



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday, 2 May 2017

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 2 May 2017

Presiding Officers

ABSENCE OF THE SPEAKER

The Clerk announced the absence of the Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (The Hon. Thomas George) took the chair at 12:00.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

Private Members' Statements

TRIBUTE TO BILL HOSKING, QC

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (12:11): I speak about one of the many remarkable citizens of Ku-ring-gai. Having lost his beloved wife, Judith, 4½ years ago, Bill Hosking, QC, now lives a quiet life in a leafy street in Pymble. I strongly suspect that many of his neighbours know little about his professional career, which is as interesting as are some of the stories recounted in a recently published book, *Justice Denied*, that Bill has written with John Suter Linton.

As I have indicated, Bill ultimately became a Queen's Counsel but his path to a senior position within the legal profession was not a conventional one. Born in Broken Hill, he initially became a clerk in the petty sessions branch of the Department of the Attorney General and Justice in 1954 and served in what he estimates to be approximately 70 courthouses across New South Wales. However, at the age of 23 Bill changed course when Jack Mannix, the then Australian Labor Party [ALP] member for Liverpool and Minister for Justice, appointed him as his acting private secretary. That was in 1961. Four years later the new Minister for Justice, the Liberal Party's John Maddison, retained Bill on his staff. Incidentally, Maddison was then the member for Hornsby but in 1973 he became the first member for Ku-ring-gai, the electorate that I proudly represent in this House.

Bill told me that in those days members of Parliament did not have electorate offices and saw constituents in temporary premises in the electorate. Bill went on to become assistant private secretary to the Liberal Premier of New South Wales but within months the then Assistant Minister for Education and soon to be Minister for Mines, Wal Fife, who was then the State member for Wagga Wagga, had taken him on as his private secretary. Bill speaks very highly of all the politicians whom he was proud to serve and of their positive influence on him.

He was nevertheless called to the bar in 1968, commenced private practice in 1970, became a public defender in 1973 and was appointed Queen's Counsel and Deputy Senior Public Defender in 1980. Between 1987 and 2000 he was a judge of the District Court. It is episodes from his time as a barrister and public defender that fill the pages of *Justice Denied*. However, the book is neither a sensationalist account of some of the more famous criminal trials of the past 40 years nor an exercise in self-promotion by its author. Apart from the fact that Bill has chosen to write not only about his skilful and even law-changing victories in the courtroom but also about his devastating defeats, throughout he adopts the same self-deprecating attitude that I have witnessed for myself when I have had the opportunity to talk to him.

I first spoke to Bill after I became his local member and he wrote a letter to me to ask for my assistance in respect of some public documents he was having trouble accessing for his book. With the assistance of the member for Vacluse and former Attorney General, I was happy to gain that access. Some of the cases to which Bill devotes a chapter in the book will be well known to even a casual observer of the criminal justice system in New South Wales. However, whether the subject matter is "Toecutter" Jimmy Driscoll, the Anita Cobby trial, Angelo Maric, Carl Synnerdahl or Anderson, Alister and Dunn, the message is essentially the same: No matter how evil the person facing charges may seem or how heinous the crime may be, the accused is entitled to a fair trial.

It is readily apparent from Bill's personal experience that that did not always happen, that defendants were convicted against the weight of evidence and that serious miscarriages of justice occurred. In that regard the book is a timely reminder to us all that the presumption of innocence is a fundamental right of every person and that any attempts to qualify it or in any way water it down when drafting legislation should be viewed with great circumspection and almost invariably rejected. It reveals that Bill was at the forefront of those lawyers who exposed the deficiencies of the legal system: the admission of the unsigned statement of confession, the danger of

police verbals and the questionable reliance on forensic evidence. In no small measure, the work that he did led to the protections that we now enjoy under both Commonwealth and State laws. That said, the book is also an extraordinarily entertaining read, as much due to the style in which it is written as its content. For those who have met Bill, that again is unsurprising. He has a keen, even cheeky, sense of humour. In a recent article in *Justinian*, he was asked what he would be if he were a foodstuff. He answered:

Absolutely not fish, fowl or animal. The life of all food items is limited and when you consider the ultimate destination distinctly unexciting. I would select an apple.

I highly recommend chapter 15 of the book, titled "Never a Dull Moment". It contains a series of short recollections that cannot fail to raise a smile, including the story of a Mercedes driver from Kurri Kurri. Even today, Bill is urging the restoration of remissions on sentences and the right of an accused to make a statement from the dock. I may not agree with all his ideas but I salute the work of Bill Hosking, QC, and wholeheartedly endorse his call that we must never fail to be vigilant in protecting the rights of individuals.

CAMPBELLTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:16): I address the House regarding the City of Campbelltown, the State's first green city, where the opportunity to succeed meets the challenge for great collaboration. The regional City of Campbelltown, at the heart of the Macarthur region and the epicentre of the south-west growth corridor, is set to expand and realise its potential as one of Sydney's vibrant economic, cultural and lifestyle hubs. Campbelltown is not only endowed with the spirit of the Dharawal and surrounded by valued green space and scenic hills; it also has a vast array of rich assets, which are real drivers for future growth and prosperity, contributing to the delivery of the Government's promises and vision for the south-west.

Noteworthy features include the Western Sydney University, including the high-profile School of Medicine and its recently completed clinical school where 200 doctors will train; the Campbelltown Sports Stadium, which is planned to be the focus of a new regional sport and entertainment area; the fifth largest regional shopping centre in New South Wales at Macarthur Square, which has recently opened its doors to a major expansion, valued at \$240 million, that will create more than 1,000 additional jobs; the internationally renowned Campbelltown Arts Centre, which has developed a reputation for leading-edge cultural development and exhibitions; and a strong industrial sector and advanced manufacturing cluster that are refocusing on international market opportunities.

There are more exciting development opportunities that can drive further city enhancements, growth and investment, and enterprise and job creation. These include the Campbelltown City Council's \$26 million Macarthur sports and health centre of excellence; the Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research, to be built on the Campbelltown Hospital campus; and the council's proposed Macarthur health and education precinct. There is strong momentum for growth and change for the better for the communities of Campbelltown and Macarthur in the south-west as well as for future populations.

Campbelltown-Macarthur is the designated regional city centre that will service the greater Macarthur priority growth area and the Wilton New Town growth areas. It will be the focus of higher order business, services, administration, education and training, and health that will over time address the needs of approximately 200,000 new residents in those growth areas. Campbelltown-Macarthur will continue to serve people already living in Campbelltown and Camden as well as many more that are yet to settle in the south-west growth centre.

The Greater Sydney Commission's draft South West District Plan recognises Campbelltown as an "emerging medical university city". It is a welcome acknowledgement of Campbelltown's future as a major Sydney metropolitan strategic centre. Campbelltown's strategic regional positioning puts it in enviable proximity to a range of metropolitan centres, hubs, and markets, including our neighbours in the Illawarra. If planned, managed and resourced appropriately, it will deliver extraordinary economic and social dividends not only for Western Sydney but also for Sydney on a global scale.

Some challenges must be addressed now if Campbelltown City is to capitalise on those opportunities. As the mayor has said, the city "... is ready for and designed for ambition, innovation and opportunity". Nonetheless, this readiness and enthusiasm for growth and positive change must be supported by Government and its agencies. Government assistance in a number of key areas will support this vision of Campbelltown as a regional city. The highest priority is to ensure that Campbelltown is connected through direct, efficient and convenient public transport and road infrastructure to the regional communities it serves, such as the Greater Macarthur, the Illawarra, and other Western Sydney strategic centres, such as Penrith, Blacktown, and Liverpool as well as the new Western Sydney Airport. Campbelltown must be recognised by Government through effective collaboration with the Campbelltown City Council in planning, managing and the resourcing for its successful future.

In order to deliver prosperity for its people, it is paramount for the Campbelltown City Council to set priorities and an agenda that will establish to sustain a foundation that is supported by the Government and based on a collaborative approach with stakeholders. The absence of any of those fundamental aspects will result in, at best, a missed opportunity and, at worst, directing the city down an adverse sociological path for its residents. I commend the Campbelltown City Council for providing the Government with the opportunity to collaborate with the council, stakeholders and community organisations.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (12:22): I welcome the words of the member for Campbelltown and his desire to have long-term collaboration and growth to ensure prosperity for the people of Campbelltown. It is an important part of Western Sydney and, as identified by the member, it is an important centre across the growing -west Sydney Basin. In conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, this Government has invested more than \$3.6 billion in new infrastructure, including road upgrades. This will service the south-west and connect it across north-south corridors. I welcome the announcement today that the Commonwealth Government will build the Western Sydney airport. The community of Campbelltown will benefit significantly from this piece of infrastructure. This is an opportunity for Federal, State and local governments to work together to ensure Western Sydney has the best possible outcome.

HASTINGS SECONDARY COLLEGE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:23): This afternoon I inform the House of the extraordinarily talented students from the Hastings Secondary College in Port Macquarie and their success at the 2017 *FIRST*—For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology—Robotics Championships held over the past couple of months. The Hastings Secondary College prides itself on its ability to cater for the student and their academic choices. Students therefore are given the opportunity to access a number of electives from the beginning of year 7 by applying to one of three academies: the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics [STEM] academy, the Creative Industries academy, the Sports academy, or a personal interest project. The STEM academy integrates science, technology, engineering and mathematics into a single elective course that delivers challenging, practical activities; mentoring and support from local industry, universities and government agencies; access to specialised STEM spaces on each campus; and participation in STEM challenges and excursions. The STEM journey for the Hastings Secondary College commenced in 2015. In 2016-17 the college is one of only seven STEM Action Schools in New South Wales mentoring other schools in their STEM journey.

Today, less than two years later, I am elated to congratulate the Hastings Secondary College Robotics Team 6508 for its global success. Their journey commenced in Port Macquarie in late 2016 when they embarked on an ambitious opportunity to join the Macquarie University's Robots in the Outback outreach program, which is supported by Google. This culminated in the Robotics Team 6508 coming third overall and winning the Rookie All Star Award at the *FIRST* Robotics Competition South Pacific Regional finals at the Sydney Olympic Sports Centre, which were held from 13 to 15 March this year. After their success in Sydney, the robotics team were invited to compete in the *FIRST* Robotics Competition world championships, which took place from 19 to 22 April, in Houston in the United States of America. In Houston, Robotics Team 6508 was selected for the quarterfinal playoffs, making it one of the top 24 teams in this international event. The competition involved 3,000 teams from across the world.

The *FIRST* Robotics Competition is a high school robotics competition that brings together students and mentors to build robots that perform in a competitive but gracious environment against teams from all over the world, combining the excitement of sport with the rigours of science and technology. As well as building and coding their robot and collaboratively designing, prototyping and engineering the multiple components for the *FIRST* Robotics Competition, students learnt valuable life skills, including problem-solving, teamwork, collaboration, public speaking, technical science and engineering skills. The philosophy of *FIRST* is:

With Gracious Professionalism, fierce competition and mutual gain are not separate notions. Gracious professionals learn and compete like crazy, but treat one another with respect and kindness in the process.

Today I acknowledge the Hastings Secondary College students who were selected for World Team 6508: Samet Portakaldali, Imel Munday, Towa Henry, Luke Aguilar, Jakk Baker and Theodore Howard. There were many other students who were integral to the team and contributed to the success of Robotics Team 6508, both nationally and internationally. I acknowledge Liam Halmi, Celine Amada, Ethan Ferrett, Ross Charles, Kael Harris, Lachlan Marotte, Jorjabelle Munday, Nicholas Weston, Michael Van Hoorn, Alexandra Banyer, Alissa Chillari, Liam Spindler and George Rudd. I acknowledge also the college staff who supported the team throughout this amazing journey: Paul King, Warren Reynolds, Stephen Barnett, Jenn Smith and Jo Burke.

The students returned to school inspired, ready to further their interest in STEM and robotics and share their knowledge. The college fosters the development of innovative leaders of the future. These students, whose journey started at the Hastings Secondary College in Port Macquarie, are our future entrepreneurs, technology leaders and innovators. My sincerest congratulations to the Hastings Secondary College on their success and on going global.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (12:27): I acknowledge the Hastings Secondary College's strong commitment to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics education. The outstanding performance of its robotics team is there for all to see. Being among the top 24 teams competing in an international competition of 3,000 is an outstanding result. Their local member understands the importance of high quality education in regional locations. As a passionate representative of her community she not only talks about the Hastings Secondary College but also recognises the long-term benefits of having a school in her community that is focused on creating opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

ANZAC COMMEMORATION

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (12:28): As the member for Baulkham Hills—which is probably the best job I have ever been offered—and also as one of only two members of this House who have been on operational service overseas with the Australian Army, together with the Minister for Planning, I speak on behalf of our veterans. In that context, I advise the House that I had the pleasure of joining the Governor in attending Archbishop Anthony Fisher's moving requiem mass on the eve of Anzac Day at which he commended the souls of our fallen soldiers. On Anzac Day, I joined the Governor, the Premier and 25,000 community members at a dawn service. Despite the report in the *Australian Financial Review* gossip column, I was not missing in action. In fact, I attended not only that dawn service but also another service conducted by my sub-branch along with the member for Castle Hill. That is a true reflection of the importance of the day. I commend Brigadier Phil Bridie of Castle Hill RSL for overseeing that event.

It is disappointing that Anzac Day was marred by the ongoing investigation into the NSW RSL State Council. I asked the RSL members under investigation not to take a leadership role in any of the services and marches. I found their presence distracting, and it turned a day of commemoration into a media circus. I was horrified to learn that those under police investigation—the very men I asked not to take a leadership role in this year's Anzac march—have now sacked the chief executive officer, Glenn Kolomeitz. Glenn is the type of veteran we want in the RSL. He is a decorated soldier who began his career in the Royal Australian Air Force and who went on to be commissioned. He then joined the NSW Police Force and went on to serve in a policy role in the office of the Labor shadow Minister for Defence. He is also a legal practitioner and an active member of his sub-branch. In fact, he is a veteran of whom we should all be proud. He is a man with a remarkable empathy for modern veterans—that is, the veterans that those in control of the RSL told me they wanted to attract. Glenn is the type of veteran whom we should raise up and who should be in leadership roles, not dragged down as has happened. Despite his record, he is defending his position from men who themselves are under investigation for a range of wrongdoing. Their calling into question the credibility of good men like Glenn Kolomeitz is beyond belief.

I welcomed Luke Foley's intervention in the NSW RSL investigation last week via Twitter. He said that he would like to work in a bipartisan manner to clear up the RSL. That was in stark contrast to the approach taken by his shadow Minister for Veterans Affairs, the Hon. Lynda Voltz, who in October last year condemned my calls for reform of the NSW RSL as a "State Government asset grab". She said she was "concerned that the NSW Government now is looking to intervene in an area with a large stock of assets, with little justification". She was defending the RSL, which is now under investigation. The shadow Minister's comments not only were personally insulting to me as a former serviceman but also were a slanderous affront to the good men and women of RSL sub-branches across New South Wales who are the real victims of the poor leadership of some of those on the NSW RSL board.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: No, she did not.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: It needs to be investigated.

Ms Sonia Hornery: Point of order—

Mr Kevin Anderson: You cannot take a point of order during private members' statements.

Ms Sonia Hornery: Yes, I can. The member should know the standing orders. The member for Baulkham Hills should be asked to return to the leave—

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I am talking about Anzac Day.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): Order! The member for Wallsend is still taking her point of order.

Ms Sonia Hornery: I have made my point.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: It is no surprise that Labor backflipped on this issue, but the Government's tough stance is right and it is just. It begs the question: Why has the shadow Minister for Veterans Affairs not publicly corrected her statement? Why has she not called out the wrongdoing? Is it because the President of the RSL is a former Labor Lord Mayor of Parramatta, or is she simply slow in telling us why he was disendorsed? I am being contacted almost daily by veterans and RSL sub-branch members pleading with the Government to intervene in this issue. I have had a gutful. It is heartbreaking to see this iconic organisation trashed. I call on the executive and the new President—whether it be James Brown or Charlie Lynn—to consider serious constitutional change in the RSL. The NSW RSL needs a full review. For too long the system has not served the sub-branch members and power must be returned to them. I strongly agree with the national President, John Dick, on this matter. We cannot allow this sad and sorry chapter to define the organisation tasked with representing the sacrifice of our nation's 100,000 war dead. I want our veterans to be kept safe and we must ensure that their valued contribution is not forgotten. Lest we forget.

FRIENDS WITH DIGNITY

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (12:33): I pay tribute to the many hardworking, trailblazing women throughout history who have taken a stand on gender equality, while at the same time acknowledging that much still needs to be done. International Women's Day is held on 8 March, and was first celebrated in 1909. It is an opportunity to acknowledge the achievements of women in all walks of life and to promote the core message of gender equality. Tomika Riley was recently named the Wallsend Local Woman of the Year at a special award ceremony held at Darling Harbour. It was with great joy that I was able to honour Tomika for her work in our community. Tomika is a volunteer with the Newcastle branch of Friends With Dignity, a not-for-profit organisation that provides help to people escaping domestic violence and abusive situations to set up new homes and new lives. When a family leaves a refuge and is able to finally secure some housing, they often do not have any household items that most of us take for granted, and that is where Ms Riley and Friends With Dignity step in.

Tomika works to assist by offering non-perishable foods, toiletries, clothing, furniture and toys to help them make a house a home. Tomika has worked tirelessly in our community as a volunteer with the Newcastle branch of Friends With Dignity helping those people in desperate need of a fresh start in life. Tomika and her dedicated team of volunteers support victims of domestic violence to turn houses into welcoming sanctuaries and rebuild their lives with purpose, dignity and hope. Everything to fill the home is donated. This includes furniture, bedding, linen, kitchenware, electrical goods, white goods and toys, collected on a needs basis.

Occasionally they also will put out a call for donations of school supplies, such as books, bags and drink bottles. They have a coordinated team that collects these donations, delivers them to the house and turns the empty house into a home, a sanctuary. Friends With Dignity literally turns an empty shell into a home the family can walk straight into and begin living the minute they receive the keys—and it is all done in seven days. Domestic violence truly has become an epidemic in our society: The statistics speak for themselves. The latest New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research reports revealed that in the 24 months to September last year, reports of domestic assaults had increased by 21 per cent.

Friends with Dignity is a national not-for-profit organisation providing assistance to men, women and children who have been displaced by domestic violence. Founded by Manuela Whitford, Friends with Dignity is a dedicated team of volunteers who work with registered referral agencies to turn houses into welcoming sanctuaries for people escaping domestic violence. There are no paid positions at Friends With Dignity. Their volunteers change lives. They come from all walks of life and believe in a world where everyone should have access to a safe and loving home free from abuse. Together they give people the dignity of a home to call their own. Volunteering is important, not just for the people who benefit directly from their efforts, but for the whole community. Tomika is thoroughly deserving of recognition for all the work that she does in our community. Congratulations.

TAMWORTH POWERSTATION MUSEUM

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:37): As part of Heritage Week I had the pleasure of attending the Tamworth Powerstation Museum in Peel Street, Tamworth, the funding for which was provided by the New South Wales Office of Environment and Heritage and Tamworth Regional Council's heritage funding campaign. This was a special education open day for the Powerstation Museum at which a special education resource was created—local stories of national and international significance. I thank Kate Armstrong,

Bridgette Guthrie and Miranda Heckenberg of the Tamworth Regional Council for pulling the first educational kit and museum experience together. They gave students the opportunity to visit the Tamworth Powerstation Museum and see firsthand our history in working order.

In 1888 Tamworth became the first city in Australia to be lit by municipal electrical street lighting. This important moment in national and local history is celebrated at the Tamworth Powerstation Museum. Established in 1988, the museum is located on the site where steam engines powered the street lighting system. The 1907 Power Station/Municipal Electric Showroom building has been refurbished to display a range of unique exhibits. They include historical cleaning and communications apparatus, cooking and electrical technology, entertainment, heating and cooling exhibits, kettles and jugs, kitchen appliances, laundry and ironing appliances, lighting, medical and personal care exhibits, steam engines, worker exhibits from days gone by and further archives. The collection captures our history magnificently. In fact, the museum has the only two working steam engines in the world built by John Fowler. The steam engines have been painstakingly and lovingly restored by Arthur Ruttley and Steve Bailey, and they look magnificent. I invite members to attend the next running of the steam engines in Tamworth on 9 November.

I thank the Tamworth Powerstation Museum volunteers—namely, Ron Greer, Ian Hobbs, Kenny Russell and many others—for their great work. This is a wonderful facility, and I encourage one and all to take the time to get online to see when the museum is open. Entry is free, and visitors will see our heritage come alive. I thank Tamworth Regional Council for its continued support of the museum, and I commend those school students who attended the Tamworth Powerstation Museum Education Open Day.

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:41): May Day, or International Workers' Day, celebrated on 1 May is a time to reflect with gratitude on the unionists who have struggled for the rights that we enjoy today, including the minimum wage, paid holidays, the eight-hour day and the right to strike. It is also a day to stand in solidarity with workers around the globe because the battles are far from over and unions and collective organising are now more important than ever. With increasing rates of casualisation, our workplace rights are being eroded steadily. The winding back of weekend penalty rates in the retail, hospitality and pharmacy industries is an insidious first step in the erosion of our protected rights to rest and to leisure, as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to an article in today's edition of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, low-income workers will lose approximately \$14 billion annually if weekend penalty rates are cut across the board. That \$14 billion loss is in addition to what the Australian Council of Trade Unions President Ged Kearney recently described as a developing class of working poor in this country.

Sydney, its inner city and inner west have a proud history of unionism. As early as 1791 there was a strike in Sydney demanding daily not weekly rations, and today we are lucky to have many active trade unions based in and around the electorate of Newtown, including the National Tertiary Education Union, the NSW Teachers Federation, the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance, the New South Wales Fire Brigade Employees' Union, the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, United Voice and the Australian Services Union where I was a delegate while working for Amnesty International. We are also lucky to have a rich history of union activity in the electorate of Newtown. The battle of Union Street in the 1930s saw members of the Australian Unemployed Workers' Union fighting against evictions as rising house prices and the inability to pay rent caused poor families and unemployed people to be kicked out of their houses across the city. The police broke down doors and tried to stop this collective action. Dozens of people were injured and 19 were arrested.

Just near Union Street is Green Bans Park. Much of the green space and heritage we enjoy in our city today was won through collective union activism. Green Bans Park in Erskineville is one such example. It was named in commemoration of union activists and environmentalists who worked together to defend the park from being developed in the 1970s. The Builders Labourers Federation—now the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union—was instrumental, under the leadership of living legend Jack Mundey, in the strike actions that saved much of our city from destruction. While Liberal governments try to dismiss union activists as thugs, I recognise the immense contribution that those activists have made to protecting green space and heritage in our community, preventing the destruction of The Rocks and Woollahroomooloo, halting an expressway entering into Glebe, stopping Centennial Park becoming a sporting complex and blocking the removal of the Opera House fig trees for a car park.

But these collective struggles for community interests are not just things of the past. I recently was inspired by the sight of a busload of Maritime Union of Australia activists joining the Save Sydney Park camp in solidarity with the activists fighting against WestConnex. I also was disgusted to see, just like in the past, the police once again being used to do the work of the big corporations and violently attacking protesters and union members at that site. One hundred years ago, workers at the Eveleigh rail yards, now the Australian Technology Park, walked off the job, striking to maintain their working rights and conditions. Their action

triggered Australia's largest industrial dispute, which became known as the General Strike of 1917 during which almost 100,000 unionists made a stand for better conditions and workers' rights.

That struggle is still being fought today. Recently, child care workers walked off the job, supported by their union, United Voice, and I have been proud to stand with the National Tertiary Education Union, the Community and Public Sector Union, the Nurses and Midwives' Association, and the Health Services Union at the University of Sydney and the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in their struggles for workers' rights on their worksites. The Greens' policy upholds the rights of unions to undertake industrial action to promote and protect the economic, social and environmental rights of their members as well as communities and third parties. As we celebrate May Day and all that united workers have achieved together, it is a good time to call on everybody to get active, to join their union and to be part of protecting the rights that have been fought for and won by those who came before us because it is pretty clear that the big corporations and the neoliberals will do everything they can to undermine them. Happy May Day to you all.

THE HILLS RURAL FIRE SERVICE BRIGADES

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (12:46): In January 1939 Sydney suffered the worst heatwave in its history. Temperatures in the city were recorded at 45.3 degrees, which meant that temperatures were much higher around The Hills areas. A pile of burning leaves on a private property in Vineyard fuelled by a fierce westerly wind created an inferno that spread from Windsor to Rouse Hill within three hours. My family, then living on what is now referred to as Heritage Park in Castle Hill, witnessed the fire firsthand. All neighbours released livestock directly onto surrounding streets in order to give them a chance to outrun the bushfire. My dad, who was only 13 years old at the time, said it was black from Katoomba to Parramatta.

