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**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 3 May 2017

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

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: We have some guests in the gallery today. I would like to extend a very warm welcome to a delegation of senior executives from Beijing BHZQ Environmental Engineering Technology, accompanied by their new partners in water remediation, Phoslock Water Solutions, which is an Australian company. We welcome you all recto the Chamber this morning.

Documents

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce the receipt of a Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled "Therapeutic Programs in Prisons: Department of Justice, Corrective Services NSW", dated May 2017.

[Notices of motions given.]

Bills

GAS AND ELECTRICITY (CONSUMER SAFETY) BILL 2017

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 6 April 2017.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (10:12): I am pleased to lead the Opposition's response to the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017. This is a welcome piece of legislation. The bill repeals the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2004, the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2015 and the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2012 in order to create a consistent piece of legislation governing the safe use of gas and electricity by consumers and to prescribe and enforce minimum standards for gas and electrical equipment and installations.

The bill harmonises existing legislation around the use and installation of gas and electricity, putting most provisions under one Act. The bill contains a number of clauses which update provisions with regard to gas consumer safety and brings them into line with similar provisions that apply to electricity installations. This is sensible legislation—the nuts and bolts of government—and the Opposition supports it. Indeed, I believe the people of New South Wales would be far happier if this Government stuck with this sort of legislation which does not ban recreational activities, does not flog off public assets and does not erode longstanding rights in the community but is just practical, pragmatic reform. I shall keep my comments brief. I note that the objects of the bill are:

- (a) to repeal the 2004 Act and 2012 Regulation and to consolidate the provisions of the Act and the primary provisions of the Regulation into one piece of legislation,
- (b) to provide for a consistent compliance and enforcement regime for both energy sources (including by extending certain compliance mechanisms currently available for electricity safety, to gas safety),
- (c) to align the maximum penalties for offences relating to gas safety with those relating to electricity safety,
- (d) to enable authorised officers to prohibit the misuse of electrical articles, gas appliances or electrical or gas installations if the misuse present a significant risk of death or injury to any person or significant damage to property,
- (e) to enable certain rechargeable battery articles that are declared by the Secretary to be high risk battery articles to be regulated as electrical articles under the proposed Act ...

The bill will also make consequential amendments to various other Acts and regulations, provide for other various matters and enact certain savings provisions. This is all commendable. I note the amendments that address a

number of new behaviours and new technologies such as the use of liquefied petroleum gas [LPG] barbecues inside the home or in enclosed areas. With the growth of apartment living, these powers to stop inappropriate use of LPG are timely and supported. Under existing laws, Department of Fair Trading officers are unable to prevent owners from using such equipment in such a fashion. The bill addresses that gap in our regulatory response.

The bill also provides new powers to regulate high-risk battery articles used in emergent technologies and devices, such as hoverboards. I am sure members can recall that the No. 1 issue of Christmas 2015 was exploding hoverboards. The former Minister, Duncan Gay, even took the step of banning hoverboards—no doubt an idea that the former Premier took on board when it came to the greyhound industry just six months later.

The bill addresses the issue of exploding hoverboards by allowing the secretary of the department to declare a battery article, like that used in a hoverboard, as a high-risk battery article and thus bring it within the power of the Act. This is sensible, and I am advised this will not be used as a blanket declaration but will be highly targeted. When it comes to our kids and the newfangled devices that are being brought to the market, we need to be sensible and always cautious. I think the particular provisions in the bill strike that balance, and they are supported.

While I cannot see the Parliamentary Secretary on a hoverboard, I can imagine the young Minister on one, hovering around the streets of Hornsby and channelling his inner Marty McFly. Finally, I note the Department of Fair Trading will undertake community education and industry information campaigns about the changes ushered in by this bill. In conclusion, the Opposition welcomes this bill and I am pleased to support it. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (10:17): I speak in support of the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017 and I thank the member for Swansea for indicating that the Labor Party is supporting this bill. I must confess that she is right: it would be a stretch to find me on a hoverboard, although in my youth I was known to go around the streets of Newcastle on a skateboard. I commend the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation for bringing this bill to the House and implementing these important reforms. When I was about the age when I was riding a skateboard, the greatest competition in the home was to see who could select the programs on the television, but of course, in the modern world in which we live, electrical devices have never been more important. Indeed, the competition in the domestic home is now over who can get their phone and their iPod on the recharger first as opposed to who can control the television channel.

Gas, with which this bill is also concerned, is also highly important. Those of us who are old enough to remember will recall when the Bass Strait oil fields were opened up to supply natural gas to our homes. Electricity and gas are important for the safety and wellbeing of people's everyday lives. I am confident that the reforms in the bill will deliver a more consistent administrative compliance and enforcement approach to gas and electricity safety, and a perusal of the bill supports that statement. Part 2 imposes restrictions on the sale of electrical articles while part 3 imposes restrictions on the sale of gas appliances. Part 4 deals with unsafe electrical and gas appliances. Part 5 deals with the safe installation of electrical, gas and autogas appliances. Part 6 introduces a regime for the reporting of serious electrical or gas incidents and part 7 provides for enforcement of the regulatory regime. Part 8 contains the usual miscellaneous provisions.

The reforms will especially ensure that gas and electrical consumer safety legislation keeps up with marketplace products and equipment as part of everyday life. These reforms will allow the Department of Fair Trading to regulate new and emerging technology such as the hoverboards to which the member for Swansea made reference, but also mobile phones, electric vehicle batteries and similar articles that use certain rechargeable batteries. Certain batteries such as lithium-ion are not captured by the existing laws. Some of these batteries are low voltage but still have the potential to cause injury to a person or potential harm by misuse.

Currently there are no standards or requirements for some of these high-risk rechargeable batteries and associated items to be met before they can be sold. Given recent incidents with hoverboards and phone chargers, the inclusion of certain battery types being able to be declared as an electrical article will assist in regulating these types of products. In March 2016 the Commonwealth issued a national interim ban on the supply of hoverboards that do not meet safety standards after advice from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission that unsafe hoverboards create an imminent risk of death or serious injury. The interim ban was extended and maintained until 16 June 2016.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has advised that six house fires in Australia have been directly linked to a hoverboard. Three of the six houses were destroyed. The most recent fire occurred in April 2016 in Bankstown of this State. It was reported that the hoverboard exploded while being charged in a child's bedroom. Another fire was sparked by a hoverboard in Tasmania in February 2016. Clearly there are fire safety risks from defective charging devices, electrical circuitry and substandard lithium-ion batteries in hoverboards.

The New South Wales Government wants to ensure that all further sales of these potentially high-risk products are safe and meet stringent safety standards otherwise they cannot be sold in New South Wales. Electrical appliances and articles must be designed and manufactured so that they will not cause electric shock, injury, death or fire damage during normal use and must comply with mandatory or other relevant Australian safety standards. Retailers, suppliers and importers of these types of high-risk electrical goods must confirm that the article meets the safety standards before being sold. If an article does not meet the required standards, a retailer would be unable to sell the product.

Consumers have the right to expect that goods they buy are safe and there are no risks of fires associated with electrical or battery parts overheating while charging, lessening the risk of injury or death to consumers. Retailers must ensure all products they supply or sell are not substandard and must be free from defects that could harm consumers. Furthermore, anyone who sells, imports, hires or exchanges any declared high-risk battery articles must ensure they are safe and comply with the relevant safety standards or have been tested and approved as conforming before sale. As members have already heard, these reforms will modernise and future proof the Act to deal with new and emerging technologies. I am heartened that the bill does not contain any draconian enforcement measures. They are reasonable and proportionate to the matters at hand. The powers to be imposed are not heavy-handed investigative powers; they are adequate to meet what is a serious issue.

I agree with the member for Swansea that this Parliament should bring forward legislation that deals with everyday issues that are important to members of the community. As I have said, today our electrically powered technology linkages are of the utmost importance to us. These linkages are providing opportunities for people in regional areas, such as the area represented by the member for Swansea, and these opportunities help to open up our society. Connectivity provides a possibility for businesses in regional areas to compete equally with those in the cities. Hopefully this will lead to this State benefiting from greater decentralisation, which will provide opportunities for people living outside metropolitan Sydney and therefore ease some of the pressures on housing affordability in metropolitan Sydney.

I commend the Minister for bringing forward this substantial piece of legislation. The bill consists of 46 pages of amendments for the reformulation of the regulatory environment for gas and electricity. It should not be forgotten that the other important energy source is gas. Gas is an important energy source that is environmentally sustainable. Gas energy does not produce carbon in the way that coal-fired electricity generation produces carbon.

Mr Michael Johnsen: Thirty per cent less emissions.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: The member for Upper Hunter says that gas energy produces 30 per cent less emissions, and I accept that. Gas is a clean energy source that is environmentally sustainable, but it must be used in homes in a safe way. We must ensure that the appliances are safe and that the installation of those appliances is safe. Under the terms of this bill there is a mechanism for dealing with serious electrical or gas accidents. Such accidents must be reported, so that the regulatory authorities can respond in an appropriate way.

We know that when a computer is bought, the technology it contains is already redundant, such is the pace of change in technology today. Electrical and gas appliances are regularly updated and renewed, and that is why there is an ongoing need to report any problems associated with new technology to keep our communities safe. We are greatly concerned that these appliances have the capacity to spark fires in domestic properties. It is therefore very important that the Government provide proper protection of the community in this regard. I understand that the Department of Fair Trading will provide educational material for industry ahead of the reforms being implemented, and I am confident that the outcome will be positive both for industry and for consumers. I note that the responsible Minister represents an electorate adjoining mine, Hornsby, and I commend the Minister for his strong work in bringing forward this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (10:27): I speak in support of the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017. I commend the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation for bringing this bill to the House with a view to implementing these important reforms. I support the reforms in this bill, in particular the proposed compliance and enforcement provisions around gas and electrical safety. These reforms will provide Department of Fair Trading investigators with additional powers to immediately issue a notice to a person or a company to cease using a gas or electrical appliance, article or installation that is deemed to be being used in an unsafe manner. Currently, investigators cannot address situations where a gas or electrical appliance, article or installation is being misused or used in a way that poses a real risk of harm. If Fair Trading investigators encounter a situation that is fundamentally unsafe, the only available remedy is to seek the assistance of the energy provider to shut down supply to the installation.

These reforms will allow an investigator to enter premises where it is suspected that a gas or electrical appliance, article or installation is being used in an unsafe manner that could lead to a major risk of death or injury

to a person or major damage to a property. Fair Trading investigators will be able to take immediate corrective action in situations where persons are using gas or electrical appliances, articles or installations in an unsafe manner which could potentially pose a risk of harm to consumers. Fair Trading will be able to prohibit the person from using the gas or electrical appliance, article or installation in such a way.

These powers are important. Fair Trading has received reports of people using liquefied petroleum gas [LPG] fuelled barbecues indoors or in fully enclosed balcony spaces. In recent times people have lost their lives due to using LPG barbecues inside their homes. These types of gas appliances are designed for outdoor use only and when used indoors can lead to incomplete combustion, a by-product of which is carbon monoxide, which can be lethal. These powers will reduce the incidence of gas and electrical injuries for consumers by allowing Fair Trading to undertake inspections of premises and assess gas and electrical equipment to ensure that only safe and compliant appliances, articles and installations are being used.

Reducing the incidence of non-compliant and unsafe gas and electrical products and equipment is crucial for NSW Fair Trading. Ensuring consumer safety and protection is of utmost importance to the Government. The introduction of penalties for offences against the provision will ensure that relevant offenders are made aware of the seriousness of committing a breach against this provision. These reforms will allow Fair Trading investigators to respond quickly to such situations and prevent unsafe dangerous situations from becoming a potentially lethal one. I understand that Fair Trading will provide information and educational material for stakeholders before the legislation commences. I am confident that these reforms will benefit both the industry and consumers. I commend the Minister for bringing this forward to the House today. This bill allows immediate action against those gas or electrical appliances, articles or installations that are unsafe in our community. I congratulate the Minister for bringing this piece of legislation to the House. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms ELANI PETINOS (Miranda) (10:31): I speak in support of the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017. The purpose of this bill is to consolidate gas and electricity consumer safety legislation into one single , incorporating the provisions of the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2004 and the primary provisions of the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2012 into one piece of legislation. The Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act revolves around the issues of consumer safety in relation to electrical products, installation and other related work. The Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation has sole responsibility for this Act. The majority of the Gas Supply Act 1996 was previously the responsibility of the Minister for Energy and Utilities, as this Act addresses the regulation of the supply of gas. The exception is section 83A, which is handled by the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation as it relates to the regulation around consumer safety issues.

The implementation and administration of the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill will be handled by NSW Fair Trading. NSW Fair Trading safeguards consumer rights, investigates potential breaches of the laws it administers and has a range of tools and powers available to support and enforce compliance with the laws it administers. The bill seeks to seize these resources to enhance the implementation and compliance of consumer safety laws around gas as well as electricity. The Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill and Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation have a lot in common.

This single uniform bill brings together key legislation that will enhance the administration and enforcement approach to the regulation of both energy sources and community safety, resulting in safer installation, repair and use of both types of energy for all the people in New South Wales, including the people of Miranda. It is clear to see that aligning gas and electrical safety breach penalties will ensure that similar gas and electrical offences will be equally dealt with when prosecuted. Specifically, it will introduce penalty infringement notices for gas-related offences that will extend and increase the range of enforcement actions available to NSW Fair Trading.

An infringement notice is a quick and cost-effective approach that a regulator can use to deter less serious and lower end offences. If compliance can be achieved by way of a lower level of enforcement and the offence has not caused serious consumer detriment, the option to issue a penalty infringement notice is available to Fair Trading. These changes will mean that gas-related safety issues will match the current enforcement actions available for electricity-related offences. Examples of these changes include raising the penalty amounts for gas-related offences committed under the proposed legislation, which will demonstrate that gas-related offences will be treated just as seriously as are electricity-related offences. The issuing of a rectification notice for non-compliant or defective gas or electrical installation work will allow Fair Trading to ensure installations are safe before use. Both these examples outline how this bill will bolster the current legislation whilst also streamlining the implementation through the proposed merger.

Extending existing provisions under the electricity consumer safety laws to also apply to gas consumer safety will make the laws consistent and create benefits including consistent administration and regulation of consumer safety matters relating to gas and electrical equipment and installations, efficiencies for NSW Fair Trading investigative staff, and consistent enforcement powers for both energy sources. Furthermore, under this

bill current electricity consumer protections will be preserved and strengthened, while gas protections will be updated and increased to a level equal to electricity. The bill will solidify enforcement powers, making sure they are adequate to ensure the safety of consumers of both gas and electricity. This merger of the regulation of these two related energy sources will facilitate improved implementation of consumer safety laws in these areas. Both these sources of energy can be high risk, and any potential offences committed against the relevant safety laws should be strongly discouraged.

The issuing of a rectification notice for non-compliant or defective gas or electrical installation work will allow Fair Trading to ensure that installations are safe before use. Traders who deal in the sale of gas and electrical articles and equipment will have only one source of law to refer to. As a result, this centralisation of legislation will ease compliance burdens for these businesses. Compliance and enforcement are essential to effective industry regulation. A range of activities and powers are needed to encourage and enforce compliance. Consistent compliance and enforcement powers will better address the conduct of gas and electrical retailers, persons or corporations who misuse gas or electrical articles or installations and the industry in general for both these energy sources.

NSW Fair Trading is committed to reducing product-related injuries. One way Fair Trading does this is by ensuring that items consumers buy for their home—such as electrical items and gas appliances which can be hazardous to both children and adults—are safe. The proposed gas and electricity consumer safety laws and the Australian Consumer Law require that certain goods must comply with safety requirements before they can be sold, and certain information about a product must be supplied with that product when it is sold. Where a problem occurs with a product, Fair Trading now has powers to remove unsafe gas goods in addition to its existing powers to remove unsafe electrical goods from sale.

This bill seeks to bolster NSW Fair Trading's commitment to consumer safety, as the merged laws will create better regulation of gas and electrical safety by providing consistent enforcement actions and modernising the existing laws. More specifically, this bill will enable authorised officers to prohibit the misuse of electrical articles, gas appliances or electrical or gas installations if the misuse presents a significant risk of death or injury to any person or significant damage to property.

For example, it will mean that rechargeable battery articles that are declared by the secretary to be high-risk battery articles will be regulated as "electrical articles" under the proposed Act. Consumers have every right to expect that they are buying safe goods, electrical products and installations. Effective and active regulation supporting this expectation will provide consumers with confidence in the products and equipment they are buying. In essence, this bill will streamline the way Fair Trading deals with these energy sources in both an administrative and an enforcement level. This will result in more efficient use of current resources and a system that can provide improved services in an expedient manner, whilst ensuring the safety of the citizens of New South Wales.

The safety of our people in this State is of paramount importance and this bill will simultaneously prioritise unimproved safety standards and practices, whilst easing compliance burdens for businesses and improving the efficiency of implementation and regulation of these energy sources by NSW Fair Trading. I note the presence of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, the Hon. Matt Kean, in the Chamber today and acknowledge his leadership and the tireless work done by him and his staff. For the reasons I have outlined, it is clear that these merged laws will create better regulation of gas and electrical safety by providing consistent enforcement actions and modernising the existing laws. For all the reasons outlined, I commend this bill to the House.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (10:41): I support the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017. The purpose of the bill is to consolidate gas and electricity consumer safety legislation into a single Act and to modernise the consumer protection framework. It is important that gas and electricity are used in a way that is safe and poses no unnecessary risk to life and property. Gas and electricity are essential to our society but poorly manufactured electrical articles or gas appliances and substandard gas fitting or wiring work present major hazards to both life and property. Gas and electricity safety legislation was administered within the Energy portfolio until the mid-1990s when consumer safety provisions were allocated to the newly established Minister for Fair Trading.

The legislation relating to the supply of safe electrical articles and safety for electricity transmission, distribution and consumer installation work was contained in the Electricity Safety Act 1945, which was jointly administered by the Minister for Energy and the Minister for Fair Trading. The Act was repealed by the introduction of the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2004 which transferred provisions applying to electricity network operators to other legislation within the Energy portfolio. The Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act focuses on matters of consumer safety with NSW Fair Trading having sole responsibility for its administration. This makes the legislation clearer and simpler to administer and regulate.

In relation to gas, the Minister for Energy and Utilities is responsible for the Gas Supply Act 1996 except for section 83A, which is the responsibility of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation. Section 83A deals with the regulations as to consumer safety in relation to gas appliances, gas and auto gas installations, gas fitting and auto gas work and gas meters. The former Minister for Resources and Energy supported the removal of section 83A from the Gas Supply Act in order to simplify the administration of the consumer safety provisions. Currently, the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation administers the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2004, the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2015 and the Gas (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2012, which provide for gas and electrical safety. The Gas Supply Act 1996 is administered by the Minister for Energy and Utilities and provides for the regulation of supply of gas.

The Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation administers section 83A of the Gas Supply Act, which is a regulation-making power relating to consumer safety issues. The consolidation of gas and electricity energy sources will provide benefits to consumers, including consistent regulation of consumer safety matters relating to gas and electrical equipment and installations, efficiencies for NSW Fair Trading investigative staff, and consistent enforcement powers for both energy sources. The bill will ensure that enforcement powers are adequate to ensure the safety of consumers when using both gas and electrical products and services. The bill also highlights the importance of consumer safety with regard to gas and the electrical installations and products.

There are many commonalities between the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act and the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation. They both provide for the safe use of gas and electricity by consumers and prescribe and enforce minimum safety standards for gas and electrical equipment and installations in New South Wales. Currently, the lack of power to issue penalty notices and/or to seize unsafe appliances in the Gas Supply Act hinders NSW Fair Trading's ability to efficiently monitor and to enforce consumer safety regulations for gas appliances in New South Wales.

What will happen to the two Acts being repealed and consolidated into one Act? These laws will be repealed once the consolidated Act commences. That Act will incorporate the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act and the elements of the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation to provide the main framework for regulation of consumer safety in relation to gas appliances and electrical articles and gas and electrical installations and related work. The consolidated Act will make consequential amendments to the Gas Supply Act 1996 by removing section 83A of that Act, which deals with a regulation-making power and which is again the responsibility of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation. The new regulation will be developed once the consolidated Act has been approved by the Parliament. The bill prescribes and enforces minimum safety standards for gas and electrical equipment and installations.

The consolidated legislation is cosmetically different from the current legislation. A few amendments are being made to the existing law, and most of them will apply consistency to compliance and enforcement provisions with regard to both gas and electrical offences. This bill represents an important upgrade of the legislation. It will reduce red tape and make it easier for NSW Fair Trading compliance officers to do their work. Importantly, it will keep consumers safe not only throughout New South Wales but more particularly in the Upper Hunter. We must do everything we can to ensure the safety of our constituents. I thank the Minister for introducing this bill. The Minister visited Singleton in my electorate last Sunday morning to announce new funding to implement safety measures for farmers using quad bikes. That is a wonderful initiative and I was very pleased to host the Minister on Sunday morning. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (10:48): I support the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017. This is an important bill for a variety of reasons. It delivers on the Government's commitment to reduce red tape and it increases protections for consumers. I note that the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation is in the Chamber. I commend him and his team for this important and fantastic piece of legislation. We hear too many stories in the media these days about gas and electrical products that become major hazards. People buy something in the belief that it will improve their life or make it easier, better or more fun. It might be a mobile phone, a gas barbecue, or even a caravan with gas appliances. No-one expects these things to cause injury or harm or to be potentially life threatening. Combining safety legislation in a single bill makes sense. This bill will also ensure that enforcement powers are consistent and that they are sufficient to safeguard consumers when using both gas and electrical products and services.

Until now Fair Trading has administered gas consumer safety to the full extent of the limitations of the Gas Supply Consumer Safety Regulation. In turn, NSW Fair Trading has adopted a stronger educational presence in the marketplace to promote compliance by traders and to ensure compliance is achieved in the absence of more robust powers and penalty infringement notices. The new Act will allow Fair Trading to promote compliance equally across both consumer safety energy sources. The bill also harmonises penalties for gas and electrical safety breaches. Penalties for gas-related offences have been increased to match those for electricity-related offences. This will provide a greater deterrent for breaches concerning consumer safety concerns.

