates helping out the best they can. An evacuation order remains in place for approximately 330 people. High-voltage electricity lines continue to pose a danger, and Essential Energy is undertaking door-to-door assessments. As has been articulated previously, we implore people not to cross flooded roads or rivers; it is just too dangerous. Tragically, six people have lost their lives in accidental circumstances during this event. Floodwaters can change and move incredibly quickly, and we would hate to see any more loss of life. The New South Wales SES operations centre received in excess of 10,000 phone calls between 28 March and 6 April, and it has responded to 2,887 requests for assistance since the event began. A total of 493 flood rescue activations have occurred and approximately 1,200 SES members have been operationally active across the State during this period.

Along with the member for South Coast, I am also extremely proud to note that two volunteers from the SES at Gosford and Erina in my electorate travelled to Lismore to assist. They took with them a vital piece of equipment that was not available in Lismore: The Arkangel is an inflatable boat that assists in the rescue of people from their flooded homes and businesses. Both Toby and Phill have done an amazing job, as has the huge contingent of SES volunteers from around the State. But as the member for South Coast and others have acknowledged, it is not just about the SES. NSW Rural Fire Service [RFS] and Fire and Rescue NSW volunteers and police have worked in incredibly difficult circumstances, on occasion putting their lives at risk to help others and to protect our community.

Approximately 100 people remain isolated around the Richmond-Tweed region, and we want them to stay safe. Operations are now transitioning from a response phase to a recovery phase as floodwaters continue to subside and the full impact of the damage is being assessed. Although the North Coast is expected to continue to receive rainfall over the next few days, no significant falls are predicted and the impact is expected to be minimal. Again, I thank the SES, RFS, Fire and Rescue NSW and the NSW Police Force, who have done an amazing job. To date, they have incurred more than \$11 million in costs in responding to the floods. That includes accommodation for up to 500 emergency services personnel, personal protective equipment, sandbagging, tarpaulins, and providing helicopters, air appliances and temporary staff at SES operation centres. The NSW State Emergency Service continues to provide support and assistance to flood-affected communities in conjunction with Fire and Rescue NSW, the NSW Rural Fire Service, NSW Ambulance and the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association. I commend all the fantastic volunteers, and thank those from the Gosford SES.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (12:37): From time to time Mother Nature teaches us a lesson: We cannot ignore her. Tropical Cyclone Debbie has definitely taught us that we must be wary of Mother Nature when she is at her worst. In the aftermath of the disaster, the Government and volunteer agencies undertook immediate response and relief activities to support the communities affected. I make special mention of the NSW State Emergency Service [SES]. The SES has again proven to be invaluable in an emergency situation—which is not to lessen the roles played by the other emergency services, together with the police and armed forces. Tropical Cyclone Debbie dropped 900 millimetres of water in an hour—that is three feet of water. As the member for Clarence said, he lives on top of a hill and he knew it was going to be big when his garage filled with water.

It was a devastating event, but the people of the Northern Rivers are resilient; they have been through it before, and I am sure they will go through it again. We must rally round to ensure they have all the support they need. In that regard, the SES must have the equipment needed to assist those communities. The fast rescue boats are getting long in the tooth and there is no program to replace them. Of course, the boats are only used on occasions such as this, when there is a tropical cyclone or flood of some description, and after that it may be several years before they are called upon again. The SES uses them for training but they are not needed on a regular basis. The State fleet is now 17 or 18 years old and it needs to be replaced. I am sure that, with the Opposition's help, the Government will put in place a replacement program for that equipment.

A strong cold front combined with an upper trough associated with ex-Tropical Cyclone Debbie moved through New South Wales between 30 and 31 March 2017. This resulted in a total rainfall of up to 900 millimetres in the northern area of New South Wales. Major flooding was experienced in three river basins in New South Wales, including the Tweed River, the Richmond and Wilsons rivers, and Brunswick River. Floodwaters are

receding, although a minor flood warning remains in place for the Richmond River and the Weir River and there is a moderate flood warning for the Moonie River in Queensland, which can impact north-west New South Wales.

I feel for the people of northern New South Wales. As I said, they have been through events such as this before and undoubtedly they will go through them again. It will be a long recovery, but, as has been proven in the past, they are a resilient mob up north and, with our support, they will bounce back. However, in the next couple of months—probably the next couple of years—we must remember that they will be in recovery. I cannot imagine what it would be like to lose every single thing in your house, or to experience the inundation of your house and the resulting stench and mould. We must support those communities, and I do so wholeheartedly as the member for Heathcote.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:41): By leave: I speak in support of the motion and I acknowledge my two colleagues who are in their electorates doing what they can for their communities: the member for Tweed and the member for Lismore. As has been mentioned, the electorate office of the member for Lismore was inundated and he remains in Lismore helping his community. Severe weather occurred in northern New South Wales and the Northern Rivers area when a strong cold front combined with an upper trough associated with ex-Tropical Cyclone Debbie moved through New South Wales between 30 and 31 March. This resulted in rainfall of up to 900 millimetres in areas of northern New South Wales. Major flooding was experienced across three river basins in New South Wales, including the Tweed River, the Richmond and Wilsons rivers, and Brunswick River. The area has been described as looking like a war zone.

The NSW State Emergency Service [SES] issued four evacuation warnings, 11 evacuation orders and 21 emergency alerts at various stages throughout this event, which at one point impacted more than 25,000 residents in areas such as Lismore, Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah. The floods impacted not only the community but also primary producers and small businesses who employ local residents. It is not just a case of areas flooding and then the floodwaters receding. Businesses have been destroyed, jobs have been lost and primary producers have been wiped out, and they all need our assistance. I was pleased to hear that the Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner will do all it can to assist small businesses in the area.

In the aftermath of a disaster, a number of immediate response and relief activities are undertaken by government and volunteer agencies to support affected communities. Recovery is being managed at a regional level, bringing all six local government areas to the table in a single recovery committee chaired by the recovery coordinator, Mr Euan Ferguson, who has also been meeting with mayors and local members individually. Providing assistance are members of the SES and the Rural Fire Service [RFS] from the Myall Lakes electorate and the mid-coast region. They have been working hard to clean up Lismore after the area was devastated by flooding.

From the mid-coast area, 42 people, 10 tankers, a bulk water tanker and two command vehicles have been sent to assist with recovery efforts. The RFS brigades assisting from my area include brigades from Pacific Palms, Tuncurry, Marlee and Mitchells Island, and from neighbouring areas—including areas that were once part of the Myall Lakes electorate—there are brigades from Limeburners Creek, Pindimar and Booral, and from Port Macquarie, Lake Cathie, Kings Creek and Lake Innes in the north. As was said earlier, we take our hats off to volunteers and their families. At times like this, volunteers put up their hand to help and advance towards danger while the rest of us retreat from it. The volunteers have the support of their families and their employers, who allow them to go. I congratulate them all. I congratulate those volunteers from my electorate who put up their hand and went to help in Lismore. If people in the area are listening to this parliamentary broadcast they will know that the whole New South Wales Parliament supports them and the volunteers. We hope those communities will recover quickly.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (12:45): By leave: I support the motion moved by the member for Riverstone and I recognise the dedicated State Emergency Service [SES] volunteers across the State, particularly those on the North Coast who are providing assistance following the recent floods. The floods were associated with ex-Tropical Cyclone Debbie, which moved through New South Wales between 30 and 31 March this year. This resulted in rainfall totalling up to 900 millimetres across northern New South Wales. The results of the storms and flooding were devastating to local communities, and evacuation orders are still in place for 330 people. Flood warnings also remain in place.

I commend all SES workers from the North Coast region. I also thank members of the Sutherland Shire SES, Liverpool SES and SES Sydney Southern Region. Those volunteers drove more than 10 hours to the flood-ravaged town of Lismore to assist with flood rescues and to lend support after the town was inundated by floodwaters when the levee gave way. The volunteers have been deployed as a flood rescue team, along with many other SES volunteers and emergency services personnel, to the SES Richmond Tweed Region, where rescue and recovery efforts are underway following Cyclone Debbie.

I am sure the Sutherland unit took its new vehicles—and I am sure it was relieved to have some new equipment to take. The recent event was timely as just last month the member for Heathcote and I joined the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services in handing over two new medium and light storm emergency response vehicles to the SES Sutherland unit. The Government provided \$387,000 to help the unit purchase them. The Isuzu Medium Storm Vehicle, in particular, is used for flood and storm response, and we got to have a good look at it. It will allow the SES to respond to storm events in a much more organised manner as the vehicles are well fitted out.

My community recently experienced some storms, and we were lucky that no lives were lost. I extend my deepest sympathies, as I know do all members in this Chamber, to the families and friends of those who lost their lives in the recent storms. The local floods caused evacuations and property damage. Streets were cut off and there was traffic congestion. Residents of Chipping Norton and Moorebank will be relieved to know the Government will be funding some drainage and flood mitigation works on Newbridge Road in Chipping Norton to reduce flooding events so that we do not have a similar experience in the future. The work will start very soon and will include removing and replacing three drainage pipes, increasing the capacity of the existing drainage, installing rock-fill barriers to stabilise the embankment, setting up a coffer dam in the river, and establishing a site compound in the reserve. This work will make a difference because it will mean that traffic can keep moving, allowing our communities to retain some sense of stability and normality during these events. We have had trouble dealing with them for far too long.

I was also thrilled recently to announce \$5,000 for the Liverpool SES to help fix its headquarters and make it nice for volunteers. Volunteers give of their time willingly, and spend many hours training. They go out in all kinds of weather. When we are rugged up at home, they are out helping the community. We thank them for that. We thank their employers and their families for enabling them to do their work. While the rest of us stay put, our SES volunteers put on their wet-weather gear and head out, risking their lives to help others. We thank them for that. I thank the House for its indulgence in giving me leave to speak on the motion.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:50): By leave: I appreciate the contributions of all members who spoke in this debate and of course I support the State Emergency Service. But I saw something most infuriating on Monday night when I was watching the television news. The Premier and the Prime Minister said repeatedly, "Don't drive through floodwater " and the very next shot on the news was of a car driving through floodwater. The media must take responsibility for some of the mixed messages they send. I would like to see them ban completely the use of images of cars driving through floodwater in order to support the spirit of this motion.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (12:50): In reply: I acknowledge the contributions of the shadow Minister, the member for Fairfield, and the members for Ballina, for Terrigal, for Heathcote, for Myall Lakes, for Holsworthy and for Cessnock. It is heartening to see widespread support for those communities affected by this tragedy. I am sure that that message will bring some hope to those who are affected and who are struggling. I acknowledge briefly some of the issues raised during the debate. I am glad that we were reminded that volunteers have come from all parts of the State—and indeed interstate—to help out, as often happens in times of tragedy. It is not just local volunteers but also those from units across the State—and indeed interstate—who come to lend assistance.

I acknowledge also the employers of volunteers who willingly release their employees to do what is needed for their communities. Employers wear that, and we thank them for doing so. I acknowledge the natural and reasonable concern raised by the member for Ballina that those local government areas that have been impacted but have not yet been declared disaster zones should be assessed as soon as possible, with decisions made as expeditiously as possible. I am sure that the Minister for Emergency Services, Troy Grant, will look to do exactly that as soon as information is available.

I commend the members for Lismore and for Tweed for the way they have responded to this event and looked after their communities in the past few days. Returning to the substance of the motion, I thank sincerely from the bottom of my heart, and on behalf of every member in this Chamber, those who don whatever colour uniform it is—the yellow, the orange, the blue or the white—and go out in times of distress and danger, at risk to themselves, to help others in their community. The guys and girls who do that are champions. Thank you.

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

Motion agreed to.

CAMDEN LOCAL AREA COMMAND

Debate resumed from 30 March 2017.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (12:54): The member for Wollondilly moved this motion and, he said last week, by the time it came before the House the matter was well on the way to being resolved. I commended all those involved in the process, but today I acknowledge our police and the wonderful job they do. The Camden Show was held last weekend. It is the biggest event on the Camden calendar, with something like 50,000 people attending each day. The police not only did a wonderful job policing the event; they won the best exhibit. I acknowledge the outstanding job they do and look forward to working with them in the future. I commend outgoing Commissioner Scipione for his great work and welcome incoming Commissioner Fuller. I know he has done a tremendous job in all his roles in the force, up to and including that of deputy commissioner. I look forward to working with him in his capacity as Commissioner of Police.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (12:55): In reply: I thank the member for Fairfield for his contribution to the debate—I know that the member for Oatley wanted to speak as he, too, is most supportive. The member for Camden and I have worked with our local police to deliver this result. We had an issue originally but it is fantastic that we now have 10 new police officers, which is what the force wanted. I thank Local Area Commander Ward Hanson, local police officers Daniel Ryder and Rod Sheraton, Deputy Commissioner Frank Mennilli, former Commissioner of Police Andrew Scipione and all those involved in achieving this outcome, including the Police Association.

This is a great result. I thank the new police commissioner, Mick Fuller, on what will no doubt be a great career. He has the experience and the runs on the board. We look forward to working with him into the future. As local members, we all come to this place to achieve things for our community. As stated previously, our community is growing at a rate of knots. More than 12,000 people have moved into the area recently and the extra 10 police officers will ensure the safety of the community well into the future. There were a few detractors who said that this was not going to happen—and, indeed, that it has not happened. But it has: The 10 police are there. I was told by someone who shall remain nameless that the Police Association did not support us. The association did support us and I thank the association for its press release, which I shall read onto the record. It states:

Monday, 6 March 2017

MORE POLICE FOR CAMDEN:

WIN FOR THE COMMUNITY AND LOCAL POLICE

The Police Association of NSW (PANSW), today welcomed the commitment from NSW Police Force (NSWPF) hierarchy to address critical police shortages in Camden and Wollondilly by delivering more police to the Camden Local Area Command.

At a Branch Meeting held this afternoon, the Camden Branch of the PANSW voted to accept the offer of 10 extra frontline police and to cease industrial action.

We are pleased the NSWPF hierarchy decided to show leadership and stand with local police and the Camden community by allocating the police numbers needed and we recognise Assistant Commissioner Frank Mennilli for his efforts on this issue.

The PANSW acknowledges the Member for Camden, The Hon. Chris Patterson MP for his strong advocacy in securing this outcome and the Member for Wollondilly, The Hon. Jai Rowell, MP for his ongoing support of local police.

We commend both on recognising the urgent need for more police in this fast growing region. Camden LAC currently has a population of approximately 130,000 people covering both Camden LGA and Wollondilly LGA.

Police Association President, Scott Weber, said, "Ten extra frontline police will help fill additional first response positions. Camden LAC has an average response time per job of in excess of 15 minutes. The region average is approximately 9 minutes per job.

We have taken up the cause on behalf of our members who have consistently raised the alarm from the frontline, concerning the urgent need for more police.

Local police care deeply about the Wollondilly and Camden communities and many live and work in this area. The Camden Branch of the PANSW has been tireless in their efforts fighting for extra police numbers so they can protect the local community and look after themselves.

It's been a long road and the Branch have remained united and acted professionally and fairly in their claims for more staff throughout staffing submissions, meetings with Region Commanders and lobbying local politicians.

The Branch has been calling for more staff for over two years and their patience has been rewarded. We thank NSW Camden Branch Chairperson, Daniel Ryder who dedicated a lot of his own time to the campaign and securing this outcome for members.

The extra police are urgently needed now and we will continue to work with NSWPF hierarchy to deliver the 10 positions immediately.

Like the member for Camden said, the association acted professionally. It was absolutely fantastic. This is a great win for our local communities of Wollondilly and Camden.

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

Motion agreed to.

GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY BAN ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:59): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes Government advertisements claiming that greyhound racing is legal in only eight countries.
- (2) Notes that information provided to budget estimates committees shows that greyhound racing is conducted in 21 countries.
- (3) Calls on the Deputy Premier to be transparent and provide accurate information to the community about the details of the global and local greyhound industry.

Last July Premier Baird ripped the heart out of many constituents of the Wallsend and Cessnock electorates—and across the State—when it was announced that the greyhound industry would be closed down permanently in July 2017. Without any proper consultation and with flimsy justification, people involved in the industry would have been stripped of their livelihoods. In my electorate, the closure of The Gardens racetrack would have cost the local economy \$17.69 million every year. More than 6,000 individuals are directly involved with the industry in one way or another. That is 6,000 people whose livelihoods would have been impacted by the captain's call.

The decision taken by the former Premier was indefensible. What is worse, Mike Baird spent more than one and a half million dollars defending a decision he ultimately backed away from. That money should have gone to schools and hospitals, but the Government spent taxpayers' money on defending its own bad decision. In the Government-funded propaganda entitled "What's the real cost of greyhound racing?" the Government stated a number of reasons why industry reform was not a realistic option: the special commission found the animal welfare issues so significant and widespread, the resistance to implement reform so pervasive, and the ability to enforce reform so difficult, that it was highly unlikely the greyhound racing industry could be reformed.

The Government stated it was a position supported around the world, with commercial greyhound racing legally permitted in only eight countries. That is a blatant lie. On 6 October last year, at a supplementary budget estimates hearing, the Government's advertising claim that greyhound racing was legal in only eight countries was exposed as misleading. The Hon. Lynda Voltz, MLC, grilled bureaucrats from the Department of Justice about the Government's propaganda defending the greyhound racing ban and the statement that it was a sport that was legal in only eight countries. Under sustained questioning by Ms Voltz, Office of Racing Executive Director Micheil Brodie admitted that the information in the Government's advertising propaganda was incorrect and that greyhound racing was, in fact, conducted in 21 countries around the world. The Government's advertising was misleading and insulting. A creative brief drafted by the Justice department's strategic communications director was obtained and published by the *Daily Telegraph*. It reported:

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

When Brenton Scott, the chief executive of the Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association was interviewed by Guardian Australia, he stated:

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

The hundreds of people that I spoke to during this debacle urged me to oppose the greyhound racing ban. They were compassionate, intelligent people who felt let down by the Government. It bewilders me that Mike Baird thought it was acceptable to spend one and a half million dollars justifying an unjustifiable decision. It seems the former Premier was operating under a set of alternative facts. I call on the Government to be transparent and provide accurate information to the community about the global and local greyhound racing industry. How can it justify the misleading facts and condescending attitude of bureaucrats towards those involved in the industry? How can it justify spending one and a half million dollars vilifying thousands of honest, hard-working people who love their dogs and just want them to race?

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (13:08): I speak to the motion. With regard to the advertising, as a Government we are damned if we do and damned if we do not. I believe the Government must advertise and I am happy it did advertise when the decision was made to close the industry. It is opportune that the member's motion is being debated in the same week as the legislation has been repealed. I note that the member for Wallsend has amended point three of the motion to replace "the Deputy Premier" with "the Government". The Government will not vote against the motion.

A decision was made by Government, that decision was wrong and it has acknowledged publicly that the decision was wrong. At the time I supported that decision. I am not blaming anybody else for it. It is not that I was right and my colleagues were wrong, I supported the Government and I accept the consequences of that decision. As a collective the Government has acknowledged it was a rushed decision. I am glad I had the opportunity to stand with my colleagues this week to reverse the decision. There are reforms in place that will enable the industry to survive.

Mr Jai Rowell: Good safeguards.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: I acknowledge the interjection by the member for Wollondilly. The bill includes safeguards to ensure the individual who perpetrates the act is prosecuted and not the industry as a whole. It will give the industry an opportunity to succeed. That is what we would like to see. When I spoke to that bill on Tuesday night I acknowledged the people in my electorate. The member for Wollondilly will do the same. I acknowledge the good people in the industry, which is in the majority of the mums, dads, nans and pops who have dogs that are treated as if they are their own children and they make sure they are well fed. One lady told me she was very hurt by the decision. Her dog slept at the foot of her bed and the reason she got out of bed in the morning was to walk her dog. We have acknowledged that a mistake was made and we are now working together to ensure the good of the industry and collectively give it every opportunity to survive with restraints in place. We will ensure that those who are involved in animal cruelty, and do not have the animal's best interest at heart, will be dealt with by the letter of the law and have the book thrown at them.

When the Government announced the closure the community at large said, "We think the Government got it wrong but we know the industry is in dire need of reform." They wanted the Government to change its decision and put safeguards in place to ensure the welfare of the animals and the viability of the industry and its support industries. The best way to ensure the viability of support industries is to ensure there is a strong main industry. I thank members of the House who unanimously supported the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017, bar a few who wanted to move some amendments. I think we can safely say this time we have got the legislation right. The industry has heard the message loud and clear. The owners, breeders and trainers, and the mums and dads at the track know it is in their interest to self-regulate and police the industry. I thank the member for Wallsend for giving notice of this motion six months ago, since when a lot has changed.

Visitors

VISITORS

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I welcome to the public gallery school leaders from Campbelltown Performing Arts Centre, Eagle Vale High School and Airds High School, guests of the member for Campbelltown.