Even a year after the fire, unclaimed livestock were still being found and returned to their owners. A number of lives were lost and 35 local properties either were damaged or were completely destroyed—a result no resident ever wanted to experience again. Out of those ashes rose local armies of community volunteers who created an incredible network of Rural Fire Service brigades across the Hills area. Kellyville, the oldest, was established in 1939, immediately after that fire. Not long afterwards followed the brigades of Rouse Hill and Box Hill-Nelson—my brigade—and later Kenthurst and Annangrove. In 1942, Prime Minister Curtin was advised that the Japanese army might attempt an invasion by dropping bombs on forests west of the city to draw the military from the coast to fight the fires. In preparation for such a tactic, the Prime Minister wrote to the relevant shires, asking that:

... a bush fire brigade should be immediately formed to operate at Kenthurst. It is the great danger of fires orientating from enemy action or the result of military operations that promoted this as, under such circumstances, the fires could be more widespread and intensive ... This message was passed on to community leaders and, on 16 March 1942, local resident Jack Baidon convened a meeting at the Kenthurst Literary Institute Hall. From that meeting, the Kenthurst Rural Fire Brigade was born. Formally established on 6 April 1942, six brigade officers were appointed and a total of 14 community members volunteered. Fast forward 75 years, and the Kenthurst Rural Fire Brigade has since had more than 500 members, with many following in the footsteps of previous generations of their family. This brigade and its volunteers have battled some of the worst fires in our history. They have saved numerous lives and properties not only in the Hills but also across the nation. In 2002 they faced the raging fires in Sydney's north-west that turned our skies to red and black. The volunteers battling the blaze were horrified to hear the desperate "red" messages across the radio as colleagues ran into trouble. Forty-three brigade members were placed on an honour roll that the local media prepared following this fire.

Another example was the horrific 2009 Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria. Several Kenthurst volunteers travelled to the region to help fight what was a major battle that unfortunately took the lives of 173 people. The experience greatly impacted the brigade, which reprioritised its focus to ensure that type of loss is never experienced within the Sydney Hills district. Having such a proud history, it was my great honour to attend the Kenthurst Rural Fire Service Brigade Seventy-fifth Anniversary Dinner on Friday 7 April 2017. The commemorative event, which was held at the beautiful Allegro Function Centre in Kenthurst, had an incredible 1940s era theme in recognition of the establishment of the organisation in 1942.

It was a fantastic evening. Upon arrival guests entered a themed "time tunnel" of sandbagged bunkers and camouflage nets, which effectively transported them back to the early twentieth century. The venue was decorated with old firefighting, farming and military memorabilia, and the room was filled with the sounds of the Australian Army Band Sydney and some fantastic swing music. There were uniforms and medals galore to be seen, along with fox fur stoles and graceful evening gowns. It was a glorious celebration and a fitting commemoration to the incredible history of the Kenthurst brigade.

I also congratulate two of the longest serving members of the brigade, Lionel Smith and Bill Duncan, who joined forces to produce an anniversary booklet. Lionel was the uncle of my best mate growing up, Ian Smith, who sadly passed away a few years ago. Two thousand copies of the booklet were printed and RFS volunteers delivered one to every household in Kenthurst—another sign of how strong and close the community is.

Lionel Smith joined the Rural Fire Service [RFS] as a teenager with his father and was the fire control officer for the Hills district before he retired and joined Kenthurst as a volunteer. Bill Duncan joined the RFS as soon as he and his family moved to Kenthurst. When reflecting on the booklet Bill Duncan said:

We wanted to tell our story, which is also the story of our community ... we wanted to give something they could keep because this is their history. The old members are now the street names we know.

The oldest members are Lionel Smith at 65 years, founding member Ken Featherstone and Ray Hancock who fought fires in London during the Blitz and who is the last surviving World War II veteran to have flown a Spitfire. All three are deservedly life members. I congratulate the Kenthurst Rural Fire Service and current President Bruce Linton on their seventy-fifth anniversary and thank them for their incredible work to ensure the future safety of Hills residents.

MACQUARIE FIELDS ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (12:51): My growing community has urgent needs that can no longer be ignored and must be addressed in the forthcoming State budget. It is a fact of life that many in my electorate commute each day to work, university, college or TAFE. It is a daily grind. I have commuted for years via public transport for work, meetings and events. My community and I know only too well the personal toll that long commutes take. It is not easy. Getting up as well as coming home in the dark day in and day out wears you down and makes the days feel longer. At the moment it is harder than it need be. It seems my electorate office is contacted almost daily by commuters with genuine concerns about a lack of parking at train stations, non air-conditioned trains and stifling conditions in the summer heat, inadequate services to meet their needs, the lack of a lift at the Macquarie Fields station and the inequity of it all. These concerns are real and will only get worse as our community continues to grow. They need to be addressed now.

As local residents so often point out, the population of south-west Sydney is expanding daily. In reality, the population is exploding in my electorate. There are the Bardia, Ingleburn Gardens, Willowdale, Emerald Hills, Edmondson Park and New Breeze developments, just to name a few. That is not to mention the Government's backflip on selling the valuable farmland of the Hurlstone Agricultural High School so there can be more concrete, cement and congestion. Where there were once fields and paddocks there are now houses. Where there were once market gardens there are now shopping centres, roads and more layers of concrete, tar and cement. The current growth is putting untold pressure on infrastructure including our hospitals, roads, schools and—not least—the transport network. Those who feel the pinch most acutely are our commuters who go out daily to earn an honest living. All they ask for is a fair go.

Week in and week out, they experience the squeeze—the squeeze into a hard-to-find car space; the squeeze onto an overcrowded train, where some commuters have to stand for an hour or more; the squeeze, on a hot summer's day, into yet another non air-conditioned train; and the squeeze up the steps at Macquarie Fields station, which is the only station in my local area that does not have a lift. We must do better. Today, I call on the Treasurer and the Minister for Transport to give the people in my community a fair go. A fair go would make people's daily commute no more unpleasant than it need be. A fair go would enable people to go about their daily business without the added burden of finding a car space, finding a seat on a train, or confronting a towering set of stairs. The time to deliver this fair go is now, in the forthcoming State budget. My constituents and commuters in my electorate have suffered long enough. The time for inaction is over. The time to deliver is now.

I call on the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure to address these genuine concerns and, in doing so, demonstrate a real and genuine commitment to the community of my electorate. People in my electorate are hardworking. They experience long commutes, and all they want is a fair go and their fair share.

GIRLS' DAY IN

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (12:55): At the beginning of this year, the young women leaders at the Glenmore Park High School met with me to discuss their idea of a "girls' day in" event where local women of influence and success could share with the students their personal journeys, the lessons they have learnt, the knowledge they have gained along the pathways of their lives, and handy hints that may assist the students in building their own successful lives. These young students also expressed a desire to provide practical assistance to an organisation or a person who needed support, and they asked me what some of my ideas were.

At this meeting I was very struck with their initiative and the enthusiasm that they demonstrated in wanting to help not only themselves but also their fellow women students at the Glenmore Park High School to build successful lives. At this meeting I provided them with the names of a range of successful local women whom I thought they could approach for this event. The Girls' Day In was held last month, and I had the amazing privilege

of addressing these young women at the Glenmore Park High School. I shared with them my personal journey in life including the obstacles that I had faced and how I had overcome them. I shared the principles that are built into my life and that have guided my life. I encouraged them to challenge themselves and to stretch to achieve their personal bests.

I used the acronym COLOUR to guide my discussion. I spoke at length about how important confidence was, and how they could build confidence within their lives. I spoke about the value of optimism, and that when they turn up to school on a Monday they should be positive, not dreary or regretful that the weekend was over. They should face each day as if it were a gift, which it is. I spoke about loyalty and about being others focused. I spoke about having understanding, empathy and respect. The speakers included Robyn Cheal—the manager and owner of RAMS, Penrith—who spoke about reasonable plans and goal-setting, and how respectfully to say no. Danielle Farrell, who is the school counsellor, spoke about resilience and how important resilience is in our lives. She led the girls through a meditation session where the girls learnt to relax and relieve stress.

Hannah Rance, a member of the Glenmore Park High School alumni, and Jade Krepp, an enrolled nurse, spoke about social life after school. Alaina Scutts, another member of the Glenmore Park High School alumni, addressed the girls on body image and positivity. Alaina is a former Glenmore Park High School captain, and spoke to the girls about how to love their bodies—how to be in agreement with their bodies—because the key to a healthy and happy lifestyle is treating your body right and taking care of it. Kaidee Dick, from Family Planning NSW, spoke about sexual health, and the important role it has in their lives. Sabrina, a physiotherapist, led a yoga session. One student commented that something as simple as yoga can really clear the mind in stressful times. She said it was quite amazing and will be of great use during the Higher School Certificate year. The feedback from the day demonstrated the impact that all these speakers had on the lives of these young women. I will share with the House the comments of some of those who attended this event. One girl said:

That afternoon I left feeling confident about myself. The speakers were truly inspirational and knowledgeable, which enhanced my wellbeing and gave me more optimism and knowledge to apply to the world.

Another said:

It was interesting to hear her story as a high school student, what she went through and how much she has progressed, and the confidence she has gained to get where she is now.

Someone else said:

One thing I really enjoyed learning about and took a lot away from was the session on body image and positivity. I learnt that I need to be in agreement with my body and respect it instead of eating less to be "skinny". I learnt that body positivity comes from eating right not eating less.

Finally, another said:

In organising the Year 12 Girls Day In I learnt a lot! I had to be extremely organised which was a challenge for me, but I learnt time management and how to meet deadlines which I had given myself.

They are but a few examples of the impact of the powerful message that was delivered that day—the importance of self-confidence and knowing who you are. We should all love ourselves as individuals. I take this opportunity to thank Emilia Rance, Chloe Shaw and Natasha Zahra, who were instrumental in the organisation of this event, as well as the other students who helped them. I thank all the presenters who supported the year 12 Girls Day In by giving their time and sharing their expertise. I also thank the principal, Lisette Gorrick, for her unwavering support of the students at the Glenmore Park High School, including these impressive young ladies whose initiative and organisation led to the year 12 Girls Day In being such a successful and meaningful event.

ANZAC COMMEMORATION

URUNGA WETLANDS

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (13:00): Today I inform the House about the incredible Anzac commemorations that took place again this year in the electorate of Oxley. The commemoration of Anzac Day and the acknowledgement of all those who have served in Australia's armed services is truly a very special occasion for all Australians. I had the honour of attending a number of services throughout my electorate, including the Wauchope High School Anzac service on Friday 7 April and RSL sub-branch services held at Bellingen, Frederickton and Wauchope. Anzac Day is a time to come together and once more acquaint ourselves with veterans from recent conflicts and members of the armed services. Most importantly, it is a time to acknowledge those who have served and passed. On a personal level, I spent a lot of the day thinking about my grandfather, my great uncle and my great aunt, who have all since passed but who each played a significant part during World War II.

All those services, which seem to grow incrementally every year, were conducted in the appreciative manner and spirit to which the constituents of Oxley are accustomed. At Wauchope High, under the attentive

oversight of Principal Sawle and staff, the Occasional Address was given by Sergeant Chris Stafford, and Jack O'Neill, a year 9 student and winner of the School's Anzac Day competition speech, was presented with an award by the Wauchope RSL Sub-Branch President Des Hancock. Jack made a wonderful speech. I was particularly touched by his concluding paragraph, when he said:

No battle is a success. Not even the battle of Polygon Wood [a part of the Third Battle of Ypres in Belgium, 1917]. For even though the combined forces of Australia and the United Kingdom won the battle, Ypres was a failure ... These soldiers have seen so much and lost a lot too, and they would agree with my ending statement: There is no winning a war, for even if you walk away feeling like you won something, you lost so much too.

On Anzac Day the Bellingen RSL Sub-Branch arranged a solemn and touching dawn service to remember all from the Bellingen Valley who have served and passed, including Sergeant Matthew Locke, MG. I then attended a similarly moving service at Urunga, which is only 20 minutes away. At Frederickton—or Fredo, as it is known locally—locals gathered to pay their respects in a small but moving ceremony and a street march. At the Wauchope cenotaph a large crowd gathered to greet the marchers from the RSL, to observe the laying of the wreaths and to listen to the service and the *Last Post*, which was played magnificently by a local school student. The Oxley Highway is temporarily closed to accommodate the large crowd that attends this ceremony on High Street, right in the middle of town.

Anzac commemorations remind us of what happened 100 years ago in Europe as well as later conflicts. They also inspire us to show gratitude and respect for the service and sacrifice of our military personnel and to honour their courage and tenacity. I congratulate all the organisers of this year's services, especially those from the RSL sub-branches who put so much energy into making the marches perfect, and the many speakers, guest speakers, cadets, marching band members and especially the trumpeters for their preparation and effort towards these services which help us to remember and reflect.

I take this opportunity also to acknowledge the work of the Department of Lands and the Soil Conservation Service and the funding from our Government to resolve a major issue in the electorate of Oxley around the Urunga wetlands. Yesterday I was honoured to have the Minister for Lands and Forestry, Paul Toole, in my electorate where we officially opened the remediated Urunga wetlands and a new walkway. The \$10 million commitment from our State Government has had an enormous impact on our community. By way of background, in the early 1970s a significant quantity of waste wash flowed into the wetlands, impacting upon water quality and large areas of paperbark forest. Over the past 12 to 15 months, the Soil Conservation Service has done an enormous amount of work to remediate the soil and create a cell in order to protect the waterways and the paperbark. Now we have an incredible asset.

The remediation work involved the treatment and isolation of about 36,400 tonnes of soil and sediment. With the improved water quality, the birds, kingfishers and jabirus are coming back. It is now a splendid location and will be a well-visited location as part of the tourist precinct of the mid North Coast. I particularly highlight the work of Clayton Colmes from the Soil Conservation Service, who oversaw the project and worked an enormous number of hours together with the rest of the soil conservation team. I also acknowledge Dylan, a young man from Gumbainggir Country, who gave a beautiful welcome to country. I am very proud of our Government for addressing this environmental hot spot and returning it to the community in a much enhanced state.

NOVA FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:05): Today I talk about events relating to an organisation in my electorate known as Nova for Women and Children, a specialist homeless service for women who are experiencing domestic violence and homelessness. Nova does great work, but it has witnessed shocking examples of the failure of our health system in relation to vulnerable women in our community, in particular, mental health units discharging women from mental health units without connecting them to support services and failing to monitor them after their release.

In Nova's experience, the Ministry of Health policy on the transfer of care from mental health inpatient services has been breached on numerous occasions and often is simply not known. The policy's aim is to ensure the safe and effective transition of inpatients with a mental illness back into the community. The policy includes community follow-up plans that are integrated with other agencies. But these measures are not being followed and vulnerable women are being discharged from mental health units with no ongoing support. In multiple cases, if not for the work of Nova's dedicated workers, women would have died as a result of these breaches of policy.

I inform the House about two such women who are lucky to be alive—thanks to Nova. For privacy, I will not use their real names. Lucy had a history of childhood sexual abuse, neglect and domestic violence. She was sleeping in parks and had just a trolley of belongings. Nova sourced temporary accommodation for Lucy in a local motel and provided her with intensive care. It contacted her every day, including weekends. But Lucy became increasingly mentally unwell and was committed to the Calvary Mater mental health unit where she remained for

two weeks. The Mater was aware that Nova had been working with Lucy but it did not notify Nova when Lucy was discharged, despite the Ministry of Health policy requirements.

Lucy returned to the motel, where she became extremely unwell and incontinent. Nova contacted the Mater mental health unit for advice. Receiving no response, Nova took Lucy to a general practitioner, who suggested that her condition was most likely the result of the medication she had been prescribed. Had the mental health unit developed a transfer of care plan, Nova would have been aware of the new medication and its potential side effects and would have monitored Lucy accordingly. When Nova again visited Lucy, she was found in an even worse state. Her bedding was soaked in urine. The Mater mental health team was contacted and made an appointment for Lucy to see a general practitioner two weeks later. Nova staff continued to conduct welfare checks on Lucy at the motel but grew increasingly worried when they did not receive a response. Upon gaining access to Lucy's room, they found her face down on the floor with urine burns all over her body. Lucy could have been lying alone for four days. Paramedics were called and they said that had Lucy been found 12 hours later she would have died. Lucy still has a contagious staph infection in one of the burns and scars from the burns.

Amber is another woman with a tragic story. Amber has a history of mental health issues, domestic violence, and drug and alcohol abuse. Nova received a call from the motel where Amber was living; people at the motel were worried about Amber and believed she needed to be connected to support services. Nova visited Amber and conducted an assessment where they learnt Amber recently had been released from the Mater Mental Health Unit after a recent suicide attempt. Amber was discharged from the Mater with no support offered and no transfer of care plan implemented. Four days later, staff from the motel entered Amber's room to find her face down on the bed. Initially they thought she was dead, but they managed to rouse her. The mattress was soiled, and all linen and the mattress had to be disposed of. Amber had again tried to commit suicide.

Nova workers are highly trained Specialist Homelessness services workers. They are not mental health specialists—that is the job of the health system. Nova does not have the time or the resources to devote to intensely monitoring women leaving mental health units. At present, however, Nova knows that if it does not provide this intensive care, some of the most traumatised and vulnerable women in our community will continue not having the ongoing support they need. This places tremendous pressure and responsibility on the staff at Nova. The health system failed both Lucy and Amber. The transfer of care policy was breached at every stage. The fundamental issue is that our hospitals are underfunded and under-resourced and that, as a result, the health care needs of our State's most vulnerable people are not being met. Why Lucy and Amber were discharged without the ongoing support, connection to services and monitoring they needed, must be immediately and thoroughly investigated. I commend Nova for Women and Children for bringing this to my attention and for allowing this issue to be brought to the House.

SCHOOL VACCINATION PROGRAM

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research)
(13:10): Today I raise the issue of vaccinations, particularly from the perspective of my electorate but also from the broader perspective of New South Wales. The Government is committed to protecting all children from vaccine-preventable diseases, and it does that by maximising the number of children who are immunised. Generally, New South Wales continues to have a high immunisation coverage rate, but there are areas where we know that the local communities need to understand the value of immunisation in keeping their child or children safe by ensuring that their child or children are not vulnerable to diseases that cause disability or death.

In 2016, across New South Wales there was not a single case of diphtheria, German measles or tetanus—although I note that this year there has been one case of tetanus on the North Coast and the child had to be transferred to Queensland—and since 2014 there have been no deaths from whooping cough. It is therefore important that we as a government—the Opposition should be on board with this as well—emphasise that the school vaccination program is important to the future of our young people because it plays a part in keeping our children and our communities safe from vaccine-preventable diseases.

I congratulate some of the schools in my electorate of Wakehurst on their incredible vaccination rates. I single out particularly Forest High School and St Augustine's College in Brookvale for both schools having 91 per cent of their students receive the first dose of Gardasil, which protects against four strains of the human papillomavirus [HPV]. St Augustine's College also achieved an excellent 93 per cent of students receiving the diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccination, and Oxford Falls Grammar School came closely behind with 89 per cent. Members may be aware that in 2007 the new Gardasil vaccinations targeted HPV. That was an important step, because HPV can produce cervical cancer in girls and throat cancer and a range of other serious diseases in boys and girls.

In 2007 vaccinations of Gardasil were first introduced for girls in New South Wales schools, and by 2013 the Government broadened this practice for boys. These two schools, Forest High School and St Augustine's

College, compare very well with the statewide average for school students who receive their first shot of Gardasil at 86 per cent for girls and 83 per cent for boys. It is important that boys and girls at school have the benefit of these vaccinations. The Northern Sydney Local Health District, where the schools are located, has coverage figures close to the State average, with 86 per cent of girls and 85 per cent of boys in year 7 receiving their first shot of HPV vaccine, and 85 per cent of students receiving the diphtheria tetanus pertussis vaccination.

I note that at St Augustine's College 91 per cent of students received the HPV vaccination and 93 per cent of students received the diphtheria tetanus pertussis vaccination. At the Killarney Heights High School, 82 per cent of students received dose one of the HPV vaccination and 85 per cent of students received the diphtheria tetanus pertussis vaccination. At Oxford Falls Grammar School 79 per cent of students and at Pittwater House Schools 85 per cent of students received dose one of the HPV vaccination and 86 per cent of students received the diphtheria tetanus pertussis vaccination. At the Northern Beaches Secondary College, Cromer, 85 per cent of students received dose one of the HPV vaccination and 71 per cent of students received the diphtheria tetanus pertussis vaccination.

I compare these rates of vaccination with the electorate of Auburn in the Western Sydney Local Health District where roughly 89 per cent of girls and 87 per cent of boys have had their first shot of HPV vaccine and 89 per cent of students have had their diphtheria tetanus pertussis vaccine. Broadly speaking we are doing very well. I say to all the schools in my electorate: Well done for keeping our kids safe with these vaccinations. I encourage schools right across the State to keep up vaccination rates. Let us try to get them as close to 100 per cent as we can.

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (13:16): I speak today about the greatest multicultural community in New South Wales—Fairfield. The City of Fairfield is home to more than 200,000 people, with approximately half of its residents born overseas. Over the years, our region has grown, and the successes of first, second and third generation migrant families have helped to shape the community that we all love and cherish today. I am incredibly proud of our diverse community and the wonderful variety of culture, cuisine, arts and entertainment that we have on offer throughout our fine city. Our region is well known for its exquisite multicultural foods and produce, and people come from far and wide just to indulge in our diverse mix of cultural foods and festivities. The people of Fairfield are proud of their heritage, work, culture, religion and their community.

That is why great offence was taken at the recent rubbish spouted by the former Federal Labor leader Mark Latham, who vilified members of our community—our community, which he called disgraceful and then alleged that they do not mix with other cultures or speak the English language. In Mark Latham's recent video about Fairfield, he targeted individuals who likely just recently have arrived in Australia, having fled war-torn countries. He accosted them on the street with his microphone and cameraman. Mark Latham's message was derogatory, inflammatory and divisive. The residents of Fairfield are outraged and have a clear response for Mark Latham: He is wrong.

Only last year the Moving Forward Together Association held the inaugural Fairfield Harmony Walk, which aimed to bring together Australians from diverse national, ethnic and religious backgrounds to help build an inclusive society. In March the Sports in Harmony event was held at the Fairfield Leisure Centre by the Red Cross and all the major sporting codes. This event helped to bridge the gap and assisted refugees to sign up to local sporting teams to help them to connect with newly arrived migrants and engage with the wider community. Our community's response was overwhelming and stands as a prime example of cultural inclusion, cooperation and solidarity.

Our multicultural diverse community stands united as we work together towards harmony and respect for all. We do not need to look too far to figure out that those of us who live in the City of Fairfield embrace our culturally diverse community and, in fact, celebrate the various religious, cultural and momentous occasions each and every year. The City of Fairfield is one of the few cities in New South Wales that can be found celebrating the new year just about every other month throughout the entire calendar year, due to the diverse range of cultures in our city. Recently we finished celebrating the Assyrian, Lao, Thai and Cambodian new years and we are only months away from the next big new year celebration. We have plenty to celebrate in Fairfield. One week we are welcoming in the New Year; the next we are celebrating and commemorating Australia Day, then Chinese and Vietnamese lunar new years, Easter, Anzac Day and so on. Before we know, it has all come around full circle.

On Monday night I spoke to Mr David David from the Assyrian Australian National, who is the announcer on local community radio station 2GLF 89.3FM, on his program the *Voice of the Alliance*. The focus of his conversation was on commemorations on Anzac Day, the significance of Anzac Day for all people and encouraging the Assyrian people to attend local commemorative services. Having attended numerous Anzac

commemorations I can say from firsthand experience that our local Anzac services were well attended, with representatives from all multicultural communities and associations.

This holds true for our other community festivals and celebrations. I give examples from last week where I held social harmony discussions with the Iraqi Australian University Graduates Forum. I attended a Lebanese function in Fairfield, various Anzac commemorative services, the Migrant Stories exhibition at the Fairfield Museum and Gallery and the Club Marconi Chestnut Day. I can honestly say that each event was well attended by individuals from all walks of life. I can say to Mark Latham that this does not sound like a community of people who do not talk to one another or who do not speak the language. There is no denying that Fairfield is a vibrant and multiculturally diverse community which has its own unique needs and challenges. The efforts made by migrants and refugees have contributed immensely to the overall culture of Fairfield and will help shape where it goes into the future. I take this opportunity to commend our local schools, religious organisations, social clubs, multicultural centres and sporting clubs for all their work dedicated to maintaining and promoting a socially harmonious and cohesive community in Fairfield.

VOLUNTEER SURF LIFESAVERS

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (13:21): Today I recognise and applaud the outstanding contribution made to the Pittwater community by our volunteer surf lifesavers who concluded the 2015-16 season on Anzac Day. Pittwater has 12 surf clubs and thousands of members who selflessly give their weekends to keep the public safe on our beaches. Their hard work and dedication play a vital role in not only helping swimmers and surfers when the swell gets a bit hairy but also in supporting the strong community and volunteer spirit that helps make Pittwater such a wonderful place to live and visit. They are not paid and their clubs often run on minimal resources provided by the goodwill of local businesses, community members and club members. Indeed, volunteering is the lifeblood of our community and I salute all those men and women who give up their time to keep our beaches safe and in large part make our community what it is today.

My love, respect and passion for our local surf clubs drives me to speak today about a concerning issue lingering in my local community. A number of Pittwater community members have expressed concerns to me about increased scrutiny being placed on our local surf clubs. I am told a spotlight is being cast over the operations and practices of Pittwater's surf clubs, calling into question whether elements within the Northern Beaches Council are exploring the prospect of taking over the role of our volunteer surf lifesavers by introducing paid lifeguards on the weekends. Despite council assurances to the contrary, concerns remain about how council intends to act in the future. I would prefer to think this is all a simple misunderstanding rather than anything more sinister. I commend the paid lifeguards who keep us safe on the northern beaches and I wish them the very best in continuing their existing operations. I know many of them personally; they are consummate professionals in all they do. However, I will not accept our volunteer surf lifesavers and the community spirit they represent being undermined by a misguided bureaucratic desire to expand a government-run service when there is no need for it.