A single piece of legislation will provide a more streamlined and consistent approach to regulation of the consumer safety aspects of both energy sources. It will also introduce clear improvements for gas consumer safety regulation. Providing consistent definitions and compliance and enforcement provisions will enable NSW Fair Trading to utilise the full range of compliance mechanisms now available for electricity safety to enforce safety standards in the gas industry. Fair Trading investigators will also be provided with an additional power to take immediate corrective action in situations where gas or electricity installations and appliances are being used in an unsafe manner, which poses a real risk of harm.

About 12 months ago, in a town in Queensland near Atkinsons Dam, a caravan burnt down due to a gas product incident. This bill provides protections to prevent such serious incidents happening in New South Wales. Additional powers are important to not only make the laws more effective but also give consumers more confidence. In 2016, almost 300 complaints were made to Fair Trading about gas and electrical safety matters. It is important that those matters are resolved quickly and fairly for both the consumer and the retailer. Additional powers may also mean the difference between life and death.

Let me provide one example, which specifically relates to clause 52 of the bill. Clause 52 more generally confers on an authorised officer the powers necessary to address situations in which gas or electrical installations or articles are being used in a way that poses a real risk of harm. Fair Trading investigators became aware of a liquefied petroleum gas installation in a caravan park that was using natural gas regulators instead of LPG regulators. Gas regulators control the pressure and output of gas. An installation that is fitted with the wrong type of regulator is non-compliant and can cause an explosion. The investigators requested that the regulators be exchanged for the correct type. When the owner refused to do so, they were powerless to address the issue. Every day that this situation continued there was the risk of a deadly explosion.

Imagine a young family on holiday, enjoying time off from school or work, who have no idea that there is anything wrong with the caravan they are occupying. They sleep in the caravan and use its appliances to cook a meal or to have a shower but, unbeknownst to them, they are potentially moments away from disaster, a tragedy or death. Even worse, Fair Trading, having become aware of this matter, could not enter the park and rectify the situation. Fair Trading called a gas supplier to disconnect the gas. Every minute of delay could have ended in tragedy. Members may remember a tragic accident in 2011 at a caravan park south of Perth, when a father and two children were killed in a gas explosion. Their deaths rocked the local community. Had an accident occurred in the example I have given, it would also have had a devastating impact on families and friends. The additional powers contained in this bill will prevent the occurrence of such deadly accidents.

I now refer to the proposed reforms. The bill repeals the 2004 Act and the 2012 regulation and consolidates the provisions of the Act and the regulation into one piece of legislation. This provides for consistent compliance enforcement regime for both energy sources, including an extension of compliance mechanisms that are currently available for gas safety. The bill provides the same maximum penalties for offences relating to gas safety as those that relate to electricity safety. The bill enables authorised officers to prohibit the misuse of electrical articles, gas appliances and electrical or gas installations if the misuse presents a significant risk of death or injury to any person or significant damage to property. It also enables certain rechargeable battery articles that are declared by the secretary to be high-risk battery articles to be regulated as electrical articles under the proposed Act. It enables regulations to be made to provide for the issue and enforcement of notices to rectify non-compliant electrical installation work and gas fitting work.

Further, the bill makes necessary consequential amendments to various other Acts and regulations. It deals with other minor matters and enacts provisions of a savings or transitional nature consequent on the enactment of the proposed Act. I thank the Minister for his work in relation to this legislation. We have heard about the devastating impact on people from accidents relating to unsafe electrical and gas products. This bill addresses those safety issues and I am proud to be part of this Government which looks after local communities. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (10:55): I make a brief contribution to the Gas and Electricity (Community Safety) Bill 2017 and endorse the remarks made by the member for Swansea. The Department of Fair Trading has again produced a bill for consideration by the House that removes red tape and provides protection for consumers. For some time the department has been conducting reviews that relate to consumer protection provisions. I remember the words of the previous Minister for whatever they call the fair trading Minister these days. What is the current title?

Mr Matt Kean: Innovation and Better Regulation.

Mr RON HOENIG: Several years ago, the predecessor of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation complimented the department on the way in which it is consolidating much of the legislation to protect consumers and to simplify the law. The Minister's predecessor was operating in the fine traditions of a Labor

Minister, in particular, the late Sid Einfeld. This is another step by the department. I had the opportunity to listen to the Fair Trading Commissioner this morning on ABC radio. He is a rather impressive individual and I am pleased that someone of his quality is providing advice to the Minister—who no doubt is learning about fair trading.

The complexities of consumer protection provisions have increased immeasurably but until the department started going through this process those complexities were not easy for consumers to understand. The Sale of Goods Act in New South Wales provided substantial assistance to consumers and it was followed by the Federal Trade Practices Act, which contained within it consumer protection provisions. But it was really not until the Department of Fair Trading became efficient and the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal became relatively efficient that consumers really received the benefit of these types of consumer provision improvements.

The important part of this bill is not only the consolidation of the legislation but also the fact that it takes consumer interests and protection away from the Minister for Energy and Utilities and places it within the scope and jurisdiction of the Fair Trading department so that it is controlled by and vested in one particular department. It is unfortunate that the department cannot have its powers extended to incorporate charges or services for gas and electricity and that those who have difficulties are relegated to the Ombudsman process. This bill contains a novel provision contained in section 6 of Part 1—which makes provision for high-risk battery articles to be subject to the legislation. The section states:

- (1) The Secretary, may, by order published in the Gazette, declare a battery article, or a battery article of a class, specified or described in the order to be a **high risk battery article** ...

In this section, "battery article" means:

- (a) a rechargeable battery or any of its components, or
- (b) an article that incorporates a rechargeable battery as a power source for the article.

Section 6 enables the Secretary to make an order under section 12 about an article which will, in effect, outlaw that particular article. That is an important and novel provision. In his second reading speech the Minister referred to hoverboards as being the prime example, but he did not refer to the model of Samsung phone that was prone to exploding in aircrafts. The provision is important but I always like to support legislative intervention that will have a particular tangible effect. One should not enact legislation just to deal with hoverboards. The problem with adding a novel provision to this bill is that the Government of the day and the Secretary of the relevant department must then take responsibility for dealing with every battery article that may cause damage. People will expect that the Secretary should act in respect of a battery article.

Members of this House know that that is an impossibility. How will the Secretary know the range of available battery articles? First, those articles are not necessarily acquired from reputable or regulated retailers; they are acquired from the internet, from overseas and from people who bring them into the country. Secondly, even in Australia those available battery articles that are purchased from flea markets and other locations can also be subject to inherent danger. For example, people have been electrocuted when using imitation Apple iPhone chargers to charge their phones. The Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation might like to enlighten the House with respect to this in his speech in reply. How will the very efficient department that he presides over deal with the plethora of these types of articles? How will the department know about these sorts of articles? Is it going to engage a variety of inspectors at considerable cost—some might say that it is a good cost—to ensure that there is an examination of battery products at every flea market and every minor retailer? Members of this House know that that is impossible.

This provision is not unreasonable but it creates an expectation and a responsibility on the Government of the day to utilise that power. If the Government gives itself a power then it is giving itself a specific function. If the Government gives itself a specific function, that function will come at a cost. If the Government does not find a way to apply section 6—other than with respect to the odd high-profile hoverboard—what is the purpose of the provision? I support it because, in theory, it is a good idea. It gives power to the department to deal with modern types of technology but the department—and its Secretary—is taking on a responsibility to utilise that provision.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (11:04): I wish to speak in this second reading debate on the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017. In doing so, I note that the Opposition does not oppose this legislation. The Government believes it is a sensible bill, and I commend the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation for introducing this much-needed bill to the House. It is 46 pages long; it is very thorough and comprehensive. I wish to thank the advisers in the gallery this morning for answering some of my questions about the bill, and for clarifying some issues.

The member for Upper Hunter progressed through some of the questions and answers about the bill. Some may regard it as a dry subject but it is really important that we clarify, for the citizens of New South Wales, the value of this piece of legislation. Let us face it, electricity and gas are extremely dangerous when used incorrectly. It is incumbent on officers of NSW Fair Trading to ensure that people use those utilities in the safest way possible. Officers must have the ability to shut things down or correct situations when it has been identified that utilities are being operated incorrectly. At the moment, officers do not have that ability and, in the interest of citizens' safety, it is very important that they are given that responsibility.

I turn now to some of the specific amendments of the bill. What are the changes to the laws in front of us at the moment? The bill prescribes and enforces minimum safety standards for gas and electrical equipment and installations, and makes enforcement and compliance provisions for gas and electrical safety. This merged bill is cosmetically different from the current legislation. There are a few changes to the existing laws, but most of the proposed changes will apply consistent compliance and enforcement provisions to both gas and electrical offences.

Currently NSW Fair Trading investigators are not able to issue penalty notices for gas-related offences. The use of penalty notices is a very effective compliance tool when it comes to ensuring consumer safety and compliant behaviour. Any member of this House who has been fined for speeding or has been issued with a penalty notice for doing the wrong thing will know that those penalties make people think twice before they do those sorts of things again. So, this is an important provision. The provision already exists under the Electricity Consumer Safety Act and the Australian consumer law and will be extended to gas-related offences. Penalty amounts for gas- and electricity-related offences will be consistent. Gas safety breach penalties will be equal to similar electrical safety breach penalties when they are prosecuted under the proposed laws.

The word "sell" is defined in this legislation. The definition of "sell" in the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act will now capture the display of gas appliances for sale. This will enable investigators more effectively to carry out compliance and enforcement in the gas appliance retail industry because they will not have to first purchase an uncertified gas appliance to prove the offence of the sale. When it comes to being able to seize and remove gas appliances that are deemed unsafe, those powers will be consistent with the powers of seizure in the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act. That will give NSW Fair Trading investigators the ability to remove or seize electrical articles when an offence has been committed in respect of those articles or if they deem that that article is about to become unsafe.

It is an important amendment because we want to ensure that people are safe and doing the right thing, but currently investigators cannot seize and remove potentially unsafe gas appliances from retail sale. Even though it is illegal to sell an uncertified appliance, the current wording of the offence does not capture the display of an uncertified appliance for sale. I found that quite surprising; I did not know that was the case until I read the bill. Fair Trading investigators are required to buy the non-compliant appliances to prove the offence. Fair Trading has the power to issue an order to prohibit the sale of such appliances, but when there is a breach of the order and the appliance is being displayed for sale by a business, again Fair Trading has to purchase the item in order to prove it was for sale in breach of the prohibition order.

When I was doing some research on this legislation I was reminded of a recent tragedy, although it does not relate to the bill. In February three members of our community passed away, Andrew and Annie Basnett and Andrew's brother Richard Basnett, who was from Canberra. Andrew and Annie were great members of the Gunning community and lived on a property at Oolong, which is between Goulburn and Yass. Andrew collapsed while cleaning out the empty cement water tank on their property with a motorised water pump. His wife, Annie, became concerned, rang neighbours and went to investigate. She entered the tank and also collapsed, as did her brother-in-law Richard, who followed her into the tank. Those three beautiful, amazing, community-minded and wonderful members of our community died in the most tragic way.

That accident reminded me of the importance and significance of the amendments that we are moving here today. Every life is absolutely sacred and precious. When I went to Andrew and Annie Basnett's funeral in Gunning, the Gunning Showground hall was overflowing—there were hundreds of people inside and outside of the hall. The beautiful girls from Frensham, the Madrigals, sang at the service. All Andrew and Annie's family and friends were absolutely devastated that this tragedy had happened in our community. I cannot think of a nicer couple. It is important that everybody stops to think before they do anything relating to electricity, gas or farming activities. A considerable amount of the Fair Trading portfolio pertains to farming activities. It is very easy for people to become comfortable with what they are doing on their farms; they have the equipment so they think they can quickly do a planned job. But it can end in tragedy as it did for the Basnetts in February this year. I extend my deepest sympathies to their family. The community misses them very much.

Mr Temporary Speaker, thank you for your indulgence in allowing me to relate that story to the House this morning. It is not exactly in line with this legislation but it is important that we highlight the significance of

getting it right so this Government can do all it can to ensure consumer safety, particularly in relation to gas and electricity. I thank the House for its attention.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (11:13): I speak in support of the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017. The bill relates to the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2004 and the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2012, which provide the main framework for the regulation of consumer safety when using gas appliances and electrical articles, and gas and electrical installations and related work. The objects of the bill are as follows:

- (a) to repeal the 2004 Act and 2012 Regulation and to consolidate the provisions of the Act and the primary provisions of the Regulation into one piece of legislation,
- (b) to provide for a consistent compliance and enforcement regime for both energy sources (including by extending certain compliance mechanisms currently available for electricity safety, to gas safety,
- (c) to align the maximum penalties for offences relating to gas safety with those relating to electricity safety,
- (d) to enable authorised officers to prohibit the misuse of electrical articles, gas appliances or electrical or gas installations if the misuse represents a significant risk of death or injury to any person or significant damage to property,
- (e) to enable certain rechargeable battery articles that are declared by the Secretary to be high risk battery articles to be regulated as electrical articles under the proposed Act,
- (f) to enable regulations to be made to provide for the issue and enforcement of notices to rectify non-compliant electrical installation work and gasfitting work.

This is extremely important legislation. We just heard the member for Cootamundra speak about the tragedy in February and how important this legislation is for her community. Similarly, this is very important legislation for the electorate of Myall Lakes. I can remember a number of cases over past years where gas bottles have exploded in caravans on caravan sites. Two or three years ago a house exploded in Tuncurry as a result of the use of a gas bottle and an electric heater. The house was reduced to matchwood—it was absolute annihilation—and the explosion damaged a significant number of adjacent houses. A further issue was that the house was old and contained quite a significant amount of fibro containing asbestos.

In those instances of explosions in caravans and the house in Tuncurry, insufficient safety measures were in place for gas and electricity to be used in the same close proximity, which allowed leaking gas, or gas that was being used, to explode. I know that the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation has the safety of consumers and the people of New South Wales in mind and that is why he has introduced this legislation. The Minister also has responsibility for section 83A of the Gas Supply Act. The majority of the Act deals with the regulation of the supply of gas and is the responsibility of the Minister for Energy and Utilities. Section 83A is a regulation-making power relating to consumer safety issues.

The Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation provides the main framework for consumer safety regulation of gas appliances and installations and related work. There are many similarities between the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2004 and the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2012. The benefits of consolidation will include consistent administration and regulation of consumer safety matters relating to gas and electrical equipment and installations, efficiencies for NSW Fair Trading operational staff dealing with a consolidated Act and providing consistent enforcement powers for both energy sources. The new Act will also address several deficiencies in the current gas consumer safety provisions.

A consolidated Act will lead to a more consistent administrative and enforcement approach to the regulation of both energy sources. This will reduce compliance burdens on industry and retailers and ensure enforcement powers are adequate to ensure the safety for consumers of both gas and electrical products and services. In particular, having only one source of regulation dealing with certification of appliances and their retail sale will assist retailers who deal in gas and electrical appliances. It is good to see that the key stakeholders have been consulted during the drafting of the bill—too often in the past that has been neglected—and are broadly supportive of this legislative framework. I will turn to some of the provisions of the bill. First, in part 2, section 8 of division 1 states:

Electrical articles must meet certain standards before they can be sold

- (1) A person must not sell a declared electrical article if the article is not of:
 - (a) a model of electrical article that has a model approval, or
 - (b) a class, description or model that has been approved or registered by the relevant authority for another State or Territory, or
 - (c) a model of electrical article that has been approved or certified under a recognised external approval scheme (being an approval or certification that is evidenced by marking on the article).

There are significant penalties for breaching section 8 for individuals, including 500 penalty units for a first offence; 750 penalty units or imprisonment for two years, or both, for a second or subsequent offence; and if it is a corporation, 5,000 penalty units for a first offence, or 7,500 penalty units for a second or subsequent offence. There are significant penalties for people who breach that section.

- (2) A person must not sell an electrical article if:
 - (a) the article is not marked in accordance with the regulations, or \
 - (b) the article does not comply with any one or more of the following:
 - (i) the class specifications (if any) for the article,
 - (ii) the model specifications (if any) for the article,
 - (iii) any other specifications prescribed by the regulations for the article,
 - (iv) any other requirements (including standards) prescribed by the regulations for the article.

Again, similar heavy penalties apply for people who breach that clause. Clause 9 states:

Acquisition guarantee may be a defence to certain offences

- (1) It is a defence to a prosecution of an offence against section 8(1) or (2) if the defendant proves that:
 - (a) the defendant received an acquisition guarantee in respect of the electrical article to which the offence relates from the person from whom the defendant obtained the electrical article, and
 - (b) the defendant had no reason to believe that, at the time of the alleged offence, the electrical article did not comply with the requirements of section 8(1) or (2).

Mr Speaker, I invite you to ask the member for Tweed to leave the Chamber or keep quiet, or both.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! The member for Tweed will come to order. The member for Myall Lakes will be heard in silence.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: This is good legislation. Its purpose is to protect consumers in New South Wales and to regulate the sale of gas appliances and electricity articles more transparently and those who are involved in the industry. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:22): I speak in support of the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017. As we have heard, the bill was introduced by the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, whose portfolio has been a hive of activity under this Government. We have had busy ministers in the portfolio to date, in Mr Roberts and Mr Dominello. The current Minister is maintaining the tradition of keeping busy improving regulation in this State, making business work more readily and easily to protect its consumers. Some would say it is good that this Minister is being kept busy. It is a welcome bill because it is a positive step that is bringing together regulation in the gas and electricity bills. We have had a consumer safety bill relating to electricity but we did not have one relating to gas.

Regulation has emerged from different agencies under different Acts which has not lent itself, therefore, to modernisation and standardisation through a single Minister's intervention. It makes sense to bring together the consumer regulatory functions in gas and electricity under a single Act so that businesses know which Act they are dealing with, and consumers will know where to get recourse. The standards in the industry will now be clear, simple and consistent, and the power of regulatory authorities will be enhanced. Other speakers on the bill have noted that some gaps existed in the capacity to regulate consumer safety in the sale of gas supply objects, implements or facilities because of the lack of having one legislation.

I am confident that the reforms in this bill will deliver a more consistent administrative, compliance and enforcement approach to gas and electrical safety. The reforms will especially ensure that gas and electrical consumer safety legislation is keeping up with marketplace products and equipment. I note that there are different products and different technologies emerging in this area. In recent years we have heard about the risk associated with lithium batteries, which would not have been an issue when the electricity safety bill was first introduced, but it now has to be brought into the regulatory net so that consumers are protected. It makes sense to keep the legislation up to date so that it has the capacity to monitor those new products.

The merger of the two energy sources under a single piece of legislation will improve consumer safety. It will provide equal and robust enforcement and compliance powers. Penalties for gas and electrical safety breaches will be equal when prosecuted, which is a positive step. This will provide a greater deterrent for breaches with respect to consumer safety. Breaches of gas safety will result in the same severe penalties that currently exist under the electricity consumer safety laws. The provision to issue penalty infringement notices for gas-related offences will establish a more proactive and immediate means to deter breaches of gas-related consumer safety. The ability for authorised officers to issue penalty notices for both gas- and electrical-related offences will promote

the Department of Fair Trading's presence in the marketplace. Powers for authorised officers to seize and remove potentially unsafe gas appliances from retail sale will assist the Department of Fair Trading to better protect consumers. We have heard about the anomaly that existed previously. Investigators could not seize articles without actually purchasing a product first to prove that it was being offered for sale. Clearly that was an unnecessary impediment to good regulation.

The measures in the bill will help investigators from the Department of Fair Trading to address situations in which gas or electrical installations or articles are being misused or used in a manner which poses a real risk of harm. Currently, if an investigator encounters a situation that is fundamentally unsafe, the only available remedy is to seek the assistance of the relevant energy provider to shut down supply to the installation. Having to rely on a corporation or a party who may be unwilling is an unsatisfactory situation when safety is the primary concern. The offence of unsafe use will provide investigators with powers to issue a notice to an individual or a corporation to cease the use of an electrical or gas product that is deemed to be used in an unsafe manner.

The bill provides for products that rely on certain battery types as a power source to be declared as an electrical article and, therefore, they will be subject to the existing approval certification requirements prior to being sold. This provision will allow Fair Trading to regulate new and emerging technology such as hoverboards—on which the member for Ku-ring-gai is clearly an expert—mobile phones and similar articles that use lithium-ion batteries. Once the bill is approved by Parliament, supporting regulations will be drafted and released for public consultation together with a regulatory impact statement. Feedback received on the draft regulations will be considered and any required changes will be made. The Department of Fair Trading has made several attempts to review the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation, but only now has the Department of Fair Trading been able to combine both section 83A of the Gas Supply Act 1996 and the primary provisions of the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation into this bill.

On 3 September 2010, following the review of and subsequent reforms to the New South Wales gas regulatory framework, Fair Trading commenced administration of an amended consolidated Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2004, renamed from the Gas Supply (Gas Appliances) Regulation 2004. That amended gas supply regulation was drafted by combining and consolidating regulatory functions from three separate agencies: the former Department of Water and Energy, WorkCover and Fair Trading. Clearly this division of responsibilities and focus has made it more difficult for authorities to properly regulate the field of gas products and supply, and it makes sense to bring them together now.

Fair Trading has administered the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation since its commencement in 2012. However, as the parent Act, the Gas Supply Act, is not administered by Fair Trading, no changes could be made that could carry across into the regulation. While Fair Trading has regulatory responsibility for section 83 of the Gas Supply Act, this Act is administered by the Minister for Energy and Utilities. Until now, Fair Trading has administered gas consumer safety to the full extent of the limitations of the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation. Fair Trading has in turn adopted a stronger educational presence in the marketplace to promote compliance from traders and to ensure that compliance is achieved in the absence of more robust powers and penalty infringement notices. The new Act will address those limitations and allow our regulatory authorities to do their job on our behalf.