Motions

GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY BAN ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (13:13): I support the motion moved by the member for Wallsend, and commend her for bringing it to the attention of the House. I also acknowledge the sincere contribution of my neighbour and colleague the member for Camden. We share electorate boundaries and I know that we both spoke to many people in the industry and constituents who were very concerned about the legislation. I also acknowledge that both the member for Camden and the member for Wollondilly made appropriate representations in relation to those serious concerns of the people in the industry.

This motion yet again highlights the absolute debacle that has been this Government's management of the greyhound racing industry over the past 12 months. Not too long ago in this place I spoke on another motion moved by the wonderful member for Wallsend about the obscene waste of money—more than \$1.5 million—on this Government's propaganda advertising campaign promoting its greyhound racing ban. It was a bad decision for the industry and by government. I acknowledge that the Government has changed its mind; however, the costs and ramifications continue. And if it was not bad enough that this Government spent more than \$1 million that could have been spent on employing more nurses, teachers and police officers, or on school halls on which it backflipped, in the Budget Estimates we learned that the information used in this advertising campaign was not even accurate.

This is just another example of the Government's complete arrogance in relation to this issue. Almost every member opposite was happy to ignore the 80 recommendations of the McHugh report at that time and to completely shut down an industry that supported thousands of jobs directly and indirectly, particularly in regional New South Wales. I acknowledge the effect that decision has had on my hometown, Dubbo, where I was born and raised. I earned my first dollar collecting aluminium cans at the Dubbo dogs just down the road from mum and dad's place. But the former Premier and former Deputy Premier said every day that their minds were made up, and no amount of concern from the people affected by the ban would change them. That was an arrogant position for a government or any public representative to adopt. They treated with contempt those they are privileged to serve.

But what changed the minds of the former Premier and former Deputy Premier was not a concern for the people of regional New South Wales but unrest on the Government backbench, particularly among The Nationals,

who were worried about losing their own jobs. They were happy to drop the axe on the greyhound industry and destroy thousands of jobs in the process, but as soon as their own jobs were on the line they could not retreat fast enough in an act of retreat and treachery. The whole scenario was an absolute farce. The report gave this Government two clear options. It could have a democratic debate in Parliament about whether the industry should continue to operate, and if it was determined that it should continue, the report provided 79 specific recommendations to improve animal welfare and governance standards in the industry.

But instead, the Government decided on its own third option to completely shut down the industry, via a Facebook post, with no debate or consultation, and using taxpayers money to engage in an all-out propaganda advertising campaign which used facts that have since been proven to be dubious at best, and outright false and misleading at worst. The greyhound racing issue is just one of many that highlights this Government's complete arrogance and born-to-rule mentality. Whether it is forced local council amalgamations, the privatisation of government assets like the Land Titles Office or the greyhound racing ban and subsequent backflip, the message being sent by this Liberal-Nationals Government is crystal clear: it simply does not care. That is not good enough for the people around this State and it is certainly not good enough by industry standards.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (13:17): I thank the member for Wallsend for moving this motion in relation to the greyhound racing industry. I acknowledge the member for Camden and the member for Campbelltown—whose electorates, along with mine, make up the Macarthur region, one of the fastest growing populations in Australia—and their contributions to supporting the greyhound industry. As the member for Camden said, both he and I have greyhound industries in our electorates which we support. We did everything we could from the Government side to try to ensure that there was no ban at the time but we did not win that argument on the day. When members are in government and do not have an opportunity to have a conscience vote they certainly support their government on an issue that the leadership at the time, the former Premier and the former Deputy Premier, were addressing.

A sign of a good government is to admit when it gets things wrong, and we got it wrong. We needed to do something about cruelty to animals, which I do not support, but I think we went too far in banning the industry. It was good to see this week the ban being overturned because in my electorate of Wollondilly there are so many good mum and dad breeders, trainers and associated businesses that were being punished for the very few people in the industry who did the wrong thing. We finally have the balance right. There are lifetime bans and jail sentences for anyone who harms a greyhound, which is appropriate and right. Although I voted for the ban even though I did not support it, governments have an obligation to let the community know when they make decisions. The Government did that through its advertising campaign. In a strange way, the campaign led to the greyhound industry coming together and putting recommendations forward about how it could be reformed and what it was prepared to do. We now have a solution that increases animal safety and allows a better regulated and more sustainable industry to continue.

I am proud that we have put money aside to improve the regulatory framework of the industry. During this transition process we must spare a thought for not only the mum and dad trainers and owners, who I certainly support, but also the ancillary businesses that make products purely for the greyhound industry and how the ban affected them. Whether those businesses produce dog kennels, special fences or other niche products, we need to ensure that each of them is okay. I suspect most of them are, but there may be one or two that need assistance. Many good people in the industry live in my local area of Wollondilly as well as in the local areas of the member for Camden and the member for Campbelltown. They are pleased that the Government has come back to the table and put in a tough regime because they do not condone animal cruelty any more than anyone else does. The Government was trying to address these issues. I think we went a little bit too far, but we now have the balance right. I thank the member for Wallsend for bringing the motion.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (13:21): I support the motion moved by the member for Wallsend. It is essential that we have important conversations in this Chamber, one of which is about truth in advertising. The decision of the Government to ban greyhound racing last year had certainly not been foreshadowed or forecast. The Government had not consulted industry groups in preparation for making the decision, although it had certainly consulted groups about a range of other prior issues. The announcement came as a significant shock to the community at large and hence the Government engaged in an advertising campaign. There was no truth in the advertising campaign in the first instance and the member for Wallsend spelled out examples of that absence of truth.

We know that statistics, facts and figures can be used however people like to mount and sustain an argument. However, in an instance like this, where public monies are used for an advertising campaign that is spread far and wide across many forms of media, there is an expectation that the Government will at the very least engage in some truth. I acknowledge the lesson to be learnt from this: when we get a serious report the best thing we can do is take a deep breath, not make an announcement. All sides of politics can learn from this and all sides

have made errors on that front. Following a *Four Corners* exposé on the international live cattle trade a couple of years ago the Federal Government made a decision to instantly cease the export of live cattle. That had an enormous impact on that industry and it continues to be felt. The important lesson is that when we get these reports the first thing we should do is take a deep breath.

The member for Camden, the member for Campbelltown and the member for Wollondilly said that a significant number of dog owners live in their electorates. The member for Wollondilly said that when the matter came to the party room he was at odds with the Government's position. In the debate on the greyhound racing legislation on Tuesday a number of The Nationals also said they were at odds with the ban when it came to their party room. If I add up all the people who were at odds with it I start to wonder how it ever went through. Nevertheless, the important thing about the greyhound racing bill is that there will be a change in the industry. For about five years I have said the industry needs to change. It now needs to embrace that change. The core purpose of this motion is to highlight that members carry a significant amount of responsibility for our decisions and their impacts on people's lives. We need to be mindful of that. As I have said, sometimes the best thing we can do is draw a big breath before we act. I commend the motion to the House.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (13:25): In reply: I thank the member for Camden, the member for Campbelltown, the member for Wollondilly and the member for Cessnock for their contributions. I first point out that it takes about 35 minutes for six members to make contributions to debate on a notice of motion and for the mover to speak in reply. I will be looking carefully at the Government's actions in future. It seems its strategy has been to take away the opportunity for debate on motions that have been submitted early in the morning via hard work by moving motherhood motions that are more like community recognition statements. In future when members seek leave to speak on those motions I might start saying no, which is my right.

We all deserve a chance to speak. This is supposed to be private members' time, but it does not always work that way. The member for Camden made some good points but it was not one of his best speeches. It was rather rambling, which is not like him. I understand that Government members are sometimes uncomfortable eating humble pie on this issue. He acknowledged that advertisements are important for governments. I agree with him. However, if the Government is going to spend \$1.6 million of taxpayers' money on an advertising campaign it has the responsibility to make sure the campaign is accurate because the community will find the Government out.

The crux of my notice was about the accuracy of the campaign, and the Government was caught short. Government members have acknowledged that and I hope it does not happen again. The member for Cessnock is right: no government should waste taxpayers' money. It should make accurate and fair advertisements when necessary and not take the community for mugs as it sometimes has. The member for Campbelltown highlighted the debacle and said he believed the advertisement campaign was a complete waste of time and money. He acknowledged that the industry provides jobs, particularly in regional areas. My colleagues in the Chamber are from regional areas. We know it is important to keep jobs in our areas because it is darn hard to get industries to regional New South Wales.

The member for Wollondilly also spoke well and talked about the procedural matter of conscience votes. If Government members were allowed a conscience vote in this instance we might not have got this far and the Government would not be having to back-pedal. The benefits of conscience votes might be something for all of us to think about. The member for Wollondilly also acknowledged the number of ancillary businesses in the greyhound racing industry. We do not want to lose those jobs. The member for Cessnock spoke articulately as usual about the lack of truth in the advertisement campaign. I would go so far as to say it was propaganda. He called on all governments and oppositions to acknowledge the lessons learnt and said that sometimes we all need to take a deep breath. I thank members for a sensible debate. I know that they will support this motion.

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

Motion agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): It being 1.30 p.m., I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery Mr David Gregory from the South Coast. I welcome 12 members from the Lake Macquarie University of the Third Age, guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. I welcome 46 students and their teachers from Fort Street High School, guests of the member for Newtown. I also

acknowledge in the gallery Ross and Joan Hosking, the uncle and aunt of the member for Newcastle. I also welcome 35 students from the Australasian Union of Jewish Students.

Announcements

DIRECTOR, TABLE AND CHAMBER SERVICES

The SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that today will be the last sitting day for Rachel Simpson in the Legislative Assembly. Rachel has been extremely popular in her current role as Director, Legislative Assembly Table and Chamber Services. She has advised members in not only a professional way but also an enthusiastic way. We are all going to miss her. Rachel has resigned to take up the position of Manager Parliamentary Service with Transport for NSW. Rachel is uniquely placed to fulfil this role, having joined the staff of the Legislative Assembly in August 2012, taking up her current position on 6 January 2014, after previous service from 16 June 1997 to August 2012 with the staff of the Parliamentary Library and the Legislative Council. We extend our best wishes to Rachel. We hope she will return to see us. I will certainly miss all of the wise advice she has given to me and other members. On behalf of all members I thank her and wish her the very best of luck.

Question Time

WOY WOY UNDERPASS

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:19): My question is directed to the Premier. Is the Premier aware of a near tragedy that took place on Tuesday morning at the Woy Woy level crossing, which follows the fatal accident that occurred only two months ago?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:20): I do not have any details about that but I am happy to take the question on notice.

CENTRAL COAST, MANLY AND NORTH SHORE BY-ELECTIONS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (14:20): How has the New South Wales Government delivered for the people of the Central Coast, Manly and North Shore?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:21): The Liberal-Nationals Coalition Government is proud to be delivering for communities right across New South Wales—north, south, east and west—and the electorates of the Central Coast, Manly and North Shore are no exception. We are proud of our record over the past six years and we will continue to deliver for those electorates. But I ask the good people in the electorates of the Central Coast, Manly and North Shore, especially those in the electorate of Gosford, which Labor is contesting, to consider what the Labor Party stands for. They had 16 years to deliver for the Central Coast, and they have failed. It is very interesting that the faceless man of Sussex Street, the Leader of the Opposition, is now the faceless man in Gosford.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Point of order—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is very interesting: I have had the privilege of visiting Gosford recently, as have many of my colleagues, but can you see a single corflute of the Leader of the Opposition? Is there a single poster of the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. The question to the Premier was what is the Government doing on the Central Coast, not the good work that the Opposition has been doing.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has been relevant to the question she was asked. The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: There is a very impressive Labor brochure with nine photographs, but is there a single one of the Leader of the Opposition?

The SPEAKER: Order! If the Opposition's aim is to detract from the Premier's answer, I will direct the Clerk to stop the clock.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 75. We have heard the Premier refer to the Leader of the Opposition as the Premier, as the faceless man, as the Leader of the Opposition.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The last time I looked he was the Leader of the Opposition. The Labor Party is so proud of its leader that in a glossy brochure with nine photographs there is not one of Luke Foley. I am pleased to say the member for Londonderry features in the brochure. She makes it in there. Those of us who were

here before 2011 would remember Marie Andrews, the member for Gosford from 1995 to 2011—she features in the brochure.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: Can we have a scanned copy of that brochure?

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Premier is being relevant to the question she was asked.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Labor Party is so proud of its record and so proud of the Leader of the Opposition he does not feature in any of their material.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The member for Keira says, "What have you done in Gosford?" We are building a \$368 million hospital.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. I call the member for Keira to order for the second time. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time. I call the member for Keira to order for the third time. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the second time. I call the member for Maitland to order for the first time. I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time. I call the member for The Entrance to order for the first time. I call the member for The Entrance to order for the second time. I call the member for Maitland to order for the second time. I call the member for Maitland to order for the third time. The member for Maitland is too busy interjecting to realise that she has been called to order for the third time. There will be no further interjections.

[Extension of time]

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The people of Gosford know that, as a Liberal-Nationals Government, we are very proud to be delivering the \$348 million Gosford Hospital. Those opposite tried to close down the Woy Woy Hospital. We did not. We are investing in that hospital. Since we have been in government we have created 35,000 new jobs on the Central Coast. The Opposition only created 2,000 jobs.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Everywhere you look there are cranes in the sky and jobs being created.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We are proud of the millions and millions of dollars we are investing in local roads and infrastructure on the Central Coast. We are a government that makes sure we commit to everything we announce. We are a government that makes sure we deliver on the ground where people need it the most. The Labor Party has been in Opposition for years and years and the Leader of the Opposition has not demonstrated a single thing he stands for. He does not even feature in any of the material in the Gosford by-election. We say to communities throughout New South Wales: No matter where you live you can be assured that our Government will continue to deliver for you.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Prospect to order for the third time. Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber. Members will come to order. If they continue to interject I will direct the Clerk to stop the clock and extend the time for each answer by five minutes.

WOY WOY UNDERPASS

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (14:28): My question is directed to the Premier. Given that there has been another serious safety incident at the Rawson Road level crossing, will the Premier now reverse her broken promise and build the Woy Woy underpass?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:28): There is no doubt that there are critical pieces of infrastructure throughout the Central Coast which our Government will absolutely deliver. It is easy for the Opposition to sit there. When they were in government for 16 years they failed to deliver to those electorates.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: When those opposite left government the cupboard was bare—there was not a single dollar to spend on anything. They left us deficits.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: They promised everybody everything and they delivered nothing. That is their track record: They are good at announcing but they cannot deliver.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question asks about a near tragedy. We would like the Premier to make a commitment that she will fund the underpass.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. There is no point of order. The Premier will return to the leave of the question. The member for Keira will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: For the benefit of those opposite, I am very pleased to acknowledge how infrastructure is being built on the Central Coast. We are very proud that we have spent \$170 million upgrading the intersection of Brisbane Water Drive and Manns Road at West Gosford, which was completed in 2015, seven months ahead of schedule. When was the last time the Labor Party built anything ahead of schedule? We are very pleased that the \$3 million upgrade is underway for the Central Coast Highway—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. If we wanted to know what the Government did we can read its glossy brochure. We want to know what the Government is going to do about the underpass.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I said, there is a whole list of projects we are delivering and have delivered for those important people on the Central Coast. There is a bit of a pattern here. Labor says and does anything to get votes, but it fails to deliver a single—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled on the matter. I will hear more from the Premier.

Ms Jodi McKay: I would like to take a point of order.

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

Ms Jodi McKay: Madam Speaker, you did make a ruling and asked the Premier to return to the leave of the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield is correct. Does she have a different point of order?

Ms Jodi McKay: The question involves an older gentleman who was almost killed.

The SPEAKER: Order! I know what it involves; I heard the question. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. The Premier is speaking about projects generally. However, I ask the Premier to return to the leave of the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Those opposite do not like to face the truth. They do not like to face the fact that they failed to deliver time and time again. I did not see them go up to the Central Coast and make that commitment.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier is being relevant to the question she was asked.

Ms Jodi McKay: Will the Premier make that commitment?

The SPEAKER: Order! This is not a debate. The member for Strathfield has been in this place long enough to know that.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: All I say to the community of the Central Coast, the northern beaches, the North Shore and the 93 electorates we have across New South Wales is that they should look at Labor's track record and compare it with our track record after six years. We say we are going to build it and we build it. We say we are going to deliver something and we do it. Labor closes hospitals; we open them. Labor lets potholes form; we build the roads. Labor closes jobs; we create jobs. That is what the people of New South Wales will get from us.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members will cease arguing across the Chamber.

TAXATION

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (14:33): My question is addressed to the Treasurer. How has the Government eased the cost of living with its low-taxing policies, and how does this compare with other policy approaches both here and overseas?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (14:33): The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is one of the lowest taxing governments this State has ever seen. This side of the House believes governments should provide the best services, should balance their budgets and should apply the lowest possible taxes. Since coming to office we have consistently removed, reduced and repealed taxes. We have repealed the home buyers tax, we have lifted the threshold for payroll tax, we have reduced taxes on clubs and organisations, and last year in the budget the then Premier abolished three more taxes. This side of the House has a fundamental belief that people are born free and have a right to their own money. People entrust a portion of their money to the Government and, as a government, it is our responsibility to spend it wisely. By stark contrast, the Labor Party believes that it is entitled to people's money before they are.

The SPEAKER: Order! All members who have been called to order are deemed to be on three calls to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Labor is the party of taxation—addicted to spending other people's money. When Labor was in government it introduced 10 new taxes and increased taxes 21 times. In the lead-up to the last election, how did the Leader of the Opposition say Labor's promises would be funded? By new taxes. The faces may change but Labor's playbook is always the same—tax and spend. While the Liberals and Nationals make more with what we have, Labor take more of what people have.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Labor's economic policies destroy the prospects of the next generation before it even has a chance. But hidden under its love of tax lies a much deeper pathology. The truth is that the Labor Party hates success—Labor hates successful individuals, it hates successful businesses—and what keeps members of the Labor Party awake at night is the scary thought that someone out there somewhere is making a profit. In their collectivist mindset, no-one can be better than anyone else. But I found out recently that Labor has a future tax plan. It was revealed recently by the head of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, a man named Timothy Ayres—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Clerk to stop the clock. The Treasurer is being entirely relevant to the question he was asked. What is the member's point of order?

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer is being entirely relevant to the question he was asked. If the member for Campbelltown had listened to the question he would know that.

Mr Greg Warren: We are flattered by the Government's infatuation with us but the Treasurer should get back to the question. It is a serious issue.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Campbelltown clearly did not listen to the question. The member will resume his seat.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The clock will remain stopped.

Mr Guy Zangari: It is in the standing orders and a tradition in this place that when a point of order is taken the member with the call sits down. The Treasurer did not sit down at any stage while the member for Campbelltown was taking a point of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! When members come to order the clock will be restarted. The member for Rockdale is on his final warning. I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Rockdale from the Chamber.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: I rescind my ruling. The member for Rockdale will not miss his House duty. The member for Cessnock will come to order. He should not try my patience. When members come to order I will direct the Clerk to restart the clock.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: This man, Timothy Ayres, says that the Government should now impose a 35 per cent estate tax on people when they die. So you work hard all your life, you pay your taxes, you pay off your family home and you then want to pass it on to your children, but the Labor Party says no, your money and your property now belong to the Labor Party. Just imagine: there you are on your deathbed surrounded by your family and friends, looking forward to peacefully passing from this life, as we believe on this side of the House, into the next. There you are, and as you draw your final breath someone appears. Is it an angel to take you to heaven? No, it is the member for Keira—dressed in black, scythe in hand, shaking his collection plate in your face. And as you draw your final breath, you pull out your wallet and you pay his final fatal tax.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: Madam Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Clerk to stop the clock.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. This is almost juvenile. I ask the Treasurer to return to the leave of the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. If being juvenile were a prerequisite for being a member of Parliament most people would not be here.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I make a public service announcement to those in the gallery: Please check your pockets, hold onto your wallets and when you leave question time move quickly and do not make any eye contact with those opposite. Anyway, where was this guy Tim Ayres, this great man—

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Clerk to stop the clock.

Mr Clayton Barr: The Minister's question has given me time to check the taxation revenue stream of New South Wales and it is higher today than it has been in the history of the State.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Where was this great new tax policy launch? I found out it was launched at that secret socialist cult annual general meeting [AGM] of the Fabian Society. And guess who had their AGM on Tuesday evening? I ran some candidates for election. Who was the guest speaker that evening? It was the member for Keira—a secret socialist at heart. The society is so secret it did not publish its agenda, but I was fortunate enough—and we talked about going around the world for policies—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Summer Hill will cease interjecting.

[Extension of time]

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I was fortunate enough to go to the mothership itself, the Fabian Society's British conference AGM. There was a range of topics, and it gives a sense of where the Labor Party and socialism is at around the world. These were the topics discussed at that conference. The first question during the morning session was: Is progressive politics dead? It is. Obviously we on this side of the House are now the party of progress. Then we have the big question: What should the Labor Party stand for? We do not know, those opposite do not know—no-one knows. This is serious. That was then followed by: Has Labor become the party for the inner-city elite? Yes. This is a good one. In the afternoon we have—

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Cessnock that this is not a debate. The Minister is answering the question. What is the member's point of order?