Our community will not accept our dedicated and incredibly effective and professional volunteer surf lifesaving patrols being pushed out of a role they have served with great distinction over many decades. A move such as this from the Northern Beaches Council not only would be a spectacular waste of ratepayers' money but also would be a fundamental attack on one of the great pillars of the Pittwater community. If there is indeed any plan to replace or even any thinking about a plan to replace our surf lifesavers with paid lifeguards, which will rob our volunteers of their beach safety role, then this plan would pose an existential threat to our surf clubs. It would be seen by Pittwater residents as a rebuke of our beloved surf lifesavers and the volunteer ethos that makes our community so special. Putting aside how this would be interpreted by the community, such an act would also be economic lunacy.

It is worth noting that in the 2014-15 financial year the Warringah Council, with its professional lifeguards, spent more than \$1.7 million on beach control whereas the Pittwater Council, with its volunteer surf lifesavers and many more beaches, spent just over \$1 million. That equates to a service that conservatively costs 60 per cent more a year. I remind the Northern Beaches Council that the merger was intended to reduce costs for ratepayers, not increase them, and any move to put professional lifeguards in place of volunteers obviously would pose a greater cost for a service already undertaken by volunteers with a high level of professionalism. It is my sincere hope that the concerns of my community are completely unfounded and that the council intends to continue delegating responsibility for beach safety to Pittwater surf clubs on weekends and public holidays over the summer season. If there is in fact a plan brewing for a takeover, I say to the Northern Beaches Council: Beware—our community will not stand for any craven and, frankly, ridiculous territorial grab against our surf lifesaving clubs.

The Pittwater community holds its clubs and surf lifesaving volunteers very close to its collective heart and we will be fierce in defending their place on our beaches. I say to the Northern Beaches Council: If you are working on a plan to displace our volunteer surf lifesavers, take all relevant documents and find your nearest recycling bin, shredder or chimenea. Should this plan ever come to pass, be warned that nothing will prepare you

for the wrath of the people of Pittwater. Together as a community we will be strong, we will be swift and we will be merciless in fighting any such plan to take this invaluable volunteer service from Pittwater. We defend our surf lifesavers, we respect their volunteer ethic and we respect their professionalism and their duty. I put it on record that I support the surf lifesavers continuing to hold the contract for beach safety on weekends and public holidays.

TRIBUTE TO DICK CAINE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:26:2): It is an honour to speak in the Chamber today about a sporting legend of the St George area, Dick Caine. His name is synonymous with swimming in the St George area and Team Caine is a familiar sight at the Carss Park pool. Generations of young people have been taught to swim by Dick and his wife Jenny. For more than 45 years, Dick, Jenny and their dedicated teaching staff have instructed and trained local swimmers in a competitive and fun environment. Dick's expertise and relentless passion for the sport of swimming has produced and developed a number of Olympians and world record holders, including Michelle Ford, Janelle Elford, Karen Phillips, Stacey Gartrell and of course Michellie Jones.

Dick has been a wonderful ambassador for the sport of swimming and is committed to continue to train young swimmers. Dick's priority always has been to deliver learn-to-swim and recreational opportunities to school children and seniors in the community. The fact that Dick has trained Olympic, world and Australian champions is a credit to him but it in no way diminishes the importance of teaching children to swim and an awareness and understanding of water safety. Throughout his 45-year career Dick has taught thousands of children, from babies to teenagers, to swim. As Australians we know how important it is to be able to swim well and be water smart. Dick has played an important role in shaping and delivering this message. Children are alive to and aware of the dangers of being in and around water because they have participated in Dick's swimming lessons.

As a community we are grateful to Dick and the Caine swimming team, who have worked tirelessly to promote the importance of learning to swim. Whilst it is impossible to put a figure on the number of children who have avoided drowning due to swimming lessons, we know that every life lost to drowning is one life too many. However, change is upon Dick and his family, and after 45 years of being the driving force behind the team at Carss Park he will hand over some of the responsibility of running the pool to the Georges River Council. Six years ago Dick had a stroke. During his recovery, doctors discovered he had cancer of the thyroid gland. Sadly, his condition continues to worsen. Dick, Jenny and their family made the decision to focus on his health—a huge and difficult decision for a man who has dedicated almost 50 years of his life to teaching and coaching the sport he loves.

From 1 July this year Dick will hand over the day-to-day running of the Carss Park pool to the Georges River Council. It then will be responsible for pool maintenance, cleaning, servicing and repairing equipment and Dick can focus on his health and teaching when he can. The Carss Park swimming complex has produced more than just great swimmers. As part of Dick's vision it has been a training facility for athletes and has been used by many sporting champions, including marathon swimmer Susie Maroney, ironman Chris McCormack, boxers Kostya Tszyu, Jeff Fenech and Anthony Mundine, and for nearly 40 years the mighty St George rugby league team. Recently, I read an article in my local newspaper, the *Leader*, in which Dick is reported as saying:

Forget the champions, it's the thousands of kids I have coached who have made it so special. I love the kids, and I hope they think I am more than just a coach. We are like family.

This summarises the commitment and involvement of Dick and his family to the St George area. He has a passion for swimming, a passion for teaching and a genuine desire to see each child do their best and succeed. As a youngster I too learned to swim at the Caine swimming pool. Unfortunately, no amount of training was going to turn me into an Olympian, but I learnt how to swim and it is still something I enjoy doing with my son.

Dick was 20 years old in 1966 when he was awarded the lease for the Carss Park pool. He still cannot believe he was successful. Having left school at the age of 12, Dick struggled to complete the paperwork to apply for the lease—but he did and it was the start of a long and wonderful coaching career. The Dick Caine swimming school grew from a small number of swimmers to hundreds of kids participating in lessons and squad training. On behalf of the St George community I thank Dick and his family for all they have contributed to the sport of swimming. I wish Dick well as he manages his health and look forward to seeing him poolside at Carss Park, coaching and shouting instructions to the next generation of young swimmers.

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

*Announcements***MEMBER FOR ROCKDALE**

The SPEAKER: I draw to the attention of the House that the member for Rockdale's fifth grandson was born on 18 April. I congratulate the member. He will need a few more to catch me; I have nine. I wish him good luck.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

The SPEAKER: I extend a warm welcome to the Shoalhaven Southern Belles Red Hat Society, guests of the Speaker and member for South Coast. That is what we do on the South Coast. I also welcome the friends and family of the new member for North Shore, particularly her husband Sam Ison, her sister Christiana Casuscelli, her niece and nephew Gabriella and Domenic, the North Shore Conference President Simon Moore, and her many other supporters in the gallery this afternoon. Of course, they are guests of the member for North Shore. I also welcome the family and friends of the member for Manly, particularly his wife Elissa Griffin. I wish both spouses good luck; their lives will never be the same. I welcome the member's brother-in-law Thomas Griffin and branch president Andrew Morrison, who are guests of the member for Manly. I congratulate everyone on their hard work. I also welcome students from Western Sydney Institute of TAFE, Mount Druitt Campus, guests of the member for Mount Druitt.

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

The SPEAKER (14:18): For the benefit of new members and those in the gallery, every Tuesday of every sitting week I give an address as part of the commemoration of the centenary of Anzac. These addresses trace the events of approximately 100 years ago and the Great War. Despite the previous month's costly failure, British and Australian troops made a second attempt to break through the Hindenburg Line near the village of Bullecourt, commencing with a pre-dawn strike on 3 May 1917. The second offensive was better planned and properly supported by artillery. The Australian Infantry Force's [AIF] 2nd Division successfully seized a small section of the German trenches. Bravely enduring days of brutal counterattacks, which at times included the use of flamethrowers, the Australians managed to strengthen their position and to dig a communication and supply trench back to their own lines. After a fortnight of combat, sometimes intense and at other times sporadic, the Germans abandoned efforts to recapture their lost territory.

The second Battle of Bullecourt gave the Allies a symbolic victory. They had broken through and captured and held a section of the Hindenburg Line. But it was only a very small section and the toll had been appalling. More than 7,000 Australian soldiers were killed or wounded. The losses forced plans for a new 6th AIF division to be abandoned. Instead, the Government embarked on a second attempt to introduce conscription. Resentment of British command among Australian ranks at the front sharpened as a result of the events at Bullecourt, as did disillusionment with the war generally. Shortly before he was killed at Bullecourt on 12 May, Lieutenant Wilfred Barlow, a schoolteacher from Victoria and father of four, wrote to his wife, "I hope the war will soon be over because it is destroying the best men and everything that is beautiful and civilised in life." Lest we forget.

*Members***ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF GOSFORD****Issue and Return of Writ**

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that my writ issued on 17 March 2017 in accordance with section 70 of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Gosford in place of Kathleen Smith, resigned, has been returned with a certificate endorsed by the Electoral Commissioner advising of the election of Liesl Dorothy Tesch to serve as member for the electoral district of Gosford.

PLEDGE OF LOYALTY

Ms Liesl Dorothy Tesch took and subscribed the pledge of loyalty and signed the roll.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF MANLY**Issue and Return of Writ**

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that my writ issued on 17 March 2017 in accordance with section 70 of the Parliamentary Electorate and Elections Act 1912 for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Manly in place of Michael Bruce Baird, resigned, has been returned with a certificate endorsed by the Electoral Commissioner advising of the election of James Henry Griffin to serve as member for the electoral district of Manly.

PLEDGE OF LOYALTY

Mr James Henry Griffin took and subscribed the pledge of loyalty and signed the roll.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF NORTH SHORE**Issue and Return of Writ**

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that my writ issued on 17 March 2017 in accordance with section 70 of the Parliamentary Electorate and Elections Act 1912 for the election of a member to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of North Shore in place of Jillian Gell Skinner, resigned, has been returned with a certificate endorsed by the Electoral Commissioner advising of the election of Felicity Lesley Wilson to serve as a member for the electoral district of North Shore.

PLEDGE OF LOYALTY

Ms Felicity Lesley Wilson took and subscribed the pledge of loyalty and signed the roll.

*Bills***STATE REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017****TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (TRANSPORT ENTITIES) BILL 2017****GREYHOUND RACING BILL 2017****Assent**

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

*Question Time***NORTH COAST FLOODS**

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:31): My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier provide flood-affected businesses in Murwillumbah, in Lismore and across the North Coast with a 12-month moratorium on payroll tax to assist them to retain their workforces while they recover from the floods?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:32): I acknowledge the question from the Leader of the Opposition and say that from day one when we realised what a serious natural disaster the flooding was in the Northern Rivers we made it our point—

Mr Thomas George: Hear, hear!

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Thank you—the member for Lismore is very definite in his response. Because often it can take weeks and months before initial disaster recovery hits those areas, we made sure it happened within days. I acknowledge and thank the Minister for Emergency Services for the role he played in dealing with his Federal counterparts to make sure we made those funds available. I also update the House about the fact that on the Monday after the disaster when it was acknowledged to be safe to go up to the region I visited flood-affected areas. In fact, Minister Grant, the member for Lismore, the member for Tweed and I visited businesses and communities affected by the floods: It was still very raw for them. In particular I will never forget the number of business people we spoke to in Murwillumbah—businesses who employ many local residents. We turned up expecting to see two or three of them and I think we saw 100 or so of them, if not more.

Mr Thomas George: It was 140.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The member for Lismore says it was 140. It was a wonderful opportunity to hear directly from them on their needs. Our Government has done everything possible within the current grant process to make sure those funds are made available. I also assure the community that we are considering all other and further options. I want to put that on the record because we have already—

[Interruption]

This is a serious issue. You should listen to my answer.

Ms Jodi McKay: It wasn't me.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Whoever it was. We already have made funding available to those communities, whether they are people in desperate need of housing and accommodation, whether they are businesses or whether they are others impacted directly by the floods. I acknowledge the great work by the Deputy Premier and that of the Small Business Commissioner. We have made sure the Small Business Commissioner has gone up there a number of times and personally visited businesses to cater a response specifically to their needs. You cannot lump everybody into the same category so we have taken a very personal and individual response to make sure we listen to the specific needs of every single business and every single community member who needs our help.

One should not disclose what is discussed in party meetings, but this morning those of us in this Government mentioned the fact that the floodwaters may have receded but our support for the community has not. We will make sure we continue to visit the region regularly, we will make sure we provide every assistance available to those flood-affected victims but we also will start planning for the future. What can we do as a community to prevent the extent of loss and suffering that has been experienced on this occasion? What can we do in the rebuilding process to make sure we reduce and mitigate the risk in future? It is about rebuilding lives and supporting businesses and communities to grow and prosper, but it is also about mitigating risk in future.

I am extremely proud of the team effort that we have demonstrated. All members on this side of the House who have specific responsibility have been up there. Even the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, who is responsible for fair trading issues, has made sure there has been a one-stop-shop information site so that people do not have to go through separate agencies—they can go to one spot. I also thank the Minister for the Environment for the fact that within days she said to all the councils up there, "You no longer have to pay the waste levy. Let's just clean up the rubbish and reduce costs."

On every level in every sphere we have done what we can from day one to support the community. We will continue to do so because a recovery effort of that nature does not take days and weeks; it takes months and sometimes even years. We will make sure we expedite the process as much as possible. The thing I am proudest of is the level of compassion we have shown by individualising what people need. We have not said, "This is what everybody gets." We have actually spoken to people one on one. I take this opportunity to thank the local members of that region for their strong advocacy. They have been ringing me—I will not say "harassing" me but ringing me—incessantly, particularly the member for Lismore. The member for Lismore accepts that it is harassment but that is okay. The member for Tweed advocated similarly. I acknowledge also that parts of the Ballina electorate have been affected. We are dealing with those challenges as well. The member for Clarence also has been in touch with me.

I take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the local members for the wonderful advocacy they have made on behalf of their communities. I acknowledge the local councils who have supported the Government's efforts. I thank the Federal Government agencies who have responded to our aims to make sure we expedite the process, and I assure the communities of northern New South Wales and the Northern Rivers we will build their communities back up with them together and we will also plan for a risk-free environment in the future.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (14:37): My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the New South Wales Government improving the learning environment for New South Wales schoolchildren?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:37): I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for his question because I know that he and all members of this place value public education and value how important it is for a government to support public education. I am very grateful for the question because we know that one of our core responsibilities as a government is to ensure that every child, no matter their postcode, no matter what part of the State they live in, has the chance to be their best. The way to do that is to make sure they have a safe and secure school environment and their teachers have the support and resources they need to be able to provide the best learning experience possible—and not just the best in New South Wales and Australia. I want to make sure that our education standards are comparable to world's best practice, and that is exactly what we are doing here in New South Wales.

I am also very proud of the legacy we have in education. Both the previous and current Minister for Education have stood up. We were the first State to accept the Gonski reforms. We were the first State to put up our hand and say, "We want to sign up to this." We are very proud of that fact. Let's not forget that this State

Government has committed \$1.7 billion over six years to deliver on the Gonski reforms. I hasten to add that those opposite would not have had the money to make that commitment. They left us deficits. They would not have had the \$1.7 billion to deliver into education.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Prospect will come to order. I warn the member for Prospect.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Of course, we expect and accept that the Federal Government will honour its commitments in relation to the Gonski agreement. I understand that in the past hour the Federal Government made an announcement about its commitment to needs-based funding, which we welcome. Obviously, anything on top of the existing Gonski legacy is a plus, and we will look closely at the detail of what has been announced. I welcome any extra support for public education. I am very proud of the kinds of reforms that have been announced in New South Wales, which give more support to local communities in relation to how their schools function.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is encouraging that this Government—the party of the worker—has employed 4,000 extra teachers.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Do you support penalty rates?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This Government has employed an extra 4,000 teachers, which is more than the member opposite could ever have done.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am also extremely proud of the fact that this morning the Minister for Education and I attended the Plunkett Street Public School in Woolloomooloo where we were able to announce a huge boost to the maintenance of public schools in New South Wales. I am pleased to say that on top of the \$330 million commitment we made for school maintenance we have added an extra \$60 million. By the end of next year, in 2018 the Government anticipates that more than 2,100 primary and secondary schools in New South Wales will have had their maintenance backlogs eliminated completely. This Government is about building new schools—we are proud to have done that—and upgrading schools. We are putting a huge dint in the maintenance backlog that we inherited. The Opposition left this Government with a billion dollars worth of maintenance backlog. The Government has reduced that substantially, but there is obviously more to do. The Government is very excited that, with this extra funding boost, it will be able to accelerate addressing the maintenance needs of schools.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am pleased to be able to give some examples of where this funding will go. Obviously, 2,100 schools will get boosts in maintenance funding. I am pleased to say that the Toormina High School in Coffs Harbour will get funding, as will the Great Lakes College in Forster, which is in the electorate of Myall Lakes. The Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College in the electorate of The Entrance will receive funding. I am sure that the local member will accept it. The Colo High School will get some funds. That will impact people in the electorates of Bathurst and Hawkesbury. The Hunter River High School in Port Stephens will get funding.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Port Stephens will cease interjecting.

[Extension of time]

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I know that the member for Port Stephens was about to thank me, and I accept that. I assure every single community in New South Wales that when members of this Government said that every community would get its fair share of government resources, we were serious. The 2,100 schools are in every part of the State.

Ms Prue Car: What about Shellharbour?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Those opposite do not like this news.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: These 2,100 schools are located across the length and breadth of the community. Whether the schools are in greater Sydney, the regions, or in rural and remote communities,

the Government will make sure that every school that needs maintenance money will receive it. I am talking about repairs to roofs, installing new floor coverings, painting and doing those things that school communities know make a huge difference to the learning environment. Report after report has talked about how a secure, safe and productive working environment will add to the education and learning experience. Although I am speaking about dollars and the numbers of schools, at the end of the day this is about improving the quality of education for every individual child wherever that child lives in New South Wales. We are incredibly proud of that. As a product of the public education system, I appreciate how important it is to have those types of learning environments.

Unfortunately, those opposite would not even be able to touch the sides when it comes to matching the investments that my Government has made in education. The Government is also very excited to have announced funding for more than 1,500 new classrooms since the Coalition came to power in 2011, and 29,000 extra student places. The Government also is pleased to have delivered 15 new or relocated schools, and 39 major upgrades. Those opposite left us in rack and ruin with respect to the budget and to education. The Liberal Party is the party for students and for public education, and we are the party for the workers.

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

BYRON AND TWEED SHIRES DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:45): My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier advise the House what representations she has made to the Federal Government regarding the eligibility criteria for disaster assistance to areas in the Byron and Tweed shires such as Tumbulgum, Stokers Siding, Mooball and Crabbes Creed, which have so far missed out on assistance?

Mr Geoff Provest: Tumbulgum!

The SPEAKER: Order! It is a legitimate question. The member for Tweed will not interject during a question, regardless of mispronunciations.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:45): I acknowledge the question from the Leader of the Opposition and will update the House. The Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services has been in regular contact with his Federal counterpart, and will continue to be so. The Government has unlocked all the funds that are available under existing schemes and is considering, from a State perspective and in discussion with our Federal colleagues, all opportunities for further assistance. As I said in my previous answer, this is not just about ensuring that we support the rebuilding of these communities; it is about reducing risk and planning for the future. I reassure the communities about that. I also stress to those opposite that they should be careful about the tone of such questions. The Deputy Prime Minister was attacked by the Queensland Premier for not having released funds to Queensland in relation to disaster assistance. He was able to produce—he must have had them in his folder—all the application forms that representatives of the New South Wales Government had filled out in order to receive funding. The Queensland Government had not done that.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If nothing else, I will update the House that, since the disaster broke, this Government has had a sense of urgency in the way it has supported those communities. We have dispatched emergency funding in record time. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the emergency services agencies—the police, ambulance officers and paramedics—because the short amount of time taken to establish evacuation centres was amazing. From about day one and day two, we were able to tell members of those communities where they could go if they needed urgent and immediate assistance. We were then able to convert some of those evacuation centres to information centres where people could access information about the support they needed. I confirm to the House that we have had an absolute sense of urgency with respect to providing assistance. I am very proud of the fact that we have made sure that support has reached the ground in record time compared to previous experiences.

I do not want to, but I could go through the long list of how long it took those opposite to dispatch funding in similar situations. I do not have enough time—and today I am speaking about us. I am always pleased to take every opportunity available in this place to make it known to the people of New South Wales that this Government has worked hard to get the resources we have. The Government will work doubly hard to make sure that those resources are dispatched to every part of our State that needs them when they need them. Again, I say to the communities in northern New South Wales—particularly the Northern Rivers—that we will be with them every step of the way. We will continue to provide opportunities to support them through this rebuilding process. The Government also pays tribute to all the government agencies—local, State and Federal—who have supported the Government and those communities in picking up the pieces after this tragic time.

We cannot underestimate what it is like for people who are just now coming to terms with the shock. For the initial few days, people are in shock. They think about what they can do immediately to keep their families and other loved ones safe, then after a few weeks reality sets in regarding the magnitude of the loss. We are making sure that people have all the support they need on a personal and a financial level whether it is a business, a community organisation or an institution. I also single out the university in the region. When I visited the area and the university it was most pleasing to see that it had made its information technology rooms available for businesses to use the facilities. That is an example of community efforts to support people who are doing it tough. Again, I reiterate to the House, and especially to the affected communities, that we have a real sense of urgency and a real sense of how long it will take for a full recovery, and we look forward to doing more.

RURAL AND REGIONAL EDUCATION

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (14:50): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. What is the Government doing to give students in remote parts of New South Wales the opportunity to achieve a tertiary education?

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:51): I thank the member for Cootamundra for her question. She is passionate about education and about creating opportunities for regional and rural children to study in their towns and remain part of their community. The member is passionate about always fighting in this place for her community. I take a moment to acknowledge the three new members who were elected recently and who today have joined us in the House. I wish them all the best in debate and in their contributions to Parliament. Their electors will rely on them to deliver for their communities, as the community of the member for Cootamundra relies on her.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: For many city children, their decision post schooling is which university they will choose to attend in Sydney. But for regional children, the decisions are quite different. The decisions for regional children are: Can I afford to leave the family farm? Can I afford to leave the family business? Can I afford to leave my regional community?

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Can I afford to travel to university?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Summer Hill to order for the first time. She will cease shouting across the Chamber.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We on this side of the House are committed to making sure that regional and rural children have options to study at home post their schooling and to learn skills and receive an education to gain employment. Of course, we have done a lot in the TAFE space through our connected learning centres.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Our connected learning centres are providing opportunities for children in areas where there has never been a TAFE presence.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Our announcement of 12 connected learning centres over the next 12 months will mean that more children will have access to vocational education. I announce to the House today that the New South Wales Government, in partnership with the Country Universities Centre, will invest \$8 million to give children in regional and rural areas that do not have a local university an opportunity to study tertiary education in a regional centre. The Country Universities Centre is modelled on a pilot that has been underway for several years in my electorate of Cooma and which was funded by the local community, the local council and Snowy Hydro. In a number of years we have achieved success. Children are now remaining in regional centres such as Cooma, staying in the community, and continuing to be part of the growth of that centre because they have an option to stay home and study.

Our \$8 million investment will locate five particular regions where we believe this investment, along with the Country Universities Centre, will allow children in regional centres the opportunity to study in a campus-style atmosphere, united and supported by the teachers and the training staff to deliver better outcomes. I can update the member for Cootamundra that Young will receive a country university centre. We are committed to making sure that regional communities, regional children and regional families have everything they need

available at a local level. We believe in a fair share. We believe in equity; regional and rural children and communities should be able to do what people in places like Sydney often take for granted. I can also update the House that overnight Minister Birmingham, following a visit by Senator Nash to the Cooma Universities Centre, announced that \$15 million will be allocated over the next four years to fund eight hubs across Australia. We will make sure the Country Universities Centre in New South Wales bids for its fair share of that funding so we can grow the five regional centres we have announced. What does this mean? We talk about centres and programs and about the investment of millions and millions of dollars in regional and rural communities.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Earlier today the Leader of the Opposition jumped up and read out a list of country towns. He would not know where they are. He is playing politics with regional towns that were affected by floods. He comes to the House and seeks to use regional New South Wales as a political football.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: That is Labor's track record on regional New South Wales. Those opposite do not care about the regions unless there is an election, and then they want to play politics. They should welcome this announcement. This investment by the State Government will give young people an opportunity to receive a tertiary education in regional and rural centres. But what does this mean? [*Extension of time*]

Take the case of Anna Thornton, a mother from Cooma who wanted to get a degree in teaching but was not able to juggle her family commitments with travelling more than 90 minutes to a university probably located somewhere like Canberra. The Country Universities Centre in Cooma provided the workspace and support from 8.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. that allowed participants the freedom to study when time allowed. Mrs Thornton said:

That was such a great help to me because it meant my husband didn't feel he had to take the kids out all the time when I was studying at home. I had somewhere I could go with my coffee and get my work done. Even though I was working on my own stuff, there were other people with whom I could relate.

We are giving opportunities to people in regional areas, whom those opposite take for granted. I will update the House about people such as Naomi McCamish, who said:

The CUC has enabled me to start and finish a pathways program to be eligible for a nursing degree. Being able to move back home and knowing that the support and facilities are here at the CUC is great. To have facilities in Cooma to be able to study and not to have to move away is a huge encouragement for me to begin University study.

Mikayla Apps said:

The CUC has given me continuous support throughout the completion of my first semester of my Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood. The staff are dedicated and passionate about bringing education to the Hilltops region.

Beth Taylor said:

Being able to study by distance allows me to continue with my social and home life. With the support of flexible work and experience at SMGS... The CUC is a quiet space away from the distractions of home where there is always something to do.