This is a fantastic initiative. It is very positive for both industry and consumers. It enhances our faith in the safety of products, services and facilities in the marketplace. The provisions of the bill empower Fair Trading with appropriate enforcement powers to deal with gas and electricity consumer safety and therefore the bill is clearly in the public interest. The bill represents a positive outcome delivered by a busy Minister who is doing a good job. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (11:31): I am happy to speak in support of the comprehensive Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017. From the get-go I commend the Minister, who is in the Chamber, and his staff for their hard work in bringing forward this 46-page bill that has an emphasis on consumer safety. It would be remiss of me not to thank all the Minister's hardworking staff: Ben Coles, the Minister's chief of staff; Julia Steward, the senior policy adviser; Richard Hodge, the outstanding parliamentary liaison officer—being a PLO and looking after backbenchers is a thankless job—and Lynelle Collins, Warren Mcallister and Nancy Gangi from the department. This brilliant team has put together this very detailed bill.

The Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017 delivers on this Government's promise to reduce red tape for industry and will increase protections for consumers with respect to gas appliances. It will benefit the consumer, ensure more efficient regulation, and reduce compliance burdens for industry and business. Earlier speakers in the debate, the member for Cootamundra, the member for Myall Lakes and the member for Upper Hunter, spoke about the importance of working with stakeholders and the extensive consultation undertaken by the Minister and his staff with regard to drafting the bill. I spoke recently to my father-in-law, Charlie Donald, a gasfitter, plumber and licensed electrician by trade, about this legislation. He is a dedicated

tradesman who is now enjoying retirement in Victoria. Charlie said that this is exactly the kind of legislation the industry needs. He said that New South Wales leads the way, and I was pleased to get Charlie's feedback on the bill.

The consolidation of gas and electricity safety is another example of this Government's commitment to improving the functions of government and regulatory reform. These law reforms will bring a more consistent and enhanced administrative and enforcement approach to the regulation of both consumer safety and energy sources. Fair Trading has made several attempts in the past to review the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation, but only now has Fair Trading been able to combine both section 83A of the Gas Supply Act 1996 and the primary provisions of the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation in this bill. Gas and electricity safety legislation was administered within the Energy portfolio until the mid-1990s, when consumer safety provisions were allocated to the newly established portfolio of the Minister for Fair Trading. Legislation relating to the supply of safe electrical articles and safety for electricity transmission, distribution and consumer installation work was contained in the Electricity Safety Act 1945, jointly administered by the Minister for Energy and the Minister for Fair Trading.

Mr Geoff Provost: Name them!

Mr ADAM CROUCH: The Act was repealed by the introduction of the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2004. I note the interjection of the member for Tweed. The member was warned earlier about interjecting so I ask you to remind him of that ruling. Mr Temporary Speaker.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I remind the member for Tweed that under Standing Order 79 interjections are disorderly.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: The 2004 Act transferred provisions applying to electricity network operators to other legislation within the Energy portfolio. The Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act focuses on matters of consumer safety, with NSW Fair Trading having sole responsibility for its administration. This makes the legislation clearer and simpler to administer and regulate—a key feature of this bill, which is all about making the legislation clearer and simpler. The regulation of this industry is important because of the consumer safety aspects of the industry. We all know that both gas and electricity are potentially dangerous. Currently, the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation administers three different parts of legislation that prescribe and regulate gas and electrical safety. These are: the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2004, the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2015 and the Gas (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2012.

The Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation also administers one section, section 83A, of the Gas Supply Act. Section 83A is a regulation-making power relating to consumer safety issues. Section 83A deals with regulations as to consumer safety in relation to gas appliances, gas and autogas installations, gasfitting and autogas work and gas meters. However, the rest of the Gas Supply Act, with the exception of section 83A, is administered by the Minister for Energy and Utilities. The former Minister for Resources and Energy supported the removal of section 83A from the Gas Supply Act as this will simplify the administration of the consumer safety provisions.

The removal of the consumer safety provisions of section 83A from the Gas Supply Act simplifies administration of the consumer safety and other regulatory arrangements. Consolidation of the gas and electricity energy sources will provide benefits including consistent regulation of consumer safety matters relating to gas and electrical equipment and installations, efficiencies for NSW Fair Trading investigative staff and consistent enforcement powers for both energy sources. Consistent regulation and a better functioning Office of Fair Trading means a number of benefits for the people of New South Wales.

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

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Mr Temporary Speaker, I appreciate your upholding order in the Chamber; you are doing a wonderful job. I shall return to my remarks regarding the consistent regulation of consumer safety matters relating to gas and electrical equipment and installations, efficiencies for NSW Fair Trading to investigate staff and consistent enforcement of powers for both energy sources. Consistent regulation for a better functioning Fair Trading office means benefits for the people of New South Wales—obviously less public expenditure, a lesser compliance burden for industry and retailers, and greater public safety for consumers, among other things.

The consolidation of these consumer safety laws into a single piece of legislation will provide a clear, consistent and strong regulatory framework. Having one piece of legislation will provide a more streamlined approach to the regulation of different energy sources, provide a more consistent approach to regulation and introduce clear improvements for gas consumer safety regulation. What are these improvements? There are now consistent definitions for gas and electrical safety for consumers, and NSW Fair Trading will have improved

powers to enforce safety standards across both the electricity and gas industries and will be able to ensure that both the gas and electricity industries are compliant. [*Extension of time*]

Consolidating the electricity and gas laws will also ensure that the current level of consumer safety will be maintained, which is very important. Not only that, but the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017 will strengthen gas consumer safety to a level that has previously only existed for electricity consumer safety regulation. Regulation of both energy sources will be improved by more powers being given to Fair Trading officers to enforce compliance where either gas or electrical appliances are being used in an unsafe manner. The merged laws will create better regulation of gas and electrical safety by providing consistent enforcement actions and modernising the existing laws. It is yet another example of this Government's commitment to reducing red tape, which will improve the functioning of consumer safety regulation and benefit the consumer, industry and businesses. I highlight the great work done in this 46-page bill by the Minister and his staff, whom I mentioned earlier. It is an exceptional example of how the Government is getting on with the job of reducing red tape and streamlining government resources. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (11:42): In contributing to debate on the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017, I commend the member for Terrigal for his in-depth knowledge of the bill and his speech in the Chamber. The purpose of the bill is to consolidate gas and electricity consumer safety legislation into a single act and to modernise the consumer protection framework. A consolidated Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act will incorporate the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2004 and elements of the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2012. The Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act focuses on matters of consumer safety with respect to electrical articles and installations. The Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation has sole responsibility for this Act. It is pertinent to note that recent Government decisions have allowed Queensland contractors with electrical licences to practise on the New South Wales side of the border, and in turn Queensland has recognised New South Wales licensees. This is a major cross-border issue in my area, which relates to safety.

It is also pertinent to note that the significant flood event that occurred four weeks ago saw my area receive in excess of 780 millilitres of rain in 24 hours. When the floodwaters receded, electrical safety was a major concern—as was the safety of gas and gas installations, with gas cylinders floating down the river. The simple licensing system allowed Essential Energy to restore power, and I congratulate Essential Energy on its outstanding work. It was an issue that a certified electrician had to double-check installations before the power was turned back on. That caused some delays, and unfortunately some people in Tweed restocked their fridges and freezers only to have their electricity cut off again for 24 hours so that their installations could be checked. However, Essential Energy moved quickly and the Minister's office was of great assistance in dealing with some complex regulation issues. Many phone calls were made to Sydney. A flood and the human misery it creates are bad enough, so having a ministerial office show some latitude in relation to some of the regulations is much appreciated. Mention has been made of that in not only the residential community but also the business field.

The major reforms in the bill will align and introduce penalties for offences relating to gas safety so they match those relating to electricity safety; introduce penalty infringement notices—we seem to introduce a lot of penalties in this place—for gas safety; amend the definition of a sale so that gas appliances displayed for advertising will be treated as being displayed for sale; enable authorised officers to seize or remove any unsafe gas appliance where an offence has been committed; and enable authorised officers to issue a notice to a person or a company prohibiting the misuse of electrical articles, gas appliances or electrical or gas installations if the misuse presents a significant risk of death or injury to anyone or any property. This is particularly relevant in my area, where there are more people over the age of 65 than in any other electorate in the State. One might say we are an ageing population in the Tweed, and things can be confusing for consumers, particularly the elderly. The more safety information, the better. NSW Fair Trading does an excellent job and is respected by elderly people in my area.

For the information of members, 85 per cent to 90 per cent of the electricity in my electorate comes from across the border in Queensland, as does our reticulated gas. Inspectors have a vital role in keeping the community safe. Before I came into this place I managed a large licensed club with a reticulated gas system. Inspectors noted that there was a significant gas leak late one evening, which caused the shutdown of the club. There was a full-scale evacuation. Fire and Rescue NSW and the New South Wales police attended while we waited for an inspector. The inspector arrived and fixed the problem. How did he do that? He put a wooden stake into the pipe and whacked it once or twice with a wooden mallet. He then put the mallet back in his car and drove away, while the emergency services personnel and I stood there saying, "That was really good!"

The inspectors do a great job. Currently, inspectors cannot access or address situations where a gas or electrical installation, article or appliance is being misused or used in a way that poses a real risk of harm. If a Fair Trading inspector encounters a situation that is fundamentally unsafe, the only available remedy is to seek the

assistance of the energy provider to shut down supply to the installation. This new power allows investigators to deal immediately with such situations and to prevent an unsafe or dangerous situation from becoming a potentially lethal one.

In respect of the issuing of a rectification notice for non-compliance work, as of 1 July 2016 NSW Fair Trading became responsible for safety inspections of smart electrical metres and related installation work. As of 1 December 2017, NSW Fair Trading will be responsible for the inspection of all electricity meters. This work was previously the responsibility of electricity distributors. NSW Fair Trading undertakes field-based inspections of installation work informed by certificates of compliance for the work and intelligence or customer feedback, such as complaints. Where necessary, NSW Fair Trading will issue orders for the rectification of defective work and arrange for reinspection of the installation. The power for inspectors to issue and enforce a rectification notice will also be extended to gas and electrical installation work that is found on inspection to be non-compliant.

High-risk battery articles, such as hoverboards, mobile phones and similar articles that use lithium-ion batteries could be classed as a declared electrical article, and therefore be subject to the existing approval certification requirements prior to being sold. NSW Fair Trading will be able to regulate new and emerging technology that could potentially cause injury or harm to persons or property. This has some significance in my electorate because it has one of the highest rates of uptake of solar energy and power boards or battery walls. A large number of people in my electorate live off the grid and therefore rely on the safety of their equipment. That is important because some of them live in remote areas. The increase in safety that this legislation affords will improve their safety and that of the wider community.

We should do everything we can to reduce red tape. Many members have run their own small and large businesses or worked for large companies. This Government's macro direction is to make it easier to implement common sense legislation and for small businesses do what they do best—that is, run their businesses. Members have often said that without small business our economy would probably grind to a halt. I congratulate the Minister and his staff on the introduction of this legislation, and I hope to see even more common sense in legislation presented to this House. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (11:52): I am delighted to have the opportunity to speak in support of the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017. I acknowledge the work of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation and congratulate him on introducing the bill and on recognising the need to institute these reforms. I am a big supporter of the Minister. I commend him for his hard work and I wholeheartedly endorse his acknowledgement of the need to introduce this legislation. The bill prescribes and enforces minimum safety standards for gas and electrical equipment and installations, and enforcement and compliance provisions for gas and electrical safety. Consumer safety legislation is paramount in identifying changes in the market and ensuring that products and equipment always meet an appropriate standard.

One cannot stress how important it is that gas and electricity are always utilised in a manner that is safe and which does not pose a risk to life and property. We all know that gas and electricity are essential to our society, but poorly manufactured electrical articles or gas appliances and substandard gasfitting or wiring work present major hazards to life and property. Gas and electricity safety legislation was administered within the Energy portfolio until the mid-1990s, when consumer safety provisions became the responsibility of the newly established Fair Trading portfolio and its Minister. Legislation relating to the supply of safe electrical articles and safety for electricity transmission, distribution and consumer installation work was contained in the Electricity Safety Act 1945, jointly administered by the Minister for Energy and the Minister for Fair Trading. The Act was repealed on the introduction of the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2004, which transferred provisions applying to electricity network operators to other legislation within the Energy portfolio.

The Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act focuses on matters of consumer safety, with NSW Fair Trading having sole responsibility for its administration. This makes the legislation clearer and simpler to administer and to regulate. The Minister for Energy and Utilities is responsible for the Gas Supply Act 1996, except for section 83A, which is the responsibility of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation. Section 83A deals with regulations covering consumer safety in relation to gas appliances, gas and autogas installations, gasfitting and autogas work, and gas meters. The former Minister for Resources and Energy supported the removal of section 83A from the Gas Supply Act because it would simplify the administration of the consumer safety provisions. The Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation now administers the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2004, the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2015, and the Gas (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2012, which deal with gas and electrical safety.

The Gas Supply Act 1996 is administered by the Minister for Energy and Utilities and provides for the regulation of the supply of gas. The Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation administers section 83A of the Gas Supply Act, which is a regulation-making power relating to consumer safety issues. The removal of the consumer safety provisions of section 83A from the Gas Supply Act simplifies administration of the consumer

safety and other regulatory arrangements. Consolidation of gas and electricity energy sources will provide benefits, including consistent regulation of consumer safety matters relating to gas and electrical equipment and installations, and efficiencies for NSW Fair Trading investigative staff and consistent enforcement powers for both energy sources. The bill will ensure that enforcement powers are adequate to ensure the safety of consumers of both gas and electrical products and services. It highlights the importance of consumer safety for gas and electricity installations and products.

There are many commonalities between the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act and the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation. They both provide for the safe use of gas and electricity by consumers, and prescribe and enforce minimum safety standards for gas and electrical equipment and installations in this State. The current lack of power to issue penalty notices and/or to seize unsafe appliances under the Gas Supply Act hinders NSW Fair Trading's ability to efficiently monitor and to enforce consumer safety requirements for gas appliances in New South Wales. We know that the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation is efficient in collecting fines. His success rate in respect of me is notable, but I am doing my best to change my behaviour. As was acknowledged in the second reading speech, the bill will deliver on the Government's commitment to reduce red tape for the industry, and will also increase protections for consumers in respect of gas appliances. While we might not be successful in our appeals, at least the Minister is defending our State. He is also doing his best to continue this Government's record over six years of cutting red tape and protecting our consumers.

These reforms will provide improvements through a single piece of legislation that generates a more streamlined and consistent approach to regulation of the consumer safety aspects of both energy sources. It also introduces clear improvements for gas consumer safety regulation. Providing consistent definitions and compliance and enforcement provisions will enable NSW Fair Trading to utilise the full range of compliance mechanisms now available to it to ensure electricity safety and to enforce safety standards in the gas industry. NSW Fair Trading investigators will be provided with an additional power to take immediate corrective action in situations where gas or electricity installations or appliances are being used in an unsafe manner that poses a real risk of harm. Having only one source of legislation for reference will reduce compliance burdens on the industry and retailers. This is the heart of the bill that has been introduced by the Minister. Through the Minister's wonderful departmental staff—

Mr Adam Crouch: There are indeed an outstanding team.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: They are an outstanding team. Having only one source of legislation will reduce compliance burdens on the industry. The new Act will allow Fair Trading to promote compliance equally across both consumer safety energy sources. This is good regulation. Any bill that cuts red tape and provides better safety standards for consumers is good legislation. I am confident that these reforms will benefit both the industry and consumers. I thank the Minister for introducing the bill and I commend it to the House.

Visitors

VISITORS

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): I acknowledge the presence in the Speaker's gallery of Audrey Johns.

Bills

GAS AND ELECTRICITY (CONSUMER SAFETY) BILL 2017

Second Reading

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (12:00): I speak in support of the consolidation of the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act and the Gas (Consumer Safety) Regulation. Previous speakers have outlined why it is necessary to have a consistent regime for the regulation of both of these power source industries. It is trite for me to cover the same material. I will outline why it is so important for the Government, through the Department of Fair Trading, to ensure consumers are properly protected in relation to products that are being made available to the citizens of the State. As recently as 2015, all gas cartridge cookers were suspended for sale in New South Wales and recalled across Australia by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. This action followed incidents involving these cookers in which units overheated and exploded, which caused a serious safety issue. The media release issued at the time by the Department of Fair Trading stated:

NSW Fair Trading Commissioner Rod Stowe is warning consumers not to buy portable butane "lunchbox" type cookers due to safety issues, including overheating.

"We recommend consumers do not buy portable cookers of this type," ...

"Compliance certification for all current models of "lunchbox" type gas cookers has been suspended by the independent safety certifiers and cookers of this type can no longer be sold lawfully in NSW.

"Up to 31 models of butane gas cookers have been withdrawn from sale as they do not meet Australian Standards. Retailers in NSW should no longer be stocking or selling these products.

"Testing, undertaken at the request of NSW Fair Trading and other State gas regulators, has found a fault with the cookers' shut-off valves, posing a risk that the devices may overheat and could explode.

"These cookers are lightweight and portable and are popular for use in camping and caravanning. They are inexpensive and commonly sell for between \$15 and \$30."

Mr Stowe said consumers who have purchased cookers should refrain from using them.

"If these products malfunction they can potentially cause serious injuries and I'd encourage people to stop using them," ...

The media release continued:

"Consumers who have purchased a non-compliant gas cooker and have proof of the purchase should return the product to their retailer and seek a refund of the full purchase price as soon as possible.

"Fair Trading is continuing to work with retailers, manufacturers and other states to ensure products are removed from shelves.

The recommendation was not only to recall existing products but also for units sold in the past to be discarded. Although the matter was given significant attention in the media, it is not clear that all affected units were actually recovered or discarded. On further investigation, it became clear that many products that had passed initial product safety certification were no longer being manufactured to the standard of the certification. The second problem I allude to is that of the deceptive practices often adopted by overseas manufacturers. These practices are not restricted to the changing of specification across manufacturing batches; there have been instances of counterfeiting of both electrical and gas products. A website that offers advice on the counterfeit risk of electrical goods to electrical contractors states:

While very few electrical professionals would deliberately supply or install sub-standard electrical systems, anyone could inadvertently do it when they handle counterfeit electrical accessories.

All electrical professionals should be conscious of the law of "subrogation", which enables insurance companies to recoup money they have paid out on insurance claims from other parties who can be identified as being partially or fully responsible for the cause of the claim. So if you knowingly or unknowingly supply, install or specify counterfeit electrical goods that are found to have contributed to an insurance claim ... because of being sub-standard or unsafe, you [the electrical contractor] could be held liable for personal damages and possibly face imprisonment.

The website goes on to make suggestions about how to identify potentially counterfeit goods and the like. The alignment of electrical and gas regulations is a good step to reinforce the ability of NSW Fair Trading to protect consumers from these types of practices. However, I would like to suggest additional steps that could be pursued to help protect Australian consumers, brand owners and retailers. Standardising the method of communicating information on a product recall is an important step towards ensuring all stakeholders in the supply chain are ready and able to remove a product as quickly and comprehensively as possible. For example, both the gas and electrical goods industries could mirror the approach of the healthcare and grocery industries by adopting an industry-developed electronic recall notice communication system. The participation of all stakeholders can ensure they are all prepared to communicate and enact recall notices in the shortest time with an audit trail. That is just a suggestion.

Reducing the impact of counterfeiting and being able to identify affected product as opposed to unaffected product is an important way to reduce the sale of hazardous products and to prevent damage to the reputation of trading partners. The medical devices industry recently started on a journey to adopt a global standard for unique device identification. A similar system to identify each individual item rather than the current product-based identification system used by industry could help provide greater clarity about which products are affected and which are returned and/or destroyed. It could also provide the foundation for more accurate advice to consumers about whether products are now safe to use. Both these reforms can push industry towards greater control of traceability of their products across the whole supply chain. Full traceability involves the identification of individual items, the capture of time at each location and the communication of this information in one language across the trading partners that play a part in the supply chain of those products.

In some countries, this type of system is in operation in other industries. Intervention by government to help industry enact these reforms is vital to the work that is being done by the NSW Fair Trading regulators—for example, to ensure that products that can cause harm to consumers are traced and recalled quickly. Supply chains are complex, and all the many different stakeholders must participate for these reforms to work effectively. Members have made suggestions as to how we can ensure that consumers are protected. This bill acknowledges that the energy industry should be regulated and that the regulations apply evenly across the electrical and gas products industries. In many respects, this is an essential reform. This is the first bill the Minister has introduced to this House, so he will probably frame it. I hope he will also frame the speeches of all the members who spoke in support of it.

Mr Matt Kean: Just yours.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I have the Minister's undertaking. I will ensure that he is provided with a gilt-edged copy. I acknowledge that the Minister is well advanced on the important task of looking after the consumers of this State. I commend the bill to the House and I welcome the appointment of the Minister to the Innovation and Better Regulation portfolio.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:11): I speak on the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017. I note the presence in the Chamber of the Minister who has carriage of this bill. I want to address the importance of the proposed powers that will form part of this bill. As previous speakers have said, every year NSW Fair Trading receives hundreds of complaints. The department does a great job in resolving complaints and acting, where it can, to ensure the safety of the community. In the Tamworth electorate, constituents come to my office with questions about the roles and responsibilities of NSW Fair Trading. After directing constituents to the Fair Trading office, which is located a short walk from my office, I generally receive positive feedback about the staff, who do their best to try to assist constituents. I thank the staff at the NSW Fair Trading office in Tamworth for their great work. But we can do more.

For example, Fair Trading has received reports of people using liquefied petroleum gas [LPG] fuelled barbecues indoors or in fully enclosed balcony spaces. That is a dangerous practice. These types of gas appliances are designed for outdoor use only. When these appliances are used indoors, incomplete combustion can lead to the release of the by-product carbon monoxide, which can be lethal. I have seen barbecues situated on verandas that are enclosed with plastic wraparound curtains for protection from the wind. The installation of plastic curtains on a veranda make the area more comfortable, but it can become dangerous if barbecues are used in those enclosed situations. Another example is the installation of a gas hot water heater on a fully enclosed balcony. If the area is not properly ventilated, it can lead to the build-up of carbon monoxide.