Mr Clayton Barr: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The Treasurer is referring to the United Kingdom.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer is being relevant to the question he was asked. The member for Cessnock did not listen to the question. That is a spurious point of order. The member for Cessnock will resume his seat. The Treasurer has the call.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: In the afternoon the question was: Is Labor failing on diversity? We have got Berejiklian and Barilaro; on the other side of the House they have male, pale and stale. The last one—my favourite session—in the afternoon was: Has Labor allowed the Conservatives to become the party of the working class? We know who is party of the workers because you cannot be a worker if you do not have a job. That is why we on this side of the House will always be the party of the workers and Labor will remain the party of the shirkers.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

PARKLANDS COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (14:43): My question is directed to the Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State. Will the Minister reverse the Central Coast Regional Development Corporation's decision to impose a \$65,000 rent increase on Parklands Community Preschool at Kariong?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (14:44): I thank the member for Port Stephens for her question. The neglect of the Central Coast by the former Labor Government for 16 years is nothing short of a disgrace.

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

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: There is a litany of failure by those opposite. So do not come in here and start lecturing us as to what we are doing for the coast, because under us the coast is moving forward.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is answering the question, regardless of whether the member for Port Stephens likes his tone.

Ms Kate Washington: I say very calmly—

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

Ms Kate Washington: My point of order is under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has made only introductory remarks. There is no point of order. The member for Port Stephens will cease arguing and resume her seat.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Do not dare come into this place and question our commitment to the Central Coast. You have nothing to stand on and I am not going to put up with this rubbish.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: Again, I ask very calmly that you tell the Minister to direct his comments through the Chair, rather than pointing rudely at me across the table.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would rather he directed them at the member for Port Stephens than at me. There is no point of order. The member for Port Stephens will resume her seat.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: The question I want answered is: Who shut down the fast ferry service out of Gosford because they were too scared that it would bring prosperity to the coast and turn it into a Liberal seat forever? Prosperity is something none of those opposite understand. Members on this side of the House will continue to fight for the coasties, the tradies and the workers because that is what we do best.

CENTRAL COAST ROADS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (14:46): My question—

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the member for Terrigal. Members will come to order. I remind the member for Rockdale that he has received a warning.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. How is the New South Wales Government investing in roads on the Central Coast, and what message does the Minister have for New South Wales residents to stay safe on our roads this Easter?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (14:48): I thank the member for Terrigal for his question and highlight the fact that during his two years in this place he has shown genuine leadership on the Central Coast, advocating for local government reform so that there is service delivery on the Central Coast.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: His wife, Jill, works in the oncology units at both Gosford and Wyong hospitals. They are a great team on the Central Coast, and their work is much respected.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The Government is delivering for the people of Gosford and the Central Coast. One need only look at our record. When we say we are going to do something, we do it—a novel concept

for those opposite. We have invested \$190 million in the Gosford electorate alone on roads and maritime projects since coming to government in 2011.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: This includes 355 completed projects and a further 24 projects that are currently underway. Some of these completed projects include: the long-overdue upgrade of the intersection of Brisbane Water Drive, Manns Road and the Central Coast Highway, West Gosford—this \$165 million upgrade was completed in November 2015—the upgrade of the intersection of the Central Coast Highway and Wisemans Ferry Road, Kariong, including construction of commuter car parking, which is a \$13 million investment; construction of the Kariong School Underpass to provide pedestrian access under the Central Coast Highway, which is a \$7 million investment; and the traffic efficiency improvements at the intersection of Victoria Street and Charlton Road, Woy Woy. This is a \$1.2 million investment that helps to improve traffic flow for residents.

Compare and contrast those accomplishments with Labor's record. Labor promised that the Central Coast Highway would be delivered in 2030; this Government has delivered it 15 years earlier. This is a Government that delivers for and invests in the people of Gosford and the communities across the length and breadth of New South Wales. That is why the Premier recently joined the outstanding candidate for Gosford, Jilly Pilon, to announce \$23 million for roads across Gosford.

Mr Guy Zangari: Who?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Jilly Pilon. This includes \$8 million to deliver new traffic lights on Koolinda Avenue and Jirrah Avenue, and create right-turn lanes on Sunshine Drive and Sunnyside Avenue; \$2 million to improve safety along Brisbane Water Drive around Point Clare School, including the installation of safety barriers and pedestrian fencing near Talinga Avenue and Takari Avenue; and \$13 million to continue planning to improve Blackwall Road and Memorial Avenue between Maitland Bay Drive and Victoria Road. The \$23 million investment package includes funding to investigate options for a pedestrian footpath between Collard Road and Jirrah Avenue, with work set to start soon.

Members on this side of the House love Gosford, and cannot stay away. In addition to that package, there is an extra \$25 million for roads in Gosford. The funding is committed and properly costed. This will deliver: \$7 million over three years to upgrade Maitland Bay Drive and Picnic Parade; \$6 million to improve safety between Woy Woy and Kariong; and \$12 million to reduce congestion at the intersection of Dunban and Ocean Beach roads. The Easter Bunny is not the only one coming to Gosford at this time of year. The Leader of the Opposition has splashed a \$100 million action plan, as he called it, into the area. This "Grand Gosford Plan" saw the inclusion of the Woy Woy underpass, TAFE and a few other "goodies for Gosford"—all for \$100 million. There is just one problem: There are nine projects in the \$100 million action plan and the Woy Woy underpass is a \$115 million project on its own.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. The money was additional.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Minister is being relevant to the question she was asked. The member for Wyong will cease arguing and resume his seat.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The \$115 million Woy Woy underpass is an issue that the Government is committed to addressing. The pedestrian underpass has been built at the intersection at Woy Woy. It is an issue of great concern to that community.

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: It was opened in 2015.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I acknowledge the Premier's interjection. This Government is not about making slapdash promises and commitments that cannot be funded. This Government is about genuine commitments that are fully funded, unlike Labor. A leopard does not change its spots. Labor will say and do anything to be elected. [*Extension of time*]

Those opposite love announcing unfunded projects and continue to pull numbers out of the hat, only for the Coalition to come to the rescue. As Labor attempts to pull rabbits out of hats we know that Easter is almost here. We know that drivers will get into their cars to get away for a break, but this time of year is not a happy and joyous occasion for everyone. Last year two people lost their lives on New South Wales roads over Easter. That is two too many. Some 90 lives have been lost on New South Wales roads this year alone. These are not just numbers; they are someone's mum, dad, brother, sister, son, daughter or other loved one.

With more people using our roads over the Easter break, drivers need to make sure that they are well rested before they get behind the wheel. If you are driving, rest up, do not rush and if you are feeling tired, stop for a break and a well-earned cuppa. Do not drive tired. If you are feeling tired, stop, stretch your legs, share the

driving if you can or take a nap, because we want every journey to be a safe one this Easter and we want everyone to get home safely. I wish everyone in this House and people around New South Wales a happy Easter. Drive safely.

NORTH SHORE BY-ELECTION

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (14:54): I direct my question to the Attorney General. In light of revelations that a candidate for North Shore has had to provide a revised statutory declaration to explain where she lives, will the Minister inform the House of the penalties for making a false declaration?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (14:55): That question comes from an Opposition that not only left the cupboard bare in 2011 but stole the cupboard and sold it—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: It is a grubby tactic. Milton Orkopoulos, Eddie Obeid—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney General remains relevant to the question he was asked. I direct the Clerk to stop the clock.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is relevance. How is Eddie Obeid relevant to a question about a penalty?

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

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I was informing the House that when in government the Opposition had Milton Orkopoulos, Eddie Obeid and Ian Macdonald on its front bench. The member for Strathfield asks, "What about me?" She wants to be in that company.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: The point of order is under Standing Order 73. The Minister is casting aspersions on the member for Strathfield, which should be done only by way of substantive motion.

The SPEAKER: Order! I refer members on both sides of the House of Standing Order 73. There is no point of order.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Most members of Parliament who want an answer to the question posed by the member for Liverpool would go to their computer and look on the internet. I invite the member for Liverpool—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat or she will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Heaven help us, Madam Speaker, if those on the benches opposite ever came to government and did not know how to use the internet. I invite the member for Liverpool to use the internet to look up the answer to his question.

NORTH SHORE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (14:58): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's transport and infrastructure achievements on the North Shore and northern beaches, and any other related matters?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:58): It is disappointing that I did not get a question from the Labor Party about Woy Woy today because I have the incident report.

Mr Luke Foley: That's because you can only get three votes to be Premier.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have one message for every voter at the by-elections on Saturday: Be careful voting for Labor. They do not know you and when they find out what you are really like, Luke, they are going to turn in a very big way.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order—

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: A former union boss who brings nothing to the public debate in this State—

Mr Paul Lynch: Sit down, little boy.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat. The member for Liverpool will not direct members to resume their seat. That is my job.

Mr Paul Lynch: I was simply trying to encourage you, Madam Speaker. I have two points. First, the Minister is addressing comments directly to the Leader of the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: Indeed. I uphold the point of order.

Mr Paul Lynch: Secondly, I refer to Standing Order 73. The Minister is clearly making improper imputations and drawing inferences against the Leader of the Opposition.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members of both parties are guilty of doing that on a daily basis in this Chamber.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Today the Leader of the Opposition spoke about two pedestrian incidents involving a rail crossing where the Government built an overpass. Unfortunately, one of those circumstances involved an elderly gentleman on a mobility scooter, who unfortunately passed away. The second incident last Tuesday also involved an elderly gentleman. The Government built and opened an underpass for pedestrians in 2015. As the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight has spelt out, this goes to the very nature of the politics of those opposite. If we continue to see this type of conduct and behaviour from those opposite in relation to such issues, we will take them so hard to the ballot box and we will teach them.

We have a Premier who is up for the fight. Those opposite lack the spine to develop one ounce of policy. They will go to a by-election on the Central Coast without any policy. When we have a Government that is delivering for this State against those opposite who have no policy, what can I say? The Opposition has no transport policy. This Government is on the North Shore and the northern beaches delivering thousands of new bus and ferry services. We are building the metro. We are going to build a new northern beaches tunnel. What do those opposite commit to for those living north of the harbour? Absolutely nothing but the politics of smear.

Then there is Gosford. Those opposite could not even take their leader up there because they are so embarrassed by him. We have a policy-free zone from those opposite. We are heading into by-elections on Saturday and still nobody knows what the hell the Opposition stands for. That is what characterises the Leader of the Opposition and those who sit on the shadow frontbench. They have no education policy and no transport policy and there is nothing from the shadow Treasurer. We know what the shadow Minister for Transport stands for: property acquisitions, which just happen to be her own.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The Minister is winding up and winding up but we want to hear about transport. That is what the question was about.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has been relevant to the question he was asked. There is no point of order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: This Government will invest some \$20 billion in the next 12 months on transport and roads infrastructure, and it has the means to pay for it. Yet when that lot opposite vote in this place to oppose every government measure to finance transport infrastructure I think we are entitled to ask: What do they stand for? They stand for nothing; they are just here to engage in the politics of protest and smear. They think that will carry them over the line. [*Extension of time*]

I also noted in yesterday's debate about the Transport Asset Holding Entity that those opposite opposed everybody in the private sector delivering transport services in this State.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: It will come as no surprise to good bus companies, such as the one in the Blue Mountains, to learn that the member for Blue Mountains said yesterday that she opposes any private sector involvement in public transport. She opposed the Blue Mountains Bus Company. We heard that the member for Swansea is opposed to Busways Central Coast delivering services to her electorate. We heard the member for Londonderry oppose private sector involvement in public transport. That is typical of those opposite. They want to cancel out those who are involved in the provision of public transport services.

As to related matters, I know that the good member for Newcastle—someone who voted for private sector involvement in the provision of transport services in Newcastle when he was on Newcastle council—yesterday opposed the engagement of the private sector in the provision of public transport services. It is interesting that his good mate Nuatali Nemes, whom he was on council with, has got herself some publicity. Did the member for Newcastle plant that, because I know she is coming for him in preselection? She is going to mow him down.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: Previous Speakers have ruled that the use of props in the Chamber is disorderly.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure will cite his reference or put the prop away.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: My final message to every voter in a by-election on Saturday is: Be very careful voting for Labor, because it stands for nothing.

PLASTICS POLLUTION

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:06): My question is directed—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Sydney has the call and will be heard in silence. This will be a sensible question.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH: My question is directed to the Minister for the Environment. With a container deposit scheme set to commence this year, what will the Minister do next to reduce plastic pollution from plastic bags, packaging microbeads and microfibres?

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (15:07): I thank the member for Sydney for his sensible question. We know that he has a genuine interest in protecting our environment from plastic litter, and I welcome the opportunity to update the House on this matter.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order. Members who are not interested in the answer will leave the Chamber. Members who wish to have private conversations will do so outside the Chamber.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: This container—this little beauty; a good prop—is part of the solution.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! If Opposition members think that is a prop, they have no idea what they are doing or saying.

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: Drink containers are the biggest problem in our environment. In the most recent National Litter Index drink bottles made up 50 per cent of the total litter volume in New South Wales and plastic bags made up less than 2 per cent. We want to get the biggest improvement and the biggest bang for our buck, so we are going to focus on the rollout of our 10¢ container deposit scheme in December this year. I know the member for Sydney is interested in this. Containers captured by that scheme make up 43 per cent of the total litter volume in our State. The member for Sydney spoke about plastic bag litter, which we are also working on. We have asked the CSIRO to conduct research into the impact of biodegradable bags on our environment. That work will be finished shortly and it will inform our decision-making going forward.

It is important to remember that a staggering 25,000 tonnes of litter is tossed away in New South Wales every year. It not only costs our taxpayers \$180 million but also has devastating environmental impacts, particularly on our waterways. Up to 80 per cent of the litter found in our waterways comes from the land and it can have a significant and long-lasting impact on our marine life. To put this in context, it is estimated that 160 million drink bottles and more than 10 million plastic bags enter our environment every year. These bottles and plastic bags can then break down into microplastics. We are now seeing evidence of the impact of those microplastics on our natural marine environment. The tiny pieces of plastic attract toxins, are eaten by sea life, make their way into the food chain and then onto our plates. This Government led the way in calling for a voluntary industry phase-out of microplastics. Since then, the Commonwealth has backed us on this. It has told industry that if it does not voluntarily phase out the use of microplastics by 2020 it will be forced to. *[Extension of time]*

There are 40 smart little tracking bottles fitted with GPS trackers inside that we are releasing into New South Wales waterways to see where our litter travels. They were released into the Parramatta River, on the Central Coast, in Wagga Wagga, the Cooks River and in Wollongong. I dropped two of the bottles into the Parramatta River, but we caught them. Guess where they ended up? One ended up two kilometres away in Putney in the electorate of the member for Ryde. The other ended up in the mangroves not far from where I dropped it. So where does our litter go? I have another example.

Mr Guy Zangari: That could have ended up in the stomach of a whale. That is disgraceful.

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

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON: The member for Fairfield does not want to hear the rest of the story. I dropped another bottle at Rose Bay, and guess what? It was eventually picked up in the electorate of the member for Cronulla, 45 kilometres away. The point is our litter can end up in places far from where we drop it. Every piece of litter counts. The rollout of our container deposit scheme along with the smart bottles make the point.

Our community cares about litter in our environment, including plastic litter, and the Government will continue to lead the way on this issue.

SHORT-TERM HOLIDAY LETTING

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (15:14): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State. Will the Minister update the House on the latest developments in short-term letting as well as any other related matters?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (15:14): Short-term holiday letting is a long-established practice in New South Wales, which has recently been brought into sharp focus by the entrance into the market of Airbnb and others. The industry is experiencing growth and it is timely to consider if the current regulatory framework is appropriate. We are going to get the balance right and make sure the right tools are in place to regulate it. In June 2015 the former Minister asked the Chair of the Legislative Committee on Environment and Planning to investigate the regulations. The committee established an inquiry and tabled a report on 19 October 2016.

As I was considering the Government's response to the committee report on short-term letting I thought I might as well have a look at Airbnb and see what kind of holiday options are available. It has been a hard week sitting here listening to the Opposition wondering whether or not the sports Minister attended some sporting events and whether or not members owned houses. It is also hard running the State's largest civilian intelligence agency to monitor the factional infighting in the New South Wales Labor Party. Naturally, I thought Easter is coming up and I need a break. When you need a break, there is only one place to go. The rolling hills of Gloucester beckoned.

I found a delightful five-bedroom getaway with stunning views of the aforementioned rolling hills—Kia Ora Lookout Retreat. It sounded like just the ticket. But there was something familiar about it. I summoned my little birds and noted the address is the same as the one on the missing property returns of the member for Strathfield. I refer to one of the reviews on Airbnb which described it as "quiet and private". It is obviously so private the member did not even think to mention she owned it. But I must say the member is doing her bit to help with the housing affordability crisis.

The member for Strathfield has put a nice little granny flat on the property, which she is also letting. It has one bedroom and one bathroom—ample room for the next Country Labor convention! Housing is always at the front of my mind. I must honestly congratulate The Greens on being the only party this week to bother asking a question about the most pressing economic concern in the country, the housing affordability crisis. However, The Greens housing policy, which involves squatting and smashing capitalism until the concept of home ownership is a distant bourgeois memory, is not for us.

Speaking of The Greens, I noticed the Young Greens have been very busy this week. We have been joined today by some Jewish students, and the papers this week had some great news for them. It seems the co-convenor of the NSW Young Greens has decided to boycott social functions with them. That makes those Jewish students some of the luckiest kids on campus. It gives me no pleasure to say that dozens of students on campus are forced every day to associate with Greens at tutorials and lectures. Jewish students now get to avoid The Greens. What a great day for them! The papers report it is the work of one Klingon Confetti, or it might be Kleon Truffetti. Maybe it is Tarquin? Anyway, he is the co-convenor of the NSW Young Greens.

It is interesting that there is never just one convenor in The Greens. They must have a two-key system of the Soviets versus the environmentalists—especially with their lock-on devices. I had a look at this bloke named Tarquin or something. I just do not think he can afford to pick and choose his mates. From looking at their website these Young Greens seem like kids who would need a chop tied around their necks so the dog would play with them. My question for Young Greens is: What makes you think members of our Jewish community would want to hang around with you? When you scratch the surface, Young Greens are just commie bedwetters desperate for relevance and, at the moment, friends.

Ms Jenny Leong: Point of order: We have to think about just how rude we are being to young people involved in politics.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. The Minister will restrain himself.

[Extension of time]

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I have two words for the Young Greens: national service. That will fix them up—176 days of discipline, with an overseas travel opportunity. That would also instil some discipline into Labor Party ranks as well. The Labor Party might then ask us some questions that are relevant to the people of New South Wales—questions about housing affordability, infrastructure, health care, education, the economy, values, jobs growth, law and order. It gives me no pleasure to refer to Labor's \$100 million action plan for Gosford.

The Leader of the Opposition does not look very happy in this photograph—it looks like the Central Coast, but it probably would be anywhere except the Central Coast—of him announcing his \$100 million 10-point plan for Gosford, including a nurse walk-in centre for the Central Coast, \$10 million to refurbish regional centres, establish a new service, build the Woy Woy underpass, more jobs for investing in education, rebuilding TAFE, committing to a performing arts centre, and establishing a Central Coast division of the Greater Sydney Commission. The trouble is that this is a \$100 million action plan and the Woy Woy underpass will cost \$115 million alone. I am not sure where Labor is going to get the rest of the money from. They might as well go up there and announce a space program for the Central Coast because that is all the plans and promises of Labor are worth. I wish everyone a very happy Easter, happy Thursday and God save the Queen.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chair

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 5 April 2017 Katrina Ann Hodgkinson was elected Chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS

Chair and Deputy Chair

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 5 April 2017 Mark Owen Taylor was elected Chair and Michael John Johnsen was elected Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics.

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES

Chair and Deputy Chair

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 5 April 2017 Kevin Francis Conolly was elected Chair and Bruce Neville Notley-Smith was elected Deputy Chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services.

COMMITTEE ON THE HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

Chair and Deputy Chair

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 6 April 2017 Adam Sibery Crouch was elected Chair and Mark Owen Taylor was elected Deputy Chair of the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission.

Members

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: On behalf of the Premier: I inform the House that on 9 March 2017 the Hon. Catherine Cusack resigned as Parliamentary Secretary for Education and the Hunter. I also inform the House that on 24 March 2017:

- (1) Gareth James Ward ceased to be Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast and was then appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Education and the Illawarra and South Coast.
- (2) Scot MacDonald, MLC, ceased to be Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and the Central Coast and was then appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Planning, the Central Coast and the Hunter.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

Pet Shops

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

Powerhouse Museum Ultimo

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

Ferry Services

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

Elizabeth Bay Marina Ferry Services

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

Surry Hills Light Rail Station

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

Social Housing

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

Inner-city Social Housing

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

Social Housing Maintenance

Petition requesting that the Government retain and properly maintain social housing, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Committees

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 33/56

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

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:24): As Chair: I thank the House for the opportunity to speak about the Legislative Review Committee's thirty-third digest for the Fifty-sixth Parliament. The committee reviewed five bills introduced into Parliament in the sitting week commencing 6 March 2017. The committee identified issues relating to four of those bills: the Fire and Emergency Services Levy Bill 2017, the Motor Accidents Injuries Bill 2017, the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2017 and the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2017. I will now outline some of the observations of the committee.