This is an investment in our future. I thank Duncan Taylor, Cooma council and the community for driving this innovative idea and pilot. A regional town addressed a local issue at the grassroots level and found a solution that we will roll out across the State for the benefit of regional and rural New South Wales.

NORTH COAST INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (14:57): My question is directed to the Premier. Will she establish an infrastructure fund to help North Coast councils repair roads, bridges and other infrastructure damaged by the floods?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:58): I have an announcement: We have billions and billions and billions in infrastructure funds.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Fairfield has asked his question. He will come to order and listen to the answer.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: That is an interesting question from a group of individuals who left this State with an infrastructure backlog of about \$30 billion. It was extremely remiss of me in my previous two answers not to acknowledge the work of the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight because I note that, within days, assessments were made of the improvements and support that was needed in relation to the road network in that part of New South Wales following the disastrous floods. I assure the community that when we talk about rebuilding and supporting the community, of course that also refers to local infrastructure because it is part of the rebuilding process. Answering this question gives me an opportunity to report that since we have been in government we have had literally billions and billions of dollars to spend on infrastructure—whether on roads,

transport, schools or hospitals. It is good to note that the improvements we have made to regional infrastructure in the Northern Rivers localities provided additional support during this difficult time.

We drove past the new hospital the Government has funded, and it was great to see that facility. We also drove past the ambulance centres that we have upgraded and other local infrastructure that was utilised during the floods. Seeing those vital pieces of infrastructure in operation gives us an enormous sense of pride because we know that, when a community faces challenges, it needs to know that the government since coming to power six years ago has delivered on our infrastructure commitments on an ongoing basis, and will continue to do so. I was going through the commitments of those opposite regarding infrastructure and I noted all the things they have not done.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129, relevance. The Premier is outlining a litany of infrastructure projects that may or may not be delivered, but my question related directly to the North Coast floods and establishment of the fund.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier remains relevant to the question. There is no point of order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Whether it is improving our local road network, upgrading the Pacific Highway or providing access to communities in northern New South Wales, of course the work will continue. This is the only government that has the capacity to do that. It is classic Labor: In government it mismanages the budget, gets the budget into deficit, and has no money.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: We paid down debt. That is what Michael Egan did.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time. She will cease shouting and interjecting.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: I know the facts.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: You make promises.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I place the member for Strathfield on two calls to order. I have ruled that the Premier remains relevant to the question.

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order is not about relevance.

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

Ms Jodi McKay: The Premier should direct her comments through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Classic Labor creates deficits, makes promises, breaks promises, announces projects, cancels projects, rips up contracts and leads us into deficit. This Government was elected on a commitment that we would not only boost the State's infrastructure but also take it to the next level. Whether it is the communities of the Northern Rivers, northern New South Wales or any other part of this State, every community will get its fair share. That is something those opposite could never deliver, but our Government will continue to deliver it.

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:02): My question is addressed to the Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs. How is the New South Wales Government delivering on its election commitment to place 200 veterans in public sector roles by 2019?

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (15:02): I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question. He served his country well as a member of the police force. I note that the new member for Gosford was welcomed to the Chamber today. She quite rightly had her medals with her. I say to her, "Hold tight to them; do not let them near the member for Prospect. Talking about asset grabs, he will grab your assets." I was thrilled to announce that the Veterans Employment Program has achieved two years ahead of schedule its target of employing 200 new veterans by 2019.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: The program's first annual review shows that 310 former Australian Defence Force [ADF] personnel have been employed by the New South Wales Government. This means that the Veterans Employment Program has exceeded its target by 55 per cent. The program is the first of its kind in Australia. It identifies and matches ex-service men and women with government skills that match their military rank and experience. It is also proving extremely valuable in understanding the scope of veteran employment opportunities in the State. The majority of new hires—70 per cent—have been in the justice and transport clusters. However, veterans also have been employed in other areas, highlighting the program's core message that military skills are highly transferable to other roles. I am pleased to inform the House that the Victorian Government has taken our lead and recently announced its own veterans employment program, noting our success in exceeding targets and our commitment to ensuring that veterans receive better support as they transition to civilian life.

We know that stable, meaningful employment is an effective way to combat a host of welfare issues that can affect veterans, and this program will ensure that veterans have the opportunity to make an ongoing contribution to our community. But there is still more work to be done. Approximately 1,300 defence personnel separate from the ADF in New South Wales annually. It is a fact that veterans are almost half as likely to succeed in job applications. The rate of job application success for employment among veterans is only 2.54 per cent, compared with 4.2 per cent for the rest of the non-veteran labour force in New South Wales. So our hard work with this program will go on. We will continue to work with and educate key government sector organisations about what veterans can offer in terms of leadership, discipline and character. We already have had discussions with JP Morgan and Boeing about their similar programs, and I encourage the private sector to embrace this worthy cause.

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: It is a shame that those opposite lack the moral courage and show continued political opportunism when it comes to veterans' issues. It is well known that some members of the New South Wales RSL State Council are being investigated for financial mismanagement. I have called repeatedly for this iconic organisation to be reformed to ensure that it represents the sacrifice of our 100,000 war dead. However, the shadow Minister for Veterans Affairs, Lynda Voltz, attempted to score political points at the expense of soldiers by describing the investigation as only "a State Government asset grab". She did not want us to investigate allegations of corruption, just as those opposite wanted us not to investigate former Labor members Eddie Obeid and Ian Macdonald.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber. The member for The Entrance will come to order.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: The shadow Minister is in conflict with the Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, who last week said on Twitter that he is willing to work with the State Government to reform the RSL—a statement that I welcomed. This is in stark contrast with the Hon. Lynda Voltz, who said that the investigation into the RSL had "little justification". The Opposition says that there is little justification because the RSL is led by President John Haines, a former Labor Lord Mayor of Parramatta. Once again, those opposite want to protect their Labor identities from justice. [*Extension of time*]

I am heartened that the Labor leader has decided to admit that the Government is doing the right thing. On Anzac Day I was privileged to attend the dawn service in Sydney with the Leader of the Opposition. I was struck by the solemn and respectful mood of those who gathered in the pre-dawn darkness to pay their respects at the Cenotaph in Martin Place.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am surprised that members are interjecting during an answer on this subject.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: To me, this illustrates how the New South Wales community is commemorating the Centenary of Anzac. I look forward to more veterans being deployed in our public service agencies. Lest we forget.

NORTH COAST FLOODS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (15:08): My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Government provide targeted industry assistance to help flood-damaged small, medium and large businesses, including primary producers, to cover cash flow shortfalls due to stock losses and damaged equipment as well as undertake rebuilding?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:08): I am pretty sure I covered this topic in my answers to the first three questions: It is a big tick, tick, tick to all the issues raised. As I am on my feet, I reiterate that we will continue to offer support in every which way we can to ensure the ongoing rebuilding process and to ensure the integrity of those communities into the future. Our response to those tragic flood events

was quick. We still have a sense of urgency and we will continue to do more. While we have done so much to improve the lives of the people of New South Wales, I cannot say the same for the integrity of the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was not about the integrity of anyone, it was about cash flow, particularly to small businesses and equipment.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The question goes to the integrity of our Government in delivering for the people of New South Wales. It was not until I highlighted, when the House last sat, that the Leader of the Opposition had not provided his diary return for seven months that he actually did it. Now I have an update.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129. The Premier was asked a question directly about farmers, primary producers, and what support they would be given by this Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I will hear further from the Premier.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What I am about to say goes to the heart of whether someone can be trusted on his word.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has demonstrated how her answer is relevant to the question. If the member's point of order is about relevance, I will not hear it because it is argument.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. If the Premier wants to have a go at the Leader of the Opposition, she can do it by way of substantive motion. Small businesses in that area need to know.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Trust and integrity are very important. The Leader of the Opposition had not filled out his diary for seven months. He then scrambled, after I raised it in the House, and said he would make sure that he did it every two months.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Guess what? He has refused to disclose his diary and 30 April has come and gone.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Maitland to order for the second time. The member will cease shouting.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129. I would think the far North Coast members of Parliament would appreciate an answer to this question.

The SPEAKER: Order! I already have ruled on the point of order. It is not a matter for debate. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Firstly, the Leader of the Opposition fails to disclose for seven months until we alert him to that fact. Secondly, he scrambles. Thirdly, he is obligated to do so on 30 April yet he still has not disclosed his two-month diary.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: The Premier is being argumentative.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maitland must identify the standing order that has been breached.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: It is Standing Order 71.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maitland will resume her seat. There is no point of order. I call the member for Maitland to order for the third time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This is for the benefit of members who may not have heard the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. He said, "Well, that deadline was only 36 hours ago."

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Clerk to stop the clock. The last three points of order were ruled out of order. If Opposition members continue to take points of order to erode the Premier's time, I will continue to order the clock to be stopped. Does the member for Strathfield have a different point of order?

Ms Jodi McKay: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Premier's answer is completely irrelevant. It is not about the North Coast floods, which is what the question is about.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier demonstrated how her answer is relevant to the question but Opposition members were not listening.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I say to the people of New South Wales: How can you trust someone who breaks promises in Opposition? If those opposite were ever to govern, the people would know they cannot trust that man to deliver on his promises. In contrast, we will continue to deliver for the great people of New South Wales. We will continue to ensure that we disclose all requirements, as the public expects us to. We call on the Leader of the Opposition to maintain what he said he would do and disclose his diary. What does he have to hide?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

NSW POLICE FORCE RESOURCES

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (15:14): My question is addressed to the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services. Minister, how is the New South Wales Government ensuring that the next generation of police officers has the support it needs to keep our communities safe?

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (15:14): I thank the member for Coogee for his question and his strong support of police in his local area. Eleven new probationary constables arrived in his command from last Friday's attestation parade. They are part of the 178 officers who joined the ranks, and it was my privilege to be with them on their special day. It was heartwarming to see. The Eastern Beaches Local Area Command is blessed to receive such quality officers. I know the member for Maroubra will be looking forward to meeting probably the highest profile graduate from the parade, that is, Probationary Constable John Mamacann, who joined the ranks at 62 years of age and fulfilled his lifelong dream of being an officer of the Police Force.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time. He is not listening to the answer. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the second time.

Mr TROY GRANT: When Constable Mamacann first tried to join the Police Force 40 years ago, there were height restrictions and he was told he was too short. His life experience will be an invaluable asset not only to his local area command but also to the colleagues he will join on the front line. As a Parliament, we wish each of the new probationary constables from class 330 the very best as they enter a changing environment for police. The challenges are becoming more complex and the tasks we give our police officers are becoming more difficult. We have 16,795 sworn officers, 3,937 of whom have passed through the police academy since 2011—despite the lowest attrition rates in the NSW Police Force's history. We are well on our way to fulfilling our 2011 and 2015 commitments to increase the number of police officers.

Police officers see the worst of humanity day in, day out, and this can take its toll. The Government is not just about better resourcing of our police with cars, equipment and appointments, but is looking after their wellbeing. What they see day in, day out can be extraordinarily confronting. The Government is very pleased to invest \$17.1 million into a wellbeing project to ensure that everything is being done to support our officers and the police family, the loved ones who support them and who help to give our police a greater level of resilience and keep doing their job. Policing can take a toll on a police officer and on an officer's family. This has led to the Government looking at initiatives, and discussions were commenced by former police Minister Ayres regarding the establishment of the Backup for Life program. I acknowledge the Minister's contribution.

The Government invested start-up money of \$1 million so that the organisation had the resources to reach out and support officers and family members. It helps officers who are still members of the Police Force or those who have left and need to obtain gainful employment. Funding of \$2 million will be allocated to establish a new program to provide much-needed support in relation to mental health as well as the physical impact on police officers throughout their service. The resourcing of the Police Force as it changes in order to tackle the different policing challenges is now being addressed in a re-engineering process. This concept was developed by the Government and it has been adopted by the new commissioner and his executive. The three new deputy commissioners who will soon join the executive will go out to the community to get feedback about what the Police Force of the future should look like to reflect the communities it serves. The arrival of six new constables

at Fairfield reflects that the policing demands in that area are very different from those in the Northern Rivers area. [*Extension of time*]

The policing challenges in the eastern suburbs—including in the electorate of Coogee—are vastly different from those in Dubbo, Broken Hill or Moree. This is a unique opportunity to ensure that resources not only are going where they are needed across New South Wales but also will not look the same, given the different challenges each area faces. This is about what police officers do when they work with their community. This Government has proudly delivered record budgets for the Police Force, and another record amount of funding will be delivered in the forthcoming budget. I encourage all members to engage with their local area command and to take note of what their communities are telling them. They may require different policing models to deliver services to their aged, Indigenous, youth and multicultural communities and to deal with different issues, including density and crime types or groups.

The Government wants to give the Police Force the capacity to do what needs to be done. That is not only about providing cars and other equipment but also about implementing the appropriate structures, legislation and policy. This Government has an extraordinarily proud record of delivering those elements to ensure that our police officers are working in a safe environment while they enforce the laws of this State as effectively as possible. When each probationary constable takes their oath of office or makes an affirmation, I tell them that the Government will continue to resource them appropriately because they have a massive job to do in keeping New South Wales safe and secure.

LISMORE AND MURWILLUMBAH LEVEES

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:21): I direct my question to the Premier. Will the Premier conduct an independent inquiry to hear from local governments and emergency workers to determine whether the Lismore and Murwillumbah levees should be raised or relocated?

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Fairfield to repeat the question. I had trouble hearing it. Government members will cease interjecting.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: Will the Premier conduct an independent inquiry to hear from local governments, emergency workers and the community to determine whether the Lismore and Murwillumbah levees should be raised or relocated?

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. The member for Macquarie Fields will cease interjecting.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:23): There are a few ways in which to respond to the member's question. The member for Lismore will correct me if I am wrong, but I understand that the Labor mayor has refused to have the wall raised.

Mr Thomas George: That is correct.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Labor mayor has said that he does not want the bank raised. I do not know whether members opposite have worked this out. The member's question certainly demonstrates that they do not understand rural and regional New South Wales. Issues like this are highly complex and people in the community have different responses and views. This is an ongoing issue because when we create, raise or reduce a levee bank, that has consequences for water flow in other parts of the town. I assure everyone in the community that the Government of course takes that on board. That is why I was careful in my responses to the first four questions asked by members opposite today, and particularly the first three.

I said that in addition to rebuilding those communities and providing all the support they need, the Government would consider risk mitigation measures. That means all risk mitigation measures. The Government will consider anything it can do to support and to protect those communities in the future. Members opposite obviously have not been visiting or listening to rural and regional communities. If they had been, they would not ask a question like that. They do not even know what their Labor mayor has said about this issue. Given that, how could they know what anyone else in the community thinks?

Mr Thomas George: I want to know how he intends to relocate it.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The member for Lismore should have asked that question of members opposite. I am relieved that at last members opposite have asked some policy questions. Unfortunately, they demonstrate that they do not understand the complex issues impacting rural and regional New South Wales. They do not have the wherewithal to deal with them and they certainly do not have the capacity to deliver the resources on the ground, which is what this Government is doing. I conclude by repeating what I said earlier:

the Government made a commitment when I became Premier that it would ensure every community received its fair share of services and infrastructure, and that is exactly what will happen.

SCHOOLS FUNDING

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:26): I address my question to the Minister for Education.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. I need to hear the question. Government members will come to order.

Mr MARK COURE: How is the Government delivering new classrooms across New South Wales?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (15:26): I thank the member for Oatley for his question. He has been a passionate and consistent supporter of public schools in his electorate. He demonstrates how consistent and persistent advocacy can result in great outcomes; that is, unprecedented investment in schools to support the great work being done by our teachers and the great learning outcomes being experienced by students and their families. This Government has a focus on delivering infrastructure across the State. As the Premier said earlier, record funding of \$390 million has been set aside for school maintenance over the next two years. She went on to say that funds will be allocated to schools across New South Wales based on need to ensure that every community gets its fair share to address the maintenance challenges facing their schools. This Government has a plan for the future of infrastructure in education and it will ensure that our children have the best possible learning environments.

Yesterday I had the great pleasure of joining the Premier and the Minister for Women, the member for Mulgoa, in opening the new \$17 million Fernhill School at Glenmore Park, which will cater for a special group of students and their parents. We had the opportunity to meet the principal, Julie Raciborska, and her team, who are doing an amazing job building the school as part of a new community. William, the school leader, gave a passionate and eloquent speech welcoming us to their fabulous learning environment. It was wonderful to meet students at the nearby Glenmore Park High School, who have been supporting the Fernhill School from its beginning. Ellie, a year 12 student at Glenmore Park High School, was responsible for designing the logo for the Fernhill School, which represents a beautiful connection between the two schools.

This very special school presently accommodates 47 students and can cater for the needs of up to 120 students with a range of disabilities from kindergarten to year 12. The school will support them to achieve excellence in their own lives and ensure that they are equipped to make a difference in our community. I am glad to be part of delivering this exciting new school. All schools, particularly schools like Fernhill, are about fostering great supportive relationships between teachers, students, their families and the local community. We are shaping the built environment of our schools to support the best possible teaching and learning outcomes. A host of research illustrates the connection between learning spaces and learning outcomes. As pointed out by Jill Blackmore from the Deakin University, recent literature shows that by effectively designing schools and classrooms to accommodate new learning techniques we can assist the best possible teaching learning outcomes in those spaces.

This Government has provided more than \$1 billion directly to schools or through specialist programs and services to assist students with disability or special needs in either regular or support classes. In 2017 an extra 124 specialist support classes were established in New South Wales public schools to cater for an additional 850 school students. Our assets register details about \$25 billion worth of assets across 2,200 schools in New South Wales. It is an ongoing challenge to meet the school infrastructure and maintenance needs, and the additional almost 20 per cent funding, which was announced this morning, will go a long way to help schools across the breadth of New South Wales. It is a significant challenge to address the projected more than 20 per cent enrolment in public schools in the next 15 years. That is why this Government established a new specialist unit, Education Infrastructure NSW—to ensure that we have the expertise to consult directly with communities in designing schools to get the possible outcomes for our students.

Documents

OMBUDSMAN

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 31AA of the Ombudsman Act 1974, I announce the receipt of the report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled, "Asbestos: How NSW government agencies deal with the problem", dated April 2017, received out of session on 19 April 2017 and ordered to be printed.

AUDITOR-GENERAL**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce the receipt of the following Performance Audit Reports of the Auditor-General:

- (1) "Passenger rail punctuality: Transport for NSW, Sydney Trains, NSW Trains", dated April 2017, received out of session on 11 April 2017 and authorised to be printed
- (2) "Contingent workforce: procurement and management: Department of Education, Transport for NSW, Department of Industry", dated April 2017, received out of session on 27 April 2017 and authorised to be printed

*Committees***PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (PAC)****Government Response: Management of NSW Public Housing Maintenance Contracts**

The CLERK: I announce the receipt of the Government's response to report No. 3/56 of the Public Accounts Committee, entitled "Management of NSW Public Housing Maintenance Contracts", received out of session on 13 April 2017 and authorised to be printed.

*Documents***OMBUDSMAN****Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 49 of the Surveillance Devices Act 2007, I announce the receipt of the report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled, "Report under Section 49 (1) of the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 for the period ending 31 December 2016", dated March 2017, received out of session on 18 April 2017 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE****Government Response: Workplace arrangements in the Point to Point Transport Industry**

The CLERK: I announce the receipt of the Government's response to report No. 1/56 of the Committee on Transport and Infrastructure, entitled "Workplace arrangements in the Point to Point Transport Industry", received out of session on 19 April 2017 and authorised to be printed.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING**Government Response: Adequacy of the regulation of short-term holiday letting in New South Wales**

The CLERK: I announce the receipt of the Government's response to report No. 1/56 of the Committee on Environment and Planning, entitled "Adequacy of the regulation of short-term holiday letting in New South Wales", received out of session on 19 April 2017 and authorised to be printed.

*Documents***OFFICE OF TRANSPORT SAFETY INVESTIGATIONS****Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 46D of the Passenger Transport Act 1990, I announce the receipt of the Office of Transport Safety Investigations report entitled, "Rail Safety Report, Main Line Rail Defect, Boronia No. 3 Tunnel, 10 October 2014", received out of session on 20 April 2017 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE****Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 35/56**

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSON: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled, "Legislation Review Digest No. 35/56", dated 2 May 2017. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: I also table the minutes of the committee meeting regarding Legislation Review Digest No. 34/56, dated 4 April 2017.

Business of the House

INAUGURAL SPEECH

Order of Business

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (15:34): I move:

That the business before the House be interrupted on Wednesday 3 May 2017 at 5.20 p.m. to permit the presentation of an inaugural speech by the member for Manly.

Motion agreed to.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

Pet Shops

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

Powerhouse Museum Ultimo

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

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**.

Mount Terry Public School

Petition requesting funding for the installation of a covered outdoor learning area in Mount Terry Public School, received from **Mr Gareth Ward**.

Privacy Laws

Petition requesting an amendment to the State's privacy laws to ensure that local councils can capture footage from CCTV cameras including areas that may be on private land, received from **Mrs Shelley Hancock**.

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**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The CLERK: I announce that the following Minister has lodged a response to a petition signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Rob Stokes—Safe Schools Program—lodged 5 April 2017 (Mr Damien Tudehope)

*Business of the House***BUSINESS LAPSED**

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that, in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3), General Business Orders of the Day (for Bills), No. 1, Suitors' Fund Amendment (Costs of NCAT Appeals) Bill; No. 2, Greyhound Racing (Repeal of Ban) Bill; and No. 3, Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Disclosure of Information) Bill; and General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) Nos 1435 to 1466, 1468 to 1519 and 1521 to 1538 have lapsed.

*Motions Accorded Priority***SCHOOL FUNDING****Consideration**

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI (Murray) (15:36): The reforms that were introduced last year in relation to the Higher School Certificate are about driving improvement in student performance. They are about setting standards and high expectations for students. I hear Opposition members say it is adding to students' stress, and I will return to that. This Government has been unapologetic about investing in schools—government, Catholic and independent—and giving them the necessary resources, as well as giving principals, in particular, decision-making powers about how they spend the money. At the same time, we are saying to students that we expect from them a great performance and effort in their schoolwork. We see that from year 12 students when they work towards achieving the target of a Higher School Certificate, which is a milestone in their education. That is why this Government has introduced the requirement for students to achieve the equivalent of at least three band 8s in year 9. My motion should be accorded priority because the Opposition has been saying that this policy—a policy that encourages students to improve their National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numbers [NAPLAN] result—is a terrible policy.

Mr Gareth Ward: They don't have any policies.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: No, they don't have any policies. They have been playing catch-up in education for six years. In no way should this Parliament confuse lethargy with strategy. It is simply lethargy on the part of the Opposition that it has been playing catch-up for such a long time. The Opposition spokesman is on Twitter and elsewhere saying that the reforms will add to students' stress and cause difficulties. I have no doubt that from the NAPLAN test, which is to be held in the next couple of weeks, we will see a significant bump in performance, particularly in year 9. I know that the new Minister for Education, who has had responsibility for that portfolio for 10 weeks, will take total credit for that bump in the NAPLAN performance—as he should, because he has done a great job in 10 weeks.

This is what Liberal-Nationals governments do: we set high standards and we tell people, ourselves included, what we expect from them. All Ministers are set expectations about their budget and they meet them. It is a key performance indicator of their job as a Minister. We say to schools that we will give them the resources but we trust them to spend them properly. We say to students that we are giving them this great opportunity in our great schools to perform well and we tell them what we expect from them. My motion should be accorded priority because I do not want members of the Opposition going to schools muddying the waters and upsetting students about something that should not concern them. The Opposition should see this reform as a great opportunity and support it.

BEREJKLIAN GOVERNMENT**Consideration**

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (15:39): My motion should be accorded priority because today should be a happy day. It is 100 days today since the member for Willoughby became the Premier of New South Wales. It has become part of the political landscape all over the world for people to create some fanfare on 100 days of their taking office. Mike did it, Barry did it and Donald Trump is in the middle of doing it, but we have heard nothing from this Government today; there has been complete and utter silence. I think the lack of fanfare and celebration from the Government today on this seemingly important issue reflects the premiership that Gladys Berejiklian has brought to New South Wales—no new vision, no new narrative and no stamp of new authority on a government that is slowly and surely failing.

I ran into a reporter today who said, "Don't you think it is simply a case of the Premier being modest?", and I said, "Well, when it comes to the development and promulgation of new and strategic policies, this Premier has more than most to be modest about." I also said that nobody should be under any illusion that this Premier does not hold strong convictions and beliefs and has a strategic policy direction, it is just that none of it is new.

It is all of the policies that she worked on and inherited from Mike Baird that led him to becoming—in an instant—one of the most unpopular political figures in Australia and which ultimately saw him flee as Premier of New South Wales.

Unless this Premier changes in the next two years, privatisations and sales will continue, such as the sale of electricity assets and the privatisation of Land and Property Information, which is one of the most hated sales in the history of New South Wales. The sale of public land and real estate assets, mostly to foreign interests, will continue apace. There will be no turning back on the hated forced council mergers despite the fact that 16 councils are in court as we speak. The arrogance towards the community on major projects, the war on trees, the fake consultation and the compulsory acquisitions will continue. Those opposite can laugh, but they will not be laughing in 2019. The cuts to health, education and the Kennettisation of the TAFE system are policies that led to this Government copping an absolute drubbing in the last four by-elections, and this Premier has the hide and arrogance to call them "great results". Well, get used to it, because we are going to inflict a hell of a lot more "great results" on those opposite in the next two years.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion of the member for Murray be accorded priority.