Under current laws, NSW Fair Trading investigators are unable to require owners to cease using LPG barbecues in a dangerous manner or to properly ventilate an area. The impact in such situations can be, at best, dangerous and, at worst, deadly. Barbecue appliances have compliance plates and safety warnings that clearly state they are for outdoor use only. The use of a barbecue in an enclosed indoor environment creates a hazard. In August 2012 in Victoria, a 40-year-old male, who took a heater that was designed for outdoor use inside a small flat, was found deceased the following day from carbon monoxide poisoning. Prior to this legislation, if a similar situation had occurred in New South Wales and neighbours had contacted Fair Trading about the smell of gas coming from someone's property, Fair Trading would not have been able to assist. With the introduction of this bill, which contains a provision that addresses the misuse of gas appliances, Fair Trading will be able to attend the premises, together with emergency services, such as the Police Force, and prevent a similar outcome.

Through this bill, NSW Fair Trading will have the ability to participate in the regulatory and inspection process. The bill also has the potential to save the lives of those who may not be aware that an apparatus is not suitable for the environment in which they are using it. The legislation may prevent gas poisoning and death. Let me share another example. In January 2013, four children in East London were treated for carbon monoxide poisoning after their grandmother had brought a barbecue indoors to dry her washing. Her actions resulted in a most unfortunate situation. The grandmother put the barbecue in the family kitchen and turned it on and then left the house. Her three-year-old granddaughter was overcome with gas and collapsed. She was treated in hospital, along with five of her relatives. Thankfully, all of them survived. It was a dangerous and silly thing to do. I hope we never have a similar case in New South Wales.

People must exercise common sense when using appliances. If instructions state, "For outdoor use only", that means for outdoor use only. Such an appliance should not be used indoors, regardless of the circumstances, even for a short time. There is a reason that these appliances are prohibited to be used indoors. Similarly, candles are used for therapeutic or aromatic purposes and for lighting. But if they are left unattended, they can cause fires and subsequent property damage or even death. People must be aware of the dangers involved. It is important that proper safeguards are in place and that NSW Fair Trading has the appropriate powers to deal with these situations. In October last year, a banned LPG gas heater caused an explosion at Bondi Junction; a man was burnt and 30 residents were evacuated from the apartment building. Fire and Rescue NSW representatives said that the heater had been banned two years earlier.

The bill prescribes and enforces minimum safety standards for gas and electrical equipment and installations and enforcement and compliance provisions for gas and electrical safety. Consumers should be aware of safety information—such as a ban on a product—that is broadcast or advertised in newspapers. The member for Epping spoke about the fillers in the gas cartridges of portable gas barbecues and about the continuing use of a particular barbecue even though it is dangerous. If anyone thinks they have an appliance that is faulty or has been recalled or banned, the common sense approach is to follow up on the safety notice and not use the appliance.

The merged legislation contains changes to the existing laws. The proposed changes include consistent compliance and enforcement provisions to both gas and electrical offences. Currently, Fair Trading investigators are unable to issue penalty notices for gas-related offences. Penalty notices are an effective compliance tool and send an immediate signal about the importance of consumer safety requirements. This will assist in protecting the health and safety of those who use appliances fuelled by gas. The relevant provision that already exists under the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act and the Australian Consumer Law will be extended to gas-related offences and penalties for gas- and electricity-related offences will be consistent. Penalties for gas safety breaches will be equal to those for electrical safety breaches when prosecuted under the proposed laws. [*Extension of time*]

Gas contains dangerous properties but it cannot be seen. A chemical is added to gas that creates a rotten egg smell so that people can detect a gas leak and remove themselves from a potentially dangerous environment. Currently, investigators cannot seize and remove potentially unsafe gas appliances from retail sale. Although it is illegal to sell an uncertified appliance, the current wording of the offence does not capture the displaying of an uncertified appliance for sale. This means that Fair Trading investigators are required to buy the non-compliant appliance to prove the offence. Fair Trading has the power to issue an order to prohibit the sale of such appliances. However, where there is a breach of the order and the appliance is displayed for sale, Fair Trading has to purchase the item in order to prove that a business is selling the product in breach of a prohibition order.

Through this bill, Fair Trading investigators will have the power to investigate and will be able to serve a notice on a person or a company prohibiting the use of a gas or electrical appliance, article or installation deemed to be used in an unsafe manner. This new power under the consolidated laws will allow Fair Trading to do its job properly. Under the current law, Fair Trading investigators have to buy an item that is for sale in order to prove that the business is in breach of a prohibition order. They are archaic rules and regulations. The new powers under the consolidated laws will enable Fair Trading officers to do their job in a more efficient and timely manner. Ultimately, the community is the benefactor as a result of the removal of unsafe items from display.

Currently, investigators cannot address situations where a gas or electrical installation, article or appliance is being misused or is used in a way that poses a real risk of harm. If a Fair Trading investigator encounters a situation that is fundamentally unsafe, the only available remedy is to seek the assistance of the energy provider to shut down supply to the installation. A timely response is difficult when an energy provider has to be contacted and engaged to lock down and make an area safe. The new power in this bill will allow investigators to immediately deal with the situation, which will help prevent an unsafe or dangerous situation from becoming a potentially lethal one.

This bill puts community safety first by allowing Fair Trading officers to do their job in a timely manner and, ultimately, to prevent a death. This bill, which takes a common sense approach, is good legislation. I thank the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, who is present in the Chamber, for bringing forward these important reforms. I congratulate the Minister, his team, Ben Coles, Julia Steward, Richard Hodge, and the departmental staff—Lynelle Collins, Warren McAllister and Nancy Georgy—on their great work in bringing forward this common sense bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (12:26): It is a pleasure to speak in debate on the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017. My friend the member for Tamworth acknowledged the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, who is present in the Chamber. The Minister, the good member for Hornsby, has the community's interests at heart and understands the need for safety and the reduction of red tape. They are two important tasks of this Government: looking after our community and cutting red tape for businesses.

Whilst waiting to contribute to this debate, I perused the good Minister's Facebook page and I noted that safety is at the forefront of his mind, such as quad bike safety training for farmers. The Minister looks after not only the people of Hornsby but also, quite rightly, as it falls within his ministerial duties, everyone across the State. I also noted that the Minister has been discussing asbestos issues in the Holbrook-Albury area, another issue of safety within our community. Safety and red tape reduction go to the heart of this bill. I congratulate the Minister on this bill, which is the first bill he has brought before the House. It is an excellent way to start off his dedicated service to the community and the Government as the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, and I am confident that he will continue to produce quality work.

The bill addresses consumer safety and ensures that Fair Trading has the powers necessary to ensure the safe use of gas appliances and installations. With the winter months approaching, the introduction of this bill is timely. The bill protects consumers from unsafe electrical products and harmonises consumer safety laws in order to make the law simpler for businesses. This issue strikes very close to my heart. My home recently was subjected to a significant hailstorm, causing damage to the roof and subsequently the electricity facilities and services within the house. With the exposure of live wires, it was a dangerous situation. So legislation relating to electricity safety issues resonates with me.

Similarly, it was not that long ago that the member for Tamworth mentioned the smell of gas in one's home. I came home after my young daughter had been cooking and, luckily, from a safety perspective I was able to smell gas in the kitchen and I realised the appliances had been left on. That is how simple it is and that is why it is necessary to put safety at the forefront of our considerations. It is often the case that when we read media reports about gas and electricity incidents and the lack of consumer safety, it seems to involve young people, the elderly or the vulnerable in our community. I cannot over-emphasise the importance of this bill.

As I indicated, the above initiatives are important. Recently hoverboards have been in favour, particularly with children, and hoverboards have exploded as a result of batteries overheating. The bill encompasses not only electricity and gas appliances but also batteries. By extending the electrical goods safety scheme to products that rely on rechargeable batteries, this Government will ensure that the Department of Fair Trading has all the power it needs to remove dangerous products from the shelves and out of the hands of those who may be injured by them. The Government is responding to a safety risk that has arisen from technology advances and it is a great example of good government.

This Government has been long committed to making life easier for businesses, including saving the New South Wales economy up to \$100 million through the reduction of red tape. We did that by repealing laws that added an unnecessary burden to business. Recently we cut costs for people requiring compulsory third party [CTP] green slips, which was a great reform. This bill continues that initiative by simplifying the law. The law should be accessible to us all, not only highly paid legal professionals, and this bill is making that happen. The reform this Government implemented in relation to CTP green slips was well received by my community in Seven Hills. My constituents commented that they are glad that this Government tackled that issue, which is providing a reduction in their day-to-day living expenses.

But, as we go into the winter months, the protections this bill will provide for consumers using unsatisfactory gas appliances are especially important. I wish to spend a bit of time focusing on those added protections that this bill will provide to consumers. For the first time, it will be unlawful to advertise and offer for sale gas appliances that are not certified. Currently, it is unlawful only to transact the sale of uncertified gas appliances. The problem is that the Department of Fair Trading struggle to prove an offence has occurred. In the past, officers from the Department of Fair Trading have been forced to buy gas appliances to prove an offence. I have a policing and prosecution background and fully understand the frustration of those in regulatory enforcement when they are faced with silly or minor details that cause them great difficulty in proving an offence before a court. This side of the House should support initiatives that will assist the Department of Fair Trading in conducting their necessary duties efficiently and effectively.

This bill will mean that if retailers are recklessly putting the public at risk by selling unsafe gas appliances, the Department of Fair Trading will have the necessary power to fix the problem. The Government has no time for traders who put the health of consumers at risk. It is for that reason that we are increasing penalties for gas appliance offences. Selling dangerous appliances puts people's lives at risk. We all know the horrors that arise when gas appliances go wrong. Gas explosions can easily occur when connections to the gas networks are faulty and they can result in horrific injuries. Only a few months ago in the United Kingdom a huge gas explosion destroyed a number of buildings and injured approximately 34 people. One witness said they saw people with significant injuries as a result of that explosion, which was heard up to 100 kilometres away.

While I understand that the cause of the explosion is still being investigated, this tragedy illustrates why we need to do everything we can to stop the sale of dodgy gas appliances, and faulty installations and connections which may lead to such devastating tragedies. Gas explosions have occurred closer to home. In 2016, two persons in Castle Hill—an area known to me and the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation; it is close to Hornsby and the Seven Hills electorate—were badly burned when their gas bottle exploded. Tragedies occur when gas appliances go wrong and we need to do everything we can to reduce those risks so that innocent people are not injured. [*Extension of time*]

Gas appliances not only present a risk of exploding. For example, in 2012 a 40-year-old Victorian male who was recently separated from his wife and children took a heater which was designed for outdoor use inside a small flat. Unfortunately, he was found deceased the following day from carbon monoxide poisoning. These examples illustrate why we need to ensure there is a strong deterrent to stop reckless traders from doing the wrong thing. The bill increases the penalties to do that. The current penalty for restricting the sale of gas appliances is 100 penalty units for corporations and 25 penalty units for individuals. Under this bill, the penalty for restricting the sale of gas appliances has been increased to 500 penalty units for an individual's first offence and 750 penalty units or two years' imprisonment, or both, for an individual's second or subsequent offence. Quite rightly, there should be such an increase in penalty for those who continue to perpetrate these offences after they have been convicted of previous involvement.

Penalties for restricting the sale of gas appliances have been increased to 5,000 penalty units for a corporation's first offence and 7,500 penalty units for a corporation's second or subsequent offence. These penalties bring them into line with penalties provided for electricity offences. Having regard to the horrific injuries that can occur, we must ensure that traders do the right thing by their customers and the public. An increase in penalties for gas-related offences is not the only way enforcement powers are enhanced under the bill. Clause 66 of the bill will allow officers from the Department of Fair Trading to serve penalty notices on people who are breaching gas laws and are deemed to have broken the law. They are an efficient and fair enforcement mechanism because the recipient of the notice is required to pay the fine within the stated period, without the matter proceeding to court, unless the recipient objects, in which case the matter will be heard in court.

Penalty notices have a long history in this State. They are an effective and efficient means of regulating persons who breach the law. As the NSW Law Reform Report on Penalty Notices explained, the Fines Act was adopted in Parliament in 1996. At that time the Act listed 43 statutory provisions authorising the use of penalty notices. Since the adoption of the Fines Act in 1996 the number of penalties has increased and there are now 110 statutory provisions with more than 7,000 offences which may be enforced through notices. Penalty notice offences exist in areas such as occupational health and safety, the building industry, environment protection, national parks and wildlife, native vegetation, residential parks, prevention of cruelty to animals, water management, animal diseases, electricity supply, passenger transport, and others. The incidents outlined in the bill fall into those categories, which makes it an efficient and effective way to enforce these regulations.

I will finish by saying that the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017 is an excellent bill. It tackles two very important aspects of consumer safety and harmonises consumer safety laws to make the implementation of regulations simpler for business. This will enable honest, hardworking people to get on with their jobs while providing the necessary protection for consumers in our communities. I congratulate the Minister and commend the bill to the House.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (12:39): In reply: I am delighted to speak in reply on the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017, which is my first bill as the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation. As members have heard, the bill will introduce a consistent regulatory framework for consumer safety for these two types of energy. It will align the maximum penalties for gas and electricity offences, and will significantly improve the ability of authorised officers to take quick and effective action to deal with situations that pose a clear and immediate risk to consumers. The bill also ensures that developing and emerging technologies will be captured by the consumer safety provisions.

Key stakeholders were consulted during the development of the new laws and have indicated their support for the new framework. Gas and electricity as energy sources are fundamental to our lives and our society, but we cannot allow the market to be populated with poor quality or sub-standard articles and installations. The bill will provide a clear, consistent and strong regulatory framework. It will also ensure that enforcement powers are consistent and sufficient to maintain the safety of consumers using gas and electrical products and services.

The bill keeps the language of the existing legislation, which will ensure that there is stability in the legal effect of these provisions. However, there are clauses which necessarily make new provisions with respect to gas consumer safety. These provisions will increase consumer safety protections and ensure that there is a consistent approach across gas and electricity. This will simplify compliance obligations for business. Consistent compliance and enforcement provisions will enable Fair Trading to utilise the full range of compliance mechanisms now available for electricity consumer safety to enforce consumer safety standards in the gas industry. The bill harmonises penalties for gas and electrical safety breaches. Penalties for gas-related offences have been increased to match those for electricity-related offences. This is wholly appropriate and will provide a greater deterrent for breaches concerning consumer safety.

The bill extends the definition of "sell" that applies to electrical articles to gas appliances. This will ensure that gas appliances displayed for advertising will be treated as being displayed for sale. While it is already an offence to sell a gas appliance that is not certified, this offence does not extend to capture the display, or the offer for sale, of an uncertified appliance. Applying this definition to gas- and electricity-related offences will also enable authorised officers to carry out compliance and enforcement in the gas appliance retail industry more effectively.

The bill will address a number of safety issues that have arisen with respect to hoverboards. The secretary will have a power to declare that a battery article, such as a specific model of hoverboard, or battery article of class, such as hoverboards in general, are a "high risk battery article". Such a declaration will have the effect of bringing that article or class of article under the provisions of the Act. This will safeguard consumers against some types of rechargeable batteries and products that incorporate those rechargeable batteries. The wording of these provisions ensures that this power is limited to cases where there is a real or material risk of damage to property, injury or death, not simply where the risk is far-fetched. Overall, this will help to establish a consistent and

cohesive approach to gas and electricity safety in the marketplace and will ensure that the laws operate effectively and efficiently.

The bill provides for a certification authority to be cancelled without first being suspended. This gives the secretary a broad power to cancel certification authority for the purposes of consumer safety. The secretary will also be able to give certification holders a chance to make submissions before the matter progresses and their certification authority is suspended. These provisions are substantially a re-enactment of the secretary's present powers under the Gas Supply (Consumer Safety) Regulation 2012.

The bill contains a number of important compliance and investigatory powers. Authorised officers will have the power to seize and remove unsafe gas appliances. This improves on the current situation in which Fair Trading officers have to purchase unsafe gas appliances to ensure that they are not sold to the public. This will bring the powers of Fair Trading with respect to gas appliances in line with Fair Trading's existing powers of seizure contained in the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act. Authorised officers will have the power to disconnect electrical articles and gas appliances from installations being used in a manner that presents, or is likely to present, a significant risk of damage to property, injury or death. This will ensure that authorised officers have the necessary powers to address situations in which gas or electrical installations or articles are being used in a way that poses a real risk of harm.

These powers are very important. As the House has heard, Fair Trading has received reports of people using liquefied petroleum gas [LPG] fuelled barbecues indoors or in fully enclosed balcony spaces. These types of gas appliances are designed for outdoor use only, and when used indoors can lead to incomplete combustion, a by-product of which is carbon monoxide, which can be lethal. Other examples of unsafe use have been instances of gas hot water heaters situated on fully enclosed balconies of units which do not allow for proper ventilation. Again, this can lead to the build-up of carbon monoxide. Fair Trading investigators are currently unable to require owners to cease using LPG barbecues in this dangerous manner or require them to properly ventilate an area. The provisions in the bill will rectify this problem.

Authorised officers will have appropriate powers to address situations in which gas or electrical installations or articles are being used in a way that poses a real risk of harm. Currently, if a Fair Trading investigator encounters a situation that is fundamentally unsafe, the only available remedy is to seek the assistance of the relevant energy provider to shut down the power supply to the installation. The provisions in the bill will enable an authorised officer to enter any place where a serious electrical or gas accident has occurred and to exercise certain investigative powers in that place. It will be possible to issue penalty notices for selected gas-related breaches. This is another example of bringing the gas regulatory scheme into alignment with the existing scheme for electricity.

Allowing penalty notices to be issued will address this key compliance issue, which is not provided for under current laws. Penalty notices are an effective compliance tool which send a clear and immediate message about the importance of consumer safety requirements. Fair Trading's ability to efficiently and cost effectively administer the gas consumer safety provisions will also be significantly enhanced by the ability to issue penalty infringement notices. The alternative to penalty infringement notices is to initiate court action, which can be disproportionately costly and time-consuming for less serious offences. It is important to understand that the laws are not being watered down in this bill. The merger of the two energy sources will not weaken or reduce the existing consumer safety regulation of electricity and electrical products. I want to be absolutely clear that the current level of electricity consumer safety regulation will be maintained and gas consumer safety regulation will be strengthened to a consistent level.

I thank the following members for their contributions to the debate and their interest in this important topic: Alistair Henskens, member for Ku-ring-gai; Lee Evans, member for Heathcote; Eleni Petinos, member for Miranda; Jai Rowell, member for Wollondilly; Katrina Hodgkinson, member for Cootamundra; Stephen Bromhead, member for Myall Lakes; John Sidoti, member for Drummoyne; Geoff Provest, member for Tweed; Michael Johnsen, member for Upper Hunter; Damien Tudehope, member for Epping; Kevin Conolly, member for Riverstone; Adam Crouch, member for Terrigal; Mark Taylor, member for Seven Hills; and Kevin Anderson, member for Tamworth. I acknowledge my counterpart from the Opposition, Yasmin Catley, member for Swansea. I thank her for the good work she is doing in this area. I also thank Ron Hoenig, member for Heffron, for his contribution. In thanking members, I have apparently forgotten to mention the very important member for Oatley, Mark Coure, who introduced the bill on my behalf.

Before I address some of the comments raised by the Opposition, I also thank my outstanding team in the department. I particularly acknowledge the great work of Lynelle Collins, and thank her for her work in helping me get up to speed in my new role as Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation. I thank Warren Mcallister for his forbearance and help in the short time I have been a Minister. I also thank Nancy Gangi for her work on this. The team at Fair Trading does an incredible job of protecting consumers across the State. I know that both

sides of the House respect the enormous contributions it makes to the State of New South Wales. I reiterate my enormous thanks to the hardworking and dedicated people in NSW Fair Trading, led by the outstanding Rod Stowe. I also thank team members for the amount of work they have put into preparing this bill and getting it to this stage, and I acknowledge their presence in the Chamber. I also thank my chief of staff, Ben Coles; my senior policy advisor, Julia Steward; my ministerial staff, Aaron Wakeley, Peter Poulos and Brooke Eggleton; and my parliamentary liaison officer, Richard Hodge—who has been working on this for the past couple of days—for their efforts.

With regard to the comments of the member for Heffron about high-risk battery articles, I can assure members that Fair Trading takes a proactive approach to these products. Online sites are monitored and reviewed regularly to identify new, unapproved or potentially unsafe articles. There are ongoing consumer education measures, and Fair Trading inspects retail outlets and initiates prosecutions as is warranted. Fair Trading also responds to hundreds of complaints and issues raised by members of the general public. I take this opportunity to reinforce that, if members of the public see areas of non-compliance and products in the marketplace that are unsafe, they should report it to Fair Trading. We have a dedicated team of investigators who will act on those complaints and make sure that consumer safety is protected in the State of New South Wales.

An example of the great work of Fair Trading was when a woman died in 2014 due to the use of an unapproved and unsafe USB charger. The prosecution was successful. The company was fined \$3,000 and the director was fined \$9,000 with added court costs of \$25,000. This is just one example of the regulatory framework in practice, and it should give us confidence that appropriate action is taken when warranted to both detect unsafe articles and take strong enforcement action. I am confident that the provisions of the bill will give NSW Fair Trading appropriate and necessary powers to deal with gas and electricity consumer safety. I am committed to enhancing consumer safety and consumer protection in this State. I am delighted to work with my counterpart, the shadow Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, to protect consumers' right across New South Wales. I am happy to see the bipartisan support for the bill, and I again thank Yasmin Catley for her efforts. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr MATT KEAN: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Members

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest): I report receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Governor:

DAVID HURLEY
Governor

Government House
Sydney, 3 May 2017

I, General The Honourable DAVID HURLEY AC DSC (Ret'd), in pursuance of the power and authority vested in me as Governor of the State of New South Wales, do hereby convene a joint sitting of the Members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly for the purpose of the election of a person to fill the seat in the Legislative Council vacated by Mr Michael Gallacher, and I do hereby announce and declare that such Members shall assemble for such purpose on Wednesday the 3rd day of May 2017 at 3:45 pm in the building known as the Legislative Council Chamber situated in Macquarie Street in the City of Sydney; and the Members of the Legislative Council and the Members of the Legislative Assembly are hereby required to give their attendance at the said time and place accordingly.