The Fire and Emergency Services Bill 2017 introduces a fire and emergency services levy to landowners. The levy will replace the emergency services contributions currently required to be paid by insurance companies. Those contributions will be abolished by the bill and a provision has been made for the winding up of those schemes. One of the issues identified by the committee is that the regulations may amend an Act of Parliament. The bill contains several clauses that authorise regulations to amend the Act. The committee prefers an Act of Parliament to be amended by a further Act of Parliament, not a regulation. The committee noted that there are provisions in the bill relating to key definitions in classifying land for the purposes of the fire and emergency service levy. The regulations may also amend and consolidate savings and transitional provisions. The committee refers the relevant clauses of the bill to Parliament for further consideration as to whether authorising the regulations to amend various schedules of the Act is appropriate in the circumstances.

The Motor Accidents Injuries Bill 2017 will replace the current compulsory third party motor accidents scheme under the Motor Accidents Compensation Act 1999. In his second reading speech the Minister outlined that the new compulsory third party scheme will be a hybrid model, featuring statutory benefits whilst retaining the right to claim modified common law damages in certain circumstances. One of the issues highlighted is the restriction of judicial discretion. The committee noted a number of clauses in the bill that mandate the manner in which a court is to respond to a particular factual scenario. The committee notes the removal of judicial discretion may impact on individual rights and liberties and restrict the courts in the delivery of justice based on the individual circumstances for each matter. The committee referred these matters to Parliament for its consideration.

The Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2017 seeks to introduce a separate criminal offence for inflicting serious harm on, or the destruction of, a child in utero, defining a child in utero as the prenatal offspring of a woman. The bill does not apply to anything done in the course of a medical procedure or with the consent of the mother of the child in utero. The committee appreciates the significant sensitivities that exist when seeking to introduce legislative amendments of this nature and refers the matter to Parliament for its consideration with

regard to the potential repercussions of defining a child in utero and creating a criminal offence in relation to a child in utero.

The Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2017 adopts the key recommendations from the report of the other place on the use of cannabis for medical purposes. The bill seeks to establish a registration scheme for medicinal users of cannabis and remove criminal sanctions in relation to people who are using or wish to use medicinal cannabis for pain relief. The committee is concerned that the bill empowers the regulations to cancel the registration of a carer, to establish schemes in relation to legally obtaining cannabis and to create offences punishable by a penalty. The committee refers these regulation-making matters to the Parliament for its consideration. The committee also examined the Local Government Amendment (Rates—Merged Council Areas) Bill 2017. The committee did not make any comments on this bill in relation to the issues outlined in section 8A of the Legislation Review Act 1987. That concludes my remarks on this digest. I thank the members of the committee and their staff for their assistance. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:29): I comment on behalf of the Opposition on the thirty-third digest of this Parliament. The committee considered five bills and commented on all but one. I support the report given by the Chair. I note there are some amendments made to the draft digest in committee. Those were done by consensus and handled appropriately. On that basis I will not make any more comments except to thank the secretariat for their support and the committee members for their work. I commend the digest to the House.

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 34/56

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

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:30): As Chair: I once again give thanks for the opportunity to speak about the Legislation Review Committee's thirty-fourth digest for the Fifty-sixth Parliament. The committee reviewed seven bills introduced into Parliament in the sitting week commencing 27 March 2017. The committee identified issues in relation to six of those bills. I will now outline some of the observations of the committee.

The Greyhound Racing Bill 2017 has been introduced to repeal the Greyhound Racing Prohibitions Act 2016 that was due to commence on 1 July 2017. In his second reading speech the Minister for Racing stated the Government would put in place government structures for a "sustainable greyhound racing industry with the highest animal welfare and integrity standards in the country". An issue identified by the committee was in relation to the inspector's search and seizure powers. The committee noted that the provision provides the inspector with powers to inspect and seize things in circumstances where an inspector is of the opinion that it is necessary under part 7. The committee acknowledges the objectives of the bill to provide the inspectors with the powers to investigate animal welfare offences; however, given the long history of the right to privacy, right to silence and right against self-incrimination, the broad ambition of the search and seizure powers may impact on an individual's rights and liberties.

The Local Government Amendment (Disqualification from Civic Office) Bill 2017 seeks to disqualify property developers and real estate agents from holding civic office. The committee appreciates the significant sensitivities that exist when seeking to amend legislation of this nature and refers the matter to Parliament for its consideration. The Security Industry Amendment Bill 2017 seeks to provide the Commissioner of Police with any criminal intelligence report or other criminal information when determining the granting of a licence. One of the issues highlighted was the setting aside of the common law right against self-incrimination. The proposed section 39R provides that self-incrimination is not an excuse when required to furnish records or information. Such information may only be inadmissible as evidence in a matter brought against that person if they were to object on the grounds of self-incrimination. The committee remains concerned that the proposed provision, notwithstanding the safeguard, may impact on an individual's right against self-incrimination and refers the matter to Parliament for its consideration.

The Summary Offences Amendment (Safe Access to Reproductive Health Clinics) Bill 2017 seeks to prohibit certain behaviours and create offences within safe zones. The focus of the amendments is to ensure the safety, wellbeing, privacy and dignity of women accessing reproductive health services across New South Wales. We recognise that clause 11L and clause 11M may trespass on personal rights and liberties, including freedom of movement and the right to protest. However, given the public policy aims of the legislation the committee did not consider the restrictions to be unreasonable.

The Tattoo Parlours Amendment Bill 2017 seeks to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the principal Act by reducing the involvement of organised crime in the tattoo parlour industry. One issue highlighted is the potential impact on freedom of association. Schedule 1 (1) provides an additional ground on which an adverse security determination may be made if it is found that a close associate of an applicant is not a fit and proper person. The committee notes that providing the commissioner with the scope to make an adverse security determination as proposed in schedule 1 (1) may impact on an individual's freedom to associate with business partners, employees and contractors of their choice.

The Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill 2017 proposes to convert RailCorp into a state-owned corporation named Transport Asset Holding Entity and also establish NSW Trains and Sydney Trains as separate standalone entities in the form of subsidiary corporations. The committee is concerned that schedule 1 (1) clause 67 of the bill empowers the regulations to refer powers and functions that currently reside with the Transport Asset Holding Entity to another specified person or body. The committee would prefer such a power to be retained by the legislature rather than vested in the Executive via regulations.

The committee also welcomed a visit from the very discerning Miss Audrey, the daughter of the member for Holsworthy, who demonstrated her very good sense and commitment to collegiality by remaining silent throughout the meeting. We took her silence as an endorsement of our work and we certainly welcome her to return to the committee at any stage. I again thank the committee staff and the committee members for their assistance and I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (13:35): I make a contribution on behalf of the Opposition to the thirty-fourth digest of the Legislation Review Committee of this Parliament. Again, I support the comments made by the Chair. His courtesy at this meeting was a wonder to behold. The contribution of Audrey to the meeting was probably more constructive than those of some of the Government members on the committee. She was a delightful presence at the meeting. I support the Chair's report. We commented on six out of the seven bills examined. I do note that in the case of the Transport Administration Amendment (Transport Entities) Bill we raised a point—which was referred to by the Chair—in relation to schedule 1 clause 67. The Minister did not address that in his reply to the debate on the issue. It is a point that needs to be repeated. Other than that, I have nothing further to add except to commend the digest to the House, thank the secretariat, the Chair and the other key members.

Report noted.

Matter of Public Importance

THIRUVIZHA FESTIVAL

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (15:37): Today we recognise the annual Thiruvizha festival of the Sydney Murugan Temple at Westmead in the electorate of Granville. The incredibly beautiful Murugan temple is the largest Hindu temple in the region and the main centre of worship for the Sri Lankan Tamil community. The temple primarily honours Lord Murugan. He is the second son of Lord Siva and Parvathi and youngest brother of Lord Ganesha. He is the lord of righteousness, who protects dharma by destroying evil. Murugan means undecaying beauty and everlasting youth. Lord Murugan is the most popular God amongst Tamils. He has two consorts: Valli—symbolizing desire—and Devasena—symbolizing power of action.

He also has in his hand a spear known as a "Vel" which represents wisdom and removes ignorance. It was given to Lord Murugan by his mother, Parvathi. It is not a mere weapon but a deity in its own right. The Vel has the three attributes of wisdom: its deep stem representing a deep understanding, the breadth of the blade representing wide knowledge and its sharpness representing a sharp intellect. The vehicle of Lord Murugan is a peacock, which symbolizes ego, causing unpredictable behaviour in human beings. This conveys the idea that control of one's ego is necessary for spiritual advancement—no doubt an important lesson for many of us in this place. The annual festival runs for 11 days and this year commenced on 31 March. Various yagams, relating to fire, Abishekams, involving milk and water, and special poojas, or prayers, are conducted.

The preparation for the festival includes the entire community. Nearby residents join in preparing the temple and grounds with auspicious decorations such as mango leaves, coconut strips, banana trees and special flowers, together with kolam designs depicting yantras associated with the deity. The major religious festivals people flock to witness are the hoisting of the flag; Sapparam Ther, the chariot festival; Theertham, the water cutting festival; and Thirukalyanam, the holy wedding. The festival begins with the hoisting of the holy flag—the Kodiyetram—which I attended last Friday, along with the member for Strathfield and the member for Parramatta, when we received blessings from the priest.

The cloth for hoisting is ceremonially brought to the temple by the priest. Hoisting the flag suggests setting out to conquer, and a devotee comes to the temple to conquer ego and gain control over the baser nature

with the help of the Supreme Being—in the religious sense, raising worshippers to a higher level of understanding and activity. The flag also suggests hope and desire to overcome ignorance. The temple visit invigorates the devotee, recharging them with strength and bravery to face the hardships of daily life, knowing full well that in the end those who have surrendered to the will of God find victory.

Sapparam occurs on the eighth day and refers to the tallest illuminated and colourfully decorated vehicle which is carrying the god and is pulled by the worshippers. The Ther, or chariot, festival is held the following day. It is the most popular of all events, and it will be held this Saturday. The chariot festival is an amazing spectacle and I am honoured and privileged to be invited to join in these celebrations. The glamorously dressed Lord Murugan and his consorts are carried out on a Lion face called "p". Hundreds of devotees carry it on their shoulders, along with the special seat known as Simmasanam, which floats on the heads of thousands of devotees shouting "Aro hara". It is a sight not to be missed. Up to 7,000 devotees attend the chariot festival. The huge and heavy chariot carrying the statue of Lord Murugan and consorts is paraded around the temple. The chariot is pulled by a rope of thousands of devotees—rich and poor, old and young, stand shoulder to shoulder in pulling it, giving Murugan the opportunity to witness the sincerity and purity of the devotees. It truly is spectacular.

On the tenth day of the festival, the ritual of water-cutting—theertham—commemorates the washing of the deity and its clothes. The priest, along with Skanda's yantra or instrument, is lowered into the water. The water used is collected in a vessel and considered sacred. After this symbolic exercise, the pilgrims plunge themselves into the sacred stream in the belief that it will wash away their sins. I am honoured to represent an incredibly diverse multicultural community in which many faiths are practised. Joining these religious communities for their most significant celebrations is really wonderful. The Murugan Temple is the largest centre of worship in the Granville electorate and has been of great importance to members of the Sri Lankan Tamil community for more than two decades. This is a community that in many cases has been displaced by the Sri Lankan civil war.

These people have come to Australia to create a new life in peace and have been incredibly successful. It is a community that strongly emphasises the importance of education and strives to keep its culture and faith alive here in Sydney. The Murugan Temple is, of course, very important to that. The Murugan Temple, in addition to being a gathering place for worship, is a special place for social support and education. Its association, the Saiva Manram, was founded in 1986, with the temple being constructed in the 1990s. The Saiva Manram operates and maintains the temple, in addition to holding religious classes there and at Homebush, and just nearby is the Tamil Resource Centre, which houses a library of more than 8,000 publications. I wish the directors and the Saiva Manram every success for this year's festival.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (15:42): It was an honour and a privilege to attend the Thiruvizha festival at the Sydney Murugan Temple in Mays Hill. This is a very important annual festival in the Tamil calendar. This festival attracts thousands of devotees. The Saiva Manram community welcomes all Hindus and other people from right around the world and often conducts school and study tours in its temple to explain the Murugan Temple and its important role. The Sydney Murugan Temple provides a place for worship, prayer, teaching and other religious and philosophical activities, based on the Saivism Tamil language. It is a place for the worship of Lord Murugan, the traditional god of Tamil, as the presiding deity. The temple preserves and enhances Tamil religious, philosophical, meditative and yogic activities; it has classes for young people and holds an annual humanitarian dinner. It is most appropriate that all the priests, volunteers and the management committee, who make this and other events and ceremonies possible, are recognised for their work.

Last Friday, I was privileged to attend the hoisting of the flag ceremony. I joined thousands of devoted worshippers as well as the member for Granville and the member for Strathfield at this significant event for the Tamil community. The flag-raising follows the blessing from Lord Ganesha and is one of the first of more than a week of festivities at the temple. As many people know, Lord Ganesha is my favourite deity because he is the giver of wisdom and of overcoming obstacles, which I always say is what we need as politicians. On Saturday I will also attend the chariot festival, which is one of the highlights of the annual festivities and is expected to attract thousands of devotees.

The Sydney Murugan Temple continues to go from strength to strength. In 1986, a small group of devotees met in Strathfield at the inception of the temple. From 1995 to 1998, the temple operated in a cultural hall at the Mays Hill site, and in 1999 the temple was completed. In 2010, I first inspected the new development alongside the temple and was impressed with the vision to create community spaces to include a huge community kitchen and eating areas, library and meeting rooms. Today, the temple is more popular than ever. I commend the management for its vision for the upcoming new development—a plan that increases car parking and includes a function space for up to 800 people. When complete, I know that this function centre will be in huge demand for weddings and other important festivals in the temple's calendar. It will be a place of happiness and blessed memories for all.

On behalf of the New South Wales Government, I recognise all the volunteers, especially the existing and past management committee. The existing management committee includes Mr Ketheson, the president; Mr Muralidaran, the vice-president; Mr Ketharanathan, secretary; Ms Chanderika, joint secretary; Mr Maftiekcavaeakar Thayaparan, treasurer; Mr Satya, assistant treasurer; Mr Sooria Kumar, director of assets and environment; Mr Thangarajah, director of community activities; Mr Sithamparanathan, director of cultural activities; Mr Satchidanandam, director educational activities; Mr Kananathan, director of religious activities; and Mr Guna Veerasingham, the past president of the Saiva Manram. I commend the development committee and volunteers for their important work.

We see a wonderful community coming together and going from strength to strength. It is clear from the temple and from the many devotees, the range of festivals and the community work in the Mays Hill, Parramatta, Granville and associated areas that the temple not only provides cultural education and awareness and the preservation of their language, their culture, their arts and their community but that it is also a place of spiritual gathering. For some people, Lord Murugan is their favourite deity. It is always great: the first thing you do when you enter the temple is acknowledge and pray to Lord Ganesha as the first—and my favourite—of the deities. On behalf of the New South Wales Government, I commend the Saiva Manram for its commitment to the community and for the social and cultural services that it provides for the Hindu community.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:47): Vanacome, Mr Assistant Speaker. I am delighted to speak on this matter of public importance to recognise a festival that is significant to the Hindu Tamil community across Sydney. I want to very much thank the member for Granville for bringing this motion to the attention of the House. She and I, along with the member for Parramatta, are regular visitors to the temple; it is wonderful that we are always warmly welcomed. We are privileged to represent Tamil-Australian communities in this, the oldest Parliament in Australia.

The sari I wear today as a show of respect to my community was given to me by my friends Renga and Bharathi during my recent visit to Tamil Nadu. The member for Granville and I will visit Sri Lanka later this year. Many of the residents I represent attend regular prayers at the Sydney Murugan Temple. It is the largest Hindu temple in Sydney and it attracts thousands of devotees each week from across Sydney. The temple pays homage to Lord Murugan, who is the lord of righteousness. He is the son of Lord Siva and Goddess Parvathi, and the youngest brother of Lord Ganesha.

On 31 March, I had the pleasure of attending the first day of the Sydney Murugan Temple's eighteenth annual festival. The festival is held at this time each year and is a celebration of Lord Murugan. In fact, annual festivals are celebrated in Murugan temples all over the world. For devotees it is a period for reflection, remembrance and festivity. The festival is celebrated over a period of 11 days and begins with the hoisting of the holy flag, the Kodiyetram. The Kodiyetram signifies an individual conquering his or her ego and is symbolic of hope and the overcoming of ignorance. I was amazed by the sense of community and solidarity. I was moved, as I am each time I visit this amazing temple, by the beauty of this space. Over the festival period there will be special Poojas, Abishekams, Sapparam and Theertham, as well as fasting and feasting. The temple is adorned with flowers, banana leaves, kolam designs and traditional music.

A highlight for me is the chariot festival, which will be held this weekend, and which I will be attending. The chariot is pulled by a large rope with thousands of devotees, old and young, standing side by side as a show of devotion to Lord Murugan. It really is an extraordinary sight and I feel so privileged to be part of this community. The final day of the festival, also known as the Poogavanam, will be organised by Sydney Murugan Youth Circle. It is inspiring to see young Tamil Australian people celebrate their culture and religion in such a vibrant way. There is no doubt that organising a festival of this scale is a herculean task, and I also pay tribute to the Saiva Manram. Like the member for Granville and the member for Parramatta, I love representing a Tamil-Australian community. I will always be their advocate in this place for the Tamil language and culture and, of course, the Hindu faith. Nadri.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (15:50): In reply: I refer to the very welcome contributions from the member for Parramatta and the member for Strathfield. We all really enjoy visiting the Sydney Murugan Temple and I know that we will all attend the chariot festival on Saturday. I am really looking forward to the day; it is one of the highlights of the year. We will all be pulling on the ropes and dragging the chariot around the temple. The member for Parramatta said that Saiva Manram runs many classes for young people and organises an annual dinner, another highlight. He spoke about his love of Lord Ganesha, the giver of wisdom. It is, of course, very important and the relationship between Lord Ganesha and Lord Murugan is one I mentioned in my own speech.

The temple is growing and has been growing for the past 20 years since it began as the Saiva Manram Association. The plans grew and the incredibly beautiful temple was built. There are now plans for an 800-seat function centre and an extensive car park. I look forward to seeing those welcome additions to these amazing facilities. The facilities have grown carefully over the years; the Saiva Manram have bought the adjoining

properties in this very small island of land between the Great Western Highway and the M4. It is an incredible thing of beauty on this little parcel of land that was probably quite hard to develop but it is a perfect location given that it is quite accessible without being a huge imposition on the neighbours.

The member for Strathfield is also wearing a sari. Hers was a gift but I bought mine in Sri Lanka about 15 years ago. We are planning to go to Sri Lanka together. As the member for Strathfield stated, this is the eighteenth festival so it has been going almost as long as the temple has been opened. It includes fasting and feasting. The Sydney Murugan Youth Circle has great plans for a celebration on the final day. I thank the volunteers and management committee for their exceptional work in putting together this year's festival. Every year it goes from strength to strength, which is wonderful. I thank them also for providing blessings to all three of us prior to the last election; we all won so I am sure we will all be there in two years time. I wish everybody the best for the annual festival at the Murugan Temple and I am very much looking forward to the chariot festival on Saturday.

Community Recognition Statements

MANNING BASE HOSPITAL

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:54): I inform the House that the New South Wales Government-funded stage one redevelopment of Manning Base Hospital is in full swing. The development of a new specialty car park at Manning Hospital took another step forward on 22 March when concrete was poured at the site. Mid North Coast Concreting was awarded the tender for the project and enlisted help from Georgies Concreting, Mick Perry Concreting, Rod Cain Concreting, Kedwell Constructions and Nambucca Formwork to complete the works. Taree-based Holcim poured the concrete while Coast Wide Concreting completed the pumping. The works covered 435 cubic metres and took the team over 12 hours to complete.

The crew joked that every concreter on the mid North Coast was there to help complete the work. Mid North Coast Concreting has attended the site since construction began in January. The team has poured concrete for the building's columns and walls and will continue to add to the redevelopment weekly. The Manning Hospital redevelopment project will bring to life a new, purpose-built facility that will provide enhanced cancer care and renal dialysis services. Staff and patient amenities as well as the car park will round out the project. All this construction is thanks to \$20 million provided by the New South Wales Government for stage one, with a further \$120 million required to finish stages two and three of Manning Base Hospital redevelopment, which I am fighting for.