The House divided.

Ayes49
Noes39
Majority..... 10

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Fraser, Mr A
Grant, Mr T
Henskens, Mr A
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Griffin, Mr J
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M
Piccoli, Mr A
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Davies, Ms T
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Hazzard, Mr B
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Dib, Mr J
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Piper, Mr G
Smith, Ms T F
Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Donato, Mr P
Foley, Mr L
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Park, Mr R
Robertson, Mr J
Tesch, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Daley, Mr M
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Parker, Mr J
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

Motion agreed to.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I welcome to the Speaker's gallery this afternoon Tahlia Zangari, daughter of the member for Fairfield and guest of the member for Fairfield.

*Bills***TATTOO PARLOURS AMENDMENT BILL 2017****Returned**

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

*Motions Accorded Priority***SCHOOLS FUNDING****Priority**

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI (Murray) (15:49): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Supports the changes the Government has made to the Higher School Certificate, particularly the new requirement for students to achieve the equivalent of at least three band 8s in Year 9 NAPLAN in order to receive a Higher School Certificate.
- (2) Notes that the updated Higher School Certificate will ensure students are well prepared for the demands of a changing workforce.

In New South Wales and in other parts of Australia, student performance improves up to years 6 and 7, there is a dip in years 8, 9 and 10, and an improved performance in years 11 and 12. That is partly because students start to take high school much more seriously as they approach the Higher School Certificate [HSC]. That is only natural because they face a high-stakes test in year 12. Coincidentally, the PISA—Programme for International Student Assessment—test for 15-year-olds in about year 9 is where we see that dip in performance in New South Wales.

The Government looked very hard at why there was such a dip to discover what we could do about it. The Government looked at Western Australia, amongst other jurisdictions. Western Australia has adopted the approach of requiring year 9 students, at the first opportunity, to meet the equivalent of three band 5s in the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN]. If students do not meet the three-band requirement they have multiple opportunities in years 10, 11 and 12—and even after year 12—to re-sit an online test, which is the equivalent of a band 8 in NAPLAN, in order to pre-qualify for the HSC. If a student passes two out of the three subjects, the student only has to re-sit one test. So, if the student passes the comprehension and reading tests but does not pass the numeracy test, he or she only has to re-sit the numeracy test.

This motion is about making sure that students have the appropriate literacy and numeracy skills in middle high school to better prepare them for years 11 and 12. I often get asked about the issue of stress. People say that this causes extra stress for students in year 9. I know there are lots of things happening in students' lives during high school—not only in school. There are also social and emotional changes occurring in students' lives. One of the problems is that students do not take high school seriously enough until years 11 and 12. Students, teachers and others have asked me about this and I have told them that if students do not have the fundamental literacy and numeracy skills by the time they reach year 11, it is a bit too late. Part of the stress that the HSC causes is a result of a lack of preparation. If students do not know how to spell, to construct a sentence, or to write an essay, and if they do not know fundamental mathematics by the time they reach year 11, they will be playing catch-up until their exams in year 12. We want to see students reach a better level by the time they are in year 9.

Yes, it is a stretch. Many students will not achieve the three band 5 requirements in year 9, but we do not set easy targets. Not all of the students will make it because it is difficult. Students will have to do more, and they are already doing more. Lots of high schools have had another look at the year 7 NAPLAN results. I have a very comfortable life on the backbench, but I wanted to move this motion to improve educational standards in Australia. To do that we must set the bar a bit higher. We cannot say, "Just turn up to school. Do what you like. Leave it all to years 11 and 12." That is the Labor approach to everything—just let it go; drop the standards. Labor members do not worry about it; they lower the bar.

We are setting stretched standards. My kids are still in primary school, but they will have to meet this standard in year 9. It probably will be difficult but, as a parent, I will be telling my children that they will have to try a bit harder because they will need to meet this standard—I know that is already happening for students in

year 9 and year 8 this year. They will need to be able to construct a sentence and to write a paragraph and an essay in year 9. They cannot leave this to years 11 or 12, because that will result in more stress. I am asked about the extra money. This Government spends \$4 billion a year teaching the fundamentals. This is exactly what schools should be doing, and it is exactly what they will be doing.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (15:55): School students are not doing the work they are meant to be doing now; instead, they are planning for a test. Raising the standards will do nothing to improve educational standards, and the member for Murray knows that. This policy will draw an arbitrary line which will mean that some kids will pass and some kids will fail. We cannot raise educational standards by drawing arbitrary lines. We raise educational standards by making sure that we give every possible support to students and teachers.

The former Minister for Education spoke about being able to write essays. There are no essays in NAPLAN—National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy. This is only telling kids that they have to learn for a test; it does not encourage them think for themselves. The policy will result in schools across the State focusing on one thing. I want to talk about the ridiculousness of it. I wholeheartedly agree that educational excellence is the most important thing. I will always stand for that, but they do not achieve improved educational standards by drawing arbitrary lines and saying, "This will be the new standard."

Last year the Minister for Education decided to set the standard at band 8. Let us talk about band 8. Sixty-five per cent of students did not meet band 8 requirements last year in NAPLAN in the numeracy section. More than 50 per cent of students across the State did not meet one of the band 8 requirements. The former Minister says that he will set the line at band 8 because it will make students work a bit harder. It is a bit more than that. It is disappointing that the member for Murray still believes that this policy is on the right track. It is not. The present Minister for Education is not in the Chamber because he knows that the former Minister gave him a hospital pass. The present Minister has to try to clean up his mess. This policy is no more than a hospital pass.

The former Minister may be cynical about us saying that this will cause more stress to kids. It is causing stress to kids. It is causing major problems in schools and major problems for parents. The member would have seen the petition from parents who are trying to stop this policy because they are dealing with the problems at the coalface every day with their children. It is all well and good to say, "We are going to raise the standards," but we do not achieve that by setting the level at band 8. During the budget estimates hearings, the former Minister said that this is not a pass or fail situation—it is a pass or fail. The member should watch what happens when the results come out. He will not be able to tell me there are no league tables and that communities have not suffered as a result. He is setting up schools and students to fail. He will not listen and change his mind. I only hope that the Minister for Education, who is not in this Chamber, will listen, because this policy is poorly thought out. It will not work; it will damage kids.

The Opposition wants to talk about kids, educational excellence and raising standards. A number of members on both sides of the House have been teachers. They will say that if we want to raise educational standards it will be done through preparation, planning and the way materials are presented. Teachers cannot do that simply by saying, "Here is the cut-off mark." I said that this policy is ridiculous, and it gets more so. If a student does not pass band 8 in NAPLAN, he or she is told, "Do not worry, you can sit a catch-up test." The catch-up test is set at the band 6 level. In other words, if a student fails, he or she does the national standard level 3, which is a band 6 level. In other words, the Government will see a student fail then will give them a pass—if their spirit is not broken. The Government will then say that they are doing well. This policy is about trying to keep up with Western Australia. The New South Wales education system needs to look at what works in New South Wales.

The policy gets even more ridiculous. Students can still sit the Higher School Certificate. Unfortunately, the head of NSW Education Standards Authority [NESA] was wheeled out to try to make this policy sound a lot better. I appreciate the member for Murray following me on Twitter. Maybe he could like or retweet some things. I say some decent things, even about him.

Ms Trish Doyle: I do.

Mr JIHAD DIB: Thank you. He said, "No, it's not true. You can sit your HSC." Yes, they can; but they will not be awarded it. This is where it gets really stupid. The University Admissions Centre [UAC] said, "You don't even need the HSC; you can get an ATAR." In other words, a student cannot get their HSC because they did not get a band 8 in year 9, and they then go down to a band 6. Even if they do not get their HSC, the University Admissions Centre is saying, "We will give you an ATAR because we know what you can do in your HSC." Universities will make that decision. I ask the Minister for Education—who is not here—to abandon this policy because it is the wrong policy. There is no educational reason for it. Educational standards are not lifted by drawing arbitrary lines.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (16:00): The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that the Higher School Certificate [HSC] remains a world-class credential. The HSC was last reviewed 18 years ago, before the advent of smartphone technology and the portable, instant internet access we now take for granted. In that time technology has advanced, national priorities have changed, workplace and employer expectations have shifted, and more complex and sophisticated skills are now required for the future workforce of New South Wales. All these factors affect the social, economic and education environment of this State.

The currency, reliability, integrity and international standing of the HSC must be maintained. It must remain relevant and prepare students to meet emerging workplace and societal demands. Syllabus content and assessment methods should be contemporary, adopt information technologies, and establish stronger expectations for literacy and numeracy skills. A minimum standard of literacy and numeracy will be set at a level required for work, continued study and life after school. This will give students the essential skills for their daily lives, expand their career options and give employers confidence in their capabilities. Syllabuses will place more emphasis on depth of learning and analytical skills, providing students with a foundation of knowledge and skills to be applied after school in further studies and the workplace. Streamlining assessment will reduce excessive stress, and give students greater scope to demonstrate what they know.

Literacy and numeracy are indispensable for functioning effectively in society. The best indicator of success in life after school—including in employment, higher salaries and good health—is a student's literacy and numeracy skills. Students will have to meet a minimum standard in literacy and numeracy for the HSC from 2020. This is part of a broader New South Wales Government strategy to support vulnerable citizens to succeed in life and work. The minimum standard complements a new cross-sectoral, statewide strategy to boost literacy and numeracy. Students will have multiple opportunities to meet the literacy and numeracy standard, which is set at level 3 of the Australian Core Skills Framework. The first opportunity is year 9 National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy. This will act as an early warning system to give students, parents, teachers and schools time to improve literacy and numeracy skills well before the HSC. Already some students are below the national minimum standard for reading and numeracy. Those students are at risk of not attaining the skills they need in life unless they receive targeted intervention and support. [*Time expired.*]

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:03): The Labor Party firmly believes that an excellent education system provides young people with the best opportunities to succeed beyond school, but we do not support this Government's changes to linking year 9 National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN] tests with receipt of the Higher School Certificate [HSC]. This is a hurried and poorly planned policy. There seems to have been very little consultation with teachers and educational specialists. I am told that there are absolutely no resources to support students in meeting these new benchmarks. At face value, this initiative does little more than put increased pressure on 14-year-old students, their families and their schools to reach unrealistic benchmarks.

All qualified educational research points to the fact that academic improvement will be achieved only when considered within a holistic educational context, rather than a literacy or numeracy benchmark. We need to look at the whole student. We need to support the parents who are supporting their children through school and we need to support the teachers. I say to Mr Piccoli, "When was the last time you spent a day in the classroom supporting children who are feeling anxious?" Mr Piccoli and the current Minister pop into schools, have photos taken, shake some hands and everyone stands there nervously until they are gone. But do they know what it is like to be in the classroom? I remember very clearly being in the classroom more than 25 years ago, and the pressure has increased since then. Parents and teachers are telling me they are anxious as a result of these proposed changes, which are absolutely ludicrous. A concerned father, Russell, wrote to me:

These decisions seem to have been made by someone out there without consulting with parents, without consulting with the schools and the amount of kids who are going to get to year 9 and fail this process and then give up will be huge. Many kids, like mine, from low socio-economic backgrounds struggle as it is. What the hell have you done? Who is going to pay the extra money for my kid to meet this benchmark?

Angry mum, Susan, says:

My daughter is so upset, she came home telling me if she didn't get three band 8s or 9s in NAPLAN, she wouldn't get her HSC. She considers herself a failure already.

These tests were always meant for diagnostic purposes only. They have progressively been used to punish schools and teachers since their inception. It is time that we stood back and listened to the community, because it is bad policy.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI (Murray) (16:06): In reply: If people have an issue with National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN] standardised testing, then they should take it up with Julia Gillard and Verity Firth, who were the relevant ministers at the time who introduced it. That debate is well and truly over,

but it is true, all of those things are important to improving educational performance and supporting students. The other thing is setting high expectations for students.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Blue Mountains will come to order. She has made her contribution to the debate.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: Everybody in Australia says we need to improve the performance of students in this country, and we are doing that by making these kinds of changes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Murray will be heard in silence.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: There was a lot of consultation about it. This is the fifth year it has been operating in Western Australia. It has been around for a long time. Where is the extra money to come from? This is literacy and numeracy. We are not asking questions about the cause of World War I. Literacy and numeracy are the fundamental basics that schools are meant to deliver. That is why we spent \$12 billion. When schools say, "Where is the extra money to do this?", I say, "This is literacy and numeracy. We are not asking the school to teach racquet ball for sport. We are asking the school to deliver on literacy and numeracy." When a child does year 5 NAPLAN, the top band is band 8. Are members opposite telling me it is unreasonable to expect a student in year 9 to get a band 8, which is the equivalent to the top band in year 5?

Mr Jihad Dib: You know if a student gets a band 8 in year 7 NAPLAN, it will not count; it has got to be in a year 9 NAPLAN. In other words, they get it and then it does not count.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Lakemba will come to order.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: NAPLAN is on a common 10 band scale, so a band 8 in year 5 is the same as a band 8 in year 9. Members opposite are saying that the standard is too high and that it will cause stress. Parents have raised the same concerns with me. I have told them that if students do not achieve that level—being the top level in year 5, which is the second last year of primary school—then we have a problem with our expectations of students in New South Wales.

Mr Jihad Dib: I think that we have raised expectations, but not that way.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: We know not every student will meet that standard.

Mr Jihad Dib: How many kids in Broken Hill will pass?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: Schools have things in place to deal with students not achieving the standard. Even by the time they get to year 12, not all students will have achieved the standard.

Mr Jihad Dib: How many kids at Wade High will pass?

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: We could say that the important thing in high schools is the vibe. I am sorry, but that is not good enough. If we want to set standards to reach a high level of education in Australia then we have to make some tough decisions.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lakemba will come to order. He has made his contribution to the debate.

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI: These are the kinds of tough decisions that we made as a government.

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

The House divided.

Ayes49
Noes38
Majority.....11

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Davies, Ms T
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M

Aplin, Mr G
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P

Ayres, Mr S
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Donato, Mr P
Fraser, Mr A
Grant, Mr T

AYES

Griffin, Mr J
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

Hazzard, Mr B
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M
Piccoli, Mr A
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

Henskens, Mr A
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Dib, Mr J
Greenwich, Mr A
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Park, Mr R
Robertson, Mr J
Tesch, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McDermott, Dr H
Mihailuk, Ms T
Parker, Mr J
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Piper, Mr G
Smith, Ms T F
Washington, Ms K

PAIRS

Berejiklian, Ms G

Foley, Mr L

Motion agreed to.

Bills

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (CLOSURE OF RAILWAY LINE BETWEEN ROSEWOOD AND TUMBARUMBA) BILL 2017

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Andrew Constance, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (16:18): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I introduce the Transport Administration Amendment (Closure of Railway Line Between Rosewood and Tumbarumba) Bill 2017 with a very clear intent in mind—that is, to drive tourism opportunities in the electorate of the member for Albury. I note that the member is in the Chamber, and I acknowledge his ongoing efforts on behalf of his electorate. I particularly acknowledge that the good member has worked tirelessly on this issue to secure funding so the project can commence. The purpose of this bill is clear: It is to close the non-operational railway line between Rosewood and Tumbarumba to progress the development of a rail trail along the corridor.

Rail trails are an innovative use of disused rail lines that can generate substantial economic and social benefits for local communities, helping to unlock their potential, including through stimulating tourism and improving the physical and mental health of users. This legislation establishes the first rail trail in New South Wales, which makes it historic. I draw to the attention of the House that most States already have rail trails in

their jurisdictions—some having multiple rail trails already established, with more than 25 active trails in Victoria alone.

A 2009 study of the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail in northern Victoria revealed that cycle tourists visiting the trail spent on average \$244 per day each at local businesses. I know of and can understand some apprehension in parts of the State about these types of tourism projects, but the good thing about this is that the project is backed by the member for Albury on behalf of his constituents. It is interesting that the member for Blacktown is in the Chamber, because when he was transport Minister he did not do much at all. I note that he is sitting on the sidelines now. Section 99A of the Transport Administration Act 1988 provides that a rail infrastructure owner may close a railway line outside the greater metropolitan region only after it is authorised by an Act of Parliament. Closure includes the removal of the tracks, which is a fundamental requirement to enable the repurposing of the corridor for pedestrians and cyclists.

Accordingly, the Transport Administration Amendment (Closure of Railway Line Between Rosewood and Tumbarumba) Bill 2017 seeks to authorise the closure of the non-operational line between McEachern Lane, Rosewood, and Albury Street, Tumbarumba—a distance of approximately 22 kilometres. As members may be aware, the Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail project was announced by the Government in June 2015 as a pilot rail trail with the provision of a \$4.8 million grant allocation from the Restart NSW—Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund. I add for the benefit of the House that the member for Albury led the charge in securing those funds. I also add that the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund was opposed by members opposite—the Labor Party and The Greens—because, in essence, the fund was established as a result of recycling capital from our existing asset base, be it through the port transactions or the poles and wires transactions.

That type of investment now enables us to drive good, regional tourism-based projects, whether a rail trail or an upgrade of an original airport. That is what this fund was established to do. It is why this investment has been so good for Albury and has enabled the progress of the project in advance of this legislation coming before the House. The rail line between Tumbarumba and Rosewood has not been in operation since 1974 and is ideal for renewal as a vibrant, new tourism attraction building on the significant natural beauty of the region. It is an incredible region. The Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail Pilot Steering Committee has been established and is chaired by Snowy Valleys Council—I thank it for its work—and local community engagement with the proposal has been very strong. The State is represented on the committee, which includes the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Infrastructure NSW, Transport for NSW, the Department of Industry—Lands, the Department of Primary Industries, and Destination NSW.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the local community. It must be acknowledged that certain individual landholders have not been as keen on this project as others, but the overall view is that this sort rail trail will benefit the whole community. The steering committee has helped to ensure good progress in the planning and consultation stages of the project. However, formal closure of the railway line is required to progress the development of the rail trail further. The Government has developed an innovative model that allows access by the public to the former rail corridor while maintaining public ownership. Transport for NSW is working with the Department of Industry—Lands to determine appropriate land transfer arrangements. It is anticipated that the corridor will be declared a Crown reserve for which Snowy Valleys Council will then be appointed trustee.

Current and forecast rail passenger and freight patterns suggest it is unlikely that the Tumbarumba to Rosewood railway line will ever be required for future rail services. However, the arrangements will ensure that the corridor can be resumed by Transport for NSW for operational purposes if the need arises. While the Tumbarumba to Rosewood project has enjoyed considerable community support, I also understand the concerns of impacted landholders regarding biosecurity, privacy and public liability. I note key feedback from landholders regarding the security of barn equipment, sheds and the like. Snowy Valleys Council and local landholders have held a number of public forums and meetings, and in early 2015 the member for Albury met with local residents. I thank the member for that engagement and for his continued advocacy to achieve this outcome for his community.

There has also been engagement with the NSW Farmers Association, which represents the interests of landholders along the proposed route. More recently, Murray Local Land Services completed a detailed strategic risk assessment. The risks of greatest concern detailed in the strategic risk assessment related largely to biosecurity, but a number of mitigation measures have been identified to manage these appropriately. One such risk that can be managed effectively is the introduction of various animal diseases to the area that may result from animal and human transfer. Measures to mitigate this risk will include the prevention of contact between animals and trail users through signage warning of trespass and biosecurity risks and obligations. These obligations will also constitute rules for use of the rail trails, with warnings extending to the treatment of food scraps, human waste, soil and seeds. The prevention of disease transfer between animals will also be managed through the instalment of fencing and gates to control animal movements.

Other issues to be managed include road safety risks where the trail crosses roads and issues regarding livestock containment and livestock access to watering points. Mitigation measures have been identified to address each of the risks and discussed in detail with adjacent landowners. The risk assessment provides insights and a valuable process that can be used to inform similar assessments for any future rail trail proposals in other areas, and applications for other rail trails across New South Wales have been submitted as part of the recent expression of interest process for the Regional Growth—Environment and Tourism Fund. The Rosewood to Tumbarumba Rail Trail is being progressed as a pilot initiative. As such, council and the relevant government agencies involved are working hard to ensure that the process for planning and delivering the trail sets an example for potential future proposals in other locations.

The Rosewood to Tumbarumba Rail Trail will have a positive impact on local communities, providing increased business and tourism opportunities for the surrounding region as well as enabling better access to this incredible part of our State. I reiterate, as someone who comes from the country and who understands country rail, that I am sensitive to viewpoints of local landholders, but we can work around those issues. That is the great thing about what the member for Albury has been doing: There are ways to work through issues. The rail trail will provide employment prospects, including during the construction phases of the project. Local residents and visitors will also enjoy social, cultural and health benefits as a result of the trail. In conclusion, the bill is indicative of the Government's support for local communities and the tourism industry across New South Wales, especially in rural and regional areas. I recognise what has been achieved from a steering committee perspective, a community perspective and the local member's perspective, which is important. We know there are other communities around the State that are championing the cause of these types of trails. We will consider each on a case-by-case basis because there are other communities in the State that do not agree with the proposals. It is about finding the right balance and ultimately ensuring that the good people of regional New South Wales see the conversion of some of our existing rail assets into something more dynamic. We have literally thousands of kilometres of disused rail infrastructure across this State because of an archaic provision in the Act. It is ironic that, as Minister for Transport, I can close a rail service but I cannot order the lifting of rail lines. To do so, I must ask for the approval of this Parliament.

Based on the feedback the Government has received from the member for Albury, this legislation will result in a fantastic outcome for the people of the region. I have every confidence that it will be well marketed by the council, Destination NSW and local chambers of commerce. This is the type of tourism initiative that can be integrated well into other opportunities in the region, be it wineries, camp sites, national parks and so on. I hope that members opposite will support this legislation, even though they did not support the funding proposal. I call on them to support the bill because it makes sense. I congratulate the member for Albury on his efforts with regard to the bill and I look forward to his contribution to the debate. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

CROWN LAND LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Paul Toole, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (16:31):

I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 is the second and final bill that will implement the most significant improvements to the management of Crown land in a generation. The bill, together with the Crown Land Management Act 2016, fundamentally improve the management of Crown land and set up New South Wales for the future. These two pieces of legislation will help to ensure that the Crown estate continues to provide significant social, economic, environmental and cultural heritage benefits to the people of this State. Crown land is land that belongs to the State of New South Wales. It is owned and managed by the State for the people of New South Wales.

Crown land is one of New South Wales' most valuable assets. Our Crown land estate covers 42 per cent of the State. It supports a rich and diverse portfolio of interests and activities, ranging from leases in western New South Wales, which support grazing and agricultural businesses, through to parks and reserves, beaches, waterways and the seabed in coastal areas, which provide vast social and environmental benefits for the people of this State. It is important that the Crown estate is managed effectively so that it continues to allow communities to prosper and to provide benefits for current and future generations. This Government has been working to

improve the management of the Crown estate for the people of this State. It has consulted with the community every step of the way to understand what it wants from the land and to ensure the legislation reflects those views.

In 2012 the Government commissioned the Crown Lands Management Review, which was the first comprehensive review of Crown land in more than 25 years. As a result of this review, it became obvious that the Crown estate was no longer meeting community needs effectively. The review made a number of significant recommendations. A key recommendation was to consolidate multiple pieces of legislation into one, new, modern and simplified Act governing Crown land. As a companion to the review, in 2014 the Government published a Crown land legislation white paper. More than 600 submissions were received on the white paper and the review from a wide range of community organisations, councils, Aboriginal land councils and individuals.

In 2016 a parliamentary inquiry into Crown land was conducted. The inquiry provided a valuable opportunity for the committee and the Government to listen to the community about what it wanted and needed from Crown land. The inquiry made 20 wideranging recommendations. The New South Wales Government has accepted all those recommendations and is in the process of implementing them. That work culminated in the Crown Land Management Act 2016, which was passed by this House last year. As flagged in debate on that legislation, this bill completes the journey of delivering a robust and effective legislative regime for Crown land. The Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 does not change the intent of the Crown Land Management Act 2016; it makes consequential changes to that Act and other Acts to ensure that all legislation is consistent and correctly references the new Crown land legislation.

The bill also addresses the framework for Crown roads and streamlines and improves Crown road closure provisions. It will help to create a single, modern legislative framework for Crown land and Crown roads and reserves that will be easier to understand, and it will increase community involvement in major decisions. It will not fundamentally change the Crown Land Management Act 2016, or any other Act for that matter. It also will not transfer any Crown land or Crown roads to councils or to any other third party. Importantly, it will not change the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 or the application of the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993 to State laws. The bill is about tidying up the legislation and finalising the consolidation process that began with the Crown Land Management Act 2016.

I turn now to the detail of the bill. The bill is divided into four schedules. Schedule 1 repeals the Public Reserves Management Fund Act 1987 and consolidates that legislation into the Crown Land Management Act 2016. The Public Reserves Management Fund is an important mechanism that provides funding for Crown reserves. It supports the maintenance of showgrounds, community halls, local parks, and reserves. It also funds improvements to recreational attractions such as holiday and caravan parks, State parks and walking trails, which are important contributors to local and regional economies. The Public Reserves Management Fund Program has provided more than \$140 million in funding to support about 2,000 projects across New South Wales over the past 10 years. The bill retains that vital fund and enables it to continue to provide financial assistance to councils, community volunteers and corporations to invest in the reserves they manage.