In order that the Members of both Houses of Parliament may be duly informed of the convening of the joint sitting, I have this day addressed a like message to the President of the Legislative Council.

I order that the joint sitting be set down as an order of the day for 3.45 p.m. on Wednesday 3 May 2017 as appointed in His Excellency's message.

*Bills***STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 2017
UNIVERSITIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PLANNING AGREEMENTS) BILL 2017****First Reading****Bills introduced on motion by Mr Mark Speakman, read a first time and printed.****Second Reading****Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (12:54:4):** I move:

That these bills be now read a second time.

The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2017 continues the statute law revision program, which has been in place for more than 30 years. Bills of this kind have featured in most sessions of Parliament since 1984 and are an effective method for making minor policy changes that are too inconsequential to warrant the introduction of a separate amending bill. Schedule 1 to the bill contains policy changes of a minor and non-controversial nature. It contains amendments to 31 Acts and related amendments to two instruments. I will speak to some of the amendments that are included in this schedule.

Schedule 1 makes various amendments to the 10 Acts establishing public universities. The amendments will clarify provisions of those Acts that confer powers on the universities' governing authorities with respect to financial management and the acquisition and management of property. These include amendments to make it clear that the existing power of a governing authority to oversee risk management and risk assessment across the university includes the power to effect financial adjustments for the management of financial risks. The schedule also makes a number of amendments to the Barangaroo Delivery Authority Act 2009. These include amendments updating references to the Barangaroo Headland Park, which has been named Barangaroo Reserve by the Geographical Names Board of NSW. The amendments will also make it clear that the board of the Barangaroo Delivery Authority may circulate papers by email or other electronic means for the purpose of transacting its business.

Amendments are made to the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010 in line with recommendations resulting from the recent statutory review of that Act. The amendments include various changes to the NSW Carers Charter to reflect current terminology. An amendment is also made to remove the unnecessary requirement that the Minister for Disability Services be included as a member of the Carers Advisory Council, being a body that advises the Minister on matters relating to carers. Amendments are made by schedule 1 to several Acts in the portfolio of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation. An amendment to the Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013 is made as a consequence of the recent transfer of functions under the Act from the Secretary of the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation to the Commissioner for Fair Trading. The amendment will ensure that those functions can continue to be delegated to employees of that department.

The Biofuels Act 2007 is amended to update a provision relating to the membership of the Expert Panel which advises the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation on exemptions from minimum biofuel requirements. The amendment is consequent on recent administrative changes and will ensure that the panel continues to include a person with regional industry development expertise who is employed in the Department of Industry. An amendment is made to the Pawnbrokers and Second-hand Dealers Act 1996 to provide for a power to delegate the functions of the Commissioner for Fair Trading under the Act. Currently, the Commissioner relies on a power of delegation under the Fair Trading Act 1987 when delegating functions under the Pawnbrokers and Second-hand Dealers Act 1996.

Schedule 1 also amends the Law Enforcement (Controlled Operations) Act 1997 by updating a reference to the former Australian Customs Service. That agency has been integrated into the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Border Protection. The officers of that department now exercise the functions formerly exercised by officers of the Australian Customs Service. The amendment will enable regulations under the Act to prescribe that department as a law enforcement agency that may conduct controlled operations under the Act. The last schedule 1 matter I will mention is the amendments to the Tow Truck Industry Act 1998. The amendments will facilitate the transfer of policy and regulatory functions from Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services to the Secretary of the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation. Under the new arrangements, the authorised officers who exercise powers of inspection and other regulatory functions under the Act will be appointed by the secretary of the department rather than by Roads and Maritime Services [RMS]. The amendments include a savings provision enabling the authorised officers who are currently authorised by RMS to continue to exercise those regulatory functions under the Act.

Schedule 2 deals with matters of pure statute law revision consisting of minor technical changes to legislation that the Parliamentary Counsel considers are appropriate for inclusion in the bill. Examples of amendments in schedule 2 are corrections of cross-references, typographical errors and terminology, and amendments arising out of the enactment of other legislation. Schedule 3 makes amendments to the provisions of various Acts providing for the issue of penalty notices consequent on the enactment of the Fines Amendment (Electronic Penalty Notices) Act 2016. That Act amended the Fines Act 1996 to consolidate and standardise provisions relating to penalty notices. In particular, the Act transferred to the Fines Act 1996 the substance of provisions found in specific sections of other Acts providing for the issue of penalty notices. The amendments made by schedule 3 will remove provisions that are now duplicated in the Fines Act 1996.

Schedule 4 makes various amendments to Acts as a consequence of past administrative changes orders and the enactment of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013. Schedule 5 continues the program of repealing Acts and instruments that are redundant or of no practical utility. Schedule 6 contains general savings, transitional and other provisions. These include provisions dealing with the effect of amendments on amending provisions, and savings clauses for the substituted provisions. The various amendments are explained in detail in explanatory notes set out beneath the amendments to each of the Acts and statutory instruments concerned or at the beginning of the schedule concerned.

I am sure members will appreciate the straightforward and non-controversial nature of the provisions contained in the bill. However, if any amendment causes concern or requires clarification, it should be brought to my attention. If necessary, I will arrange for government staff to provide additional information on the matters raised. If any particular matter of concern cannot be resolved and is likely to delay the passage of the bill, the Government is prepared to consider withdrawing the matter from the bill. Withdrawn proposals can also be dealt with in a second bill, using the procedure for splitting bills in the Legislative Council, which can be dealt with in each of the Houses in the same way as an ordinary bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2016-17

Debate resumed from 6 April 2017.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:03): When I last spoke about the Budget Estimates and Related Papers 2016-17, I referred to education and maintenance. However, the Education portfolio is not the only major infrastructure area that was a winner in the 2016-17 budget because the Government is also investing in vital road and transport infrastructure. The 2016-17 infrastructure spending on roads and transport is \$12.1 billion, which is an increase of 16 per cent on the 2015-16 budget. More than \$1 billion will be spent over the next four years for a new suburban train fleet to deliver more services and less crowding across the network. Also, \$2.1 billion was allocated in 2016-17 to continue fast-tracking major upgrades of key regional highways such as the Pacific Highway, the Princes Highway, the Central Coast Highway, the Great Western Highway, the Newell Highway, the New England Highway, the Oxley Highway, the Mitchell Highway, the Kings Highway, the Riverina Highway, the Silver City Highway, the Cobb Highway, and Bells Line of Road.

Other infrastructure highlights include: \$1.4 billion to start Sydney Metro City and Southwest; \$1.3 billion for the Sydney Metro Northwest; \$130 million for the next generation of the intercity rail fleet; \$2.9 billion to continue the development and delivery of WestConnex; \$1.6 billion for health capital projects; \$645 million for social housing projects; \$554 million for new and refurbished schools and related infrastructure; \$962 million to increase prison bed capacity; and \$2.4 billion for new investments in water and electricity utilities. As I said, this budget also provides record levels of funding for services across the State. I know that the residents of Holsworthy will be happy to hear that.

Some of the amazing funding opportunities we will see include: a record \$20.6 billion in health services, which is an increase of more than 5 per cent; a record \$13.7 billion for school education services, which is an increase of more than 7.5 per cent; and a record \$6.8 billion to be spent on justice, which is an increase of 4.5 per cent. This State continues to go from economic strength to strength under this Government's leadership. We have continued to excel as one of the highest performing States in relation to growth, unemployment and jobs. Now we can add the important fact that this State is now virtually debt free. This Government has truly made New South Wales number one again.

Late last year I had the opportunity to accompany the Premier in her previous role as Treasurer of New South Wales in touring Country Comfort Hunts Hotel, in Casula, and to meet with the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce to speak about the budget and jobs growth across the region. During the visit, the operator of the hotel and former president of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, Mr Harry Hunt, OAM, talked us through how

he has seen an increase in tourism in the Liverpool area and how he is now seeing approximately 1,000 international tourists basing themselves at his hotel each week. This has allowed him to hire additional staff, ranging from cooks to cleaning personnel, and many of them are from the local area.

During conversations with representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, Premier Berejiklian was able to tell them that south-west Sydney has seen the second biggest jobs growth across metropolitan Sydney. An impressive 17,800 new jobs have been created in Sydney's south-west over the past year, which is an increase of 11.2 per cent. Small businesses in our area have been and will continue to be at the heart of our State's economic success story.

Getting into the housing market, especially for the younger generation looking to buy their first home, can be a very hard task to conquer. I know that housing affordability is an issue to many in the Holsworthy electorate, and across New South Wales. Therefore, I am happy to advise that the Government is working on ways to assist the community. I am pleased to note that Premier Berejiklian outlined that as one of her priorities when she was sworn in as Premier. To assist with this, the Government has provided a total of \$41 million of new funding over four years in the budget, to the Greater Sydney Commission to support the planned growth in housing supply. The Government has also allocated more than \$966 million in funding to the Housing Acceleration Fund, which continues to create new opportunities for housing supply through the implementation of key projects in our growth regions.

To further assist people in their goal to enter the housing market, this Government is ensuring that local residents have a better chance of being successful. The Government is introducing surcharges for foreign investors in residential real estate, including a transfer duty surcharge of 4 per cent applying to all new purchases. With the forthcoming development of new growth areas around my electorate, particularly in Edmondson Park and Leppington, this is significant news. I am also happy to note that since this budget was handed down, the Premier has continued pursuing her priority of providing housing affordability by appointing the Minister for Housing, the Hon. Anthony Roberts, to deal with this serious issue.

I thank the Government for the work it has done in providing the essential localised education funding and services that this State needs. I am proud to advise that to assist in this cause the 2016-17 budget has provided \$2.6 billion over the next four years to focus on education infrastructure, and has made a \$13.7 billion investment in our education system, which is an increase of \$959 million on the previous year. The Coalition has delivered a strong and effective education system. It has introduced initiatives such as Supported Students, Successful Students, Quality Teaching, Successful Students, and the Resource Allocation Model. In 2017, public schools in our area will benefit from a share of a record \$219 million in additional needs-based funding, through the Resource Allocation Model. These extra resources go directly to the schools, allowing principals to utilise these funds to better meet the unique needs of their students, and the school community.

Locally \$11,930,547 will be invested in our schools, an increase of \$2,713,089 from 2016. Schools that will see funding increases include—and please bear with me while I rattle off a whole lot of numbers, but they are impressive and worth noting: Casula High School, which will receive \$1,293,259 this year, an increase of \$261,784; and Casula Public School, which will receive \$1,133,242 this year, an increase of \$413,636. Chipping Norton Public School will receive \$373,064 this year, an increase of \$168,845; Dalmeny Public School will receive \$947,296 this year, an increase of \$178,725; Hammondville Public School will receive \$386,295 this year, an increase of \$100,396; Holsworthy High School will receive \$589,116 this year, an increase of \$168,221; and Holsworthy Public School will receive \$439,057 this year, an increase of \$91,253.

But wait, there is more. Lucas Heights Community School will receive \$450,471 this year, an increase of \$84,812; Lurnea High School will receive \$1,977,429 this year, an increase of \$249,755; Lurnea Public School will receive \$1,380,001 this year, an increase of \$265,241; Moorebank High School will receive \$761,245 this year, an increase of \$190,750; Newbridge Heights Public School will receive \$407,341 this year, an increase of \$66,705; Nuwarra Public School will receive \$531,860 this year, an increase of \$153,821; Prestons Public School will receive \$813,611 this year, an increase of \$222,619; and Wattle Grove Public School will receive \$439,462 this year, an increase of \$90,545. Those figures are not easy to rattle off but they are important to note because that spending will be hugely beneficial to the principals and the schools. This investment will assist principals and teachers to continue to provide exceptional levels of teaching to our students to help make sure they have the skills needed for the future.

I am happy to advise that many roadways, cycleways and footpaths in and around the Holsworthy electorate will also receive important upgrades through this budget. These include \$6.6 million for traffic improvements on the Hume Highway at Bigge Street, Liverpool to help ease congestion and \$20 million towards the widening of Alford's Point Road south of Alford's Point Bridge, with the \$40 million project scheduled for completion in 2018. That is in addition to the Government providing the six lanes needed in that area.

The budget also includes \$1 million to install pedestrian fencing on median and kerb, raise median and upgrade traffic lights on both crossings of Hume Highway and Hoxton Park Road to improve road safety; \$650,000 to upgrade traffic lights on the Hume Highway and Reilly Street, Liverpool to improve road safety; a \$410,000 grant to Liverpool Council to construct a cycleway along Elizabeth Street from the Hume Highway to Castlereagh Street, improving local connections and supporting active transport; a \$388,000 grant to Liverpool council to construct a cycleway on Newbridge Road, improving local connections and supporting active transport; a \$184,000 grant to Liverpool Council to install a roundabout at Jedda Road, Prestons; and, finally, \$48,000 to install raised median and curve alignment markers at Joadja Road in Prestons.

This budget also allows the New South Wales Government and me to keep promises that we made to the Holsworthy community at the last election. I am proud to say that the Government has provided \$1.5 million to continue planning the upgrade of Heathcote Road between Infantry Parade, Holsworthy and The Avenue, Voyager Point. The proposed upgrade of this two-kilometre section of Heathcote Road will assist to reduce congestion, improve safety and meet future traffic demand. This important road in my electorate carries more than 30,000 motorists every day and is also a key link for commuters accessing Holsworthy train station and the Holsworthy Army Barracks.

Currently, the New South Wales Government is proposing to widen Heathcote Road to four lanes between Infantry Parade and The Avenue, which would also include upgrading the intersections of Macarthur Drive and The Avenue to traffic lights. Additionally, the three bridges across Harris Creek, Williams Creek and the railway line would be duplicated and a pedestrian and cyclist path would be built to connect Voyager Point to Holsworthy train station. I look forward to the 2017-18 budget and hope to see additional funds allocated to complete this project. Additionally, \$1.3 million has been allocated for traffic improvements on Hoxton Park Road at Hill Road, Lurnea to assist in delivering on our election commitment.

Debate interrupted.

Community Recognition Statements

TRIBUTE TO TIAHNA SKELTON

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (13:15:0): Wallsend Little Athletics club member Tiahna Skelton recently claimed a 17-year-old national meet record twice in two days. Tiahna was competing successfully in the under-13 girls 200-metre hurdles at the Australian Little Athletics Championships in Sydney. She stopped the clock at 27.94 seconds to win her heat before backing that up with 27.74 seconds to claim the final. She eclipsed the previous mark of 28.24 seconds set by Tahlia Gray in 2000 by 0.5 seconds. Tiahna also collected silver in the 80 metres hurdles and another gold in the 4x100 metres relay team. Tiahna and fellow Hunter athletes Imogen Petrie, Montana Monk, Ethan McLoughlin and Ashlyn Blackstock helped the New South Wales under-13s clinch the Trevor Billingham Trophy for the best overall point score.

TRIBUTE TO HOLLY STARLING

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (13:16): I recognise the outstanding kindness of a very special nine year old, Holly Starling. Holly participated in the World's Greatest Shave in early April and generously donated her waist-length hair to the Wigs for Kids program run by Variety, the Children's Charity. When I read about Holly's incredible act of compassion, I was astounded and extremely moved by her selfless actions, especially for somebody in year 4. Holly was inspired to participate in the World's Greatest Shave by her grandmother Pauline, who is now in remission after her own battle with cancer. The Leukaemia Foundation offered amazing support during Pauline's battle. Upon seeing this, Holly wanted to give back to them. I am immensely impressed with Holly's considerate nature for other people battling cancer and her understanding of the vulnerabilities or insecurities they may feel when losing their hair. I thank Holly for her dedication to helping fundraise for the Leukaemia Foundation and for raising awareness for those cancer patients in need. She has shown such bravery and maturity at the age of nine that I am certain Holly will have a bright future ahead.

BANKSTOWN SPORTS STRIKERS FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:16): Last Saturday I was delighted to join Bankstown Sports Strikers Football Club at their home ground at The Crest in Bass Hill to present the kindly teams with their jerseys for the 2017 season. The 2017 season is shaping up to be a true milestone season for Bankstown Sports Strikers. Under the leadership of the outstanding committee of Bankstown Sports Strikers, including President Jenny Stone, Secretary Kylie Freeman, Assistant Secretary Nicole Kemp and former President Andrew Skaltsounis, the club has grown by more than 200 players in the past two years. More than 550 players from the Bankstown community have signed up with the Strikers this season, from the four kindly teams with players aged

three to five years to the Platinum League men's team who participated in the Westfield FFA Cup for the first time this season. I wish all teams at Bankstown Sports Strikers the best of luck for the 2017 season.

SOUTH COAST SURF LIFE SAVING

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (13:17): Today I pay tribute to the hundreds of Surf Life Saving volunteers who over the busy summer period ensured the safety of local residents and visitors on South Coast beaches up and down the coast. The last patrol of the season took place on 25 April. On behalf of all residents and visitors to the South Coast I thank each and every volunteer who once again ensured the safety of our coast. In particular I thank members of the Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club, Nowra-Culburra Surf Life Saving Club and the Sussex Inlet Surf Life Saving Club and their presidents, Rodney Austin, Mitchell Pakes and Jeremy Murdoch, as well as the President of the South Coast Branch, Steve Jones, for another successful surf life saving season on the South Coast.

LAKE MACQUARIE WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (13:18): Lake Macquarie is blessed with many wonderful community-minded people, and a fine example is Vivienne Bruce. I recently had the privilege of presenting Viv with the Lake Macquarie Woman of the Year Award, which recognised her many years of service to a range of community groups. Vivienne is currently the manager of Southlakes Carers, a group dedicated to providing community services to the aged. Having raised four children of their own, Viv and her husband, Steve, became the full-time carers of their four young grandchildren in 2015. Viv began her career as a volunteer with Horizons disability services before being employed by the group. She later coordinated neighbourhood centres and ran early education groups. She has worked as a volunteer for the Salvation Army for more than 20 years and has been the driving force behind after school care programs and programs for young women and people facing life's challenges. She is a youth mentor and spends a significant amount of her own time helping people who are generally not in a good place. Vivienne is a solid, reliable friend to many and I am pleased to be one of those and to have the opportunity to recognise her efforts in the Parliament.

GLENBROOK LITTLE ATHLETICS CLUB

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (13:19): I recently visited Glenbrook Little Athletics Club [GLAC] and met up with Mr Matt Andrews, president, and Ms Belinda Hill, canteen manager. It was great to hear about the planned canteen upgrade and the growth of the club. Glenbrook Little Athletics Club competes on Saturday mornings and provides athletic competition for all children aged from four to 19 years. It currently has 308 registrations. Glenbrook Little Athletics Club relies on the parents and volunteers who turn up each week to undertake the enormous job of organising athletic activities. Whether running the canteen, marking out the eight kilometres of line markings or timekeeping, their efforts keep this fantastic community club going. In March this year, the Little Athletics New South Wales State Championships were held at Sydney Olympic Park, and Glenbrook Little Athletics Club had 46 athletes who qualified to attend. That was an amazing achievement for this wonderful club; it was the club's largest team in 41 years. I wish all the competitors and all the volunteers at the club a successful 2017.

CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:20): Hillsborough is a quiet neighbourhood, with 450 residents in the Charlestown electorate. There are only two streets to enter and exit the suburb, Higham Road and Chadwick Street. Both lead to Hillsborough Road, one of the busiest and most frustrating bottlenecks in the Charlestown electorate. Of a morning, residents are often forced to wait 20 minutes to find a safe gap in the traffic in order to turn out onto Hillsborough Road. With traffic volume and near misses ever increasing, this is simply not good enough. In April I attended a residents' meeting at Hillsborough Oval to discuss possible solutions to the increasingly congested Hillsborough Road. I commend local resident Michael Nolan, who took the initiative to organise the public meeting and all the Hillsborough residents who attended. It is wonderful to see a community uniting to fix a shared problem in their neighbourhood. I assure the residents of Hillsborough that I will continue to work with them and advocate on their behalf on this important matter.

ST GEORGE LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:21): Recently I had the honour of presenting the Local Woman of the Year Award to Ms Nahed Soliman. Accompanied by the Minister for Women, the Hon Tanya Davies, MP, I was pleased to make this important presentation. Nahed is an outstanding local woman whose work as the service manager of St George Meals on Wheels assists frail, aged or disabled people to remain in their own homes. St George Meals on Wheels has operated locally for the past 48 years in the St George and Rockdale areas and has more than 150 volunteers on the roster. Nahed is a dedicated coordinator who always has a smile on her face. There are many wonderful and hardworking people in the St George area and Nahed is a perfect example.

I congratulate Nahed on her award and thank her for her wonderful service to our local community. Nahed and her team ensure that the basics, such as food and company, are provided to some of our most vulnerable and needy residents. This is why she has been awarded our Local Woman of the Year Award for 2017.

IRONWOMAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (13:22): I refer today to Newcastle ironwoman, Bella Williams. Ms Williams went to her first Australian Youth Championships in March, hoping to win a place in the surf race. The Hamilton South student won not only a silver medal in the surf race but also a gold medal in the ironwoman and board events in the under-14 division. The new under-14 Australian champion, who had never competed at the Australian Youth Championships before, was surprised and happy with her results. The 13-year-old was seventh in the swim and first in the board and ironwoman events in the under-14s at the State titles at Blacksmiths Beach in March this year. She then backed up in the under-15s the following week to win the swim, finish third in the ironwoman championships and make the board final. She has now taken out the Australian Youth Championships on the Gold Coast. I congratulate Bella. Clearly she is a rising star, and one to watch.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:23): Today, I recognise an initiative by Coast Shelter and selected McDonald's restaurants on the Central Coast. They have partnered to raise awareness about domestic violence. Their message is that everyone deserves to feel safe and protected from domestic and family violence. During May, McCafe coffee cups will display the 1800-RESPECT helpline number—1800 737 732—which provides counselling, information and support to those experiencing domestic and family violence. I commend the owner of these restaurants, Ron Mussalli, for supplying the platform for Coast Shelter to get its message out and to raise awareness of anyone who may be suffering or in need of help. I acknowledge Mr Mussalli as one of the largest employers of young people on the Central Coast through these McDonald's franchises, which have an outstanding employment record.