PROSPECT ASSYRIAN NEW YEAR FESTIVAL

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:55): I thank the Assyrian Universal Alliance for their organisation of the New Year's festival at Fairfield Showground in the electorate of Prospect and its continued support for Assyrian culture and values. The Assyrian people are rightfully a proud people whose vibrant culture has survived over millennia. Despite many challenges to their Christian faith, language and culture, Assyrians have continued to lead the world as an example of the power of faith and determination to succeed. Today many Assyrians are in grave danger in their homeland of Northern Iraq.

Already tens of thousands of Assyrians have fled their ancestral homelands and yearn for the day they can return to live in peace without the fear of persecution. The Assyrian people have my full support, as an elected representative in Australia, for the creation of an autonomous State to be established as the Assyrian homeland as part of the Iraqi Federation. Many Assyrians have established a wonderful life in Australia. A generation of Assyrians, many born in Australia, enjoy their lives in freedom and peace. Many have also recently arrived and are very welcome. They are all an integral part of New South Wales and have enriched our Western Sydney community to an immeasurable extent. May God bless the Assyrian community.

BOWRAL HIGH SCHOOL ARTEXPRESS

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (15:56): I congratulate Bowral High School students, Marieon Cunningham and Gemimah Williams, who have had their major artworks featured and displayed as part of ARTEXPRESS. ARTEXPRESS is a joint initiative managed by the NSW Department of Education and the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards, and coordinated by the Arts Unit, Department of Education, and communities. This showcases the bodies of work of Higher School Certificate [HSC] students in high-quality visual arts education which were nominated by HSC markers as excellent examples of expressive form. In 2016 9,000 New South Wales students sat the HSC art exam and 512 were pre-selected for ARTEXPRESS. Only 228 were then accepted into the ARTEXPRESS exhibitions. Bowral High School has been incredibly successful with visual arts in the HSC, with 14 works being selected over the past five years. I say well done to the students and staff. This is a wonderful reflection of the quality of schools we have in Wollondilly and the Southern Highlands.

TRIBUTE TO TERRY WAND, OAM

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (15:57): Wyong Rugby Leagues Club honoured Terry Wand with an OAM dinner on 31 March 2017. Rugby league and the Masonic Lodge were two big parts of Terry's life. He helped establish the massive enterprise that the Wyong Rugby League Club has become and also coached several premiership teams. In 1980 he coached the coast's Harold Matthews Cup side and never lost a game against South Coast, mid North Coast, Newcastle, Manly, St George, Western Suburbs and Cronulla. The side contained eight Wyong juniors.

Terry's love for rugby league is reflected in his former secretary and general manager roles on the Central Coast and his many coaching positions. Terry's number one badge at Wyong Rugby Leagues Club is well deserved. However, he did not stop at rugby league. Terry was a good swimmer and along with many of the young footballers he helped establish Soldiers Beach Surf Club. A descendent of two of Wyong's pioneering families, Terry Wand says, "A lot of people talk about Wyong and ask, 'Why you would live there?'" His reply is, "The town has got character; that's why."

TRIBUTE TO JAMES BRUSH

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:58): This afternoon I pay tribute to an extraordinary young man who is achieving so much for his community in the Seven Hills electorate. Just last week James Brush of Lalor Park was awarded the Australian Scout Medallion for his work with the 1st Winston Hills Scouting Group. The Australian Scout Medallion is one of the highest honours for any Australian Scout. It requires the Scout to organise a challenging group activity and leadership project, undertake substantial community service and, importantly, be of good character.

On behalf of the entire Seven Hills community and the House I congratulate James. We are very lucky to have a young man of such quality leading by example in the local area. After the presentation I had an opportunity to inspect the ceiling and lighting in the main Scout hall at Edison Parade, Winston Hills. It is in need of repair. I am proud to have been able to deliver, on behalf of the New South Wales Government, a Community Building Partnership Grant of nearly \$10,500 for upgrades to it. I look forward to Parramatta City Council expediting these improvements. The main hall is used by a number of different community groups throughout the week and I am glad to have been able to make this shared facility safer and better for all.

TRIBUTE TO RYAN TEASDALE

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (15:59): On 16 March a tragedy unfolded in Unanderra as heavy rains bucketed the Illawarra region. Seeking a moment of innocent fun, 11-year-old Ryan Teasdale lost his life in flood waters when he was swept through a kilometre of stormwater drains at Riley Park. On behalf of the people of my electorate, and I am sure every member of this House, I offer the Teasdale family our deepest sympathy and condolences on the loss of their son and brother. I acknowledge and thank the staff of Ryan's school, Lindsay Park Public School, for supporting Ryan's school friends and family. I thank everyone from Wollongong and beyond who has rallied to help the Teasdale family with donations and vouchers that will reduce the pressure at this difficult time.

RIVERSTONE DOLPHINS RSL YOUTH SWIMMING CLUB

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:00): On 11 March this year the Riverstone Dolphins RSL Youth Swimming Club participated in the 2017 New South Wales RSL Youth Clubs State swimming championships at Wyong pool. The Riverstone Dolphins is a longstanding amateur swimming club catering for all ages. It is located, as the name suggests, in the Riverstone electorate. Of the 40 Riverstone Dolphin swimmers sent to compete, 15 participated in individual events while the rest participated in freestyle and/or medley relay team events. Collectively they achieved a medal tally of 22 gold, 10 silver and 23 bronze, with the majority of the club's swimmers achieving personal best times in their races.

I make special mention of two swimmers who won medals in all four events in which they competed. Aston Barton received two individual gold and two relay silver medals and Stephanie Kegg received two individual bronze and two relay bronze medals. Seven other swimmers came home with three medals each. I congratulate Michael Nohy, club president, and the committee for their generosity and commitment to support and encourage young people of the Riverstone Dolphins swimming club. They are a positive influence in the local community.

SRI DURGADEVI DEVASTHANAM SYDNEY

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (16:01): I bring to the attention of the House the opening of the Sydney Durga Temple in Regents Park. The temple pays homage to the three female Hindu deities: Goddess Durga, Goddess Sariswati and Goddess Lakshmi. The temple's inauguration is a significant milestone, as it is one of only

a few temples of its kind outside India and the first in Australia. The Sri Durgadevi Devasthanam Sydney makes an important contribution to our area, and I recognise its efforts as we celebrate the vibrant cultural diversity of Sydney. I proudly represent a large Hindu community in the electorate of Strathfield, with many devotees regularly attending prayers at the Durga Temple. I congratulate the temple committee, including Mr Mahendran Ratnam, on the opening of the temple, as well as devotees who have contributed to raising funds for the temple. I look forward to supporting the committee long into the future.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE NINETY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (16:02): I inform the House that last Sunday I had the pleasure of representing the Premier and visiting the Glenbrook RAAF Officers' Mess to celebrate the ninety-sixth birthday of the Royal Australian Air Force. As the Minister for Veteran's Affairs and a former member of the Defence Force, I must congratulate the men and women of the air corps on this milestone. I thank those who have served and continue to serve Australia with bravery and dogged determination to keep her safe in turbulent times, at home and abroad.

I was particularly chuffed to meet 94-year-old Eric Barton, who flew over the skies of Europe during the darkest days of World War II. It is the stories of people such as Mr Barton that remind us that the heart and soul of the Australian Defence Force is the people who served with courage in the past and those who currently serve. It was a delight to celebrate in the company of Air Vice Marshall Gavin Turnbull and his beautiful wife, Jacqui, as well as United States Consul General Valerie Fowler and her husband, Captain Chip Fowler, USN, retired. Happy birthday, Ronnie RAAF.

NOVA FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:03): Demand for emergency accommodation services in the Hunter region is high. That is why we are lucky to have Nova for Women and Children, an amazing service that supports women who are victims of domestic violence and experiencing homelessness. Over the past eight months, Nova has had 393 requests for help. According to Nova's chief executive officer, Kelly Hansen, 180 of those requests were from single women, and 154 of those women were at risk of domestic and family violence. Nova has recently run out of their existing underwear donations.

Although it seems basic, new underwear for a woman who has been homeless is a small luxury. I did a call-out on Facebook letting people know that "Nova needs knickers" and asking people to donate new and unworn underwear. People were quick to share the post. My office has now received many generous donations which I am looking forward to dropping off to Nova next week. I thank Nova and its dedicated workers for their endless commitment combating and supporting women fleeing violence in the Hunter.

ST IVES ROTARY CLUB AND DEMENTIA CARE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:04): Through April and May the Rotary Club of St Ives, along with Tim England, a dementia care specialist, will be holding free public education events about dementia, called "Discover the facts about dementia". The next sessions will be held at several times on Wednesday 12 April at Peter Canisius House, Pymble. In an endeavour to make the world a better place through practical efforts to support the community, these informative and important sessions are open to carers and families of people living with dementia. They should provide invaluable practical knowledge and understanding to anyone interested in this important issue. I congratulate the Rotary Club of St Ives and Tim England on all their wonderful work in this very important field and wish them well in the future.

TRIBUTE TO MARION GOSPER, OAM

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (16:05): I acknowledge Mrs Marion Gosper, OAM, of Cudal. Following her move to Cudal in the early 1970s to take up work as a primary school teacher, Marion married a local gentleman and cemented foundations by raising a family. Marion has since been involved in and volunteered for a number of local groups, including the Parents and Citizens Association, various children's sporting clubs and the Australian Red Cross, of which she holds the position of Treasurer. Marion co-founded the Cabonne Food Wine and Cultural Centre which opened in Cudal's old general store selling local produce.

The centre provides an excellent meeting space, free library and café. It plays an important role in creating community cohesion. Following many years of research, Marion produced a book, *Servicemen from the Cudal District*, and with assistance re-established the Cudal Anzac Day service. Marion's skill for writing also saw her produce the *Cudal News*, a printed community newspaper which she distributed throughout the district. Marion is an invaluable pillar of the Cudal community and was recently recognised for the significant contributions she has

made over many years through nomination in the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries 2016 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll.

MARINE RESCUE ULLADULLA

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (16:06): I inform the House that a brand-new, smaller rapid response boat, the UL20, was delivered to Marine Rescue Ulladulla on Wednesday 29 March this year. This new addition is part of a joint effort between the Government and Marine Rescue NSW. Over eight months new rescue boats have been delivered to Jervis Bay, Batemans Bay and Shoalhaven marine rescues. As a coastal community, Ulladulla is all too familiar with the risks at sea, and this new fast response boat will ensure that help is never too far away.

I thank Yamba Welding and Engineering for the construction of the UL20 and Ulladulla Crane Hire for safely lowering the \$303,000 boat into Ulladulla Harbour. I thank the Ulladulla community for its ongoing support for Marine Rescue Ulladulla. Finally, I acknowledge the Marine Rescue Ulladulla volunteers for their fundraising efforts while still continuing their vital emergency operations and training. I particularly acknowledge unit commander Dave Hall and deputy Dave Findley. Marine Rescue Ulladulla is a wonderful organisation that has helped the community in times of need for many years.

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL SENIOR CHOIR

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:07): On Monday 4 April I was treated to a unique concert by the fabulously talented students of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Primary School, Waterloo. I joined with parents and friends alongside pleasantly surprised shoppers at Woolworths, Redfern, to watch the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Senior Choir perform a selection of early twentieth-century folk songs. The students had delivered a special performance for the residents of Annie Green Court nursing home before their impromptu concert in the aisles of Woolworths. They sang magnificently, in full voice, and the delight of shoppers was obvious as a large crowd gathered to enjoy the lovely music and the children's gorgeous smiling faces. It is just another example of the brilliant work done by teachers and staff at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and Rachel Scott from the Australian Children's Music Foundation. I commend the beautiful voices of the choir to this House.

TRIBUTE TO ZANE NORRIS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:07): Zane Norris is the 17-year-old captain of Terrigal High School in my electorate and recently attended the National Schools Constitutional Convention in Canberra. Zane was selected from around 4,000 students across Australia to attend as a national delegate. Students from government, Catholic and independent schools competed in local conventions in their respective States and a selected few, including 30 from New South Wales, were given the opportunity to attend the national convention. Zane was selected based on an essay he wrote and says he enjoyed meeting like-minded students. He participated in a mock referendum, heard from a panel of experts that included university professors and participated in group discussions. It is great to see young people engaging with the workings of Parliament and the Constitution and I congratulate Zane on his participation in the convention. Well done.

CHING MING FESTIVAL

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:08): On Saturday 1 April I attended a ceremony at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Leppington to mark the annual Ching Ming Festival, as I do every year. For followers of the Buddhist faith, Ching Ming in the lunar calendar is a very important time of the year when the graves of deceased family and loved ones are swept and cleaned. Incense is burned in their memory and paper money, clothes and food are also offered to the dearly departed so that they have adequate sustenance in the Western Paradise of the afterlife. Some of the traditions that are followed date back centuries and continue to be passed down through families to this very day. I thank Mr Edward Chui of Invocare for his kind invitation to attend Ching Ming and thank him for providing a service that is so important at a very sensitive time for families who have lost a loved one. I also thank Mr Joseph Ko from the Universal Chung Wah Funeral Parlour, which does a very professional job locally, along with his staff, Peter Yeung, Minh Tong, Mai Dang and Agnes Yiu.

AUSTRALIAN SURF LIFE SAVING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (16:09): I congratulate the four Bay surf clubs on another outstanding result at the recent Australian Surf Life Saving Championships at North Kirra Beach, Queensland. Unfortunately, stormwater runoff closed Gold Coast beaches for most of the water-based events but all beach-based events were held as well as the youth, masters and first day of the water-based competition. North Cronulla, Wanda and Cronulla surf clubs finished in the top 10 clubs—North Cronulla, sixth; Wanda, seventh; and Cronulla, tenth. I also commend Elouera, which finished thirtieth. I particularly note Alex Rampoldi from the North Cronulla Club, who at just 15 years old took double gold at the championships. She made history

by winning twice on the same day. She raced with her triplet sisters, Leah and Emily, on the way to winning the under 17 championship, and then became the youngest winner of the open title. I congratulate all four Bay surf clubs on another fantastic effort at the Aussies.

MARATHI COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOL, WESTMEAD

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:10): Last Saturday I attended the inauguration of Australian Marathi Vidyalaya's [AMV] new Marathi community language school at Westmead Public School. AMV sought my support to establish the school about 18 months ago, as many local students were travelling to Glenfield every weekend for lessons, or missing out altogether. So I am especially delighted to see it up and running with the support of the Department of Education's Community Language Program. On Saturday all the parents and guests were entertained by fantastic dance performances and Marathi poetry recitations from the students. Marathi is the main language of Maharashtra and the nineteenth most commonly spoken language in the world. By learning Marathi, the students are able to communicate with their friends and relatives in India, and to keep their language and culture alive here in Australia. Starting with 73 students, the Marathi school at Westmead is clearly meeting a strong demand in the local area. I wish Australian Marathi Vidyalaya every success.

RETIREMENT OF JOAN SAXBY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:11): I inform the House that a much-loved and treasured member of the Manning Valley Choral Society has retired. Tributes were flowing in honour of Joan Saxby, the recently retired accompanist of the Manning Valley Choral Society [MVCS], during a special evening held in her honour. Following 35 years of continual service, Dame Joan made the difficult decision to retire from her beloved singing group at the end of 2016. In recognition of her outstanding contribution to the MVCS, a celebratory dinner was held at the beautiful home and grounds of longstanding member Rowena Meldrum and her husband, Ross.

Attendees included present and past choristers, representing three decades of choral tradition, and were warmly welcomed by MVCS vice president George Dan. Accompanied by her husband, Roy, daughter Louise, grand-daughter Anike, son Brian and his wife, Cara, Joan was duly revered in verse and song, with accolades befitting her decades of service. Current president Robyn Rankin spoke of Joan's endurance, patience and talent. Joan graciously responded to her accolades in her usual humorous and genial manner, reflecting on her time as an accompanist and on the many wonderful people she had known and times she had experienced. In appreciation of all Joan has done and has meant to the choir, Joan was awarded the perpetual 2017 Mike Collins Memorial Award for her outstanding service to the choral society.

PACIFIC HEALTHIER EATING ACTIVE STRONGER TOGETHER GROUP

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (16:12): I acknowledge and praise the efforts of my local Pacific Healthier Eating Active Stronger Together [PHEAST] leadership committee on their efforts to improve our Pacific community's public health outcomes. The campaign was officially launched last Friday at Minto Community Centre amongst supporters, health advocates and the local media. Our community campaign is aimed at empowering and encouraging Pacific Islander people to better understand their health, normative cultural behaviours, nutrition and lifestyle.

Our PHEAST ambassadors are to be given the appropriate training and resources so that they can recruit others to become ambassadors and help to spread the message to improve the Pacific community's public health. Our group meets weekly to strategise and discuss the best way forward. I am encouraged by the dedication of the group and their level of enthusiasm. I say to Mal, Charlie, Richard, Alicia, Adi, Masae, Zach, Marcel, MaryAnne, Moana and many others who contributed to the campaign that it is a job well done. We all agree that this is only the start of our campaign.

CHAMPION EQUESTRIAN VAULTER CHARLOTTE LEE

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (16:13): I congratulate local equestrian Charlotte Lee, who was recently crowned interschool primary vaulting champion for 2016. Charlotte is a member of the Southern Highlands Vaulting Team and was recently recognised at the 2016 Equestrian NSW Annual Awards for Excellence, which were held at Rosehill Gardens Racecourse. It was just the most amazing and recent accolade to come Charlotte's way. She was also announced New South Wales junior vaulter of the year late last year. She took home the national Pre Novice Champion title at the event in South Australia. That sits alongside her second place in her event at last year's Sydney Royal Easter Show. So 2016 was a great year for Charlotte. She will be looking to continue her winning ways at the Southern Cross CVI vaulting competition to be held at K Ranch Arena in Mount Hunter in early April, which attracts some of the best vaulters from across the country.

WOMEN OF PYRMONT BOOK LAUNCH

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:14): I refer to the inspiring women elders of Pyrmont, whose stories are in a new book *Women of Pyrmont*, which I was proud to help launch with the Federal member for Sydney, Tanya Plibersek, last night. The stories tell us about how they built community in this densely populated urban redevelopment area. They are women of different backgrounds, from many different countries and different lives who represent a microcosm of Sydney. They all contribute to and join activities around Jacksons Landing and the Pyrmont Community Centre, showing that community is not the buildings or the roads but what people make happen. The stories remind us about the importance of people welcoming, supporting and caring for each other. They also show the vital role of a place for people to get together, socialise, hold events and organise, and in this case it is often the City of Sydney's Pyrmont Community Centre. Congratulations to everyone who contributed and especially to editors Barbara Thompson and Leone Huntsman, who have captured the spirit of the women of Pyrmont.

THE SCHOOL OF ST JUDE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:15): Gemma Sisia, OAM, spent her early years on a wool sheep property outside Guyra in northern New South Wales. She devoted time to helping the poor in Africa, in particular Uganda, for three years as a volunteer teacher. Her experience led to her belief that free, high-quality education should be the right of all children as the strongest weapon to fight against poverty, corruption and political instability. Gemma is the principal and founder of The School of St Jude, which opened in 2002. It is a 100 per cent charity-funded educational institution that provides free scholarships to 1,800 of the poorest students in the Arusha region of Tanzania in East Africa. To raise funds, Gemma contacted local Rotary clubs, and within a few months formed a long-term, supportive relationship with Rotary. I was fortunate to attend a recent St Ives Rotary fundraising dinner last month where Gemma, as guest speaker, spoke about her hope-inspiring cause. I commend all concerned with the cause and St Ives Rotary, under the leadership of Peter Lorsch, for its support.

BLACKHEATH PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:16): I commend the fantastic Blackheath Public School for its production of *Nourish—Food for the Heart and Soul*, which is a cookbook of beauty, and for its efforts in being named the best practice model for healthy canteens across New South Wales. With pride, I congratulate the Parents and Citizens Association, school staff and students on this incredible project. This little town sits at the top of our Blue Mountains, tucked into a World Heritage wilderness, on a plateau with rock escarpments on both sides. It is a little town with a huge community heart. Exceptional talent and efforts were employed by the Blackheath community in creating this book. Some of those involved included Sam Masters, Jody Lee, Hannah Surtees, Ona Janzen, Victoria Jeffreys, Trish Davies, Lisa Hicks, Paul Burrows, Geoff Smith, Asia Upwood and Lewis Thyer, as well as the many wonderful local businesses who contributed generously, wholeheartedly volunteering their precious time to support this great little school.

TERRIGAL ROTARY COMMUNITY AWARD RECIPIENT RAMAZAN CAN

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:17): Recently I attended the Rotary Club of Terrigal community awards and pay tribute to Ramazan Can—or Rambo—who is the proud owner of the outstanding Aromas Cafe at Erina Fair in my electorate and a strong supporter of our local community. Rambo regularly assists local organisations, including schools and sporting organisations. He is a key supporter of the Central Coast Mariners, not only financially but also through mentoring players who come from overseas to ensure their integration into the team and the Central Coast community. As a quiet family man, Rambo never seeks to be recognised for his contributions, but in appreciation of his service he recently received a Community Award from the Rotary Club of Terrigal. I had the pleasure of presenting the award and enjoyed the opportunity to thank him for making our local area and my electorate a better place to live.