To reduce complexity, the bill repeals the Public Reserves Management Act and replicates the provisions in the Crown Land Management Act 2016. It also renames the Public Reserves Management Fund the "Crown Reserves Improvement Fund" to describe more accurately and simply the purpose of the fund. Schedule 1 also includes some minor amendments to the provisions in the Crown Land Management Act 2016. These amendments demonstrate the Government's commitment to ensuring that its Crown land management arrangements are strong and, just as importantly, transparent.

The Government has undertaken an extensive process of consultation—first, in relation to the development of the Crown Land Management Act 2016 and, more recently, in relation to the supporting regulations. It was through this process that these amendments have been identified, allowing us to incorporate them before the Act commences later this year. In summary, this bill introduces important amendments to ensure that the implementation of the Crown Land Management Act 2016 is successful and that the arrangements in the Act strengthen community confidence in the management of Crown land.

Crown land can be reserved for a public purpose including for recreation, as cemeteries, for infrastructure or for government services. There are approximately 34,000 Crown reserves across the State. These are managed by a number of different entities, including local councils, community organisations, volunteer and professional trust managers and New South Wales government agencies. There are a number of significant Crown reserves across the State that are managed by a small number of professional reserve trusts. These include the trusts that manage cemeteries and crematoria, certain racetracks, Luna Park and the Sydney Cricket Ground. The professional trusts that manage these reserves are skills based, with paid board members, chief executive officers and staff, and extensive assets.

Many of these trusts operate under their own pieces of legislation, such as the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013, the Luna Park Site Act 1990, and the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Act 1978. Those pieces of legislation are inextricably linked to the Crown land legislation; they use the same concepts, defined terms and framework as the Crown land legislation. The Crown Land Management Act 2016 amended the Crown reserve trust and trust manager system to simplify the management structures, to improve governance standards and to reduce unnecessary administrative burden on Crown reserve trust managers. This bill now applies those changes to the range of Acts that refer to Crown reserves and trusts.

Schedule 2 to the bill makes consequential amendments to Acts that refer to Crown reserves and brings them in line with the reserve management framework under the Crown Land Management Act 2016. It is important to note that these amendments will not change or disturb the existing arrangements for reserve managers or reserves such as cemeteries on Crown land but will streamline and update them in line with the Crown Land Management Act 2016. By doing so, this Government continues to recognise the critical role that those managers play as stewards of this land. There are approximately 500,000 hectares of Crown roads across New South Wales. However, many Crown roads across the State are paper roads; they are merely lines on a map and are unformed or unused. They were drawn up in a bygone era and are superfluous to today's needs. The current legislative framework for Crown road closures and maintenance is not as efficient or as effective as it could be.

Schedule 3 to the bill modernises the legislative framework governing the closure, maintenance, transfer and sale of Crown roads. The Minister for Lands and Forestry is the roads authority for all Crown roads. Under this bill, Crown roads will remain the responsibility of the Minister for Lands. However, the existing arrangements around road closures create inefficiencies in road closure applications. Currently, responsibility for opening and closing most roads lies with the Minister, who administers the Crown land legislation, even where the local council is the road authority for the road. This means that all council road closures are initiated by local councils but require the approval of the Minister for Lands and Forestry. Having two authorities processing council road closures creates duplication, inefficiencies and time delays.

The bill addresses this by allowing local councils to close public roads for which they are the roads authority in their local area without requiring the approval of the Minister for Lands. This will allow councils to deal with local issues without encountering red tape and will reduce double handling by government agencies. The bill includes important safeguards to ensure a closure is appropriate and does not deny practicable access to a property, or an existing road network. The protections also continue to ensure that anyone affected by a proposed road closure has the right to be consulted and to provide a submission before a decision is made about the road closure. The bill also allows adjoining landholders and certain authorities the right to appeal to the Land and Environment Court against a council road closure decision. This provision provides an important avenue for adjoining landowners to challenge council road closures.

As I mentioned earlier, many Crown roads are not used by the general public and exist as lines on maps. In fact, many Crown roads are wholly enclosed within private properties or adjoin freehold property. Since 2004, landowners have been encouraged to purchase Crown roads within their properties. This allows landowners to consolidate their landholdings and to improve security of tenure, and it allows the land to be managed to its full potential. However, the process of closing and selling Crown roads is lengthy and time-consuming. This process has been a longstanding issue with parts of the community. We read about it in the submissions to the Crown land legislation white paper and heard about it through the recent parliamentary inquiry into Crown land.

Under the current legislation, the Department of Industry—Lands must follow the lengthy and time-consuming road closure process set out in the Roads Act 1993 for all Crown roads. This process becomes a particular issue when the road closure relates to a paper road that is not used for access by the general public. Over time, the road closure process has resulted in a large backlog of road closure and sale applications. To assist in addressing these issues, this bill streamlines the Crown road closure and sale process. Under the current road disposal framework, Crown roads must first be closed and converted into Crown land before being able to be sold or disposed of. This process will be simplified under the bill. Crown roads will not be required to be closed before they are sold to third parties.

The bill includes safeguards to ensure that appropriate consultation is conducted on the sale of Crown roads. Public consultation must occur if a Crown road is proposed to be sold. Under the bill, the public must be provided with at least 28 days to comment or to make a submission about the proposed sale of a Crown road. In addition, adjoining landowners must be individually notified of the proposed sale. A Crown road cannot be sold to a person who is not the owner of land adjoining the Crown road or a public authority unless each adjoining landowner consents to the sale. The bill also allows for conditions to be placed on the sale of Crown roads. This process strikes the right balance between the need for community consultation on proposed disposals of Crown road and addressing time delays associated with road closures.

Many Crown roads provide lawful access to privately owned and leasehold lands where little or no subdivision has occurred since the early nineteenth century. Where a Crown road is not accessible to the general public and where there are legitimate health and safety issues, the Minister will be able to direct the users of the road to repair and maintain the road or to pay the costs of the Department of Industry—Lands to do this. This power will be used cautiously and to ensure that the Crown road is safe for its users and so that access is maintained. This will be limited to instances where the Crown road only provides access and is of benefit to a single property or a couple of private properties. This will provide for a more equitable approach to road maintenance, ensuring that those who have exclusive use of the road contribute to the cost of maintaining it. As is the case currently, Crown roads that are used by the general public will be able to be transferred to Roads and Maritime Services or other authorities. This will allow Crown roads to be maintained to an appropriate standard for public access and by the bodies best equipped to maintain and to upgrade them.

I turn to schedule 4 to the bill. This schedule makes cosmetic changes to a number of pieces of legislation. The amendments do not change the substance or intention of any of these Acts or instruments. They merely bring the language and terminology of existing legislation in line with the new Crown Land Management Act 2016. This bill is the product of more than four years of extensive consultation with the community and key stakeholders. In 2012, we conducted the most comprehensive review of Crown land in New South Wales since colonisation. We sought the community's views on what the new Crown land legislation should involve and received more than 600 submissions about various aspects of the legislation. We were then provided with another opportunity to listen to the community through the parliamentary inquiry into Crown land in 2016.

Along the way both the Government and the Department of Industry—Lands have been speaking with numerous stakeholders and community representatives. Together, these views and this consultation have woven the threads of the Crown Land Management Act 2016 that was passed by this House last year and now this bill. This has provided a rich evidence base about what the people of New South Wales want from their Crown land. This bill now completes this journey. It consolidates legislation that in some cases is more than a century old. It reduces red tape and streamlines administrative processes that have been stifling economic and land productivity for too long. It ensures Crown land is retained for a range of conservation and community purposes and, finally, it ensures that our Crown land can be managed effectively for the future of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

SECURITY INDUSTRY AMENDMENT BILL 2017

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 30 March 2017.

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (16:51): On behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition I speak to the second reading debate on the Security Industry Amendment Bill 2017. I note from the outset that Labor does not oppose the bill. The objective of the Security Industry Amendment Bill 2017 is to enhance the principal Act and to provide the New South Wales police commissioner with additional powers concerning the determination and actioning of security licences which are under scrutiny. It was stated in the second reading speech given by the member for Tamworth, Kevin Anderson, on behalf of the Minister, that the amendments proposed under this legislation were requested by the regulator, the NSW Police Force.

The security industry's role in New South Wales is rather diverse, with its licensees playing important roles in various sectors throughout all of our communities. Given our reliance on this industry and the various powers bestowed upon it, we need to ensure the regulation remains current and is in line with the needs of the day. This leads us to the amendments before us today. The bill will provide the police commissioner with a range of new powers which include: new measures concerning the security industry licence renewal and handling processes; the option to recall sensitive police documents provided to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] for a particular hearing before they are released to the public; and the ability to appoint an individual or an organisation to provide training, assessment or instruction within the industry.

Given the importance of the security industry in New South Wales and the powers bestowed upon it, it is not unreasonable that the public would expect a certain level of oversight, professionalism and regulatory control to ensure that the industry is kept honest and to weed out any undesirable individuals who may flout or break the rules and regulations. New section 27A sets out the criteria for an individual or an organisation that has been appointed by the commissioner to provide training, assessment or instruction within the industry. Further, this new section sets out that the appointment may be revoked or suspended at any given time, with a penalty to be imposed should the individual or organisation fail to comply with the conditions imposed by this section of the bill.

This is further emphasised by the changes set out in division 3—new section 39R—which relate to the requirements for individuals within the industry to provide the appropriate records or information or to answer questions as required under this bill. Changes proposed under this section allow for the revocation of the common law privilege against self-incrimination, as an individual cannot evade any reasonable questioning and proper record keeping, forcing them to cooperate. Warnings will be provided on each occasion on which an individual has committed an offence. However, the person cannot be found guilty of any such offence unless they have received a prior warning. This will ensure that an individual has been made well aware of their obligations under the legislative guidelines. If they fail to heed any warnings, they are doing so knowing they are committing an offence.

Should it be necessary, the commissioner will have the power under section 25 to suspend a licence. New section 25 (1) provides that the commissioner may, if satisfied that there are grounds for revoking a licence, suspend a licensee's licence for a period of 60 days commencing upon the service of the notice. This may be extended to a further 60 days, as per proposed section 25 (1C), should the circumstances necessitate it. However, this duration cannot be extended any further. New section 25 (1A) and (1B) sets out that the commissioner must provide in writing the reasons for the licence suspension. The commissioner may request to hear the reasons that the licence should not be cancelled. This, however, is not a necessity and is at the discretion of the commissioner. Schedule 2, clause 25 (2) and (3) sets out that the commissioner does not need to provide the reasons for licence revocation if it is determined that it would not be in the public's best interest. This would be determined through information the commissioner would have access to that is contained in criminal intelligence reports or other criminal information held in relation to the licensee.

Licensees who have had their licence revoked will still have the option to challenge the suspension of their licences by making an application to NCAT. New section 29 (4) and (5) sets out that if there is any information contained in a criminal intelligence report or comprising other criminal information which has not been properly identified as such, the tribunal must ask the commissioner whether he or she wishes to withdraw the information from consideration by the tribunal in its determination of an application. Any information that is withdrawn by the commissioner must not be disclosed to any person or be taken into consideration by the tribunal in determining an application. This will ensure that any such information remains protected from disclosure, thus keeping the police's criminal intelligence reports and any other gathered criminal information secure from being made publicly available.

New section 46 of the bill sets out the manner in which documents may be served to a licensee, which include by delivery to the person, posting the documents to the prescribed address, email, delivery to the business address and any other kind of authorised service delivery method for similar documents of this manner. There are a number of minor miscellaneous administrative or consequential amendments provided in the bill which will clean up and clarify language used in the principal legislation. Following stakeholder consultation, there have been no issues identified with the bill. The proposed amendments aim to make a number of changes which were requested by the NSW Police Force to enhance the intent of the principal legislation. As I said from the outset, the New South Wales Labor Opposition will not oppose this bill.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (16:59): I speak in support of the Security Industry Amendment Bill 2017, which provides certain powers to the Commissioner of Police. As previous speakers have indicated, this is a commonsense bill. I want to speak about the security industry and the guards who work in our airports, shopping centres and office buildings and on our bridges. They do a fine job. Many years ago I worked in the hospitality industry. Some 27 years ago, or a bit longer, if a man was big enough he would be given a security T-shirt and away he would go. I would be showing my age if I spoke about the days when off-duty policemen were employed to work in night clubs. That was outlawed by the Commissioner for Police, quite rightly.

I have seen the industry grow and blossom. I have seen also the fine work performed by the industry—at venues that open late at night or at shopping centres during the day—to keep their patrons safe. I am pleased to say that a majority of people in the industry do a really good job. Over time there has been a concerted effort, particularly by this Government, to introduce a high level of professionalism, ethics and accountability. I am pleased that the industry has endorsed and, in many regards, promoted that policy. A number of years ago, when I was Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency Services, I had the distinct honour to attend the Australian Security Industry Awards night, which was held at that number one establishment the Ivy, just down the road. I was extraordinarily pleased to see operators and individual security guards being awarded certificates for their efforts within the industry and for their support of the wider community. The awards illustrated their high level of training, professionalism and expertise.

This bill gives certain powers to the Commissioner of Police. Under the Security Industry Amendment Bill, the Commissioner of Police must refuse an application to renew a licence if the commissioner is satisfied that were the applicant applying for a new licence the application would be refused. Sometimes I am disappointed

when members on both sides of the Chamber refer in their speeches to penalties, such as the revocation of licences, but miss the opportunity to praise the industry, which has made an effort to weed out the cowboys. We have heard the term "cowboy" used when rogue security guards appear in court. But the majority of security guards, both men and women, are trying to earn a dollar and are making an effort to lift the level of professionalism in the industry. The Australian Security Industry Association Limited is a great group of people who continue to strive.

I have seen security guards rendering first aid. There are a number of nightclubs in my electorate and each year we have a great event called "Schoolies". The event also attracts toolies—former schoolies who later become toolies—who seem to cause more trouble than they are worth. Unfortunately, many people become highly intoxicated and the taking of drugs is becoming more frequent at "Schoolies" and at other events in my neck of the woods. Over Easter, record crowds attended the well-known blues festival just south of my electorate. Fortunately, there was a very good security team which worked in conjunction with the NSW Police Force. The number of incidents—particularly relating to drugs and intoxication—were down for the first time in many years. I praise the patrons and the tight security provided by the private security guards and New South Wales police.

As previous speakers have said, this bill contains a number of commonsense amendments. I am proud of our Minister for Police, his staff and the department, in their efforts to lift the level of professionalism in the industry. The onus has been put on security guards to be aware of their responsibilities. As members know, some security guards drive armoured vans and carry weapons. There have been cases where armed offenders have tried to rob security guards. Shots have been fired in our streets and security guards have lost their lives in the course of their work. The amendments contained in this bill will assist the industry by making it easier for the industry to advance. The bill will create greater protection for security officers and a safer community and will promote greater professional development in the industry. Private security guards are employed at airports and in office blocks. Some members in this Chamber who frequent nightclubs late at night—although the average age of the members would limit that number; most of us would prefer to be home in bed—would have seen security guards at those venues.

Security guards provide a great service. I commend the commonsense proposals contained in this bill. I am a great believer in listening to police on policing issues, to medical staff on health issues, and to teachers on education issues. This is another example of this Government listening to key stakeholder bodies, understanding the issues and reducing red tape where possible. We do not want an unworkable set of regulations that we may praise here but which do not work in the workplace. My sources within the industry tell me that this commonsense bill is widely accepted by the majority of the industry. They believe that the bill will assist the industry to grow. As the security industry grows, it must adapt to changes and to the needs of the wider community that it services. This bill is a positive step forward. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (17:07): I am delighted to contribute to this second reading debate on the Security Industry Amendment Bill 2017. The member for Fairfield has brilliantly articulated the Opposition's position and I endorse his views, whatever they might have been.

Mr John Sidoti: I was asleep.

Mr RON HOENIG: Unfortunately, the member for Drummoyne spends a lot of time in this House asleep, and a lot of meaningful contributions to legislation seem to go above his head. However, the Opposition does not oppose this bill, for very good reasons. The Government, over some time, has been undertaking a review of the licensing regime for a number of positions in security-type industries. The Government has done so with respect to private investigators and commercial agents, and it is now doing so with regard to security licences. This is an important reform. I have read the second reading speech that was given on behalf of the Minister. Security licensing and those who have security licences are being used more frequently for security and protection purposes.

This industry has been infiltrated by organised crime syndicates in various parts of the State—I see the Police Minister is nodding his head—particularly in areas around Kings Cross. A lot of organised crime has occurred in this industry and allegations have been made—and I say they are allegations because those people are difficult to catch—that organised crime syndicates have used the security industry and its institutions for the purpose of distributing narcotics. It was one of the major reasons that the lock-out laws were enforced in certain parts of Sydney. What is proposed in this bill is significantly important because it gives the police the opportunity to act when they reasonably suspect—even on the basis of criminal intelligence—that the security industry may well be engaged in criminal activities. I imagine the Police Minister is after the criminal elements—yes, he is nodding his head—that have infiltrated certain parts of an industry. Consequently, this bill enables the police to operate on the basis of criminal intelligence by immediately withdrawing the licence of those people who are so engaged.

Other members in the security industry who are genuine about protecting the society in New South Wales will have their reputation enhanced by this licensing regime. They will not be impacted by the Police Commissioner's powers, but those criminal elements that have infiltrated the industry will certainly have a lot to fear because police intelligence has indicated a number of those areas where they operate. If this bill becomes legislation, the Police Commissioner will act promptly in withdrawing their licences. There are protection mechanisms, such as using the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT], so if there is an excessive use of this power or its use is unjustified, security industry personnel can request a review, which is a good thing. The Police Commissioner can immediately suspend the licensee's licence for a period of 60 days without providing an opportunity for the licensee to be heard. Normally that would be an excessive power to be given to the executive branch of Government, but I can assure the House from my own knowledge that it is essential to this industry. The Police Commissioner can extend that suspension for a further 60 days, if warranted.

I also note that if the police operate on the basis of their intelligence and there is an appeal to NCAT, the protection of that intelligence will be preserved by this bill. I do not have to tell the House how important it is to protect intelligence, the informants or the material that may lead to identifying informants, particularly those renegade people in this industry. As a result, the bill specifically targets organised crime that has been operating in small parts of this industry for many decades. As soon as the bill is enacted by Parliament and proclaimed, I hope that the new Police Commissioner will promptly suspend licences.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (17:14): Today I speak in support of the Security Industry Amendment Bill. As the member for Tweed said in his opening remarks, we should pay particular respect to those hardworking men and women who monitor our hotels, pubs, housing estates, shopping centres, and hospitals on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday until the early hours of the morning when we are all in bed. When I was the Minister for Mental Health and the Assistant Minister for Health, it was often up to the security guards to be first on the scene to deal with extremely difficult situations, particularly in those areas. I pay my respects to those men and women. I have seen firsthand how hard they work. They have a high degree of professionalism and, as we heard, it is a growing industry.

Of course there will be a few bad eggs in any industry. By giving those powers to the police this legislation aims to remove those bad eggs. I acknowledge the Hon. Troy Grant, who is in the Chamber today, and commend him and his office for their hard work in continuing to protect this great industry. It is very important that the industry is regulated, and this bill ensures that the reputation of good security guards will remain intact and that those few bad eggs will be removed from the industry. In order to ensure the ongoing efficient and effective regulation of the private security industry, it is important that this legislation is fit for purpose and that the NSW Police Force, as the industry regulator, has appropriate powers to undertake that task.

Therefore, the bill provides for a series of mostly minor amendments. It is important to note that the police have sought those powers, and they are supported 100 per cent by this Police Minister. The police do a fantastic job. They know that they have a fantastic police Minister who will always back them with the support of Government. One significant amendment is designed to abrogate the protection against self-incrimination so that licensees cannot hide behind it and frustrate the regulator when attempting to investigate breaches of the legislation. The bill provides a series of amendments and I will list a few of them. The bill does a number of things apart from making minor consequential administrative amendments. It provides that the privilege against self-incrimination does not excuse a person from being required to give information to police and other enforcement officers under the Act.

It also ensures that the criminal intelligence reports and other criminal information held for the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] can be withdrawn and protected against disclosure. It provides that the commissioner—and I take this opportunity to acknowledge the new police commissioner and wish him the best in his new role—may suspend the licence for up to 60 days without the licensee being given an opportunity to be heard. This provision does not remove the ability for an individual to appeal the suspension of a licence to NCAT at any time after the suspension is issued. It also clarifies that the commissioner must refuse an application to renew a licence if the commissioner is satisfied that if the applicant were applying for a new licence, the application would be refused. I know that the member for Drummoyne is particularly interested in this next point and I am looking forward to hearing what he has to say on this bill later. He too is supportive of the requirement that master licensees must not allow persons to carry on a security activity with a dog, except with the approval of the commissioner, to keep people safe in difficult and challenging environments. The Commissioner may approve individuals or organisations to provide training, assessment and instruction in connection with licence conditions under the principal Act that requires the undertaking of training, assessment and instruction by a licensee while the licence is in force. It provides that the Commissioner of Police may have regard to any criminal intelligence report or other information about criminal activity held in relation to the applicants or the licensee for the purposes of determining whether the granting of a licence would be contrary to the public interest or whether it is not in the public interest for that person to continue to hold a licence.

When I was a student at the University of Western Sydney, I came into contact with a number of security personnel. I was one of the first students to live on the campus and, when we first moved into the accommodation, fire alarms would often go off until the problem was fixed. The security guards at the university worked 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They looked after the students and went above and beyond their duties. They were also involved in some challenging situations, and what they did was amazing.

This is good legislation and, as we have heard, it ensures that the industry is well regulated. It further enhances the credibility of existing security officers. The bill also highlights the Government's ongoing commitment to effective industry regulation in New South Wales. I will say over and over that the work done by the hardworking, dedicated men and women in our security industry is often undertaken when we are tucked up in our beds. Often the skills required to work effectively as security guards in testing circumstances are not only those of security guards; frequently they are negotiators and diplomats. They do the heavy lifting required in difficult circumstances and they do incredible work.

As I have said, there are always one or two bad eggs in any industry, and this legislation gives the Commissioner of Police the power to cancel the licences of any bad eggs. I have no doubt that the commissioner knows what he needs to do to weed out these bad eggs. When this legislation comes into force I have faith that the Commissioner will appropriately act in the handful of cases that no doubt exist in the industry. Those in the industry who are doing the right thing do not need to be worried about this legislation. When I was on council—

Mr John Sidoti: Which council?

Mr JAI ROWELL: —the Campbelltown City Council—and our meetings went late into the night, it was our security guards who would walk people to their cars. Security guards protect our civic infrastructure—our civic hubs, libraries and pools. They play an important role and we do not thank them enough. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): I welcome to the Chamber Ms Frances Bedford, the member for Florey in South Australia.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:23): As a former South Australian, I welcome Ms Bedford to the gallery. She represents a lovely State, but now I am a very proud resident of the Central Coast. I speak in support of the Security Industry Amendment Bill 2017. This is an outstanding bill, and I pay tribute to the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services and his incredibly hardworking staff, who are in the Chamber. The bill brings the Security Industry Act 1997 up to date, making it modern and timely. The private security industry holds a privileged place in communities across New South Wales, not least in my electorate of Terrigal. I note the positive comments of the member for Drummoyne about this bill. He and the member for Wollondilly and the member for Tweed have spoken about the values of this amendment bill and the contribution that these changes will make to the industry. As was pointed out earlier, the industry has some bad eggs and these amendments put in place the necessary mechanisms to weed them out.

On the Central Coast not a day goes past without security guards playing an important role, including in the transportation of money to and from banks. But the role we most equate with security guards on the Central Coast is ensuring the safety of patrons of licensed premises. They are employed in this role every night of the week, but they are especially in evidence on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. In Terrigal many licensed outlets have taken on private security officers to ensure the safety of their patrons, because it is important that people going to licensed premises know that undesirable people will be kept out. Some premises are frequented by families, so it is important that they are confident in the knowledge that they will be safe and comfortable.

I single out the brilliant work of the police officers of the Brisbane Water Local Area Command [LAC]. They have implemented a "Ban one, ban all" policy. This voluntary policy was put in place by the publicans and licensees of the Central Coast. This LAC went to our licensed premises and said, "You need to step up and make these venues safer for your patrons." Under this policy, if someone attends one of the RSL clubs or a diggers' club and unfortunately has too much to drink—

Mr David Elliott: Doesn't happen.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: —and becomes rowdy—I note the comment of the Minister but occasionally this does happen—then the patron is asked to leave the club and their identification is marked as banned for 24 hours. Should that patron then try to sneak into the Florida Bar, shall we say, they are unable to access that facility. This initiative was not done through legislation; it was done through proactive work by an outstanding team at the Brisbane Water LAC. Many times I have sung the praises of Superintendent Danny Sullivan of the LAC. He is an outstanding officer with an outstanding team of dedicated officers, especially the licence crew. The Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services has visited the LAC and I had the privilege of spending a night with Superintendent Sullivan's team. I grew up in a normal family environment, so it was an

eye-opening experience to spend a night out with the men and women of our police force. I would encourage other members of this place, if they have not done so already, to spend a night on the beat with members of their local police force to see the work that they do to keep us safe. I know all members have very good relationships with their local area commands.