AUTISM ADVISORY AND SUPPORT SERVICE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (13:24): I draw the attention of the House to the work of the Autism Advisory and Support Service [AASS], a not-for-profit charity run for children and adults with autism and their families in Western Sydney. AASS provides a range of services to support, advocate, help, educate and guide families who have a family member with autism, as well as the broader community. Relying heavily on donations and grants, AASS has proudly accomplished the opening of an autism community house in Liverpool, the only 24-hour autism hotline in the Southern Hemisphere, individual and group therapy, school outreach, professional development, support groups, social groups, parent workshops and lots more. I congratulate and thank Grace Fava, founder and chief executive officer, and her dedicated team at AASS, on the amazing work they undertake to support our families in Western Sydney. Their vision for children with autism has changed lives and enriched our community.

SYDNEY ROYAL EASTER SHOW DAIRY CHAMPION

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:25): I inform the House that Janine Eagles of Ghinni Creek Ayrshire stud at Moto was a winner with Ayrshire cow, Boldview Modem Pastel, at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Ms Eagles' confidence going into the judging was warranted as Boldview Modem Pastel was sashed as the senior champion in the Sydney Royal Easter Show dairy ring. She certainly had high hopes going into the event, and things worked out perfectly. Boldview Modem Pastel impressed Canadian judge Michael McQuat with her youthfulness, and she was commended for her snug udder and teat placement.

Producing 35 litres of milk per day, Boldview Modem Pastel is on track to produce 8,500 litres in her current lactation and was also sashed best senior udder, proving the mature cow's productivity. Boldview Modem Pastel was sired by Lagace Modem and from Boldview Paella Harmony, at Boldview Farm in South Australia. Boldview Modem Pastel was exhibited by Mick Eagles and led by Janine. Winning as senior champion was an important milestone for the Ghinni Creek Ayrshire stud, with this being its first senior champion win since starting up outside Mick's family partnership. Michael and Janine's children, Tyler and Jessica, are the fourth generation in the Eagles' farming legacy.

PENRITH DISTRICT NETBALL MARCH

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (13:25): It was a pleasure to attend the Penrith District Netball march-past on Saturday 29 April. This is one of the biggest events in Penrith's sporting calendar, with thousands of local families coming together to launch the 2017 season. As the member for Londonderry, I was particularly pleased to see Jordan Springs Netball join the ranks as Penrith's newest netball club. I believe Penrith already has 11 teams. Once again, I send a huge thankyou to the team at Penrith District Netball, who always make sure

everything runs smoothly for the girls and who encourage our young women to be involved in club sport. I send congratulations to Joy Gillett and Penrith District Netball Association office bearers for always inviting me along and for the tireless work they do in promoting netball as one of our region's biggest sports.

BATHURST GOLD CROWN CARNIVAL

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (13:26):

This House should recognise the outstanding success of the Bathurst Gold Crown Carnival. This was a 10-day carnival of racing two- and three-year-old horses. It is an event that attracts more than 5,000 people to the region and is recognised as one of Australia's premier harness racing carnivals. Special recognition is given to the Bathurst Harness Racing Committee on its outstanding endeavours: chief executive officer Danny Dwyer, members of the board, president Wayne Baker, vice-president Laurie Clifford, treasurer Phillip Webb and John Brien, Frank McRae, Peter Turnbull, Robert Chew and Nathan Hurst. Incredible support was also provided by marketing manager Marianne Donnelly, administration officer Julie Loader, track curator Tony Hagney, grounds manager Mark Evans, and grounds staff member Peter Muller. I mention also that representatives from Racing NSW were among the patrons and included John Dumesny, Adam Fairley and board members Peter Nugent, Rod Smith and Chris Edwards. The Gold Crown Carnival is a prestigious regional event which attracts many visitors, enhances the economy and promotes our State. I extend my congratulations to all involved with the staging of this magnificent racing event.

ANZAC COMMEMORATIONS

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (13:27): Anzac Day this year was commemorated across the Port Stephens electorate, from Wallalong to Nelson Bay. I was honoured to attend the dawn service at Karuah, followed by services at Seaham and Raymond Terrace. It was uplifting to see so many people attending each service—more than in previous years. It was particularly pleasing to see so many school students attending services, marching, or even helping to run the services. All students at each service were a credit to themselves, their schools and our community.

For putting in the hard work on behalf of their members and our community, I thank Raymond Terrace RSL sub-branch members led by president Vic Jones. I thank Alan Earle who ran the Seaham service on behalf of the Raymond Terrace RSL sub-branch and Karuah RSL sub-branch members, along with president Peter Fidden. I thank Nelson Bay RSL sub-branch members and president John Tate, and Tilligerry RSL sub-branch members and president Noel Cartwright. I thank Medowie RSL sub-branch members with president Ian Harding, and Tea Gardens RSL sub-branch members and president Michael Farrar. I thank the many current and former serving personnel who live in Port Stephens for their service to our country. Lest we forget.

ROSEVILLE COLLEGE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (13:28): On 21 March Ms Deborah Magill was inducted as the tenth principal of Roseville College at an occasion I was delighted to attend. She leads a school of talented young ladies. Fifty-one music students from the college recently toured through Japan, concluding in Yokohama on Anzac Day. Their final performance was during the memorial service at Yokohama War Cemetery, for the Australian Ambassador to Japan, the Hon. Richard Court. The venue they performed at is the only war cemetery in Japan administered by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Yokohama is the resting place for 277 members of the Australian Army, Navy, Merchant Navy and Air Force. It was wonderful for the Roseville College students to have this opportunity to honour and remember the Anzac sacrifice and to develop their individual talents within a novel culture. I congratulate Ms Deborah Magill on her new role as principal, as well as head of music at the college Ms Noni Katada for her achievements with the students' music ensemble. I wish the college well in its future endeavours.

INGLEBURN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY AND GARDEN CLUB NINETIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (13:29): Today I recognise the Ingleburn Horticultural Society and Garden Club for reaching its ninetieth anniversary milestone recently. The gardening club was established by local residents in 1927 with the vision of encouraging local residents to grow flowers and vegetables, first, for the joy this brings; and, secondly, for exhibition in their seasonal shows. I recently had the opportunity to attend the ninetieth anniversary celebrations on Saturday when, true to fashion, the club displayed a wonderful array of flowers for the enjoyment of visitors and participants. As the fifth oldest garden club in New South Wales, the horticultural society has a very rich history. Meeting every month at the Ingleburn Baptist Church, it encourages people of all ages with an interest in plants to attend. Occasionally, there are guest speakers. I purchased three plants two years ago, and they are still going strong. On Saturday I purchased three more for the electorate office. They certainly brighten up the day. I congratulate the Ingleburn Horticultural Society and Garden Club on its ninetieth anniversary.

KIAMA LIONS RESPITE HOUSE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (13:30): I acknowledge in the gallery my guests from the Shoalhaven Heads Red Cross and commend the Red Cross for the outstanding services it provides to the people of this State and around the world. I am delighted to advise the House that last week I announced a \$40,000 contribution from the New South Wales Government to the Kiama Lions Respite House. This house provides carers and their families with an opportunity to get the rest and relaxation they deserve in the beautiful seaside town of Kiama. I commend former Kiama Lions Club President Ray Redgrave. I commend members of the Lions Club who have worked so hard on this project, particularly Jerry Granger-Holcombe, Peter Scifleet and Tony Grainger. I also thank Gregory's Scaffolding for its support of the project. Not just Kiama Lions but also the Minnamurra and Gerringong Lions clubs banded together to raise funds for this truly worthy cause. Right around this State we have carers who invest their time and their lives supporting their family and friends. It is wonderful to provide this respite for them, and I congratulate Kiama Lions Club on the initiative.

RECIPIENT JUNE LOWE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (13:31): I also acknowledge the guests of the member for Kiama who are in the gallery. Welcome to the New South Wales Parliament. I am a member of the Shellharbour Red Cross. I bring to the attention of the House the incredible sporting achievements of June Lowe, who recently received the Shellharbour Sports Star Award in the Masters/Veterans category. June is an Aboriginal athlete from the Yuin nation on the South Coast of our great State. She has been a sportswoman for most of her life and until 10 years ago played A-grade netball locally. Following her retirement from the sporting world, June faced a number of very serious health setbacks but her determination eventually pushed her to overcome those obstacles and to make a triumphant return to sport in 2010 in the form of athletics. Since her return, June has proven to be a driven and powerful athlete. She currently holds the New South Wales State record for her age bracket in the 60-metre sprint, long jump and high jump. June's story is one of strength, passion and determination, and is a source of inspiration for our local community. I look forward to hearing all about her achievements and successes in the future.

AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (13:32): I recently presented the 2017 Local Woman of the Year Award to Donna Fraser. Donna is an exceptionally worthy recipient for her tireless work over 30 years with a diverse range of community organisations. Not only does Donna raise funds for domestic violence, breast cancer support, and other women's issues, but also for more than 20 years she has been a passionate member of the Hills Domestic Violence Prevention Network. Donna is a volunteer at the Castle Hill branch of Red Cross and was recently involved in the formation of the West Pennant Hills District Probus Club. I thank, congratulate and recognise Donna Fraser for all her wonderful work.

I also presented Ms Rosemary Derwin of Girl Guides New South Wales with a 25-year service award. Rosemary started as a guide leader in 1982 and has continued to volunteer with the Guides for 25 years. She is a respected member of the State board. I also had the pleasure of awarding Jasper Pardo with the Project Volunteering Award for his MATES Mentor Program. MATES is a mentoring program at Western Sydney University that pairs experienced students with commencing students, providing friendship and support as the new students transition to university. Congratulations to Donna, Rosemary and Jasper on receiving their awards. Their success, dedication and community spirit is tremendous.

KEIRA ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (13:33): It gives me great pleasure to talk today about the very important service that I attended on Anzac Day hosted by Woonona Bulli RSL and the fantastic sub-branch. I particularly thank Mr Phil Williams, honorary secretary; Mr Michael Paris, president; and Mr Garry May, OAM, vice president. I also thank the students from the Wollongong High School of the Performing Arts—Shalani, Ashlee, Chloe and Caleb—who gave a beautiful rendition of the Anzac song, vice president Mr Peter Pioro, patron Mr Peter Bailey, and honorary treasurer Mr Les Ledwidge. It is a great sub-branch that continues to honour the traditions of the men and women who have served our great country. It is always a very moving service, and I congratulate the Woonona Bulli RSL on behalf of a very grateful community.

THE HILLS-KELLYVILLE ROTARY CLUB

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (13:34): I pay tribute to an extraordinary organisation in my local community, the Rotary Club of The Hills-Kellyville, and its incredible membership of volunteers. The other night I had the honour of attending the club's annual awards evening with good Ministers the Hon. David Elliott and the Hon. Ray Williams, who spoke about the importance of volunteering and the sense of community we share in

the Hills. Awards were presented for both community service as well as pride of workmanship. Created more than 40 years ago, the Rotary Pride of Workmanship awards are intended to encourage Australians to take pride in their vocations. Locally, Amanda Carmichael, Grace Mak, Michael Were, Wade Nichols, Chris Shaw and Stacey Kent were deserving recipients of the award. I was very pleased to present Stacey with her award for the pride she has shown in her work at The Hills Medical Centre. I am sure the whole House will join me in extending to the award recipients the warmest congratulations and in sincerely acknowledging the enormous contribution that Rotary clubs like the one at The Hills-Kellyville make to our communities.

BARDWELL PARK STATION EASY ACCESS UPGRADE

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (13:35): Last Friday the member for Rockdale, Mr Stephen Kamper, community members and I launched a petition calling on the Government to install accessible lifts at Bardwell Park Station. Ms Linda Burney, Federal member for Barton, also supports our campaign to improve access for people with disabilities, the elderly and parents with young children. Currently, those people who are able must do battle with the steep flight of stairs down to the platform. Sadly, the Berejiklian Government has ignored the Bardwell Park-Earlwood communities by not including the station in its Easy Access Program despite the fact that a huge number of elderly people live in the two suburbs. The member for Rockdale and I are determined to get the Government to include Bardwell Park Station in its Easy Access Program, and we have enlisted the support of the community through the petition to get this all-important lift installed at the station. I call on the Government to provide funding for it in the State budget.

CHAMPION SKIER MATT GRAHAM

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:36): Matt Graham is a 22-year-old champion skier from my electorate of Terrigal who was successful in taking out third place in the recent World Cup moguls event in Japan. Moguls are a series of bumps on a ski slope that must be navigated with sharp turns. It is a high-speed sport, with big crashes a common occurrence. Matt raced against opponents from the United Kingdom, Kazakhstan and Canada to claim third place in the event. Matt has had an illustrious sporting career, having also competed at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, as well as in numerous other world championship and World Cup events. I commend Matt for his sportsmanlike attitude. He has said that if he remains focused on his goals he will always achieve the greatest outcome possible. That is a great attitude and a good example to young, aspiring athletes in my electorate of Terrigal. Congratulations to Matt on his success.

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

Announcements

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER: Today marks a national day of remembrance for victims of domestic and family violence. One in six Australian women and one in 20 Australian men have, since the age of 15, experienced physical or sexual violence from a partner they have lived with, and every year 100 women, children and men will die due to domestic violence. Outside Parliament House roses were placed along the fence in honour of victims, and I saw the Minister there talking to people about this issue—red roses for women, white roses for children and yellow roses for men. I encourage as many people as possible to take a moment today to remember all those children, women and men who have lost their lives as a result of domestic and family violence. I thank the Minister.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I extend a very warm welcome to Jane Diffey from Dubbo, a guest of the Minister for Police, Minister for Emergency Services, and member for Dubbo. I also welcome to the Chamber Iris Knowles and Phyllis Anne Richards, guests of the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and member for Oxley. I acknowledge members of the Shoalhaven Heads Red Cross in the gallery today, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, Parliamentary Secretary for Education, and member for Kiama. I welcome to the gallery Mr Andrew Dale and Mr Paul de Maria from the Rockdale RSL, guests of the member for Rockdale.

I also acknowledge Mrs Annabel Digance, the member for Elder in the South Australian House of Assembly, a guest of the member for Wallsend. I welcome Bill and Val Symington of Gwandalan to the gallery today, guests of the member for Swansea. I welcome to the gallery Mr Tony Bear from the NSW Police Association. I also welcome the Hon. Pam Allan, former Minister for the Environment.

*Question Time***NORTH COAST FLOODS**

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:24): My question is directed to the Premier. What steps are being taken to rescue elderly pensioners at Gateway Lifestyle Tweed Shores and the Chinderah Lake Caravan Park who are facing eviction this Friday because their home sites have been declared an uninhabitable health risk after the recent floods?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:24): As I said yesterday, we are making every single effort we can to support those communities and individuals who have been impacted by the devastating floods in northern New South Wales, and that is ongoing. As I also said yesterday, if there is an individual, community organisation or business who needs our support they will receive it. The member for Tweed assures me that they are getting that support.

Mr Geoff Provost: They are getting it.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Yesterday those opposite asked me a number of questions which on paper demonstrated they have not done their homework and do not understand the community. I want to again take this opportunity to reiterate what I said yesterday in the House—

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance under Standing Order 129. This question is specifically about people being evicted and relocated.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I want to take this opportunity to reiterate to the member for Tweed, the member for Lismore, the member for Clarence and the member for Ballina that they have a hotline to me if anyone in their community needs anything, and I know they have been exercising their prerogative very assertively in recent times. If they need anything, they know how to get in touch with me directly and we will make sure it is delivered. Let us not pretend those opposite have empathy. During the past 100 days the Leader of the Opposition had a number of opportunities to talk about what he would do to make New South Wales stronger and better, but there was one particular policy announcement made—

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The Premier is reflecting on the first 100 days, which is totally irrelevant to this point.

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot rule on that point of order at this stage. I will hear further from the Premier. The member for Campbelltown is making assumptions about what the Premier may say.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Those opposite do not often put out policies, so when those opposite released a policy I was very interested. It was not about how to improve the quality of life for people in the Northern Rivers or any other part of New South Wales; it was about where the Leader of the Opposition wants his office to be. It was in a press release.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I cannot see how the Leader of the Opposition's office—who should be the Premier—can possibly be relevant to the Northern Rivers floods.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will note that point of order and save that for later in question time. I have just received a message from the member for Tweed to confirm that relevant government agencies are in fact on the ground supporting those people and I want to thank the member for his quick response.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (14:29): My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government improving local infrastructure in regional communities?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:29): I am very proud of the fact that this Government is making sure that every part of New South Wales gets its fair share of the infrastructure and services that our communities expect and need. This is only possible because of our strong economic position. We have a strong surplus, we have no debt and we have billions to spend on infrastructure. The surplus did not happen by accident. It is very interesting to note that those opposite have opposed us at every turn—every time we have wanted to embark on an asset recycling program, and every time we have wanted to reduce our expenses and put more resources on the front line.

I do not want to steal the thunder of the Treasurer, but guess what the Victorian Government announced yesterday? The Victorian Government announced, following the successful lead of New South Wales, that it will also be offering a concession on the land and property operator. Even the Victorian comrades of those opposite have seen the light, but those opposite have not. The announcement by the Victorian Government confirms a number of things. This Government moved so quickly because we wanted first-mover advantage. That is how we have secured \$2.6 billion from that one transaction to go into local infrastructure all across New South Wales.

I cannot tell members how proud I was yesterday to announce with the Minister for Education that 2,100 schools throughout the State will have their maintenance issues addressed. That is only one of a number of projects we are undertaking throughout the State. Those opposite can oppose all they like, but the world is passing them by, including the Victorian Labor Government, which is probably as close to the unions as those opposite.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The absolute priority of our whole team, including the Deputy Premier and me, is to make sure that every local community benefits from the hard yards we have put in over the course of a number of years. For example, I was pleased to join the member for Goulburn at the weekend to announce a new ambulance station. The station had not been upgraded for 85 years, and it was about time that this situation was rectified. This is just one example of what is happening all across the State, not just in Goulburn, as we have a multibillion dollar infrastructure program across the State. It was pleasing to meet with the hardworking paramedics and volunteers who service that station to realise what a difference the upgrade would make for them. A new ambulance station was also recently opened in Wagga Wagga.

Mr Daryl Maguire: Hear, hear!

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This was welcomed by the member for Wagga Wagga. More are currently under construction at Coolamon and Harden, which I know the member for Cootamundra is excited about. These ambulance station upgrades are happening all across rural and regional New South Wales. I know the Minister for Health has been out and about in rural and regional New South Wales as well as Greater Sydney, ensuring that every community is receiving its fair share of health services. I was very pleased that the member for Albury recently unveiled the designs for the new Tumbarumba multi-purpose health centre. Our Government will ensure that we deliver this health centre, which is important to his community. The health centre is a new building that will include an acute patient wing, larger residential aged-care rooms with dedicated ensuites and enhanced facilities for both patients and staff. These kinds of facilities make a difference to communities, and we want to ensure that every community benefits from such facilities.

Still on the topic of health, earlier this week our Government delivered a big boost for the children in northern New South Wales with the opening of a \$14 million paediatric intensive care unit at John Hunter Children's Hospital. This is an amazing state-of-the-art facility that will enhance the capacity of critical care services for children and young people in a family-friendly environment, which is important. We know that more than 300 children and young people require intensive care treatment each year at John Hunter Children's Hospital. *[Extension of time]*

This hospital will cater for the entire region, not just the specific location. We are very pleased that families can be assured that the hospital will offer world-best paediatric services. I hope to visit the hospital at some stage because the Minister has told me that the \$18 million stages two and three of the neonatal intensive care unit refurbishment at John Hunter Children's Hospital are also progressing on schedule and are due to be completed mid-next year. This facility may be based in Newcastle, but it services all of northern New South Wales and demonstrates our commitment to deliver quality health care to all people in regional areas.

Time will not allow me to highlight all the education, health and transport infrastructure that we are delivering in regional communities. But I will mention briefly some of the upgraded roads we are delivering in regional communities, and I am sure I will have plenty of opportunity in future to discuss others. In the Central West, a 2.8 kilometre section of the Great Western Highway at Kelso was recently opened. I know the member for Bathurst is thrilled about this section of the highway. Not only did we deliver this commitment but we made sure that it was delivered ahead of schedule. We know that we can manage projects on time and within budget, and if the weather is good we will deliver them ahead of schedule. This project doubles the capacity of the highway to provide a safe and more efficient road for all road users. Along with reducing congestion, this upgrade has improved capacity for freight movements, which are so important not just for people in regional New South Wales but for all of us. Road freight being moved more efficiently puts downward pressure on household costs, and that is exactly what we want to achieve. There are so many more projects that I could speak about, but I will save them for another time.

MR DENNIS CLICHE

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:36): My question is directed to the Premier. What is the salary paid to Dennis Cliche, the chief executive officer of the Sydney Motorway Corporation?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:36): I cannot say that that is something I know off the top of my head. I understand that information is not yet on the public record, but I will say this—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting. The Premier will be heard in silence.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I assume the question relates to the Labor Party's assertions today on the cost of living. I am more than happy—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bankstown will cease shouting at the Premier.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. My question was not about the cost of living but about putting on the public record the salary of the CEO of the Sydney Motorway Corporation.