CHALDEAN LEAGUE

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:18): I recognise the Chaldean League, which organised a fundraising dinner on Sunday 19 March at Edensor Park. Chaldeans mostly come from what is called Iraq, and the purpose of the fundraiser was to help rebuild villages and lives that have been destroyed as a result of the conflict with and actions of Daesh—probably better known to Australians as ISIS. I congratulate the organisers of the event, including Sam Yousif, President of the Chaldean League of New South Wales. Also present at the event were His Grace Mar Emil Nona, Archbishop of the Chaldean and Assyrian Diocese of Australia and New Zealand, together with Haval Syan, the representative in Australia of the Kurdish Regional Government. The Chaldean community have an entirely natural wish to help family and friends living in their land of origin to overcome the horrors that have been inflicted upon them. They deserve our support and solidarity.

TRIBUTE TO CRICKETER MAITLAN BROWN

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:19): I inform the House that Wingham's Maitlan Brown has recently been to Sri Lanka with the Australian Shooting Stars under-21 cricket team. This was the 19-year-old's international debut and follows a successful season in the Women's Big Bash League [WBBL] with the Melbourne Renegades as well as strong performances in the Sydney first grade competition. The Australians have been away for two weeks and played three 50-a-side games and three T20s against the Sri Lankans. There are 13 players in the under-21 touring squad. Selectors utilised the tour to access talent for the Australian Southern Stars side. Ms Brown is a bowling all-rounder. She is also looking forward to playing more 50-over games after spending much of the summer involved in T20s with the Renegades.

Ms Brown had her first season in the WBBL last summer with the Renegades. She was part of a young squad that missed out on the playoffs but showed considerable improvement from the previous summer. Ms Brown was named player of the match in the second last game of the campaign against the Sydney Sixers, where she hit 30 off 15 deliveries, including 14 from the last three, to clinch the victory. Earlier she claimed 1-21 from four overs. Ms Brown hopes to stay with Melbourne next season. Maitlan Brown's younger brother Reid Brown from Wingham High School is also a rising sports star and keen golfer, who was named as one of six members of the Australian All Schools Championships honours team. Winning gold in the 2016 New South Wales stroke play championship also catapulted Reid into fourth place in Australia for high school golf.

CABRAMATTA ASSYRIAN NEW YEAR FESTIVAL

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:20): On Saturday I was afforded the privilege of being invited to the Assyrian New Year Festival, also known as Akitu. We celebrated year 6,767 of the Assyrian calendar over the weekend, marking one of the longest continuous cultures in the world. South-western Sydney is home to many of the roughly 60,000 people in Australia who identify as Assyrian and they make a significant contribution to our community. Despite the bad weather, families filled Fairfield Showground to celebrate the festival as a community and joined together for speeches, an award ceremony and performances. It was great to see the Assyrian community celebrating this important cultural day together. I thank Mr Hermiz Shahan, Deputy Secretary General of the Assyrian Universal Alliance, for hosting this wonderful community event.

WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:20): I congratulate and give thanks to Chief Fluid Systems and the Chipping Norton Community for coming together to host a World's Greatest Shave event. On Friday 17 March many businesses and volunteers in Chipping Norton came together to run the World's Greatest Shave, which is an event that raises awareness and funds for research to help more people survive blood cancer. Some of the businesses include Hennessy Coffee, Blackbook Ink, First National Real Estate Daystar, the Rise and Grind Cafe, Kennards Hire Moorebank, Christopher Woe Photography and Five-7 Racing. The team had a donation goal of \$10,000 and, amazingly, they doubled their target goal by raising more than \$20,000 on the day. I congratulate and thank Chief Fluid Systems and the community of Chipping Norton for their efforts in raising money for blood cancer.

SAINT SAVA SERBIAN YOUTH FESTIVAL

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:21): I recognise the twenty-sixth Saint Sava Serbian Youth Festival held on 26 February at the St Sava Serbian Cultural Club in Middleton Grange. I have previously attended this event and I thank David Milovanovic, President of the St Sava Serbian Club, for his invitation. I also acknowledge the presence of Consul-General of the Republic of Serbia Brislav Grbic on that day. The Serbian community has played a significant role in south-western Sydney and Liverpool for many years. They are an important part of the multicultural community that is characteristic of contemporary Sydney and the area that I represent. Liverpool is a wonderful place in which to live. A significant reason for that is our multiculturalism, and particularly groups such as the Serbian community. I congratulate the organisers of the Youth Festival and the performers.

REACHING 4 KORINA

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (16:22): I draw the attention of the House to an event held at Highlands Golf Club in Mittagong, Reaching 4 Korina. This event aims to educate and promote sepsis awareness and create a support network for quadruple amputees and their families who have been affected by sepsis. It was inspired by a brave woman in my electorate, Korina Valentine from Yerrinbool. Korina, a 29-year-old mother of two, was struck down with sepsis in April 2015 and was in a critical condition for the following 10 months. Despite requiring multiple amputations, Korina bravely fought the disease and survived against all odds. Korina was recently given the Education Pathways Award for Outstanding Commitment to Studies at the Tumut TAFE

Campus graduation after completing a Certificate II in Education Support by distance study. This is a great achievement for an amazing woman and I wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

Rulings

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Although I do not particularly agree with the concept of community recognition statements, I agree with their intent. However, I suggest that if any member is intending to send a video of their community recognition statement to the person involved that person will not be able to understand what was said. I feel sorry for Hansard. The member for Macquarie Fields is an example to everyone of how a community recognition statement should be given. The member for Davidson and the member for Blue Mountains also deliver their statements well. Instead of rushing through them, members should give community recognition statements with some feeling and purpose so that the person or persons being recognised can be proud of what was said. As I said, some members do it right but others may as well be speaking another language as far as Hansard, the Chair or anyone watching is concerned.

Private Members' Statements

CONSTRUCTION WORKER MENTAL HEALTH

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:24): I recently joined three relatively small but fantastic local construction companies in the Blue Mountains as they downed tools to spend the day talking and learning and practising living a healthy life. The day was named Get Healthy at Work. Blue Eco Homes, Steelworx Construction and Woodford Homes staff participated in practical, engaging, collaborative and theory-based sessions throughout the day at Trees Adventure in Yarramundi. At their invitation I joined them for a small part of the day. The program included an introduction to living and working in a more robust, healthy manner. Throughout the day each of the workers participated in a variety of health checks by the Get Healthy at Work team: their cholesterol, weight, body mass index [BMI] and blood pressure was measured. There were sessions about nutrition, mental health and suicide, a fitness program and, of course, an adventure challenge at the close of the day involving a bit of fun with the companies competing against one another up on ropes between the trees.

I acknowledge the efforts of Teresa Henson, Lyn and Allen Smith, and Merylese and Joe Mercieca for organising the day. I thank them for stepping outside the comfort zone and moving away from the usual routine of a day's work to offer a critically important break for their staff. I was so impressed by their commitment to, and care for, their workers on the day. It involved raucous laughter and brought tears to my eyes. Many could learn a lesson from their efforts and dedication and for reminding us all that we are human. Mates in Construction conducted the workshop I attended, which field officer and case manager Carolyn Kelso ably led.

The session focused on recognising signs of distress and acknowledging that, when we see or hear of someone struggling with feeling bad, the usual response in the industry involves comments such as, "Harden the f*** up, Princess", or, "Here, have a cup of concrete." As someone who has personally dealt with the heart-wrenching ramifications of a loved one attempting suicide, when that low point turned our family's lives upside down, I was keen to learn of more ways to strengthen mental health, recognise those suffering the illness and support this great initiative by local companies.

Statistics about young men in the construction industry, who are suiciding at alarming rates, require both serious consideration and action. The Griffith University Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention, a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Suicide Prevention, is a major contributor to the World Health Organization's first World Suicide Report. Their work has informed action taken by Mates In Construction, industry bodies and unions to inform and support workers. According to the research that Mates in Construction collects, every year 190 Australians working in the construction industry take their own lives.

This means that we lose a construction worker every second day to suicide. Construction workers are six times more likely to die from suicide than from an accident at work. Our young construction workers aged under 24 years are well over two times more likely to take their own lives than other young Australian men. For workers in the construction industry, suicide seems to be a part of the reality of the work. The industry is highly transient, with most workers employed on a project-by-project basis for periods from a few weeks to at best a few years. There is little job security.

Other research has shown that workers find it difficult to discuss feelings and emotions with colleagues and the nature of the work means that social support is more difficult. Pride was identified as an issue, with workers saying they had a problem being seen as "not manly". Past research also suggests that suicide among construction workers is connected to excessive alcohol consumption, lack of help seeking, and relationship

problems. Personal stories reveal much about the human spirit and its ability to find a way back from the darkest of places where everything seems lost.

Sadly, we all know people who have suffered from the impact of suicide. We need to keep talking about this. I am grateful for awareness-raising campaigns that deal with difficult issues and for prevention and intervention initiatives such as R U OK? Day and Beyond Blue's "Heads Up". I am impressed by the resilience training exercises conducted in our schools, and I am thankful for useful workshops conducted by the likes of Mates in Construction, with men who work in this tough industry encouraging others to speak and listen to their mates. I also respect and applaud unions such as the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union in demanding better and healthier working conditions so our loved ones can come home.

GOULBURN ELECTORATE EVENTS

DALTON POWER PLANT

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (16:30): Last weekend I had the pleasure of attending the Brigadoon Highland Gathering at Bundanoon, an incredible celebration of all things Scottish, including haggis, and the largest gathering in Australia. It was a perfect Southern Highlands day, with more than 15,000 people in attendance. The entertainment included more than 20 pipe bands, highland games, the Tartan Warriors, dancers, stalls and clan representatives. A highlight was the ceilidh on Saturday night, with lots of fun and Scottish dancing with family and friends—my own included.

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of Brigadoon. I congratulate the committee and all the wonderful volunteers who helped make this day, and previous days, such a success. I thank President Thomas-Andrew Baxter and committee members Alastair Saunders senior, Irene Watson, George and Vicki Anthony, Alastair Saunders junior, John Everett, Tara Dunbar, Helene Jessep, Wilma Cotterill, Ryan Elphick, Andrew Ryan, Stan Cooper, Jacinda Tunks, David Stimson, Tricia Ashley, Joanne Smith, Brian and Pat Hughes, Pat Green, and Peter Rocca. I cannot wait until next year for my haggis.

March saw us celebrate Seniors Week, and what better way than to recognise the efforts of local community members. This year I was able to recognise the efforts of local man Cohn Handley from Wingello for his work with the Rural Fire Service. I take this opportunity to sincerely thank Mr Handley for his tireless dedication and selflessness in helping to make the community of Wingello and surrounds a safer place. Mr Handley was chosen as a recipient for his commitment to the brigade through fundraising and volunteering, along with generosity in providing fire safety talks and demonstrations at local schools. It is this commitment to upholding safety standards and the promotion of these standards that mean he and his colleagues return safely to their families, as well as keep our community safe from harm's way. The Southern Highlands is stronger thanks to the dedication of volunteers like Colin Handley. I commend him for his wonderful achievement.

On a more serious note, the communities of Gunning and Dalton have been left reeling after AGL announced it is seeking a two-year extension on its approval for the gas-fired Dalton Power Plant, which was granted in 2012 and expires in July. This week I have consulted with the community and I understand their frustration, which is new to my electorate. Once the project was suspended in 2012 the community moved on, so one can imagine the shock of hearing of the resurrected plans three months prior to the lapse date. These communities have changed in the past five years. A lot more people now live in Gunning and Dalton, and this needs to be considered when people are thinking about putting a peaking station four kilometres from the village. Next week I have scheduled two more listening posts for further community consultation and look forward to continuing to work with this wonderful rural community in the electorate of Goulburn.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:33): I thank the Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and the member for Goulburn, for her great efforts on behalf of her community. It will come as no surprise given my Christian name, that I am of Scottish heritage. So I well understood what the Minister was referring to in speaking of the Brigadoon and haggis. I also thank the Minister for her advocacy and support for Seniors Week, and for recognising Mr Handley. The Minister also raised important concerns about the Dalton Power Plant, which exemplifies what a great member she is. Her constituents are very lucky to have the Minister as their local member.

CAMDEN ELECTORATE STUDENT LEADERS

CAMDEN SHOW

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (16:34:0): The member for Ku-ring-gai has just spoken of his Scottish heritage. He has not shouted anyone since coming to this place so it must be true. Yesterday student leaders from schools in my electorate visited Parliament House. As this Parliament debates, considers and

legislates the laws by which we all have to live, students gain an understanding of the legislation process and how it will eventually impact on their lives. To be elected as a leader of a school is a privilege and the leaders who visited us yesterday were fantastic ambassadors. Their peers have elected them to represent their schools and they have done an outstanding job. Over the years I have found all the leaders of the schools in my electorate to be a credit to their school.

Visiting Parliament House gives these students an opportunity to see firsthand how their Parliament works. After all, some of these students may see themselves as future leaders in their adult life and consider a career in politics. I made the point yesterday that we would like to see people from many diverse backgrounds becoming members of Parliament—I also made the point that it might be better to get a real job. Camden is often referred to as the birthplace of Australian agriculture. Last weekend the very successful Camden Show was held, and Minister Roberts and I were given the opportunity to present awards to the junior rural ambassadors.

The Camden Show is the last regional show before the Royal Easter Show—without a doubt it is the State's premier agricultural show. Every year the agriculture display of local produce and stock is outstanding, let alone the cooking and craft. The rural ambassadors are a credit to the area. It is encouraging to have young people so passionate about the land. I thank Camden Show Society President Hugh Southwell for his hospitality and the committee for their outstanding efforts in making the show the success it was. The definition of a leader has many connotations—leading by example, taking charge in a situation that needs control or having a vision for the future. We are all given the opportunity to lead at some stage in our lives; it is about stepping up. Being a leader in a school is not that different from what we do; it is about democracy and giving everyone a say in how they would like things done.

I thank the students and teachers who attended Parliament House yesterday. They did themselves, their families, their schools and our community proud. In acknowledgment of their wonderful efforts I will mention each of them by name: Magdalene Catholic High School, Alexandra Willis and Bailey Whitley; Camden High School, Isabella Boone, Cormack Stevens, Daniel Ely and Hannah Taylor; Elizabeth Macarthur High School, Kritika Kumar, Dylen Stevenson, Alexis Tram, Taylor Acton, Brittney White, Carrin Goosen, Jeremiah Edagbami, Iesha Needham, Zainab Al Nakeeb and teacher Amitha Bhat; Mount Annan High School, Heather Austin, Abbey Croft, Cameron Biggs and Jacob Jones; St Benedict's Catholic College, Madison-Leigh Colmenar and Jackson Lewis; Elderslie High School, Hannah Trethewy and Deni Hoxha.

I pause to mention that last Saturday night I attended the Cricket NSW award ceremonies. Hannah Trethewy, a year 12 student at Elderslie High School, was presented with her baggie blue for representing the New South Wales first grade Lendlease Breakers last year. She filled in for Alyssa Healy when she was on Southern Stars duty. Well done, Hannah. I return to the list, Mount Annan Christian College, Tahlia Broadstock, Daniel Krakue, Dominique Willes, Kyle Taylor and teacher Joesian Beshay; and St Gregory's College Joshua Ashkar, Vincent Hreszczuk and Cort Langford. I felt it appropriate to mention by name all the leaders who attended because of how outstanding they were. I repeat, all those leaders were outstanding. I am very proud of the schools, principals and teachers in my electorate. I look forward to working with these outstanding students now and in the future when they are leaders in the professions of their choice.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:39:0): I thank the member for Camden, who is also the Whip, for his great contribution to this Parliament. What a great local member he is. I am very fortunate to have had his guidance since I have been in this place, as have many other members. In the way he operates he demonstrates what he talked about today—leadership. He is a great mentor—as he has informed the House—to the school leaders in his electorate. He supported the Camden Show—I think there are probably few better places to go than the Camden Show and the Royal Easter Show will probably learn a lot from it. I thank the member for his great contribution to his electorate and for what he does around this House.

MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE ROADS AND BRIDGES

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:40): I refer to a number of road and bridge works that are urgently required in the Myall Lakes electorate and call on the Government to seriously consider funding those works. They include: Martin Bridge at Taree, which needs painting and lights; Cedar Party Creek Bridge at Wingham, which needs replacing; Old Bar Road, which needs upgrading; Avalon Road between Wollongbar Road and Krambach, which needs upgrading; Markwell Road, which is between Bulahdelah and Gloucester, needs sealing; and the Lakes Way North and the Lakes Way South need upgrading.

Martin Bridge is the gateway to Taree and a very important bridge. It was first built in about 1940 with 11 spans crossing the Manning River. Six million dollars has been spent on upgrading the structural integrity of the bridge but it now needs painting. The paint is peeling and falling into the river. It is the gateway to Taree and it is embarrassing. The community really wants to feel proud about itself. Everybody knows the front door, the

gateway to an area, is important and it would be great to have community input into what colour the bridge should be painted. Light-emitting diode, or LED, lights would also assist.

Cedar Party Creek Bridge is the entrance to Wingham, a very important historic town in New South Wales. The bridge is of wooden construction and has been there for many years. It has a number of structural problems and is covered during times of flood. We see what is happening on the North Coast now. It needs replacing. It is very pleasing to see the council received \$350,000 from the Fixing Country Roads program to undertake the plan and design work. The community is now able to be engaged in looking at which options it would prefer. Old Bar has grown significantly and is the closest town to Taree on the beach. A large number of vehicles use Old Bar Road and it is in a state of disrepair and needs upgrading with overtaking lanes.

Wollongbar Road from Nabiac to Avalon Road has been upgraded. Avalon Road needs to be upgraded. It is a freight route and an important road for the community. Markwell Road runs from Bulahdelah to Gloucester, and needs sealing. Tourism is very important to Gloucester and Bulahdelah. To seal that road would open up opportunities, not only for the town of Bulahdelah but also for Gloucester. More tourists would visit those towns and spend their money, and that means employment. It is important that work is looked at, even if the Government decides to assist the council by sealing a few kilometres and upgrading the road over several years.

The Lakes Way North between the Pacific Highway and closest to Taree and Tuncurry needs upgrading. There have been a number of serious accidents on the road. A large number of people who live in Forster-Tuncurry, Taree and Halliday's Point use that road to travel to their employment. It is also the road that connects Forster-Tuncurry with Taree, which has a number of regional services such as the airport, railway station and the hospital. Ambulances use this road to transport patients to hospital in Taree. In the past few years there has been at least one accident on that road involving an ambulance. The last road I mention is The Lakes Way South from Forster-Tuncurry to the Bulahdelah end of the Pacific Highway. That road is used by many tourists. It is a narrow, winding road. These roads and bridges need upgrading. I call on the Government to look at these projects and fund them.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:44:0): It must be a day for the Whips: The member for Myall Lakes, who is also The Nationals Whip, has just shown again what an outstanding member he is. There is nothing more important to country and regional electorates than their roads and for him to advocate so strongly on behalf of his electorate is a great model to all members of this House. Not only is he a great local member but he is also actively involved in the Lions Club and other community organisations and I thank the member for his hard work for his community.

SOUTH COAST INFRASTRUCTURE AND TOURISM

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (16:45): I discuss the sustained investment in infrastructure and tourism projects in the South Coast by the New South Wales Government. The South Coast region is the most popular tourist destination in New South Wales outside Sydney, attracting over 10 million domestic and international visitors last year. Tourism is crucial to our area and the New South Wales Government is ensuring that it has the facilities and services necessary to continue to support our growing tourism industry and attract more and more visitors. Recently the Minister for Tourism and Major Events advised me that two deserving projects in the South Coast were successful in achieving funding under the Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure Program: The Jerriwerri Indigenous Ecotourism Enterprise Development Project was awarded an amazing \$149,000; and \$105,305 was awarded to Goodnight Oysters at Greenwell Point for the Four Knots Oyster Room and visitor experience centre.

Both projects will contribute substantially to economic growth and job creation on the South Coast. The Jerriwerri Indigenous Ecotourism Enterprise Development Project envisages infrastructure for camping and eco-cabin facilities on Aboriginal-owned land around Jervis Bay. The Jerrinja clan of the Wandjina people have a 27,000 year cultural connection to the land that is proposed for development. The Jerrinja Local Aboriginal Land Council will use the income and opportunity provided by this project to support land management and combat the high unemployment rate among the Jerrinja people. The project will offer tourists another means of enjoying the beautiful Jervis Bay landscape and also educate them on land conservation and Aboriginal culture.