Police officers of our local area commands keep us safe in conjunction with our security guards. They work together on the Central Coast in conjunction with the closed-circuit television cameras that have been funded by the State Government to make populated areas safer. Amendments such as those included in this legislation are timely. As outlined by previous speakers in debate, this bill will provide that the Commissioner of Police may have regard to any criminal intelligence report or other criminal information held in relation to the applicant or licensee for the purpose of determining whether the granting of a licence would be contrary to the public interest, or whether it is not in the public interest for that person to continue to hold a licence. I also pass on my heartiest congratulations to the newly installed Commissioner of Police, Mick Fuller. I had the pleasure of meeting Mick Fuller in Terrigal when he spoke at a domestic violence forum. He is an outstanding example of someone who has worked their way through the ranks of the NSW Police Force. We could not have asked for a better replacement than Mick Fuller for the outstanding former Commissioner Andrew Scipione. I congratulate Mick Fuller on his tireless work throughout his career, especially implementing policies on domestic violence.

This legislation clarifies that the commissioner may approve individuals or organisations to provide training, assessment and instruction in connection with licence conditions under the principal Act that require the undertaking of training, assessment and instruction by a licensee while the licence is in force. In addition, it clarifies that master licensees must not allow persons to carry on a security activity with a dog, except with the approval of the commissioner. As I said earlier, I have total confidence in Commissioner Mick Fuller to make the appropriate and correct decision when it comes to issuing such master licences across New South Wales—again, we could not have found a better person than Mick Fuller.

Mr Mark Taylor: Mark Taylor was a good copper!

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Let us say it as it is: The member for Seven Hills was also a member of the police force and an outstanding one at that. I know that in his job as a police officer he would have had interaction with licensed security guards, and they work collectively to provide protection for our communities. This bill clarifies that the commissioner must refuse an application to renew a licence if the commissioner is satisfied that, if the applicant were applying for a new licence, the application would be required to be refused. While that is a big responsibility, the Police Commissioner is more than up to the task. This bill also provides that the commissioner may suspend a licence for up to 60 days without the licensee being given an opportunity to be heard. This provision does not remove the ability of an individual to appeal the suspension of a licence to the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] at any time after the suspension is issued.

The legislation ensures that criminal intelligence reports or other criminal information before NCAT can be withdrawn and be protected against disclosure. That is a very important factor with the transfer of intelligence. The bill also provides that the privilege against self-incrimination does not excuse a person who is required to give information to police and other enforcement officers under the Security Industry Act. We also had the chance to talk one on one with the Minister regarding the content of this bill, and I acknowledge the time he spent with many backbenchers, outlining these amendments and how they will improve the industry.

Finally there are other minor, consequential and administrative amendments in this legislation. It is important that these sorts of amendments are brought before the House, to ensure that a bill is kept up to date given changes in technology and conditions, and changes across the community. This is a good bill. I thank the Minister and his staff for their hard work and their consultation with the industry, which has a vested interest in ensuring that it has the best outcome to protect its own integrity. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Before I call the member for Seven Hills, I welcome to the House members of the Punjabi Council of Australia, who are guests of the member for Blacktown and who have been approved to take some photographs of proceedings. I could almost be convinced that the member for Blacktown has hair beneath his turban!

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:34): I was sitting at the same table as the member for Blacktown the other night and the light was shining in my eyes—I do not know why. It is a pleasure to speak to the Security Industry Amendment Bill 2017, which amends the Security Industry Act 1979 to make further provision in relation to the licensing and regulation of persons in the security industry and for other purposes. It is also a pleasure to comment on this bill while the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services is in the House. He is a Minister with expertise and experience in policing in New South Wales and one who understands the need for wide consultation in matters that are brought before this House. One of the Minister's

qualities is his ability to call on that experience when engaging stakeholders and undertaking that wide consultation.

This touches on the good police of New South Wales who are doing a great job of protecting the people of New South Wales in a variety of ways. They protect people on the roads, on our trains, on other transport systems, in our licensed premises and through inspections such as those undertaken under the Security Industry Act. The member for Terrigal congratulated the new Commissioner of Police, Mr Fuller. I also commend Mr Fuller and the actions he has taken thus far beefing up the investigative abilities of the NSW Police Force, and particularly putting an emphasis on frontline police. I note that the Minister is nodding his head. As an ex-police officer, he understands that it is all about frontline policing and protecting our community in the best possible way. He knows that some great work is being done by the people of the NSW Police Force. I commend the force to the House.

The security industry works hand in hand with police in protecting the community in a number of roles across our State. It is not uncommon to see members of the security industry patrolling industrial areas at night. We see them in static locations protecting buildings and property, in money transport and security for cash, and even in one-on-one personal protection for numerous people. The security industry has certainly changed over the years and, as the member for Terrigal indicated, licensed premises frequently have a large number of security personnel inside, providing not only security for patrons but also an emphasis on safety and assisting those in need, whether they are having difficulty getting home, or experiencing an incident or harassment on the way home. There is a need for trust and confidence in security guards. That is why good training is always important.

As the member for Terrigal indicated, the Central Coast has a number of licensed premises. I remember seeing security guards in action in a place called Iguana Joe's, and a number of members of the House may remember that particular place. Security guards certainly assisted people at that location over the years—but I have digressed and now return to the issue. As I indicated, the industry has changed over a number of years, and training and the upgrading of skills of security industry personnel have benefited. These personnel are dealing with more complex tasks, but there is now a large percentage of mums and dads in that industry with small and family security businesses. It is important that there is a fair and level playing field, not only for the safety and security of our community but also for good business practices across the State. The last thing we on this side of the House—and I assume those on the other side of the House who support this bill—would want is to have organised crime infiltrating such an important industry as the security industry. We spoke not so long ago in this House about the tattoo parlour industry, where there have been difficulties over time concerning the scourge of organised crime.

Unfortunately, the security industry has also been the victim of infiltration by organised crime gangs. Members on this side of the House want that stopped; we want the industry left to honest, hardworking security personnel. The Commissioner of Police has approached the Government requesting that the Police Force be equipped with the best tools available to deal with the security industry, and that is the reason the Minister for Police introduced this bill. The commissioner has asked the Government to improve and to strengthen the powers available to the Police Force so that it can get on with the job of protecting our community. I digress for a moment to note that the 2017 Security Exhibition and Conference will be held from 26 to 28 July 2017 at the International Convention Centre at Darling Harbour. This fantastic event will be a three-day exhibition of new security products and services. The security industry will have an essential platform to connect with participants to discover the latest innovations and to get a first-hand look at what is happening in the field.

As I said, this is a rapidly changing environment and staying up to date through this conference will be extremely valuable for industry participants. There will be discussion panels, executive briefings, workshops dealing with common issues and trends in the industry, and a networking dinner. The exhibitor directory on the conference website lists the large selection of security suppliers who will be available at one venue. Cybersecurity, which is a growing issue, will also be addressed. I am sure that the Australian Security Industry Association Ltd is proud of its involvement in the conference. The legislation states:

The object of this Bill is to amend the Security Industry Act 1997 (the principal Act) as follows:

- (a) to provide that the Commissioner of Police may, in determining whether the grant or renewal of a licence under the principal Act would be contrary to the public interest, have regard to any criminal intelligence report or other criminal information held in relation to the applicant or licensee...

This means that the police will be relying on the best information possible. The police obviously need to tap into the widest range of sources possible, and they do not want to be faced with unnecessary constraints. They need the best resources available, and this bill will provide them. The object of the bill is also "to make it clear that the Commissioner may approve persons or organisations to provide training, assessment and instruction in connection with licence conditions under the principal Act that require the undertaking of training, assessment and instruction by a licensee while the licence is in force". As I said, the community relies on the security industry, and training,

education and instruction should be at the forefront when determining whether a licence should be issued and in enforcing any regulations.

The bill also seeks "to ensure that criminal intelligence reports or other criminal information before NCAT can be withdrawn or protected against disclosure". This goes to the heart of public interest in protecting those who provide information to the police or other regulatory bodies that may need to use that information to do their job. It is important that the people providing information are given the best protection possible. Finally, the bill provides that the privilege against self-incrimination does not "excuse a person who is required to furnish records or information to police and other enforcement officers", and so on. It is always balancing act when the NSW Police Force and other enforcement agencies determine these issues. However, a provision such as this is necessary when dealing with the scourge of organised crime. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (17:44): I support the Security Industry Amendment Bill 2017. I recently attended a conference in the United Kingdom dealing with national security. One of the more startling revelations was the extent to which the private security industry has mushroomed. In fact, the private security industry in the United Kingdom is now larger than the local police force. The current trend is to contract private security companies to protect premises, events and the like. Most buildings are now protected by private security officers and private security companies now move cash around the city. Many entertainment venues are also protected by staff from private security companies. That is where this bill comes into play.

If the community places its trust in private security companies, there must be a regulatory regime to ensure that their personnel behave in a way that warrants that trust. The regulatory regime requires the police to license people involved in the security industry, but we must also acknowledge that they are working in a dangerous environment. Security guards at licensed premises have been king hit and severely incapacitated, which has had consequent effects on their families. Private security guards are also involved in patrolling hospital emergency departments. Drug-affected people or those suffering from a psychotic condition have lashed out at security officers and others who are trying to help them. We must acknowledge that danger and that those officers are placing their lives at risk.

The Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety is conducting an inquiry into the dangers that emergency service workers confront in carrying out their duties. Every day we ask nurses, ambulance officers and fireys to render assistance, but we do not expect them to be attacked by members of the public while doing so. Perhaps that expectation should extend to the personnel of private security firms who work at entertainment events or who are protecting the community in public places such as hospitals. This Parliament must ensure that we protect not only emergency services workers but also anyone else who plays a role in protecting the public. Of course, that protection is provided to police officers—and rightly so. We have legislation containing provisions dealing with aggravated offences against police officers, but there should be similar provisions dealing with other emergency services workers, fireys, ambulance officers, nurses and security personnel.

To work in the security industry brings a responsibility to ensure that the trust of the community is maintained. The bill introduces a licensing regime for the industry. The police need to know that people involved in the security industry do not engage in criminal activity. Recently a security officer at a dance party was supplying drugs to partygoers. Clearly, such people should not be in the industry and we need a mechanism to remove them from it. The bill provides the Commissioner of Police with the necessary tools to remove them by cancelling their licence and establishes a regime of appeal mechanisms when licences are withdrawn. In those circumstances, a process must be gone through to ensure that all necessary information is available to assess the worthiness of someone to work in the industry. The right to not answer questions is a fundamental component of the trust that we place in the security industry, but if people want to work in the industry they should be prepared to answer all questions asked of them.

As a lawyer, I am concerned about laws that remove a person's right not to answer questions when those answers may impact on other aspects of their life. That concern must be balanced with the right of the community to be protected from industry participants who may be a threat to their security. When a large industry is involved, and we need to trust the people in it, the removal of the privilege against self-incrimination can be justified, but only on the basis of community protection and safety. The Minister is aware of my concerns and I am sure there will be some formalising arrangements in relation to standardise the circumstances where that can be relied upon and how the process operates. This bill is necessary and one to which every member of this House should speak for some time. Therefore, I am surprised that members opposite are not jumping to their feet to contribute to this debate and to speak about protecting the communities they represent. It is extraordinary that more Opposition members do not wish to contribute to the debate and to acknowledge the security workers in their communities. I am delighted to support the bill. The Minister is acting on the advice of the police who have requested various amendments to ensure that the licensing system works well. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (17:53): I support the Security Industry Amendment Bill 2017. The member for Epping expressed surprise that Opposition members do not want to speak in the debate on behalf of their communities. I have taken his advice and will address the bill on behalf of my constituents in the Upper Hunter. The private security industry holds a privileged place in the New South Wales community, and people have an expectation that it will serve and protect them in various ways as regulated by the NSW Police Force and the commissioner. I have a great deal of respect for the police in my electorate, particularly Local Area Commander Steven Clarke, whom I have known since he started his police career in Scone 20-odd years ago.

Mr David Elliott: Great pies.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: There are great pies everywhere in the Upper Hunter. Commander Steven Clarke, Guy Guiana and Tim Seymour form a great leadership team. They are very effective managers, who are caring, and very aware of the security issues in their community. The Upper Hunter has a number of security businesses and we generally do not hear any complaints when they perform important tasks at events in licensed premises or, for example, at the Scone rodeo, which will be held next Saturday as part of the Scone and Upper Hunter Horse Festival 2017. I encourage everyone to attend this fantastic event. On Friday 12 May we will hold the famous Scone Cup, the richest country race meet in Australia on the best track outside Sydney or anywhere else.

Mr David Elliott: Many breeders live around there.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: Yes, there are plenty of breeders there, and so there should be; it is wonderful country. The horses do wonderfully well in the Upper Hunter, and I believe that is because of the limestone. Years ago I moved a horse from a lush, green paddock in Dural, Sydney, to a dry, bare paddock in Scone and it put on weight. I do not know why that happened; it must be the soil. Returning to the leave of the bill, our security companies will play a significant role at all events in the next couple of weeks during festivities in the Upper Hunter, especially at Scone. Other events will be held at Denman and elsewhere. Our community expects that our security companies will play a vital role to serve and protect them, and they do a great job. However, it is well publicised that there are some bad eggs in the industry outside the Upper Hunter. This bill will ensure that we remove those bad elements from the security industry.

As has been mentioned in debate, organised crime has from time to time infiltrated the security industry, tattoo parlours and so forth. We need to do whatever we can to stamp out that crime and to remove the bad eggs from the industry. The industry comprises many good security companies and personnel in the Upper Hunter and throughout New South Wales. Those to whom I have spoken are very comfortable with the amendments in the bill because they have nothing to fear—they are not doing anything wrong; they are law-abiding citizens going about their business and helping to keep people safe. They maintain a level of order at many highly populated events and at all forms of licensed premises such as pubs or clubs. Security guards also transport large amounts of cash from place to place and maintain order in pubs and clubs and at public events. They install security systems in people's buildings. They do all sorts of work that has the potential to impact on individuals, groups and communities. Therefore, there is an expectation that the security industry will have the highest possible standards. These amendments go a long way to ensuring that those expectations are met.

A key amendment requires the commissioner to deny the renewal of a licence when there is evidence of criminal activity on the part of the applicant, just as the commissioner would deny a new licence application in similar circumstances. The amendment will go a long way to ensuring that community expectations regarding the security industry are met on an ongoing basis. Let us not forget that we are not in this place to assist criminal elements; we are here to serve our community, particularly its vast majority of law-abiding members. Our police do a fantastic job. As I have said, those in the Hunter Valley Local Area Command, led by Steve Clarke, do a fantastic job for our community. The amendments that the Minister has put before the House are the product of consultation with police and the security industry. I fully support the bill and I fully support our police, our emergency services personnel and members of the security industry who do the right thing. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (18:02): I make a contribution to debate on the Security Industry Amendment Bill 2017. I acknowledge the work of the Minister for Police, the Hon. Troy Grant, who is in the Chamber. I particularly acknowledge his approach to this important bill. Those opposite may consider this to be a flippant amendment. Some people in the security and policing fraternity may not realise the importance of this legislation in ensuring that we have the best possible opportunity to keep our communities safe and secure. The member for Terrigal spoke about the work of security guards in his electorate. The member for Seven Hills highlighted the fact that in his former role as a member of the NSW Police Force he was exposed to a lot of people working in the security field. Like those two members, I am sure that both the member for Myall Lakes and the Minister will talk about the effect this legislation will have on the work of both police and security officers.

I speak to the bill not only because I have a genuine interest in the safety of our community but also because I was reminded when I considered the bill that it was Paul Keating who privatised the security of Victoria Barracks in Sydney. It was a significant reform because it was one of the first of many privatisation programs that Paul Keating introduced in Defence. He privatised the catering corps and Defence public affairs. I remember the shock and horror felt within the military, and indeed in the general community, when Keating privatised the security arrangements at Victoria Barracks. It was a significant change to the culture of how we protected military barracks, but it was also a symbolic change. Previously young soldiers, often from reserve units from around regional New South Wales, would take a two-week posting to work as guardsmen. Replacing those positions with private security guards was, as I said, symbolic.

Today it is probably one of the most dangerous positions to hold in Sydney because, as you would know, Mr Assistant Speaker, from your time in the Australian Defence Force, the current national security classification of "probable attack" means anybody who is responsible for the security and safety of a military establishment puts themselves at risk, as does anyone who is responsible for protecting our vital assets. Whether in Sydney or in regional New South Wales and whether it is commercial, communications or transport infrastructure, our vital assets require an extra level of security and safety. Counterterrorist operations have always identified vital assets as being vulnerable. Today we live in a society that requires security guards in places where they were probably not needed in the past.

Those vulnerable areas include hospitality establishments such as hotels and licensed premises. We do not need to go back far in recent history to recall the attacks that occurred in Bali, Mumbai and the United Kingdom in areas where people socialise, including licensed venues, and where people come together for celebration and commemoration. That has put a lot of extra pressure on the security industry and on those who may not swear an oath to the Crown but who are nonetheless required to provide security in venues of mass gathering that may be vulnerable. I make that point in order to commend the Minister and the Government for introducing this bill, which contains tougher provisions regarding the types of people who may work in our security industry.

During the Sydney Olympics in 2000 a number of volunteers worked as security officers. It took some time to conduct probity checks and to establish that they were of good character. It was not unheard of to discover that people who volunteered for security operations at the Sydney Olympics had outstanding warrants and criminal records. A shiver goes up my spine when I consider that we could have had an incident at the Sydney Olympics due to our own failings—or indeed the failings of the Labor Government that was responsible for delivering the Olympics. Those failings could have meant that somebody with a criminal record was charged with looking after VIPs and vital assets. For that reason, the Minister must be commended for bringing this legislation before the House. He is making it harder for people with any sort of criminal record or exposure to criminal activity to get into the industry, and that is a good thing. It is the right thing to do. It acknowledges the fact that in New South Wales today we are on high alert and our police are required to work hand in glove with private providers. It also recognises that the current state of alert in this nation means that more corporations and organisations will require the services of private security operators.

Again, I commend the bill to the House and I commend the Minister for his progressive approach to the security industry. Unfortunately, there have been examples which show that this legislation may have come a little too late. As I have said to those who are involved in the cluster that the Minister and I have the honour of serving, we live in a new world that requires a high level of alertness and a better quality of person working within this industry. For that reason, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (18:10): I support the Security Industry Amendment Bill 2017, which has been brought before the House by the Minister for Police, the Hon. Troy Grant. During question time today, we heard from the Minister—and he has been spoken about it before—about the Government revolutionising the NSW Police Force. Minister Grant has introduced this bill and is working with the new Commissioner for Police to revolutionise policing so that in New South Wales it is not stuck in the old ways. I commend the Minister for his initiative. Many people in New South Wales have been looking for this type of action, and the Minister and the new commissioner are delivering. The objects of the bill are to amend the Security Industry Act 1997:

- (a) to provide that the Commissioner of Police may, in determining whether the grant or renewal of a licence under the principal Act would be contrary to the public interest, have regard to any criminal intelligence report or other criminal information held in relation to the applicant or licensee.
- (b) to make it clear that the Commissioner may approve persons or organisations to provide training, assessment and instruction in connection with licence conditions under the principal Act that require the undertaking of training, assessment and instruction by a licensee while the license is in force.
- (c) to provide that the Commissioner must refuse an application to renew a licence if the Commissioner is satisfied that, if the applicant were applying for a new licence, the application would be required to be refused.

- (d) to provide that the Commissioner may suspend a licence for a period of 60 days without the licensee being given an opportunity to be heard.
- (e) to ensure that criminal intelligence reports or other criminal information before NCAT can be withdrawn and protected against disclosure.
- (f) to provide that the privilege against self-incrimination does not excuse a person who is required to furnish records or information to police and other enforcement officers, or to answer questions under the principal Act from furnishing that information or those records, or from answering those questions.
- (g) to make other amendments of a minor, administrative nature.

In order to ensure the ongoing efficient and effective regulation of the private security industry, it is important that the legislation is fit for purpose and that the NSW Police Force, as the industry regulator, has appropriate powers with which to undertake its task. This bill provides for a series of mostly very minor amendments, all of which have been sought by police. One significant amendment is designed to abrogate the protection of self-incrimination to ensure that licensees cannot hide behind this provision and frustrate the regulator's attempts to investigate breaches of legislation. The changes are proposed in the context of an industry that is described in the Minister's second reading speech as being involved in a high-risk activity. Security licensees are given access to firearms and to large quantities of cash. They often have access to commercially sensitive sites and information, as well as being routinely asked to maintain order in public areas and to defuse potentially dangerous situations.

As a former police officer and a lawyer who practiced in criminal courts, I know that it was often the case that people with private security licences were associated with criminal elements or criminal gangs. It was very common on licensed premises in some areas of Sydney for gangs to run protection rackets through private security agencies or by working in the industry. I am pleased the NSW Police Force is being given extra powers to enable it take into account criminal intelligence and criminal histories when considering applications for licences in the industry. It is good for the community for the Commissioner of Police to have such a power. I will turn now to proposed new sections. Proposed new section 25, which relates to the suspension of a licence, states:

- (1) The Commissioner may, if satisfied that there may be grounds for revoking a licence, suspend the licence, by notice served on the licensee, for a period of not more than 60 days specified in the notice, commencing on service of the notice.
- (1A) The notice is:
 - (a) to state that the licence is suspended and the reasons for suspending it, and
 - (b) to request that the licensee provide the Commissioner with reasons why the licence should not be revoked.
- (1B) The Commissioner is not required to give a licensee an opportunity to be heard before suspending the licence under this section.
- (1C) The Commissioner may, by further notice served on a licensee during the period in which the licence is suspended under this section, extend the period of suspension of the licence for a further period of not more than 60 days specified in the notice.

Proposed new section 27A relates to approved training, assessment and instruction. Proposed new section 29 (4) and (5) states:

- (4) If the Tribunal considers that information contained in a criminal intelligence report or comprising other criminal information has not been properly identified as such, the Tribunal must ask the Commissioner whether the Commissioner wishes to withdraw the information from consideration by the Tribunal in its determination of an application.
- (5) Information that is withdrawn by the Commissioner must not be:
 - (a) disclosed to any person, or
 - (b) taken into consideration by the Tribunal in determining an application.

Under division 3, proposed new section 39R states:

- (1) **Warning to be given on each occasion**

A person is not guilty of an offence of failing to comply with a requirement under this Part to furnish records or information or to answer a question unless the person was warned on that occasion that a failure to comply is an offence.

That is a fairly common requirement. When police interview people, they first tell them their rights—for example, police tell people that they have the right to remain silent. The police say, "We are going to interview you in relation to a certain offence. You are not required to answer a question unless you wish to do so. Anything that you say may be taken down and used as evidence." A person is not guilty of an offence of failure to comply if they have not been given that warning. The proposed section continues:

- (2) **Self-incrimination not an excuse**

A person is not excused from a requirement under this Part to furnish records or information or to answer a question on the ground that the record, information or answer might incriminate the person or make the person liable to a penalty.

I commend this good and worthy bill to the House.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (18:17): I support the Security Industry Amendment Bill 2017, and I thank the Minister for Police, the Hon. Troy Grant, for introducing this amendment bill to make public safety paramount. This Government has proven to be committed to effective regulation of the New South Wales private security industry. The legislation will help provide vital services across the community in hospitals, pubs, clubs, banks, shopping centres and defence sites. It was introduced at the request of the regulator of the private security industry, the NSW Police Force. It includes clauses that seek to abrogate the common law privilege against self-incrimination, to provide the power to suspend a licence without providing an opportunity for the licensee to be heard, and to limit the capacity to access police criminal intelligence holdings.

These changes are proposed in the context of an industry that is operating in what can be described as a high-risk activity. Security licensees are given access to firearms and to large quantities of cash. They often have access to commercially sensitive sites and information, as well as being routinely asked to maintain order in public areas and to diffuse potentially dangerous situations. This Government has a track record in providing legislative change, if required. For example, just last year we moved amendments to the Security Industry Act 1997 to transfer regulatory arrangements for private investigators to be regulated as part of the security industry. Additionally, private investigation activities were also changed to be subject to offence and penalty regime under the Security Industry Act 1997. Although these offences were similar to those that applied to the industry under previous legislation, the offence of misrepresentation was included, and it currently applies. Section 33 of the Security Industry Act 1997 directly addresses false or misleading activity relating to the engagement of security activities. The application of this offence to the private investigation industry has strengthened the integrity of the industry and helped to increase alignment with the way in which the security industry is regulated.

This bill is about making small but significant changes so that police have the appropriate powers to regulate the security industry. One of the more significant changes is designed to repeal the protection against self-incrimination. This will ensure greater public satisfaction because licensees will not be able to hide behind this defence. These changes will also help to provide the Commissioner of Police with the ability to obtain and review criminal intelligence reports or other relevant criminal information in relation to an applicant or licensee. This will assist police to judge whether it is in the public's interest for a licence to be renewed by a licensee. This will assist to secure the safety of community members and to protect the public in a private arrangement.

Another significant change is the right of the Commissioner of Police to suspend a security license for up to 60 days without the licensee being given an opportunity to be heard. This will allow police, as regulators of the industry, to better manage risks that may potentially arise within that business community. Again, with this small but important change, the safety of the community is at the forefront. In those 60 days the licensee will still have the ability to challenge the suspension and seek a review in the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This is a positive step in balancing community safety and licensee rights.

These changes have created a further barrier for people to enter the security industry; prospective applicants may choose not to register in New South Wales and look to additional jurisdictions. This will add an extra layer of security when licensees apply for a licence. Item 18 of schedule 1 to the bill reinforces current protections around the disclosure of information or criminal intelligence used by the NSW Police Force. This important addition will stop any backdoor proceedings that may impact our community. The greater enforcement of powers and security resources of the NSW Police Force in regulating the security industry will enable rogue private investigators to be dealt with more quickly and effectively. This will obviously be to the benefit of all industry members and, importantly, the community.