The SPEAKER: Order! The question was about the chief executive officer's salary, not about the public record. There is no point of order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I say to those opposite: Why do you not support better roads for Western Sydney? What do they have against—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. We would be happy for the Premier to take the question on notice and publicly disclose the salary at the end of question time. The Premier should just disclose it.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier is entitled to complete her answer. There is no point of order. Opposition members who continue to interject will be placed on calls to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Time and time again, those opposite complain about every aspect of the project.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. We want to know the salary of the CEO of the Sydney Motorway Corporation. The Premier is hiding this at every step of the way. What is the salary?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier is trying to answer the question. There is no point of order. The Premier has the call. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time. He will cease shouting and arguing across the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If members opposite are so interested in public disclosure, why do those on the Opposition front bench not disclose their diaries? They will not even tell us who they are meeting with. What are they hiding?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Bankstown to order for the first time. I call the member for Lakemba to order for the first time. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time. Members will cease shouting. I call the member for Bankstown to order for the second time. Opposition members will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I say to those opposite: Stop your hypocrisy and focus on those issues that matter to the people of New South Wales.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Strathfield to order for the first time. Her behaviour is not acceptable.

SMALL BUSINESS

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (14:40:3): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier inform the House what the Government is doing to create opportunities to start up and grow small business in New South Wales?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time. Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the third time. Such language is not acceptable.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:41:2): I thank the member for Parramatta for his

question. He is a passionate advocate for his electorate, his region and the community of Parramatta. Judging from what the member for Parramatta has done for his electorate over the past six years—investments in community infrastructure, jobs and small business—it is no wonder that he is a popular local member. His question goes to the heart of the Government's role in supporting small business in New South Wales. We ran a pilot program in the City of Parramatta to see how we can make it easier to do business in New South Wales. On the back of that program, almost 3,000 new jobs will be created in the cafe, small bar and restaurant industry because of the Government's commitment to slashing red tape and making it easier to start a business in New South Wales. We know that it is sometimes difficult for businesses to navigate through the government maze.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: If people want to open a small bar, cafe or restaurant right now in Sydney, or elsewhere in New South Wales, the process will take almost 18 months. No part of that process will run in parallel. They will need to deal with 75 regulations, 48 forms and 13 agencies, and make 30 phone calls. No wonder it is difficult to start a business in New South Wales. But the Easy to do Business pilot program—which we initiated through the NSW Small Business Commissioner and the former Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, the member for Ryde, and continued with the new Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, the member for Hornsby—will make it easier. We have streamlined that process from 18 months to three months.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Rockdale to order for the second time. He will cease shouting across the Chamber.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Businesses or those who want to start a small business in New South Wales have a digital point of entry at Service NSW—a one-stop shop where those with the passion to be part of the exciting small business sector in New South Wales can begin the process and get on with the job of starting a business. That should not be reserved just for Sydney. Last week I had the pleasure of travelling to Dubbo, where I had the opportunity to announce the first pilot program in that city to make it easier to do business there. It was fantastic to stop at the Church Street Cafe and meet owners Errin and Julie, who have invested in that great business and created jobs. They spoke to me about starting and running a business in a regional centre: dealing with local government, dealing with regulation, dealing with the 13 agencies and the 30 phone calls, and dealing with the duplication of information and process, when nothing runs in parallel.

Why did we announce the pilot program in Dubbo? It is because Dubbo is a vibrant regional city that has seen natural growth. The member for Dubbo is very proud of his electorate and has seen significant Government investment in schools, hospitals, roads and rail. More importantly, that investment has brought confidence to the community so that the private sector wants to get involved and start businesses. We are not talking about the big end of town. The data speaks for itself: It is the individuals, the mums and dads, who show courage and who mortgage their homes to be part of the small business sector. They are winning under this Government because we are making it easy to do business in New South Wales. Why? It is because we believe in small business. We know that small business is the engine room of the economy.

In a community such as Dubbo small businesses represent 93 per cent of all businesses and employ something like 57 per cent of the workforce. They are a significant contributor to the local, State and national economies. That is why, from the moment we were elected in 2011, members on this side of the House have focused on making it easier to do business in New South Wales by cutting red tape and cutting taxes. At the 2015 election Labor opposed cutting taxes on small business because it does not understand small business.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The member for Maitland is right on cue. [*Extension of time*]

Ms Jenny Aitchison: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The Minister is misleading the Parliament and casting aspersions on Opposition members. We were representing small business. That is an untruth.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Maitland will resume her seat. She has demonstrated that after two years in this place she does not understand the standing orders of the House.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Those opposite opposed tax cuts for business in New South Wales. They cannot deny that. They went to an election ripping more than \$5 billion in tax cuts away from—

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: That reflects the culture within Labor and the culture of its members. I have a quote from Young Labor, which states:

Unfortunately, we often perceive small business as the enemy of our common cause. The businessman is not the worker. They want lower costs and less regulation. They are difficult to organise in any traditional sense, and their union density is bleak compared to larger workplaces. Indeed, the majority of small businesses have no employees.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Those opposite talk and talk. Federal Labor opposed company tax cuts—the same company tax cuts that support small businesses. That is on the record. Those opposite can carry on about that in this place but the record clearly shows that they opposed tax cuts for businesses, opposed supporting small businesses and opposed people who are prepared to take the risk to be part of the business sector. We know that government cannot deliver everything. On this side of the House we know that we are in partnership with the private sector to grow the economy and to build and enable infrastructure. That is why we have seen more than 300,000 jobs—almost 50,000 in regional New South Wales—created over the past six years. Business confidence is high. Jobs are being created. The private sector is matching the Government's investment in growing jobs in New South Wales. Today I reassure all business owners in New South Wales that the Liberal-Nationals Government is committed to making it easier to do business in New South Wales.

M4 WIDENING PROJECT

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (14:48:5): Madam Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. The member for Prospect is entitled to ask a question. He will be heard in silence.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: My question is directed to the Premier. The head of Roads and Maritime Services, Ken Kanofski, told budget estimates that the M4 widening would be completed by the first quarter of this year. I ask the Premier: On what date will it actually be completed?

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. The Premier does not require their assistance.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:49): I will get to the specific question in a second. I must apologise for having inadvertently misled the House in my previous answer. The salary of the head of the Sydney Motorway Corporation [SMC] is on the website.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the hardworking member from Western Sydney, because within seconds of my resuming my seat he said, "Glad, it is on the website." It has taken me 30 seconds to confirm it, but members opposite could not do that for themselves.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: I ask the Premier to reveal the salary of the chief executive officer—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. There is no point of order. Members will come to order. This is my final warning. Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber, regardless of whether they have been called to order. The member for Macquarie Fields will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: After that performance, does anyone seriously believe members opposite are ready for government?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I have said enough about the remuneration of the Chief Executive Officer of the SMC; it is definitely on the website. The member for Prospect asked when this stage of the project will be opened. Its opening is imminent, and I will have more to say about that in the future. It is curious that an Opposition member would ask that question given that members opposite announced the construction of 12 different rail lines when they were in government, but delivered only half of one at double the projected cost three years later.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: They also announced the CBD to Rozelle metro and then axed it. They then said they would widen the M4 and the M5. This Government is doing that now because they did not.

Dr Hugh McDermott: Point of order: The question was about the M4, not railways or anything that happened in the past.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The question was about the M4. The Labor Government said that it would deliver the project, but it did not touch the sides. When it comes to Western Sydney and infrastructure projects, this is the side of the House that delivers. We have the money, the resources, and the knowhow. Members of the Opposition cannot even look up a website to get an answer. I rest my case.

The SPEAKER: Order! Question time is very noisy today. However, the visitors from Rockdale RSL appear to be enjoying it.

PORT KEMBLA

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (14:54): I address my question to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Will the Minister update the House on any new port developments at the port of Port Kembla, and is she aware of any related matters concerning ports?

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: The member for Kiama asked two questions. Therefore, his questions should be ruled out of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The question of the member for Kiama also referred to "related matters". I direct the Clerk to stop the clock. Question time will not proceed until members cease interjecting. I remind members that several of them are on three calls to order. Those members who have been called to order are deemed to be on three calls to order.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (14:54): I thank the member for Kiama for that great question. He is a great Parliamentary Secretary for Education and the Illawarra and South Coast.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. I cannot hear the Minister.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: As members know, the Government is delivering for the Illawarra. It has spent \$580 million on the Foxground Bypass, which has been delivered and is open. It has spent \$340 million on the Gerringong/Princes Highway upgrade, which has also been delivered and it is open.

Ms Anna Watson: What about the Albion Park Rail Bypass?

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The Government has done the planning for the Albion Park Rail Bypass and the Berry to Bomaderry Bypass, and tenders are being issued. None of that would be happening if it were not for the work of this Government and the ongoing advocacy of the Speaker, the member for Kiama, and the member for Bega and Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. The member for Kiama asked about new port developments in Port Kembla. I opened the new state-of-the-art Quattro multi-grain terminal at Port Kembla 12 days ago. It was a wonderful day for the Illawarra. This \$80 million facility features 19 new silos, and can load 1,500 tonnes of grain an hour into ships—

Mr Michael Daley: That was done with private money.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Are you criticising private investment in the Illawarra? Shame on you, Michael Daley! You hate the private sector. You are correct: The terminal does involve private sector investment.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: That is something we should celebrate, not denigrate. This terminal will increase export demand from Port Kembla.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The terminal will service three grain trains a day and can store more than 100,000 tonnes of grain. That is good not only for the Illawarra and Port Kembla but also for farmers, because it gives them another choice to get their grain to market. This is about competition and the New South Wales economy. How dare you criticise it. Criticising the private sector is in the Labor Party's DNA.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: This will give the Minister a chance to calm down.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order. I cannot hear the member for Strathfield.

Ms Jodi McKay: The Minister is shouting.

The SPEAKER: Order! It was Opposition members who were shouting.

Ms Jodi McKay: Madam Speaker, I ask that you request the Minister to direct her comments through the Chair.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will direct her comments through the Chair.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: They hate the farmers. They hate the private sector. I would have thought that both the State and Federal member, who were invited, would have been there on that day. I was so looking forward to seeing the Federal member for Cunningham, Sharon Bird. We beat the Commonwealth in netball and I wanted to rub it in. The member for Port Stephens was goal attack and I was goal shooter. We beat Sharon Bird and I wanted to rub that in. The member for Port Stephens did not attend, nor did the member for Wollongong. Why was he not there supporting his community? I know that Noreen would have been there.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Point of order—

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: What do you want, grandpa?

Mr Stephen Kamper: My point of order relates to relevance. Is the Minister talking about farmers or netball?

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Rockdale should listen and try to keep up.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Do you hate netball too? The member for Cunningham was not there, nor was the member for Wollongong. I was really sad. Those opposites used to pretend they were the party for the worker, but now there is no pretence. [*Extension of time*]

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: They do not care about the worker. They just hate good news. We on this side are getting on with the job not of making New South Wales number one again but of keeping New South Wales number one. It was this Government that took New South Wales from the worst economic position to the best in Australia.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Rockdale for the final time.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: Through cooperation and collaboration with the private sector and companies like Quattro, we are delivering infrastructure and providing jobs, competition and the right investment framework.

Ms Anna Watson: Why didn't you build the trains here?

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I was also asked about related matters concerning ports. There have been militant activities at Port Botany. The Maritime Union of Australia [MUA] is conducting illegal industrial action that is costing our economy. It is Labor's own Fair Work Commission that has deemed this industrial action illegal. It is illegal strike action by the MUA. It was revealed in February that in the last financial year the MUA delivered \$20,000 to the Australian Labor Party.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira will resume his seat. I remind him that he is on three calls to order.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: This is the challenge to the Leader of the Opposition: Will you continue to take illegal donations from people who break the law and stop jobs, investment and activity? That is the question for you, Luke Foley.

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

M4 TOLL

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:03): My question is directed to the Premier. On what date will Western Sydney and Blue Mountains motorists using the M4 have to start paying the reintroduced toll?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. I remind members that many of them are on three calls to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:03): Those opposite keep asking the same question. Have members noticed that theme? I was asked five yesterday. Today my response to the previous member's question was that we will advise the community imminently about those changes. The member for Blue Mountains has not been here as long as some of us, but when the Labor Party introduced tolls—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Labor Party's tolls on roads in this State far exceeded what this Government is doing. The discount those opposite applied to tolls was higher, the concession rate was longer, the amount was more per kilometre, and they did not even finish the project.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! Has the Premier concluded her answer?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will give them a bit more.

Ms Jodi McKay: That is kind of you, because in doing so you give me the opportunity to give you a bit more as well.

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

Ms Jodi McKay: The question was specifically about the date for the introduction of the M4 toll. I remind the Premier that Labor removed the toll on the M4. When is the Government bringing it back?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier is answering the question. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. I remind her that she is on three calls to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Let me get this right. Do they believe in asset recycling?

Government members: No.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Do they believe in budget repair?

Government members: No.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Do they think money grows on trees?

Government members: Yes.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: My point of order is in relation to Standing Order 129. The question specifically related to the introduction date of the toll on the M4.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier is answering the question. The member for Fairfield will resume his seat.

Mr Guy Zangari: The residents from Mulgoa, Penrith, Londonderry and Fairfield would like to know, Premier Berejiklian.

The SPEAKER: Order! I place the member for Fairfield on three calls to order.

Mr John Robertson: Point of order: Brad, you should learn. Do not project yourself onto what I do.

The SPEAKER: Order! Does the member for Blacktown have a point of order or is he simply being a smart Alec?

Mrs Melinda Pavey: He does smart Alec well.

Mr John Robertson: I learned from you, Melinda, in the upper House. It is unparliamentary to incite responses from members in the Chamber. The Premier is inciting her colleagues to respond.

The SPEAKER: Order! The standing orders do not contain any references to inciting responses. They do contain references to interjecting, which Opposition members do too often.

Mr Michael Daley: To the point of order: I refer to several rulings of past Speakers that mass interjections are particularly disorderly.

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

Mr Michael Daley: I know you do not want to acknowledge any of our points of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will not incite my colleagues for the rest of my answer but I will incite those opposite, because when they were interjecting something suddenly came to mind. When those opposite were in government, pensioners used to receive a free voucher twice a year to go on CountryLink trains. Those opposite actually imposed a booking tax every time a pensioner rang up to use their free ticket. They put a tax on a free voucher for pensioners to use CountryLink services.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Government members will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I will end on this note: When it comes to the cost of living, those opposite have zero credibility. When it comes to infrastructure, they have zero credibility. When it comes to delivering anything, they have zero credibility. I will end there, enough said.

REGIONAL HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (15:07): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. What is the New South Wales Government doing to improve health infrastructure in regional New South Wales?

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (15:07): I thank the member for Tamworth for his question. He is a member who really represents the regional area and understands the needs of his community. We had a great time up at Tamworth a few weeks ago. The Liberal-Nationals Coalition delivered Tamworth Hospital—\$211 million worth—and it is a beauty. The hospital staff are ecstatic.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bankstown will come to order. The member for Canterbury will come to order. This is their final warning.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: What I really like about the hospital is that it has not just been the work of bureaucrats. It has been designed by the community. In fact, as one walks up the first flight of stairs, there is an original Aboriginal flag, framed and proudly placed, to represent the local Aboriginal community, whom I believe are the Kamilaroi.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Yes, sir.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: The Kamilaroi people are very pleased with it. When this Government came to power in 2011, more than 50 per cent of the hospitals and health facilities in New South Wales were more than 50 years old and something needed to be done. The Labor Government had bumbled its way through the preceding 16 years. It had not been able to get the economy moving or the necessary funds to build our hospitals. The Liberal-Nationals Government turned the economy around. New South Wales went from the bottom of the economic pile in this country to the top. I hear an interjection from the Opposition about the resources boom. The resources boom was driving Queensland and Western Australia, but the economy of New South Wales was being driven by the good work being done by this Government. And now the people across the regions are benefiting.

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

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: This Government has a health building blitz going on across New South Wales. I have the best job in the world because I go to facilities like those in Tamworth and see how much the local communities appreciate them. This has been occurring everywhere, right across the State. I mentioned just a few weeks ago the new Byron Central Hospital, to which \$88 million has been allocated. How good is the Dubbo Base Hospital? The member for Dubbo is proud of that facility. Stages 1 and 2 were constructed at a cost of \$93.7 million and an allocation of another \$150 million is underway. At the time that we opened those first facilities, Parkes and Forbes health services were also allocated more than \$60 million for their facilities. They are fantastic.

In the south of the State we find the great member for Bega. He knows how to advocate for his community. There is an amazing new hospital in his electorate, the South East Regional Hospital. The Eurobodalla renal and oncology unit was also opened within his electorate. Those are fantastic facilities for the local community. I turn now to Goulburn and the wonderful member for Goulburn. In Goulburn, \$10.4 million has been allocated to the new Goulburn Base Hospital Sub-Acute Rehabilitation Unit. The people in that electorate love it. On the weekend, I was talking to some of the folk at Goulburn Hospital and they really appreciate the funding. Another \$10 million has been allocated to the redevelopment of the Grafton Base Hospital, while \$14 million of funding has been allocated to the Illawarra Cancer Care Centre. I also refer to the Kempsey District

Hospital redevelopment, an incredible new development that the member for Oxley and the community in his electorate appreciate.

The effervescent, wonderful member for Lismore gets excited when he sees the new hospital facilities in his electorate, which received \$80 million. He fought for those facilities. Look at the grin on his face. When I was in Lismore recently I got the sense that it is a great regional hospital. The community and the medical staff love it. A further allocation of \$180 million will be made to those facilities and a wonderful new car park has been constructed over the road, which I think was funded at \$10 million. The Port Macquarie Hospital expansion was delivered by the Government at a cost of about \$110 million. I asked the local member, Mrs Leslie Williams, what she thought of it. She said, "It is the most amazing development." She went into details. She said, "There is a new and expanded emergency department, a new and expanded intensive care unit, and a new high dependency unit." *[Extension of time]*

The fantastic member for Port Macquarie highlighted the fact that there is a new paediatric unit and a new 30-bed medicinal inpatient unit, and we are on the way with a new \$15.8 million mental health unit in the coming 12 months or so. There has been an expansion to the ambulatory care unit at Shellharbour Hospital, which is another great project, as is the Shoalhaven Cancer Care Centre. The Shoalhaven Cancer Care Centre was funded to the tune of about \$32 million. I know that that has received personal recognition by two members in this place, who both fought very hard for it: the Speaker and the member for Kiama, Gareth Ward. That facility has two linear accelerators. These types of facilities touch everyone's lives. I know that Mr Ward's mum was treated there with the linear accelerator, as was the Speaker's daughter.

The message is that each and every one of the centres that this Government is rebuilding makes a huge difference in the lives of individuals. This is not just about infrastructure; it is about producing results for individuals. A new car park has been built at Wollongong at a cost of \$27 million. I turn now to Wagga Wagga. Every time I mention Wagga Wagga, the member for Wagga Wagga almost leaps out of his seat. Look at him; he is almost bouncing out of his seat. I asked him what he thought of the new hospital. He said that it was absolutely fabulous. That is what the people of his electorate think about the hospital, but there will be more to come for the wonderful member for Wagga Wagga. I was disappointed that before the 2011 election the Opposition announced that a Labor government would close the Woy Woy subacute rehabilitation unit. The Liberal-Nationals Government kept it open and put another \$11 million into it. This Government will continue the hospital building blitz across this State for as long as we are in Government.

RAILWAY STATION UPGRADES

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:15): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Will the Minister tell the people who use or would like to be able to use the train stations at Petersham, Stanmore, Erskineville, Redfern, Lewisham, Macdonaldtown and St Peters—all of which are currently inaccessible stations—when the urgently needed upgrades will commence and where these stations are on the priority list?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting. The member for The Entrance will come to order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:15): I congratulate The Greens member on asking a sensible question. It just goes to show that members can ask sensible questions in question time, unlike the questions asked by the shadow Minister.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kogarah will remain silent.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I am unsure whether the member for Newtown was a member of Parliament when this Government upgraded a station in her electorate.

Ms Jenny Leong: There are still seven to go.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Newtown will cease interjecting and listen to the answer.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: She would also be aware that this Government delivered accessibility around the City Circle. Over a very long time, governments had not invested in accessibility across the train network.

Ms Jenny Leong: It is shameful.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Newtown will come to order. This is not a debate.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The disability services Minister also said that it was a shame. It is important for this House to note that when we came to Government two-thirds of the stations did not have easy

access. I can report to the House that 88 per cent of commuters across the network now have access. But there is more to do. I am grateful for the member's question because I can indicate that this Government is going to continue to work on this issue. The member would also know that since this Government came to office we have delivered lift access at Redfern. However, the work does not go far enough and this Government will continue to deliver this \$890 million program. More needs to be done. Let me call a spade a spade. For people with disabilities one of the greatest barriers to participation in the community is access to transport. That is why this Government will continue in this vein. In relation to the inner west, I am a little disappointed with the member for Summer Hill, who is fighting an upgrade at Dulwich Hill. The Labor Party is opposed to upgrading the city to Bankstown line and all the inaccessible stations, where we want to put brand new metro stations.

Mr Jihad Dib: I don't think so.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The member for Lakemba says, "I don't think so." I am glad that his comment is on the record.

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

Mr Jihad Dib: Get it on the record.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: In the electorate of Newtown, the Government has recently announced a major accessibility upgrade at Central station, which will link the suburban rail lines to the new metro station that is going to be delivered. The Government will continue to work at it. Without doubt, this Government has made significant inroads in relation to accessibility, and we will continue in that vein. There are still many small stations across the network that do not have easy access. That is why we are going to continue to invest in this year's budget. Work on the City Circle was concluded only last year. We are very conscious that stations such as Edgecliff and Redfern and those stations just beyond the City Circle precinct require much better access. Many members in this House, such as the member for Newtown, continue to advocate for their local communities. This Government has a very clear program in relation to those stations so that we can provide the access required. I note that those opposite are yawning, which demonstrates they do not care.

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (15:20): My question is addressed to His Excellency the Treasurer. Following the announcement that Victoria is to enter into a concession for its Land Titles Office, how is the New South Wales Government leading the nation when it comes to infrastructure delivery, and is the Treasurer aware of any other strategies?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (15:21): As Oscar Wilde once said, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery". Whilst we on this side of the House innovate, Labor members imitate. And so they should, because asset recycling is what good governments do. We know it, Victoria's Labor Party knows it, everyone knows it except the New South Wales Labor Party, which becomes more and more irrelevant every day. I noted at the time of the debate on Land and Property Information that there were Labor members attending a union rally in Martin Place. Typical Labor, standing around in groups, eating sausages and achieving nothing. The member for Blue Mountains interjects. On her Facebook page she said:

NSW Labor stands with the Public Service Association.