The South Coast's renowned vineyards and dairy farms already attract tourists from all over the world, but it is fantastic to see the New South Wales Government supporting our promising oyster tourism industry in the region through the Four Knots Oyster Room. Goodnight Oysters is an operational oyster farm owned by second generation oyster farmers who are looking to completely overhaul the Shoalhaven oyster coast tourism experience. Their oyster room will include an interpretive centre, an oyster nursery and grading machine, and a cafe with a degustation area. Another wonderful infrastructure initiative transforming the South Coast is the Curley's Bay skate park. This skate park has had a tumultuous history in the Culburra Beach community. In April 2015 the privately owned community skate and youth space was closed down for private development.

This left quite a gap in the community; however, almost immediately a group of young people from Culburra banded together and formed the Culburra Beach Youth Park Project Committee.

These determined, community-minded people lobbied and lobbied to turn their vision of a Culburra Beach skate park into reality. The committee had the backing of the entire Culburra Beach community and by December 2015 they achieved results in the form of a \$50,000 New South Wales Government Community Building Partnership grant. This was a fantastic boost, but more was needed to realise the development of a recreational park facility. In April 2016, one year on from the demolition of the old skate park, I had the privilege of announcing to the Culburra Beach community that they were successful in achieving a New South Wales Government Category 3 recreation grant of \$512,000 for the Curley's Bay Recreational Park. I am very happy to say that on 21 March 2017 I turned the first sod for this project and construction is well underway.

I sincerely thank the former Minister for Racing, the Hon. Troy Grant, for allocating this funding to the South Coast. I also thank the Culburra Youth Projects Committee: Alex McNeilly, John Segol, Erin Bell, Eamon Seymour Munn and Luke Munn for all the work they have done on this project. I thank also the Youth Action Group: Ryan Byrnes, Mat Byrnes, Daniel Wood, Leon Vukelic, Naya Rogers, Charlie Hayes and Jayden Kelly, and all of the other supporters throughout the Culburra Beach community. The Culburra Beach and Curley's Bay area is already an incredibly beautiful part of my electorate and this State. With access to these recreational facilities, the decision for tourists and families to visit will be so much easier.

These infrastructure projects are a fantastic example of the ways in which the Government is prioritising regional New South Wales. I thank the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government, and in particular the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, the Hon. Adam Marshall, and the former Minister for Racing, the Hon. Troy Grant, for this generous funding. This project at Curley's Bay is one of those things that makes me extremely pleased for the South Coast community.

Culburra Beach is a small village and has not really attracted too many funds in other areas. There are many families with young children and kids who do not have a lot to do in Culburra Beach. Curley's Bay will be transformed with the skate park and outdoor recreation facilities, including barbecues, outdoor gym facilities and other amenities. This master plan has been devised with the local community, and the community is right behind it. It is their master plan. I have been part of it, and right beside them along this road. Now it is underway and it should be completed very soon. So I say well done to the community of Culburra Beach, and in particular the committee. I make particular mention of Alex McNeilly, who has worked so hard to lobby for these funds. Well done, Culburra Beach.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:50): After a challenging question time, it is interesting to hear the member for South Coast speak with such energy and passion about her electorate. Indeed, who can blame her—she talked about her electorate's beaches, skate parks and yummy oysters in oyster rooms. There is no doubt that her hard work has turned her electorate into the tourism mecca that it is today and has promoted great economic growth and jobs for her constituents. So I thank the member for the South Coast for all she is doing.

Ms Shelley Hancock: I hope to see the member for Ku-ring-gai at Culburra Beach soon.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I would love to go there for a visit. I thank the member for South Coast for all she does, both for the House and for her constituents.

CANTERBURY ELECTORATE SCHOOL MAINTENANCE

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:51): Today I express my disappointment that this Government continues to ignore the overcrowded and under-maintained schools in my electorate of Canterbury. The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is allocating less than 10 per cent of the money needed to fix the school maintenance backlog. At the current rate, this means it will take 20 years to fix up classrooms for schoolkids in my electorate. During the recent by-election in Canterbury, education was a very important issue, particularly maintenance issues. Time and time again, people gave me the same answer when I asked what their key issues were—their kids' education, particularly the overcrowding, overcapacity and lack of maintenance of schools.

Getting a good education, and giving the next generation the best start in life, is part of the Australian ethos of a fair go and equal opportunity. Education is truly the greatest equaliser. In the words of shadow Minister for Education, Mr Jihad Dib—the next Minister for Education:

Our children deserve the best possible education, and that means providing the best possible learning environment.

Children simply cannot receive the education they deserve in a leaky classroom, a school with malfunctioning toilets or dilapidated sports facilities. I thank and pay tribute to the amazing work done by the principals, teachers, school staff and volunteers in my electorate of Canterbury. These staff make sure that, despite the issues facing

our local schools, our kids get the best education possible. Educators really are local heroes, and I will support them in any way I can every day that I am the member for Canterbury. I also thank the amazing local parents and citizens groups in my electorate for their tireless advocacy and the work they do in Canterbury. The tenacity and hard work of these parents is extraordinary and I thank them for their service.

What this Government has provided is overcrowded schools, an over-budget and malfunctioning information technology system, and schools that have issues in simply getting the bare necessities. This Government must tell the families of my electorate why their children are learning in dilapidated schools while this Government cannot even keep to budget on its infrastructure programs. The children of Canterbury deserve better than this—the children of New South Wales deserve better than this, yet this Government continues to disappoint and ignore families across New South Wales, including those in my electorate. The maintenance backlog for Canterbury South Public School is \$174,384, and the Parents and Citizens Association had to apply for a Community Building Partnership grant to get the toilets fixed, which should have been done during the past six years under this Government.

These are the lengths concerned parents are having to go to in order to get their children's schools repaired. The Government can barely fix a toilet, let alone its warped policy agenda. This also raises serious questions about what needs to be repaired in other schools and why the Government is not carrying out even simple repairs. The maintenance backlog for Canterbury Public School is \$979,312, and the list goes on. Those are just a couple of examples. Seventeen schools in my electorate have been left behind by this Government and they are crying out for functional school grounds—for their toilets to be fixed and for their leaking roofs to be fixed. This equates to a more than \$7 million maintenance backlog in schools in my electorate. This is just another example of this Government not governing for all of New South Wales but only for some of New South Wales.

Our area is growing and it is growing because this Government has allowed population rezoning to happen. The Government has presided over this enormous population growth and it is continuing to increase the growth targets. However, the Government has not spoken to any of the schools, to any education officials, to parents or to the parents and citizens associations. I am calling on the Government, the education officials, the Department of Planning, the Greater Sydney Commission, Infrastructure NSW—all those highly paid bureaucrats in the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government—to go and talk to the parents and teachers in my electorate. The Government will find out that its population targets—imposed without speaking to the schools—have caused overcrowding and big maintenance issues in schools. The Greater Sydney Commission has mentioned plans for an education subcommittee to address this issue. I am calling on the Government to release information about this subcommittee as soon as possible.

MACLEAN FLYING FOX MANAGEMENT

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:56): I inform the House of the severe impact that an infestation of flying foxes is having on a school in Maclean and on the Maclean community. The best way that I can do that is by reading a letter that was sent by a ratepayer in Maclean to the Clarence Valley Council, which the mayor emailed to me. The letter reads:

How are you? My name is Helen Graney and I live in bat central Maclean. I am inviting you to come and spend a week at our home just to give you an idea of what we have to put up with. The constant screeching, the smell and being bombed with crap twice a day has worn us down. We put the house on the market just before the bats were moved to the gully in August 2007. We intended to buy a place on the Lower Clarence on a flat block as neither of us are getting any younger, but while we had plenty of lookers as the price was reasonable we had no takers once they looked across the road. There was no way we could sell with anything like a fair market price and we cannot afford to go into debt at our age.

We have lived in this house for 33 years in October and in that time we have had to put up with these animals for nine years. We have had to have our house painted and the roof blasted and painted which hasn't done a lot for the bank balance. The next expense because of these things is a respray of our car. I think it has stood up amazingly well to a twice daily acidic excreta and urine bath but the paint is now lifting off and will have to be redone. Of course these expenses are born by us with no thought from you or anyone else. I do sympathise with the school kids, their parents and teachers. I think they have plenty to worry about and I really don't see anything happening until a child either gets sick from a bat born disease or dies. Wouldn't that do wonders for your political future. I suppose the average time someone at the school would be impacted upon by bats would average about 3.5-4 hours a day over a year. We have them between 14 and 18 hours a day, depending on the season, for the bulk of them and 24 hours for those that for some reason don't leave the camp at night.

As for the non-existent community consultation we hear about we have not had anyone consult with us since 2009. The so called "Working" Group does not seem to do much work. It would be interesting to see what the groups views were on retaining and dispersal and how many are for and against, in the interest of impartiality of course. How did these people get appointed to the group and who appointed them and are the rate payers funding them in any way, shape or form? There must be some tie up with council as a letter we received this year from the group was on council headed paper. It does therefore follow that they must in some way be accountable and should make their dealings public.

Thanks for your time and the invite stands.

Regards

Helen Graney

There are about 60,000 to 70,000 flying foxes in Maclean, which prompted this ratepayer to write the letter I have just read. You cannot have 60,000 or 70,000 chooks in a residential area, because they pose a health hazard. Surely to goodness having in a residential area 60,000 to 70,000 flying foxes, which carry the Hendra virus and the lyssavirus, poses a greater threat. The threat is at its greatest when they fly around schools and other parts of a residential area. The Government must take away the impediments to removing these flying foxes so that we can disperse them as cost-effectively as possible. This is not rocket science—this is not putting a man on the moon—it is simply shifting flying foxes. We were effectively able to shift flying foxes 30 and 40 years ago, without diminishing flying fox numbers.

We need to go back to basics, empower the community and take away the impediments so as to ensure the community can protect itself, its houses, its children and its schools. The residents of this urban area, and the kids at school in the area, did not elect to live in an animal enclosure, but that is what Maclean feels like at the moment. We must take every responsibility to ensure that the residents' health and wellbeing come first. In order to do that, we need to go back to basics. We need to ensure that the flying foxes are moved quickly and effectively in a non-lethal way. It should not cost millions of dollars to move these animals; it must be done as cheaply, effectively and humanely as it was done in the past. I urge the Government to look at every opportunity to remove the infestation of flying foxes not just from Maclean but from every urban community.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (17:02): The Clarence electorate is certainly lucky to have the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Planning represent them in this place. He is one of the most pleasant people in this place; he always has a smile on his face and he is always friendly. The people of the Clarence electorate are very lucky to have him as their local member. As he has just demonstrated, he is certainly concerned about the amenity of his area. He is keen for us to come up with appropriate solutions for the flying fox problem in his electorate. Having a few fruit bats in my electorate, I am very sympathetic to some of the problems that can be created by such animals taking up residence in an urban area.

HOLSWORTHY ELECTORATE COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:03): I am delighted to announce to this House the benefits my local area, the Holsworthy electorate, has received from a \$300,000 investment through the 2016 Community Building Partnership grants. These grants have gone towards hardworking community groups ranging from disability service providers to local sporting groups. What I love most about representing the people of Holsworthy is working with the community and seeing people succeed in delivering much-needed services to our local area. Making people safer in the local region is a priority of mine—I hope to ensure every person living in the Holsworthy electorate is able to thrive in the best environment possible.

This is why I was pleased to announce \$30,000 for the removal of the asbestos in the Wattle Grove Scout and Guide Hall. Asbestos is a problem in older buildings as it can provide the potential for unintentional harm to individuals. This investment is vital to the local community and to the scout hall to make Wattle Grove safer. I know that Sean Budge, the Scout Leader of Wattle Grove Scouts, has been looking for a way to address this removal, so I was more than happy to assist in providing funds to ensure a safe space to develop the leadership skills of these young people.

I was thrilled to meet with them recently and watch two young people join the Scouts. It was a very exciting time for them. Encouraging the community to come together to play sport is a great thing. That is why I was happy to announce \$40,000 towards a new irrigation system for the upgrade of a synthetic hockey pitch at Moorebank District Hockey Club. This upgrade will make it safer and quicker to play hockey in times of wet weather and will help to reduce call-offs on wet weather days. I was also able to secure \$12,059 to repair the damaged netball clubhouse fence at Moorebank Netball Club. This investment is to assist with future prevention of environmental damage to property and to upgrade the fencing, creating a safer and more practical environment for all netball players at the clubhouse.

As many members in the House would know, I have a strong passion for helping to create equity for people with disabilities. Not everyone is gifted with good health and I believe it is important we assist those who are less fortunate than ourselves. I am extremely pleased to announce that \$28,000 has been awarded to go towards wheelchair accessible ramps at St Anne's Church and hall in Hammondville. These ramps will allow people who use wheelchairs to easily access the entry and manoeuvre around the hall. I announce also that \$24,000 has been allocated towards the installation of accessible infrastructure at the New South Wales Radio Controlled Racing Car Club in Moorebank, which will help allow for increased participation of people with disabilities and the elderly.

Additionally, \$13,470 has been awarded to the Australian Foundation for Disability's Chipping Norton day program. This money will go towards upgrading the air-conditioning system, which is vital for the care and

hygiene of the workers and attendees at the day program. I have also been able to secure \$9,908 for Spinal Cord Injuries Australia to establish exercise services in the Liverpool area. This will enable residents living in the local area to have access to safe and easily accessible treatment when injured. It is a great incentive to improve health facilities in and around the Liverpool area.

Other organisations to receive funding include: Sandy Point Progress Association, which received \$15,000 towards an upgrade of Sandy Point playground to assist older children to play in that space; Wattle Grove Parents and Citizens Association, which received \$11,890 for the installation of air-conditioning in its school hall—what a difference that will make on those 40 degree days next year; Prestons Robins Little Athletics Centre, which received \$11,000 to upgrade its discus and long jump facilities; Liverpool City Robins Football Club, which received \$6,000 for the installation of lighting on its mini fields; Liverpool Action Group, which was granted \$10,000 towards the restoration of environmental assets in Chipping Norton; Menai Men's Shed, which received \$2,816 for the purchase of first aid equipment; Marconi Clay Target Club, which has been allocated \$46,290 for an upgrade of its toilet and bathroom facilities; and the Shire Christian School, which received \$30,000 towards the installation of new playing courts for students.

I am thrilled that this money was able to be spread around geographically and shared among different groups including ageing, disability and sporting groups, churches and schools. I have worked hard to secure this funding to improve the services and local welfare of people living in Holsworthy. I congratulate all community organisations that have received funding and look forward to seeing the positive results of these grants. As the Treasurer is in the Chamber, I look forward to seeing these grants appear in the budget so that they can continue next year.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (17:08): I thank the member for Holsworthy, and Deputy Government Whip, for informing the House of those matters. I have had the pleasure of serving on a special purpose parliamentary committee with the member for Holsworthy, where her pleasant, friendly personality and great intellect were exhibited. It was certainly a pleasure to be with her on that parliamentary committee in circumstances that were not always easy. It is wonderful to hear her report the things she is doing for her community. As a woman with a young child, she is a great exemplar for female leadership and life balance. She is a great exemplar of everything a local member should be in the way she has supported Scouts, sports, the disabled, the aged and schools in her community. I congratulate her on all her hard work.

ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER VISIT

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (17:09): I inform the House of concerns raised by my constituents upon the visit of Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. One of the hallmarks of free societies is freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom of association. These are just some of the liberal values that our society is based on, values that make our country the envy of the world. I am proud to say that it is the Liberal Party in this country that has the responsibility for defending them. We know Australians are egalitarians to the core. They believe in a fair go, the chance to do your best, freedom for the individual, opportunity for those who seek it and a democracy they can take pride in.

We know that when you embrace these Australian values, there is no room for prejudice. This is why Australians have zero tolerance for racism in any of its forms. The best cure for racism and hate is not big government tribunals or secret trials by unaccountable bureaucrats. The best cure for racism and hate is to expose it, so it can be condemned by everyone. Let me now expose the pattern of intolerance engaged in by members of the Labor Party concerning our friend and ally, the State of Israel. Israel is the only functioning liberal democracy in the Middle East that shares the common values of freedom, democracy and the rule of law.

In fact, Australia was the first country to vote in favour of the United Nations resolution to establish Israel in 1948. Despite this shared history, there has been a concerted campaign from within the Labor Party to ban its members of Parliament from visiting the State of Israel. While this was ultimately defeated, it reflects a growing intolerance within its ranks. This year, in the lead-up to the visit of the Israeli Prime Minister, an open letter was written saying he should not be welcomed to this country. This is free expression and I support it.

I point out the large number of current and former Labor members of Parliament who signed this letter, including John Stanhope, Alan Griffin, Melissa Parke, Jill Hall and Laurie Ferguson. The fact that so many Labor members of Parliament would put their name to this letter also reveals a pattern of intolerance deep inside the Labor Party. There is further disturbing conduct by Labor members of Parliament. It has been brought to my attention that two New South Wales Labor members of Parliament, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane and the member for Granville, Julia Finn, attended and spoke at an anti-Israel hate rally in Sydney a few weeks ago.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 73. Personal attacks on members of the House should be done by way of substantive motion. Private members' statements should concern issues relating to a member's electorate.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I am not attacking anyone.

Mr David Harris: It is an attack on members of the House.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: To the point of order: These are issues raised by my constituents in relation to the Israeli Prime Minister's recent trip to Australia. I am drawing the attention of the House to issues of fact.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I will listen carefully to the member for Hawkesbury. I ask the member to ensure that his speech remains relevant to his electorate.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: At the start of my speech I stated that these were issues raised by my constituents. It is my right as a member of Parliament and representative of the electorate of Hawkesbury to raise these issues in the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I will listen carefully to the contribution of the member for Hawkesbury.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It has been brought to my attention that two New South Wales Labor members of Parliament, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane and the member for Granville, Julia Finn, attended and spoke at an anti-Israel hate rally in Sydney a few weeks ago. It was a rally that expressed anti-Semitic views. I lay upon the table of the House for the benefit of members photos taken at that rally depicting the Israeli Prime Minister.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: Mr Temporary Speaker, I again draw your attention to Standing Order 73. The Treasurer is continuing to make personal attacks on members of this House. If he wishes to do that, he should do so by way of substantive motion. It is appropriate for the Treasurer to raise issues generally, but when he refers to members of the House and produces photos, that is a substantive attack on another member.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I will hear further from the member for Hawkesbury.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I have photos taken at the rally depicting the Israeli Prime Minister as a Fascist, a Nazi and as Hitler posing in front of a swastika. These images would be incredibly hurtful to the Jewish community given their history. Hezbollah is a listed terrorist organisation, but its flag was also on display. Even more disturbingly, some of these flags and posters were held by young children. I think that we can all agree that this is not the kind of Australia we want. This issue matters because it exposes Labor's hypocrisy. We all remember when Tony Abbott spoke at a rally in front of signs attacking Julia Gillard. At the time, Labor members said that his career "should be over" and that they felt like vomiting because the signs were "so deeply and utterly offensive".

Ms Sonia Horner: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. I have been in this place for 10 years and I know that private members' statements should be about a member's electorate. I am afraid that the Treasurer is moving well away from his electorate. Mr Temporary Speaker, please direct the Treasurer back to issues relating to his electorate.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Hawkesbury referred to his electorate in the early part of his contribution.

Mr Andrew Fraser: To the point of order: I have been listening for the past minute or two to the Treasurer's private member's statement. He is talking about what was displayed at the rally and how his constituents took offence. That is totally within the standing orders.

Mr Alister Henskens: To the point of order: Members of the Labor Party continually say they are against racism. When the Treasurer speaks—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Ku-ring-gai will resume his seat. The notes for the Chair make the following reference to private members' statements:

- Matters of general concern may be raised, mostly pertaining to a Member's electorate or local matters of concern to a constituent. However, Members are allowed to cover wider issues of public policy where a connection with the Member's constituency is established.
- Attacks on other Members is not permissible except by way of substantive motion.
- Statements reflecting on character or conduct of persons outside the Parliament are inappropriate.

- Ministers should not use private members' statements to raise policy issues that fall within their portfolios responsibilities ...
- Shadow Ministers should not raise portfolio policy issues by way of an attack on the Minister under the guise of a Private Member's Statement.
- Private Members' Statements should not be used to anticipate or continue debate on a matter in the Assembly or Council, nor should they be used to debate legislation or comment on policy matters.
- Members should make a statement rather than develop an argument.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: That is what this is. I am raising issues that have been raised with me as a matter of fact by my constituents. If members of Parliament cannot represent their constituents and raise their issues in this place, why does the Parliament exist?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I will listen carefully to the contribution of the member for Hawkesbury. If it descends into a personal attack on other members, I will direct the member to resume his seat.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It is not a personal attack. That is what Labor members said about Tony Abbott. Two members of the Labor Party have spoken at rallies in front of signs depicting Jewish people dressed as Nazis and calling Prime Minister Netanyahu the new Hitler, but members opposite say nothing.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: Mr Temporary Speaker, I again draw your attention to Standing Order 73. The Treasurer is referring negatively to members of this House. He must do so by way of substantive motion. He has mentioned them again, despite your ruling.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! My ruling was about personal attacks on members but the member for Hawkesbury is stating what happened. It is not an attack.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: This issue matters because it exposes Labor's lack of integrity. The actions of these members directly conflicts with Federal Labor's national platform, which says:

We oppose all attempts to divide Australians by pandering to prejudice. Our national unity is based on mutual respect ...