The bill also provides that a dog may not be used without the approval of the commissioner. This will not only remove any uncertainty as to dogs working with private security companies but it will also ensure no unnecessary risk to members of the community or security licensees when a security activity is taking place using a security dog. The bill also provides that the commissioner must refuse an application to renew licence if the new licence does not satisfy the updated requirements. This important requirement will provide consistency across the security industry. Private companies will be forced to comply with the current legislation. Indeed, these new additions and clarifications will strengthen the regulation of the industry. The NSW Police Force will now be the regulators of the private security industry. I thank the patient Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services, the department and his staff for bringing this bill to the House. As I have said, community safety is paramount. This legislation is fit for purpose for the NSW Police Force. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (18:25): I speak in support of the Security Industry Amendment Bill 2017. The private security industry holds a privileged place across New South Wales communities. Security guards patrol our wonderful Sydney Harbour Bridge, hospitals, shopping centres, office buildings and many other venues. They transport large amounts of cash from place to place; they maintain order in pubs and clubs at night; and they install the security systems in our buildings or our homes, or re-key our homes when we have

lost our keys. Inevitably, the men and women of the security industry perform very important functions in our community. It is because of these important functions that we are debating legislation this evening governing the security industry, to ensure that it is fit for purpose and that the NSW Police Force, as the industry regulator, has appropriate powers with which to regulate this vital industry. The Security Industry Amendment Bill 2017 proposes amendments identified by the regulator as being necessary to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the Security Industry Act 1997.

The bill provides for a series of mostly very minor amendments, all of which have been sought by the NSW Police Force. I have no doubt that all members in this place want to support the men and women of our police force, and I am delighted that this legislation will do that. It would be completely remiss of me to not mention the very hardworking teams at the Miranda and Sutherland local area commands. Miranda has Superintendent Michael O'Toole and Sutherland has Superintendent Julian Griffiths, both of whom lead a wonderful team of hardworking and very committed local men and women of the Sutherland Shire. It would be even more remiss of me to not mention our newly appointed commissioner, Mick Fuller. Being parochial, we are extremely proud to have a police commissioner from our shire—congratulations again to the newly appointed commissioner.

I will return to the substance of the bill and highlight a few of the small, yet significant, amendments that the Government seeks to introduce. This bill provides that the Commissioner of Police must refuse an application to renew a licence if the commissioner is satisfied that if the applicant were applying for a new licence, the application would be required to be refused. It is wordy, but it does make sense, and it will serve to streamline the job of the regulator. Previously the legislation allowed for some discretion in such matters. The bill also makes provision for the Commissioner of Police, in determining whether the grant or renewal of a licence would be contrary to the public interest, to have regard to any criminal intelligence report or other criminal information held in relation to the applicant. Again, a very commonsense amendment that can only serve to enhance the regulation of this high-risk industry.

Similarly, this bill clarifies that the commissioner may approve individuals or organisations to provide training, assessment and instruction in connection with licence conditions under the principal Act that require the undertaking of training, assessment and instruction by a licensee while the licence is in force. The bill provides for the police and other enforcement officers to be able to require the attendance of a person at any specified time and place to answer questions in relation to an investigation of a suspected contravention of the Security Industry Act. Previously, the person to be questioned could nominate the place and time, providing them with greater latitude to frustrate or circumvent this process. This bill also provides that the commissioner may suspend a licence for up to 60 days without the licensee being given an opportunity to be heard. This provision does not remove the ability of an individual to appeal the suspension of a licence to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal at any time after the suspension is issued.

The bill also makes other minor, consequential and administrative amendments. Notwithstanding all these positive changes, the bill will also set aside the common law right against self-incrimination. As someone who studied and practised in law prior to my entry into this place, I have a deep respect for our common law rights, one of which is shared by legal practitioners. That respect means that I fundamentally do not believe that the privilege against self-incrimination should be abrogated on a whim. Notwithstanding that, the bill will provide that the privilege against self-incrimination does not excuse a person who is required to give information to police and other enforcement officers under the Security Industry Act. Whilst I commend the Minister on his work on this legislation, and for listening to our extremely hardworking men and women in blue, I have concerns about the inclusion of this provision and I do not believe it is necessary. The bill highlights the Government's ongoing commitment to effective industry regulation in New South Wales. I congratulate the Minister on his amazing efforts on this legislation and on listening to the community and to the members of our party and our backbench committee. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (18:30): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Security Industry Amendment Bill 2017. The bill is aimed at strengthening the regulation of the private security industry in New South Wales. A number of speakers on this bill have spoken adequately about the merits of the amendments and have acknowledged the Minister for Police for all his fine work on this legislation. I have had extensive discussions with the Minister about this bill, and the work that has been done to provide the Commissioner of Police with what he needs to ensure he does his job is to be commended. I acknowledge the Minister for his fine work as well as the work of the department on this bill.

Having been in the hospitality industry for a number of years prior to coming into this place, and having worked with the security industry over many, many years, I have seen a change over three decades from basically minimal regulation to a much-needed crackdown on the industry probably a decade ago. In the early days, before photographic identification was introduced, unlicensed people would turn up to work in venues and no checks

were in place. When photographic licence identification was introduced the police could carry out a check. That was a good thing because that rooted out a number of problems in the industry. Previously, unfortunately a lot of people had criminal records, were not of good character or were certainly not the type of people one would want in the industry looking after licensed premises. In about 1997, changes were made and the industry began to head in the right direction to clean itself up. We have come a long, long way since that time. This bill contains a number of minor amendments that the police have sought to ensure that they can do their job.

I will just pick up where the member for Miranda left off and acknowledge the new Commissioner of Police and welcome him on board. I know he will do an outstanding job. He has been a regular visitor to Camden, with the Minister, over the past few years at our White Ribbon Breakfast during the 16 Days of Activism in December.

Ms Eleni Petinos: Can you acknowledge the shire now?

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: I have had the privilege of sitting at the table of then Assistant Commissioner Fuller. He is clearly an outstanding man of character. I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Miranda. He is a shire boy done good—and for the record that is not Wollondilly Shire.

Ms Eleni Petinos: The real shire.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: The real shire. I bring to the attention of the House that a former police commissioner, Macarthur man Ken Moroney, AO, APM, will meet the Minister tomorrow to make representations on behalf of the Camden community. I know that Mr Moroney is a great friend of the Minister's, and he is a great friend of mine. I have had the privilege of calling him a friend and a mentor, and I have gone to him for advice on a number of occasions. Mr Moroney has been acknowledged in the honours list for all the wonderful work he has done in our community. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (18:36): In reply: I thank members for their considered and comprehensive contributions to the debate on the Security Industry Amendment Bill 2017. There is bipartisan support for this legislation, as clearly articulated by those who spoke in debate. I acknowledge members of the Labor Opposition for saying at the outset that they would not oppose this bill, which indicates that they join with the Government in our commitment to ensuring the continuation of the strong and effective regulation of the New South Wales private security industry. As the member for Camden said, the Security Industry Act 1997 was a game-changing piece of legislation in its day. However, this Act is now due for appropriate amendments.

I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Fairfield, the Opposition's spokesperson for Police and Emergency Services. I also acknowledge the contribution of the member for Tweed, and especially the member for Heffron for his considered contribution to the debate. His quality contribution was particularly notable in acknowledging what this bill does not do—that is, it does not reflect poorly on the industry itself. This legislation is designed to strengthen the industry. It does not suggest that these amendments are required because the industry as a whole is problematic, nor does it conduct its business appropriately. This strengthening legislation will be welcomed by the industry because it will weed out the bad elements in the industry. The member for Heffron's contribution highlighted this important aspect of the legislation.

I further acknowledge the member for Wollondilly and the member for Terrigal for their contributions. The member for Seven Hills was a police officer and he saw firsthand the operations of the security industry while working side by side with members of the security industry during his long and dedicated service to this State. I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Epping. I consulted extensively with members of the committee, including the member for Epping, along with the member for Ku-ring-gai and the Hon. Trevor Khan. They gave very clear feedback in relation to the need for amendments to get the right balance and to make sure there was no legislative overreach. They pointed out that the legislation needed to be drafted and constructed in a manner to achieve the outcomes it sought to achieve—that is, holding the industry to account through effective regulation and the necessary deterrents to limit the penetration of organised crime and other misuse of the industry.

I thank the member for Upper Hunter and the Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs, the member for Baulkham Hills, for their contributions, and also another former police officer with firsthand experience, the member for Myall Lakes. I commend the members for Miranda, Holsworthy and Camden for their contributions and thank them one and all. The provision of private security services is quite rightly considered a high-risk activity. This industry is similar to the tattoo parlours industry in relation to which this House recently introduced strengthened amending legislation. This industry is preyed upon by those seeking to profit from it and to cover up their organised crime activities.

In that vein, it is vital that the Commissioner of Police and his delegates, as industry regulator, are appropriately empowered and resourced to keep the industry honest and to make sure that holders of security

licences are properly trained to do their job. That can be ensured with the commissioner being assisted through the Security Licensing and Enforcement Directorate as part of the State Crime Command. While these amendments are not major, they are important in ensuring that the legislation remains effective in maintaining high probity and competency standards across the New South Wales private security industry. I am proud to commend this bill to the House.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr TROY GRANT: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Private Members' Statements

STOCKTON CENTRE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (18:41): Today I update the Chamber on the ongoing closure of the Stockton Centre. The Stockton Centre is currently being closed by the Government, with 440 residents being moved into 88 group homes under a plan that friends and families of Stockton Centre patients are finding very difficult. As the plan is forging ahead, problems are being raised. Many patients are not dealing with the changes and family members of patients of the Stockton Centre are raising questions, airing concerns about what will become of the residents who have high-care needs requirements.

In the last week of April, the *Newcastle Herald* uncovered the fate of two of the displaced residents. One has died and the other is in hospital with serious health issues only weeks into their new accommodation arrangements. This is concerning news. The story goes on to say that the women had become dehydrated in the group home. The father of the surviving woman said his daughter, who is 51 years of age, had been in Stockton for 46 years and had had phases of not eating or drinking.

My colleagues in the Labor Party and I have called for a thorough and transparent investigation into how this occurred. The Government guaranteed that people being transferred from the Stockton Centre to group homes would receive the same level of medical and specialist care. I am seeking to hold the Government to account on this issue. The same level of medical and specialist care appears not yet to be apparent. How do two women who are receiving the same medical and specialist care suffer from dehydration? I will leave the answer to that question to the current investigation.

The mother of a Stockton Centre resident wrote in the *Newcastle Herald* today of her experiences. Her son has been at Stockton for more than 20 years. Due to his complex medical issues, it was not expected that he would still be alive now. His survival is testament to the exceptional standards of care that he has received at the Stockton Centre. She now fears for her son's future, with the stories of the death of one woman and the hospitalisation of another. Her fears are that the Government's promises of quality care outside the centre will fall flat. The Government needs to respond to these concerns; it needs to address concerns that have occurred under its watch. The Minister for Disability Services is not taking this issue seriously enough.

While it is acknowledged that two of the staff members of the group home hold nursing qualifications, he cannot answer how this happened under his watch. Due to the gravity of this situation, a letter of concern has been sent from Ms Yadaeff of the Stockton Centre Welfare Association. The shadow Minister for Disability Services, the member for Port Stephens and I made a representation on her behalf to the Minister for Disability Services. In a letter she writes detailing nine areas where she believes the reality of group home systems will fall short of the Government's commitment. My colleagues and I wrote:

On numerous occasions we have been advised and assured that the concerns of residents, family and staff would be addressed. These assurances were provided during meetings with the former Minister both in Parliament and on site and during tours of group homes with the Department.

Disappointingly, the Stockton Hospital Welfare Association remains concerned about the welfare of the residents due to the government's unfulfilled commitments, ongoing uncertainty and the predictable unreliability of information provided by the Department and former Minister. Given the complex and high needs of the residents, families are understandably frustrated, stressed and deeply concerned.

The systems are simply not yet in place. Ms Yadaeff also says the in-house medical services that the Stockton Centre provides will not translate to the group homes because already overburdened general practitioners are

reluctant to take group home residents as patients, meaning that these extremely vulnerable people will be dependent on the general hospital system. These systems are not in place and issues surrounding group houses are raising concerns. The exercise is not an easy task but needs more planning than the Government is currently providing. The Minister needs to get involved, find out how this tragedy occurred, and make sure this does not happen again. He needs to talk to the families and reassure them that the promises his Government made will come to fruition. He needs to understand that this move is not about meeting time frames or budgets; it is about moving the most vulnerable residents, those who have called the Stockton Centre home for many years and decades, into a new accommodation scheme, which will not be an easy task. Finally, he needs to listen to people like Ms Yadaeff who know these residents and what they need.

TWEED ELECTORATE CYCLONE DAMAGE

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (18:46): I inform the House of a recent significant weather event that occurred in my electorate and also in the electorate of Lismore, which was briefly mentioned today during question time. At the beginning of April we saw the effects of the end of Cyclone Debbie in the electorates of Tweed and Lismore. In the space of 24 hours on that Thursday night we received more than 780 millimetres of rain in 24 hours. The famous Tweed River rose more than six metres in certain places, and there was an inundation over many hectares. I pay tribute to Wayne Starling, our superintendent of police.

Ms Anna Watson: He is a great guy.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: He certainly is a great guy. He ran the emergency area. The member for Lismore and I participated in emergency management every few hours, where there was representation of the NSW Police Force, NSW Health, Roads and Maritime Services and the Tweed Shire Council. This was an enormous job, which was difficult at times. We evacuated some 400 people in the Tweed area to either Kingscliff TAFE or Banora Point High School. There were similar issues in Lismore.

The event was devastating and caused around \$50 million of damage to council infrastructure. It displaced many hundreds of people, but Euan Ferguson, the coordinator of the disaster recovery, had within a few days set up the recovery centre in Murwillumbah. I pay credit where credit is due: Although I listed many government agencies, the real heroes, apart from the police force, are the State Emergency Service. Its members, dressed in their orange, did an extraordinary job. They went out in the middle of the night and evacuated 200 people at 1.00 a.m. Unfortunately, over the past 20 years our flood peaks have occurred at about midnight and have caused serious damage.

The bonding that occurred in our local town was beyond belief. The Premier and the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. Troy Grant, visited the affected areas and saw the metres of mud that had swept through people's houses. Having six metres of water washing down the rivers was like having a giant's hand smashing everything in its path. We lost a preschool and many houses in Tumbulgum and Condong. We also lost industries and businesses, \$4.5 million worth of damage was done to O'Connors Farm Machinery in Lismore, Shoobridge Transport lost millions of dollars worth of equipment, and the local council lost 80 per cent of its trucks. I am sure that members will have much more to say about this tragedy.

On the day the Premier, the Minister for Emergency Services, the member for Lismore and I visited the area, one of my constituents, Stephanie King, and her three young children were in their car when it left the road and plunged into the river. Stephanie was a real hero; she managed to get young Chloe-May out of the vehicle before it sank. Tragically, it then disappeared with Stephanie, Ella-Jane and Jacob still on board. Superintendent Wayne Starling's handling of the tragedy was exemplary; he did all he could. We can rebuild towns and industries devastated by floods, but we cannot rebuild lives. These events have had a deep and profound effect on my community. Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove visited the area to offer his support, and Governor David Hurley and his lovely wife, Mrs Linda Hurley, visited twice within a week.

I pay tribute to Stephanie, who sacrificed her life to save one of her children. Chloe-May is a legend for swimming to shore and raising the alarm. The drama and tragedy that she and her father have experienced are beyond belief. I pay tribute to Stephanie's partner, Matt Kabealo, who is standing firm and strong behind Chloe-Jane. It was a great tragedy and I acknowledge the local community for supporting them during this extremely difficult time.

ALBION PARK RAIL CRICKET CLUB

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:52): As a self-confessed cricket tragic, I love supporting cricket clubs across my electorate. Within all our sporting organisations we have hardworking and dedicated volunteers who make their clubs work. All too often they operate on a shoestring, relying on donations and charitable contributions from businesses and club members. While there are many sporting clubs in my electorate that I could focus on, tonight I will concentrate on the mighty Razorbacks—the Albion Park Rail Cricket Club—with which

I am proud to have a close association. Given the outstanding year the club has had, I am pleased and proud to use this opportunity to make a private member's statement recognising this season's true Razorback champions. How fitting it is to make this statement to Parliament during the club's fortieth year. My association with the Razorbacks started when the club approached me requesting a new turf wicket roller. Like any good local member of Parliament should, I requested a grant from then Premier Mike Baird. Initially the Premier's office rejected my request.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Shame!

Mr GARETH WARD: Shame indeed. Not known for taking no for an answer, I got in my car, drove to Sydney and met with the Premier. I walked out with a \$14,500 commitment to secure this important investment in the Albion Park Rail Cricket Club. I take this opportunity to thank Mike Baird for agreeing, albeit under duress, to my request to support the Razorbacks. On Saturday 29 April 2017, I was very pleased to attend the club's annual presentation night at the Albion Park Bowling Club and to present the Cricketer of the Year Award. I acknowledge President Simon Pearse for his ongoing dedication to the club. He was an outstanding MC on the night. I am particularly grateful to Simon for avoiding my involvement in the ceremonial shoe, which is a ritual practised at the club's annual presentation nights. As time is limited, I will not entertain the House with details and circumstances of the shoe on this occasion. I also acknowledge club coach Grant Tilling, who is also the vice president of the South Coast District Cricket Association. Grant is incredibly dedicated and I thank him for his service to South Coast cricket and to the Albion Park Rail Razorbacks.

The following club members from first grade to fourth grade received awards and acknowledgments: Brett Gilly, Mark Damoiseaux, Pushpinder Singh, Tim Goodall, senior cricketer of the year John Puckeridge, Hayden Bagoly, Cody Hutchison, Lachlan Murphy, Chris Garrett, Jake McBride, Tim Crowther, Darren McBride, Matt Gilly, Jamie Pigram, Dale Stanford, Justin Austin, Jimmy Wiltshire, Truman Driscoll, Rohit Sharma, Steve Szakacs, Wayne Herbert, Dylan Rae, Adrian Bartlett, Brad Smith and Brandon Norwell. Special congratulations go to the second grade team, who were this year's champions of the South Coast cricket competition. I take this opportunity to thank all the wives and partners of the Razorbacks in addition to all the wonderful and dedicated volunteers who help the team with off-field tasks that are so important to the club's management and administration. If I mention the Albion Park Rail Bypass project in the context of the Albion Park Rail Cricket Club, members may wonder how the two are connected.

Ms Anna Watson: Do not. Get the shovels in the ground and start construction.

Mr GARETH WARD: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Shellharbour. The member would not know how it is connected because her side of politics did not fund it. But tonight is not an opportunity to talk about that. If anyone doubts my commitment to the Albion Park Rail Bypass—as the member for Shellharbour does—ask the Albion Park Rail Cricket Club.

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

Mr GARETH WARD: The oval is directly impacted by the bypass and will need to be relocated to accommodate this important project. I am pleased to report to the House, and to the member for Shellharbour, that after many productive discussions this move will take place and the Razorbacks will have a new oval to call home. I am very grateful for the patience and support of the Razorbacks and their members throughout the discussions. I thank Roads and Maritime Services for ensuring that opportunities for the Razorbacks could be expanded. It knows how important this project is to our community and I am pleased that we have been able to work with the club and provide it with new facilities. Congratulations to the Razorbacks on a great year; I am sure that there will be many more. I look forward to cheering from the sidelines. We have a great competition on the South Coast and it is the contributions of teams such as the Razorbacks that make it robust, entertaining and the greatest sport of them all.

WEST DAPTO EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:56): The private members' statements of the member for Kiama are always entertaining. Tonight I will talk about the lack of West Dapto educational structure. Over the next 15 years 300,000 new school places will need to be created across New South Wales to provide for the rapid growth in the State's school-age population. Whilst this is a statewide issue, it hits particularly close to home in West Dapto. Within my electorate of Shellharbour the development at West Dapto currently requires an additional eight primary schools and three high schools. However, the Government is yet to acquire any land on which they could be built. In 2004 the Dapto Primary School was moved to West Dapto to provide for the upcoming development. This school was the first, and to this day remains the only, primary school in the area. When the entirety of the West Dapto development is completed it is expected to include approximately 19,000 new

dwellings and more than 50,000 people, and to create around 8,500 jobs. The Government is yet to announce any plans for educational infrastructure to provide for this population influx.

To understand the level of demand that Dapto Primary School has to handle, one need only look at the growth in surrounding suburbs. By 2026, it is expected that West Dapto will see its school-age population increase by 40 per cent. This is in an area where the only school is already struggling to cope with the existing population. It is unacceptable. This trend is not a surprise. West Dapto has been attracting young couples and young families since its initial development. The Government had no foresight to plan for its future. How does the Government expect one at-capacity school to cater for those numbers? The time for action is now. This strain on infrastructure and incredibly limited resources will only worsen as the rate of development continues to accelerate in the Shellharbour electorate.

The upcoming development in Kembla Grange will see the number of children aged 14 years or younger increase from a mere 35 in 2011 to nearly 1,000 in the next 10 years. Despite the enormous and rapid population growth expected for my electorate, the Government has announced no plans for the development of schools despite this clearly impending deadline and the undeniable need for action. I call on the Government and the member for Kiama, the Parliamentary Secretary for Education and for the Illawarra and South Coast, to deliver to the citizens of West Dapto the educational infrastructure they both need and deserve. These developments have long since outgrown the single local primary school the Government has provided. Once again, research has shown the population of this area requires eight more primary schools and three more high schools. The Government needs to start putting its citizens and their education first. The time for blame and stalling has passed; we need to act for the sake of our State's children and their futures.

In the short term, once West Dapto is linked up with Calderwood and Marshall Mount it will be the size of Wagga Wagga. I call on the State Government to purchase land to build an educational precinct at West Dapto to ensure that the needs of our children are met. Today in question time the Minister for Education spoke about new schools but the time for talk is over; we want to see the walk. We want to see new educational infrastructure constructed at West Dapto.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (19:01): I commend the member for Shellharbour, who has raised these matters with me before, for her advocacy on behalf of her community in relation to education places. As the member for Shellharbour is aware, the Government announced a new agency involved in the planning, supply and maintenance of schools with a \$5 billion commitment for the future needs of schools. There is no doubt that many schools across the State need extra support and classrooms. I visited Dapto High School where principal FitzSimons does an incredible job and inspires his students to achieve their full potential. As the Illawarra continues to grow we will need those schools. Indeed, West Dapto is the largest growth area outside south-western Sydney. The member for Shellharbour is right to raise these matters, and I look forward to joining with her to advocate for additional places in the Illawarra.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (19:02): I inform the House about the Push for Palliative group in my electorate of Orange. When the Orange Health Service hospital was opened in 2011, our community lost the dedicated palliative care ward that it had had in the old Orange Base Hospital for decades. Palliative care not only assists people in the final hours of their life but also has a key role in managing chronic illnesses such as coronary heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. The focus in these cases is symptom control and improving quality of life, rather than curative measures. Four out of five deaths in Australia are from chronic illnesses, and this rate is heightened in rural communities.

Orange Push for Palliative was formed in 2014 as a result of community outrage about losing this essential service. Palliative care physician Dr Yvonne McMaster is the driving force behind the campaign, and three members on the Orange Health Service Palliative Care Consultative Committee are also involved with the group: Dr Jann Porges, Tracy Wilkinson and Jenny Hazelton. This group is bringing together all sectors of the community, including general practitioners, nurses, representatives of service organisations, and local families and friends concerned about provision of palliative care services in the Orange district. Push for Palliative has been extremely active in garnering support from service organisations such as Rotary, the Ionian Club, and the Quota Club, and many church groups in Orange. So far there have been minor improvements in palliative care services by accommodating palliative care patients in other acute care wards of the hospital, but a designated palliative care unit is desperately needed. Statistics compiled by Dr Yvonne McMaster indicate there are insufficient palliative care nurses and doctors to service the hospital and the community.

Existing palliative care trained staff continue to do a wonderful job, but there are simply not enough to service the number of patients requiring their care, both within the hospital and in the community. This issue has gained significant momentum in the past two years since the forum hosted by Push for Palliative and the Orange

Health Service, and the almost 10,000 signatures on the petition received until today are indicative of the importance members of this community place on good palliative care. I am pleased to inform the House that in the past two hours the final 525 signatures required for a 10,000 signature petition were secured at a local shopping centre today. When I present this petition to Parliament it will represent one quarter of the population of Orange. Almost half of the adult population of the Orange City Council area have formally pledged their support to the building of a dedicated palliative care unit in Orange.

Members of this House should note that Palliative Care Week in New South Wales is from 21 to 28 May, and I hope to table this petition then. Orange Push for Palliative is now a registered charity and has had extensive discussions with the non-government organisation [NGO] Care West—now known as Living Better—about collaborating on establishing a new palliative care hospice in addition to the campaign for a palliative care ward at the Orange Health Service. I acknowledge the tireless efforts of those behind Orange Push for Palliative, including: Tracy Wilkinson, President; Jenny Hazelton, Vice President; John McDonogh, Treasurer; Janice Harris, Publicity Officer; Joe Maric, Secretary; Peter Brown and Helen Brown. Mark my words: This issue will not go away. Together we can make a difference that helps improve the lives of everybody in the Central West.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 19:06
until Wednesday 3 May 2017 at 10:00.**