Labor mouths platitudes in its party platform but lets its members of Parliament attend rallies that deliberately fan the flames of racial division. This issue matters because the Labor Party continually virtue signal on these issues but its members never practise what they preach. Now is the time to remind the Labor Party that it cannot say one thing and do another. Now is the time to remind the Labor Party that, while it has freedom of association, it does not have freedom from responsibility. Now is the time to remind the Labor Party that the standard it walks past is the standard it accepts. I call upon Luke Foley and Labor to hold his members of Parliament to account and make them apologise immediately for their conduct.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (17:20): I thank the Treasurer, and member for the Hawkesbury, for raising issues that have been raised with him by his constituents and for advocating on their behalf. I also support the Treasurer, as I have many Jewish constituents, for speaking in support of Israel and for speaking against racism.

Ms Sonia Hornery: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 73. The Parliamentary Secretary has changed the subject of the private member's statement. He should address the substance of the Treasurer's private member's statement.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Wallsend will resume her seat.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: It is important for a member to draw attention to hypocrisy with regard to racism where it exists, and to shine a light on racism—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member for Ku-ring-gai is not speaking about anyone in particular; he is speaking generally.

Ms Julia Finn: If you are calling me a racist, you are so wrong. You are a disgrace.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I have not said anything about the member for Granville.

Ms Julia Finn: You're talking about me attending a rally and calling me a racist.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I have not even mentioned the member for Granville.

[Time expired.]

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:22): Today I talk about the importance of cardiovascular disease in Western Sydney. On Saturday 1 April 2017 I was happy to attend the Heart of the West Charity Ball at Club Marconi in support of the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute. In July last year the Victor Chang Committee for Western Sydney was formed, and already its work and support has been amazing. The Heart of the West Charity Ball is just one outstanding example of its hard work. Members of that committee include: President of Club Marconi Mr Vince Foti, Brendon Noney, Amanda Rose, Maria Kovacic, Frank Oliveri, Danny Rezek, Jody Masina, Craig Wellman and Tony Zappia. The emcee for the night was Rahni Sadler, a reporter with the Seven Network's flagship public affairs program *Sunday Night*.

The Victor Chang Committee for Western Sydney aims to raise awareness of heart disease in Western Sydney, educate the community and spread the word about the work of the institute to address the heart health of all people, including those in the west. Almost two million people live in Western Sydney, and one in three will be affected by heart disease. I wish the prevalence was not so high, but it is. Cardiovascular disease is a major issue in Western Sydney. Nearly 65 per cent of adults in the western suburbs of Sydney, including Penrith, Bankstown, Fairfield and Wetherill Park, are overweight or obese. Heart disease claims the life of one Australian every 26 minutes. Worldwide, more than 17.5 million people died of cardiovascular disease last year—many while still in the prime of their lives.

In fact, after 40 years of declining death rates and disability from heart disease, for the first time last year the fatalities started to increase again. This is of particular concern because now it is happening more and more in younger people, in no small part due to the epidemic of obesity. Indeed, by 2030 half the world's population will be obese and, at that point, I am very sad to say we will be burying our children as they will not be living as long as we are now. That is a shocking state of affairs, so we really need to address this major problem. Of course, heart problems are not confined to overweight middle-aged men. They are also the most common cause of birth defects in the world. Every day in Australia six tiny babies are born with a life-threatening heart defect. Every week, 32 babies will need open heart surgery to fix those terrible problems. Women are also at serious risk. Three times more women suffer heart disease than suffer breast cancer, and the death rates reflect that. The Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute is committed to discovering better ways to diagnose, treat, cure and, most importantly, prevent heart disease in our community.

I will discuss briefly two major recent breakthroughs. The first, thanks to the pioneering work of Professor Peter Macdonald and his team at the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, is that they have discovered how to keep a heart alive and beating in a box, ready for transplantation. It is the biggest breakthrough in transplantation in at least 30 years. Previously surgeons only had four hours to transplant a heart. Now doctors have up to 12 to 14 hours to perform the intricate operation. This means that a donor heart from Perth can now be transplanted in Sydney or even Auckland, for example, or a heart from a donor in Ankara could be transplanted in Dublin. It is remarkable stuff. It is important to realise that, tragically, even babies require heart transplants and teenagers who are in heart failure have no choice but to go on the transplant waitlist.

The second recent breakthrough is that world-renowned Professor Sally Dunwoodie and her team at the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute have discovered not only the cause but also, amazingly, how to prevent a particular form of birth defect and miscarriage, including defects in heart formation. Sally and her team have discovered not only the cause but also a prevention of a major problem that affects the development of many organs, including the heart—findings that could forever change the way that pregnant women are cared for. I thank Professor Robert Graham, AO, executive director of the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, and his staff for their amazing research work. Their incredible dedication and commitment have saved countless lives and truly reflect the legacy that the late Dr Victor Chang left our community. On behalf of the families of Western Sydney, and particularly those in the electorate of Prospect, I thank them from the bottom of our hearts.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I thank the member for Prospect for an excellent private member's statement.

WARNERVALE TOWN CENTRE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (17:26): This afternoon I speak once again about Warnervale Town Centre, which is a very important future development in my electorate. Wyong is an electorate that is growing every day with new housing estates and it needs the infrastructure to support that growth. When I last spoke about this issue a couple of weeks ago I drew to the attention of the House the fact that Woolworths, which owns land at the top of the hill in the Warnervale Town Centre development, has indicated that it has put its project on hold or is not proceeding at this time because it is waiting for certain infrastructure, including residential housing, to be completed. I also spoke of how Transport for NSW said that at the moment it was not starting the promised North Warnervale railway station because it was also waiting for future growth to happen.

It so happens that the New South Wales Government owns the land at the bottom of the Warnervale Town Centre development. It was owned by Landcom. Landcom was one of the partners with Woolworths that paid the then Wyong Shire Council—now Central Coast Council—to build the access road to where the shopping centre would be built. Late last year a sign went up on the old Landcom site, which came to be owned by UrbanGrowth NSW. It put out the land for tender. So I wrote to the then Minister, Minister Stokes, who was a very good planning Minister; I had spoken to him about a lot of issues. The response I received stated:

UrbanGrowth NSW will soon commence a public tender offering of its land holding at Warnervale. A sale of the land is consistent with the directive I have given UrbanGrowth NSW to transition from a developer and seller of residential lots to a transformation agency focusing on key urban renewal projects, located near major infrastructure on government land.

A successful sale of the land at Warnervale will create an opportunity for a private developer to take advantage of the existing development approval issued for the site by the Central Coast Council.

That opportunity will be the development on the land of over 137 homes with the further benefit of providing a catalyst for future development of the Town Centre. There lies the problem. The original idea was that the Government would build the affordable residential blocks through Landcom. It has now sat on the market for a long time. It is ironic that the sign welcoming a new community in Warnervale is falling down. As I mentioned the last time I spoke on this issue, it looks derelict.

The problem is intensifying. Many people buying in the area are drawn there by real estate advertising and property people saying that there will be a town centre, a railway station and a shopping development at Warnervale. At the moment we have a classic Mexican stand-off: the residential land is up for sale but not enough people have bought it, the train station will not be built because apparently the population is not growing quickly enough, and the shopping centre will not be built until the railway station and houses are constructed. The people who are moving to the area are scratching their heads and wondering why the Government will not make it a significant site and provide the catalyst by developing the land to get the whole thing moving, which was the original plan when Labor was in government.

Unfortunately, when the Government changed the entity from Landcom to UrbanGrowth NSW it changed the emphasis. Now we have nothing. It is unfair to the people who are moving from Sydney to the Warnervale area with the expectation that things will be built. I congratulated the State Government on providing the great intersection and the road to where the shopping centre will be. There is now a Mexican stand-off and nothing is happening. Instead of everyone pointing fingers at each other about not doing what they promised, I ask the Government to provide the catalyst to get this project moving. This development was promised in 1975. It was first going to be a city, then a town and I think next it will be a village. We might get a corner shop in the next 50 years if we are lucky. I ask the Government to re-examine the matter, develop the land and get the project moving.

COFFS HARBOUR CITY STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (17:31): I did not have the opportunity to contribute to debate on the motion of the member for Riverstone earlier today thanking our State Emergency Service [SES] units and volunteers for their work during the North Coast floods. In March I visited my local SES unit and presented them with a light tower that was donated by the Coffs Harbour Freemasons Association and Masonicare, which I chair. The two organisations contributed dollar for dollar towards the light tower, which cost about \$15,000. I visit the SES unit on a pretty regular basis. I have to say that Bill Roffey and his crew are one of the hardest working groups of people I have met.

On the night I was there to donate the tower I looked at their sandbagging machine and other equipment. I jokingly said to them that I might need that sandbagging machine at my place before too long because of the number of ants on top of posts at the moment. One young lady told me that it is a great unit when the sand is dry but it is pretty hard to use when it is wet. On 16 to 20 March we had a deluge. In fact, on the morning of 17 March Sawtell received 191 millimetres of rain in the space of about three hours. For members who are a bit old fashioned, that is about eight inches of rain. Elizabeth Street and Link Road were flooded and cars were off into ditches. I know from a report they provided to me that in that time Bill Roffey and his team of great SES volunteers completed three flood rescues and 80 jobs from flood miscellaneous through to flood and storm damage from a total of 90 jobs.

As I have said before in this House, these people are out there doing this work while the rest of us are looking at our own situations or sitting inside, staying out of the wet weather. In this dangerous, stormy weather SES volunteers are out there literally putting their lives at risk. I do not think there is any better way of thanking them than by mentioning them in the Parliament of New South Wales for the fantastic work that they do, at their own peril. These representatives of the State Emergency Service are well trained but they, too, have families at home, and their family members have probably been wondering what the hell is going on. Over that weekend period, on the road to my house at Central Bucca, on at least two occasions I found that the water had come up and covered the road bridges and left debris—branches six, eight or 10 inches across—on those bridges.

My family did not suffer the worst of it because we live a little bit inland, but people on the coastal fringe had to put up with a great deal of danger. Right across that week of wet weather the SES volunteers, the police and others did an unreal amount of work. My electorate dodged a bullet with respect to the tail end of Cyclone Debbie. The rain depression created a lot of rain. In fact, my wife told me this morning that today was the first opportunity she has had in a fortnight to get any clothes on the line. Today was the first sunny day we have had. The ground is sodden and any more wet weather that we get will create issues so that, once again, the volunteers from the State Emergency Service will be called on.

I visited the SES unit on two or three occasions during the time that my electorate was getting drenched. There were hearty smiles. A young lass on the sandbagging machine told me that dry sand was easier to work with. They filled over 3,000 bags of sand in one day there, and they only carry 4,000 dry bags at the SES at any one time. So, on behalf of the people of the Coffs Coast and on behalf of the people of New South Wales, I thank Bill Roffey and all his volunteers for the fantastic job that they do. I thank them for the three rescues that they carried out, because that could have been three deaths. I thank them for the more than 90 jobs that they carried out on that one weekend and the dozens since. I say to them, "Thank you. It was a job well done. Keep up the great work. I will continue to support you in any way I can."

LORETO NORMANHURST 120TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (17:37): Tonight I celebrate the 120th anniversary of an outstanding school in my electorate, Loreto Normanhurst. It is a school very close to my heart due to my family's long and close association. I note the Parliamentary Secretary's association with the college, given that his wife worked there for many years. In 1892 Mother Gonzaga Barry had led the Loreto nuns from Ballarat to Sydney with the aim of setting up a Catholic school for girls. The original school was established in a rented premises in Randwick but within five years had grown significantly, and the need for boarding facilities was deemed necessary. Thus began the search for a suitable site.

In 1896 Mother Gonzaga's prayers were answered when Mr Frank Coffee of Wahroonga sent her an urgent message to come and see a property that was for sale a short distance from his home. It had been raining, but as the nuns arrived at the site, the sun burst through the clouds and formed a beautiful rainbow over the estate. That was a sign they needed, and in 1897 the land was purchased by Cardinal Moran for a school first known as Loreto Convent Hornsby. Loreto Normanhurst is part of a worldwide network of schools, including seven in Australia, which recognises Sister Mary Ward as their head founder. Sister Mary Ward established the Loreto movement 400 years ago to empower young women and invest in their education.

Sister Mary strongly believed that "Women in time to come will do much". It is a sentiment which has echoed through the ages and is strongly embraced by Loreto Normanhurst's current principal, Barbara Watkins. Principal Watkins is an outstanding principal, and an outstanding community leader. She leads the school community by example by instilling Sister Mary Ward's Loreto values of "freedom, justice, sincerity, verity and felicity". I am delighted to say that Sister Mary's and Principal Watkins' shared values are warmly embraced by each year group that passes through the school. Loreto's students continue to amaze me with their think big and reach for the stars attitude. As the local member I am so proud to see these young women reaching out to help others in our local community, and often overseas.

Loreto's diverse academic and extracurricular achievements throughout the years have been nothing short of remarkable. I would be here all night if I were to mention each and every one, so I will mention but a few of those notable women. Stephanie Lorenzo used her time at Loreto to work towards founding her own charity, which aims to stamp out human trafficking and sexual exploitation of girls in developing nations such as Cambodia. Monica Frost, Alicia Brown and Hillary Matchett helped to raise \$35,000 at the school's annual Loreto Days to support a milk program in Zambia to provide formula to babies with HIV-AIDS. Casey Thomas and my friend Kate Vartulli set up a school charity knitting program called "Wrap with love". In a group effort, the girls managed to knit more than 1,000 squares that were made into blankets and sent overseas to people in need.

Loreto students also continue to showcase their fantastic academic skills. Loreto recently finished as the top performing Catholic school in New South Wales—a remarkable 76 per cent of students finished with an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank [ATAR] of 80 and above. It is easy to see why, with students such as former student Kathleen Champ winning the international Future Problem Solving competition in Fort Collins, Colorado, with her plan to alleviate poverty for low-income families. Other more recent students such as Jessica Murray formulated a case study that won the National Mathematics Talent Quest. Sarah Fletcher put her talents to the innovation and design sector by designing a world-first body-preserving boat transport buggy, which prevents boat loading injuries.

Much has changed over the school's 120 years but its commitment to providing exceptional education opportunities remains unchanged. My sister Emma Kean and cousin Amy Kean are both proud old girls of Loreto

Normanhurst and my uncle John Kean has served as the School Council chair for many years. Loreto has continued to adapt and change over the past two decades to cater for the growing needs of our local community. In 2000 the school received a visit from the former Governor General, Sir William Deane, to open its new aquatic and learning resource centre. That was a big win for the local community at that time, but much more has been achieved in recent years. In 2010 Loreto's request to expand its student population from 915 to 1,150 was approved by Hornsby Shire Council. Four years later the school also formally approved re-opening a primary school facility that had previously been closed in 1982.

Today, Loreto continues to provide new and rewarding educational opportunities to young primary school girls and young ladies preparing to enter the workforce. I congratulate the Loreto Normanhurst school community on this momentous milestone. I take this opportunity to thank some of the wonderful women who have served our school and our community over the years. In particular, I acknowledge outstanding Principal Barbara Watkins; past principals Leoni Degenhardt, Denise Demarchelier and Maureen Saunders; chaplain Kerry McCullough; Head of Primary Maryanne Dwyer; Parents and Citizens Association co-presidents Sue and Louise; Ex-Students' Association President, Mrs Janneke Chudleigh; and current school captains Annie Clarke and Tatendaishie Mwanza.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:42): I acknowledge the great work of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, and member for Hornsby. I also congratulate Loreto Normanhurst on a wonderful 120 years. I declare an interest that many years ago my wife taught there for more than seven years. Principal Barbara Watkins is the sister of John Watkins, a former member of this House. The school has a history of outstanding achievements in both academic results and in the extracurricular activities undertaken by students over many years such as debating and water polo. The notable alumni of this school are spread throughout the corporate world, arts and culture. I thank Loreto Normanhurst for the wonderful leaders it has produced over the past 120 years. I look forward to celebrating many more milestones with Loreto Normanhurst and its great local member.

PALESTINE

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (15:43): I speak about a rally I attended recently and the speech I gave at that rally, which has become a subject of fascination in this place. I, along with many people from my electorate, attended a rally opposing Benjamin Netanyahu and the policies of his government. I represent hundreds of Palestinian families who live in my electorate because they have been displaced from their homes by Israeli occupation. I also represent many Lebanese people who have lived for the past 70 years with up to 1½ million Palestinians in Lebanon and they have been displaced from their traditional home. We also have a Nakbah Memorial Community Garden in my area.

I gave a personal explanation after what I thought were some rather nasty comments about me last week. In that personal explanation I offered members the opportunity to receive a copy of my speech notes because I spoke about a two-state solution and about peace. No-one requested those speech notes from me, so I am going to read the speech I gave at the Sydney Town Hall. I begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Gadigal people. This land was, is and always will be Gadigal land. I think it is equally important to recognise the traditional owners of Palestine, the Palestinian people.

We are here today to send a strong message to Benjamin Netanyahu while he's visiting Australia, and that message is that we support peace and we support Palestine. Netanyahu is an enemy of peace. He opposed the Oslo accords from the outset, and so far this year, his Government has approved 6,000 new homes in the existing settlements on the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, as well as legalising unauthorised buildings in new settlements. This is colonialism, whether through war or illegal construction. It is further encroachment and undermines the peace process. It makes Palestinian statehood harder to achieve.

In his re-election in 2015 he pledged to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state and repeatedly calls for one-sided conditions to be placed on a Palestinian state, like recognising Israel as a Jewish state and renouncing the right of return for Palestinians, selling out Arabs living in Israel as well as the Palestinian diaspora. He was responsible for the 2014 blockade of Gaza, which killed over 2,200 people. There were over 6,000 airstrikes and over 50,000 shells were fired into Gaza. And, of course, it was mainly civilians killed.

He is making Gaza uninhabitable and increasingly difficult for Palestinians living on the West Bank, 100,000 of whom commute into Israel every day for work, if they can get past the checkpoints in time. Of course, he boasts of building the wall. He endangers peace and in doing so he endangers the Israeli citizens he represents. Netanyahu has been warmly welcomed by Malcolm Turnbull and Julie Bishop. Unfortunately, there has been no hesitation; no puzzlement at his odd assertion that Australia and Israel's friendship goes back 100 years to Beersheba during World War I. But this is a Government that calls the term "occupation" inconvenient and won't condemn the West Australian Liberals for their preference deal with One Nation.

Netanyahu has had much to say about the Labor Party and its support for Palestine. I'm a Labor Party member and I'm proud of our party's support for an effective and fair two-state solution. I believe Australia should recognise Palestine, as Netanyahu by his words and actions undermines the peace process every single day. Now that you are visiting Australia, you can hear what we and most of the world have to say and we support Palestine, we recognise Palestine and we support peace.

I am very disappointed, particularly after the disgraceful comments that were made last week about me, that this afternoon the Treasurer waited until most people had left the building for Easter to launch a personal attack on me and a member in the other place, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane, for having attended this rally. It was, I think, quite gutless. He could have called me at any time to tell me he was disappointed in me for attending the rally. He did not. He waited until this afternoon when most people had gone off for Easter, and I think that is really disappointing.

It is not an appropriate part of his private member's statement because it did not really pertain to his electorate. It occurred at Sydney Town Hall and was attended by many people from my electorate. It was also attended by many Jewish people. There were some tasteless signs condemning Netanyahu that I disagreed with and thought were a bit offensive, making an analogy between the occupation of Palestine and Nazism. There were no swastikas surrounding me or any of the speakers. We were surrounded by Palestinian flags. That was an utter misrepresentation and I am disgusted that people are still talking about it.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I thank the member for Granville for her contribution. I remind all members that private members' statements must contain matters pertaining to their electorates. I warn members that if the shenanigans of today are repeated in the future and I am in the chair I will direct the members involved to resume their seats.

Dr Hugh McDermott: Point of order: I hope the Temporary Speaker will tell that to the Treasurer.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I refer to all members. The member for Prospect will resume his seat

Rulings

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Members must respect each other. I know that can be difficult at times, but members will not attack each other across the Chamber during the giving of private members' statements, which should pertain to members' electorates and the people in their electorates. I refer members to the standing orders regarding private members' statements. I do not enjoy listening to diatribes when I am in the chair. I know that Madam Speaker does not enjoy it, and neither do the members affected. Members in this place are legislators. The business of Parliament is to legislate, not to make personal attacks.

Mr Nick Lalich: I seek leave to give a private member's statement.

Leave not granted.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON THE OMBUDSMAN, THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION AND THE CRIME COMMISSION

Membership

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

That Mr Farlow be discharged from the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission and that Mr Amato be appointed as a member of that Committee.

Legislative Council
6 April 2017

TREVOR KHAN
Deputy President

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 17:52
until Tuesday 2 May 2017 at 12:00.**