Therein lies the difference: Labor stands with the Public Service Association; we stand with the people of New South Wales. Yesterday's decision by the Victorian Labor Government is a scathing indictment on the economic illiteracy of those opposite, exposing them as nothing more than cheap political opportunists. While their Victorian comrades are moving forward, NSW Labor is moving backwards—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Swansea will come to order. The member for Cessnock will come to order. This is their final warning.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: —with the member for Cessnock bringing forward his long-awaited Land and Property Information repeal bill. He should get Tim Pallas to write the speech. His bill will cost the State billions of dollars. Even in Opposition those opposite have found a way to put New South Wales into further debt and deficit. I thought Dan Andrews was the most left-wing socialist leader in the country, but those guys opposite make him look like Genghis Khan. But I have diagnosed a deeper problem. As the Labor Party continues to protest—it loves to talk about things in Opposition but it never delivers anything in government because it can never fund it—I recently read an article by the former infrastructure Minister Anthony Albanese, who was lecturing the States and the Federal Government on infrastructure. He said:

Construction supports economic activity and jobs.

This is coming from a guy who for six years as the infrastructure Minister delivered absolutely nothing. Yet he has the hide to lecture us on infrastructure.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 73. The personal reflections of the Treasurer are not only inaccurate but are a misrepresentation.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not think they were personal reflections; they were general reflections. There is no point of order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: This is after last year announcing that not one Federal dollar would go to the biggest infrastructure project of the nation—WestConnex—simply to save his inner-city seat. This is the Labor Party's modus operandi: lots of talk in Opposition but no action in government. But the rot does not stop there. The other day I went to my favourite Facebook page—that of the member for Summer Hill. She posted a video, which the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure should put up on his Facebook page because it is a great aerial video of WestConnex. The member for Summer Hill said on Facebook:

We've seen enough destruction.

It is not destruction; it is construction. The member for Summer Hill was an adviser to Minister Albanese—no wonder nothing ever got done. It continues; the names change but Labor stays the same. Recently I was doing my second favourite activity: reading *Hansard*. On 29 May 1997, the Hon. Jan Burnswoods—I do not know what faction she was in—said on the day of the opening of the M2:

I record my sorrow at the opening on Monday this week of the M2 tollway. Commonly described as the road to nowhere ...

What Labor did and said in 1997 about the M2 is exactly what it is doing and saying about WestConnex today. I can guarantee that in 2037—20 years from now—the Treasurer of the day will be reading the comments in *Hansard* of the member for Strathfield and the member for Summer Hill as thousands and thousands of people travel along WestConnex every day. Not only are governments around the country copying us, governments around the world are starting to copy us too. I was recently on a yacht with my good friend and the second most powerful person in the world, the Vice President of the United States of America—Mike to his friends. [*Extension of time*]

I am with him and, most importantly, he is with us, because the very next day he came out in the media and said that he was keen to emulate New South Wales' model of infrastructure funding. Victoria is copying us, the United States of America is copying us. Everywhere they are copying us because here in New South Wales we are the best in business. While Labor will continue to be the party of protest and become even more irrelevant, on this side of the House the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government will continue to provide the infrastructure of the twenty-first century for the great State of New South Wales.

Committees

PORTFOLIO STANDING COMMITTEES

The SPEAKER: In accordance with clause (2) of their terms of reference, I announce that the following committees' portfolio responsibilities, as set out in clause 1 of the terms of reference agreed to on 28 May 2015, are amended to read as follows:

- (1) Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning—Resources; Energy and Utilities; Arts; Housing; Planning; Special Minister of State; Environment; Local Government; and Heritage.
- (2) Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development—Premier; Regional New South Wales; Skills, Small Business; Treasury; Industrial Relations; Primary Industries; Regional Water; Trade and Industry; Finance, Services and Property; Lands and Forestry; Racing; Sport; Innovation and Better Regulation; and Tourism and Major Events.
- (3) Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety—Attorney General; Police; Emergency Services; Counter Terrorism; Corrections; and Veterans Affairs.
- (4) Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure—Transport and Infrastructure; Western Sydney; WestConnex; and Roads, Maritime and Freight.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: SPEAKING TIME LIMITS

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide for the following speaking time limits on the notice of motion regarding the Granville Train Disaster, given this day by the Premier:

- (1) The Premier—10 minutes.
- (2) The Leader of the Opposition—10 minutes.
- (3) The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure—5 minutes.
- (4) The Member for Granville—5 minutes.

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**.

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**.

*Business of the House***HEART DISEASE****Reordering**

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (15:30): I move:

That the General Business Notice of Motion (General Notice) given by me this day [Heart disease] have precedence on Thursday 4 May 2017.

My motion should be given priority because it is evident that heart disease mortality has been substantially reduced through the advances in diagnosis, clinical care and treatment. Also, it is Heart Week. That is another reason that my notice should be given precedence. Good health starts with a healthy childhood. Childhood overweight and obesity increases the risk of developing hypertension and other complications later in life. Children become overweight and obese for a variety of reasons. The most common causes are genetic factors, a lack of physical activity, unhealthy eating patterns or a combination of all those factors. Conversely, risk factors such as being overweight or obese in childhood may increase a person's risk of developing such health conditions later in life. Children who are overweight or obese can develop health problems during childhood because of all those reasons.

It could lead to type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, fatty liver disease, gallstone and risk factors for heart disease.

In 2014 and 2015 a staggering 63.4 per cent of Australian adults were overweight or obese, which is well over half of our nation's population. That is almost two in three adults. This is an increase from 1995, which was 56.3 per cent, illustrating that this problem is certainly rapidly getting worse. The New South Wales Government is proactive and is aiming to make healthy normal via an inspiring new campaign activity, which is family focused, to get the whole family more active and eating healthy. The reordering of this motion is critical because the health of our citizens is vital, not only for their wellbeing and for their overall quality of life, but it is also important to the health of our economy and the increasing effects on our health system.

The good news about heart disease is that advances in diagnosis, clinical care and treatment have substantially reduced heart disease mortality over the past 20 years. New figures from the NSW Bureau of Health Information indicate that 30 day mortality after admission to hospital for heart attacks has dropped 41 per cent over the past 15 years. This has come about because of better recognition of warning signals by consumers, faster times to hospital and faster and more advanced treatment in hospital. That is why this motion has to be reordered.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (15:33): My motion is absolutely critical because we often hear members on the other side say that New South Wales is number one. On this occasion they are right. New South Wales is number one for taxation. Members opposite love it. They love big government. They love putting their hands in the pockets of mums and dads; they love nothing more than a good tax. I know the Treasurer loves quoting *Hansard*, so I did a bit of research with my entire department in my huge office, and found an article on the internet from 2 June 2016 entitled "Dominic Perrottet: Taxes Destroying Family Aspirations". I thought, this is interesting coming from the highest taxing Treasurer; it is a bit unusual. The article states that Dominic Perrottet said:

Mr Speaker, let me be clear—in a free country, money belongs to those who earn it.
He goes on:

...
It is not fair that you are punished for creating jobs, investing wisely or providing for your family.
It is not fair that we increasingly have a system that taxes those who work to subsidise those who won't.

...
This is why I am in favour of cutting taxes under any circumstances and for any excuse, for any reason, whenever it's possible.

A year is a long time in politics because we now have a Treasurer who is number one for taxation; he loves it. New South Wales residents are paying \$4,417 in taxes per year. That is \$427 more than the average State or Territory. Government members love tax. They love budget blowouts. More than ever they love taking money from residents and blowing it on projects. That is what they really love doing. They are fantastic at blowing taxpayers' money. The Auditor-General said this week that a billion dollars was spent on contract labour. Today the million dollar man in WestConnex is revealed. This Government loves taxes. This Government loves budget blowouts and it is fiscally irresponsible.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the notice of motion of the member for Drummoyne have precedence on Thursday 4 May 2017.

The House divided.

Ayes52
Noes39
Majority..... 13

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Fraser, Mr A
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Elliott, Mr D
George, Mr T
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M
Piccoli, Mr A

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Davies, Ms T
Evans, Mr L
Gibbons, Ms M
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G

AYES

Roberts, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

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
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McDermott, Dr H
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
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
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
Greenwich, Mr A
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
Mihailuk, Ms T
Parker, Mr J
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

Motion agreed to.*Motions Accorded Priority***ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE****Consideration**

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (15:42): When ignorance goes for \$100 a barrel, I want the drilling rights to the Opposition. Today we saw the Opposition's ignorance on display concerning regional roads. I wish to update the House on an announcement made by Labor's candidate for Gilmore, Fiona Phillips. Today she paraded herself in the community and announced that an elected Shorten Labor Government will promise \$50 million to upgrade the Shoalhaven River bridge. I have news for the former failed candidate for Gilmore and South Coast: The upgrade cost more than \$200 million. I ask members of the Labor Party which particular span of the bridge they expect the residents of Shoalhaven to swim across. They have said they will commit \$50 million, but that would not build a quarter of the project, and yet those opposite believe they can be trusted on regional roads.

I note the member for Shellharbour is in the Chamber. She voted against the Albion Park Rail bypass that runs through her community. I sympathise with the member for Shellharbour, although she is interjecting. In a note to the House it was stated that her library recently burnt to the ground. Both books were lost, and I am very sorry about the one she was colouring in. When it comes to roads she has a lot of work to do, because she cannot claim credibility for roads and then vote against them here. She cannot say she is for investments in her community and vote against them.

What does this Opposition want to do if it wins the election in 2019? It wants to get the biggest pair of scissors and cut ribbons at every single project those opposite voted against. These projects are in regional New South Wales but they never would have seen the light of day. I am proud to stand with my friends in The Nationals, because members on this side of the House are delivering for regional communities—be it the Pacific Highway, be it across the divide, be it in Kempsey, be it the Princes Highway, be it the Newell Highway—as this dreadful Opposition drags its knuckles around the State. It is confronted by infrastructure project after infrastructure project. It is trying to convince the people of this State that it would have undertaken these projects, but it does not have the spine or the intestinal fortitude to join this Government and every member on this side of the House, because we know what is right for regional communities.

We will not let those opposite get away with it. At the next election we will have candidates in each one of their seats, taunting them about the projects they wanted to cancel, the projects they are against, and the colouring books they have failed to colour in. We will come after each one of their seats, because they destroyed

New South Wales. They should take a look at members on this side of the House. We are going to get on and deliver without those opposite, because they destroyed this State, and we are rebuilding it.

Business interrupted.

Members

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY

At 3.45 p.m. the House proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber to attend a joint sitting to elect a member to fill a seat in the Legislative Council vacated by the Hon. Michael Gallacher, resigned.

At 4.00 p.m. the House reassembled.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I report that the House met with the Legislative Council in the Legislative Council Chamber to elect a member to fill the seat in the Legislative Council vacated by the resignation of the Hon. Michael Gallacher and that Taylor Mitchell Martin was duly elected. I table the minutes of proceedings of the joint sitting. I order that the minutes of proceedings of the joint sitting be printed.

Motions Accorded Priority

ROAD TOLLS

Consideration

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (16:01:1): My motion deserves priority over other business of this House because at its heart it is about the consistent attack on the people of Western Sydney by this Government. Western Sydney residents will be hit hardest by the reintroduction of the toll on the M4, which will be capped at \$4.21. That means that a regular commuter from Penrith—and I note that the member for Penrith and Minister for Western Sydney tolls is walking into the Chamber—travelling to the central business district will be slugged an extra \$2,000 per year. But why should we be surprised? This is standard operating procedure under the Liberals. It means that those who can afford it the least will pay under this Government. What makes it even worse is that this toll will rise above the consumer price index at about 4 per cent per quarter and will exist for some 43 years. Let us put that into context—it will exist until 2060. My four-year-old son will be 47 when this toll on the M4 finishes; there are people in this Chamber who will be long gone by that point.

This is nothing less than another tax on Western Sydney families by the hand of this Government. First it told us the toll would be introduced in the first quarter of this year. Then it said, "Maybe not until 2019". Then it was rumoured that there might be a toll-free period, but the Minister for Western Sydney told us he was slapped down by the Premier on that. The Minister for Western Sydney cannot even tell the people of our communities when this road will be finished. Let me remind the Minister, who Andrew Clennell calls the Minister for the big end of town, that he should not forget where he came from, although he has thrown his lot in with the corporate fat cats who will never, ever have to pay a cent of this toll. If he thinks he can impose this toll on Western Sydney families and get away with it, he should think again, because Labor is coming for him. This Government is the enemy of Western Sydney, and Western Sydney families have every right to feel utterly betrayed by this Government. That is why my motion deserves priority.

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

The House divided.

Ayes49

Noes36

Majority..... 13

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Davies, Ms T
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D

Aplin, Mr G
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A

Ayres, Mr S
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Donato, Mr P
Fraser, Mr A
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B

AYES

O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

Pavey, Mrs M
Piccoli, Mr A
Rowell, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Dib, Mr J
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McDermott, Dr H
Minns, Mr C
Piper, Mr G
Smith, Ms T F
Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Park, Mr R
Robertson, Mr J
Tesch, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D
Parker, Mr J
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G
Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Barilaro, Mr J
Berejiklian, Ms G

Foley, Mr L
Mihailuk, Ms T

Motion agreed to.*Bills***SECURITY INDUSTRY AMENDMENT BILL 2017****Returned**

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

*Motions Accorded Priority***RURAL AND REGIONAL ROADS****Priority**

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:11): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Welcomes the Government's record regional roads program, which is delivering benefits for communities across the State.
- (2) Condemns the Opposition for its failure to invest in regional roads throughout the State.

Every member of the Opposition just walked into Chamber and voted against regional roads. If anyone wants a demonstration of where they stand on regional roads, that is it: They voted against regional roads in New South Wales. Of course, they are now trying to treat the communities on the South Coast, and particularly the Shoalhaven, as schmucks. What their candidate proposed today is not even a half or a quarter measure. Members opposite are telling the people of Shoalhaven that a quarter of the job is good enough.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I place the member for Blacktown on three calls to order.

Mr GARETH WARD: The member for Blacktown is leaving the Chamber because he knows he has lost the debate. His best contributions are those made outside the Chamber. I can reveal to the House today that the New South Wales Government has applied for \$180 million from Infrastructure Australia. We have done our

job in seeking the funds that our communities need for a bridge project. The people of Shoalhaven should not only be concerned about today's announcement but also be disgusted with the Opposition because it does not even do a quarter of the job. Members opposite now have egg on their faces not only because they are now supporting this commitment but also because their former failed candidate in the electorate of South Coast opposed the leasing of poles and wires, the proceeds of which have funded the Albion Park Rail bypass project. We are seeing record amounts being spent on roads across New South Wales.

Since 2011, the Government has spent \$4 billion on average each year on roads and maritime and freight projects, which is 67 per cent more than the Labor Government spent. On the South Coast, we have seen a 110 per cent increase in road spending on projects such as the Gerringong upgrade, which the Labor Government promised for 16 years but did not deliver. That project has made a real difference to people's lives. Members opposite were happy to prioritise road projects in their own electorates, but they ignored regional New South Wales while they were in government.

Ms Anna Watson: That's rich!

Mr GARETH WARD: I hear the musings of the member for Shellharbour. I am sure she will make an entertaining contribution to this debate. The problem is that when she is speaking she does not know what she is saying, and when she sits down she does not know what she said. I look forward to her explaining why she voted against the Albion Park Rail bypass project and its funding. I am sure she is busy learning how to colour between the lines, and I commend her for that. Members on this side of the Chamber will continue to deliver for regional New South Wales. My very good friend the member for Upper Hunter is in the Chamber and will make a contribution to this debate. We have great members like the member for South Coast, the Hon. Shelley Hancock, who year after year and day after day when she was in opposition came into this House to ensure that Parliament and the Government were aware of the needs of motorists on the South Coast. Projects like the Gerringong upgrade, the Berry Bypass, the South Nowra project, the Termeil Creek project, and the Burrill Lake project would not have been delivered if it were not for her advocacy.

The member for Heathcote, who is in the Chamber, is a champion of road projects in his electorate. Those projects would not have been delivered without his hard work. In contrast, members opposite are not prepared to make the tough decisions about things like asset recycling. The member for Cessnock is also in the Chamber. I respect him and I suspect that he knows about shifting capital from one side of the balance sheet to the other, which is what other State Labor governments have done. The member voted against the lease of the ports. The problem for him is that his leader changed his mind in the lead-up to the election and now supports the lease. Members opposite said they opposed the proposal, but now they support it. They write to the Government saying they do not want the money, and then they do. They do not know which way they are going.

Of course, things like the lease of the port led to the delivery of the Berry Bypass project. That was another project and regional investment that members opposite did not want. How can anyone trust them when they do only a quarter of the job? The announcement made today about the Shoalhaven is not something to be celebrated; it is a disgrace. The Labor Party candidate has proven that she is an embarrassment and that she cannot do the job. The Government has obtained the \$180 million required to deliver the project, but it appears that people will have to swim across, span to span, because the Labor Party candidate is so hopeless, pathetic and incompetent that she cannot be trusted to deliver for the Shoalhaven.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:16): We have seen it again: the member for Kiama, the Kiama blowhole. He says one thing in his electorate and then comes into this place and says something completely different. He cannot seem to make up his mind on where he stands on road infrastructure. For the past six years the member has been singing the praises of the Albion Park Rail bypass, as have members on this side of the Chamber; we are very keen to see it delivered. In fact, we are so keen that we have been talking about it for six years. But what have we seen from the member for Kiama? He says, "I know; we'll spend another \$1 million on more planning." The planning done in the 1990s delivered the same result. Members opposite have been dragging the chain and paper shuffling for six years. By the time this Liberal Government gets a shovel in the ground, it will have been in power for almost 10 years. The people of the Illawarra are not stupid; they know that members opposite are dragging the chain on the Albion Park Rail bypass. They should not lecture members of the Labor Party about—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Shellharbour and the member for Kiama will cease arguing across the Chamber. They will direct their remarks through the Chair.

Ms ANNA WATSON: I can certainly do that, but I do not know about the member for Kiama. This Government has done nothing more than shuffle paper. It is laughable for the member for Kiama to judge the Opposition on its record on road infrastructure. West Dapto, which is one of the biggest growth areas in New South Wales, has not one State roads project. That is a disgrace. This is a priority project and we do not see even one

State road. I will update the House on Labor's road infrastructure. I will just name a few projects: the Westlink M7, which cost \$1.6 billion; the upgrade to the Pacific Highway, \$1.6 billion; and the M5 East, \$650 million.

Seacliff Bridge was another Labor initiative. There is also the Woronora Bridge. Labor delivered the Iron Cove Bridge duplication between Drummoyne and Rozelle, and widened the M4 west of Granville. The list goes on and on. Labor commenced the south-west rail line. In addition, it was a Labor government that delivered the Kiama bypass. It was a Labor government that delivered the Dapto bypass. We have been living with this missing link for more than six years—it was promised repeatedly but the Government cannot even get it into the budget. That is a disgrace.

The people of the Illawarra know that the member for Kiama only cares about the member for Kiama. The member for Kiama cares only about his job and his position. For a little while he may have been toying with the idea of being the member for Gilmore. I think that dream may have vanished, but one day we might see some action from him. Last year the Government directed 90 per cent of its priority infrastructure to fund urban road projects despite promising that at least 30 per cent would go to rural and regional areas. It has not happened. The roads and railways in rural communities are not functional. The Nationals members in this place have enormous concerns about the potential that is not being met. The Liberal Party's mates in the bush know what is not being delivered. Even the NRMA has said that the Government needs to start prioritising rural and regional roads. The Government has been told once, twice and three times, but it is still not listening.

Mr Gareth Ward: What?

Ms ANNA WATSON: You are still not listening—you are not listening now. The Government seems to be interested only in building metropolitan roads and infrastructure. It does not care about regional roads. They are not a priority—they never have been and never will be.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (16:22): It is with great pleasure that I support the motion moved by the member for Kiama. As he said, since 2011 the Coalition Government, and particularly The Nationals, have increased road funding by well over 100 per cent. I will give some examples of what has happened just in my electorate of Upper Hunter since 2011. Since then, more than 740 projects have been completed and more than \$600 million in road funding has been delivered. In addition, projects worth approximately \$350 million are underway. Since 2011, the Government has commenced or delivered approximately \$1 billion worth of projects just in my electorate of Upper Hunter.

Those projects include the replacement of the Fitzgerald Bridge over the Hunter River at Aberdeen, which cost \$29 million; the upgrade of the Raymond Terrace to Dungog road, \$20 million; pavement resurfacing on the Golden Highway at various locations, more than \$6.5 million; and pavement resurfacing on the New England Highway, more than \$9 million. Those works have been completed. Another example is the repair and repainting of the bridge over the Paterson River, which cost \$8.8 million. The list goes on. I have pages and pages of similar examples but I do not have time to mention them all. I will also outline the projects that have commenced since my election to this place. They include: Golden Highway upgrades, which cost \$170 million; the Scone bypass, \$55 million; the Muswellbrook bypass, \$68 million; the Singleton bypass, \$93 million; the Gowrie Gates in Singleton, \$20 million; and \$10 million to Dungog Shire Council for local roadworks. The Nationals in government have a particular focus on regional roads.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: In Nationals seats.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: And so we should—we represent Nationals seats. What does the member for Maitland expect us to do? Of course I am going to go out and fight for my electorate. That is why we have been so successful. We take happy pills; we foster good relations. We go out there and convince the ministry decision-makers that we need funding for our roads after 16 years of constant neglect by Labor. All of a sudden, in six years, this Government has commenced or completed works that are worth almost \$1 billion. That is a record we can be proud of.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:25): It was interesting to hear the member for Upper Hunter—or should I say "Mr 2 Per Cent Margin"—boasting about the \$1 billion expenditure in his electorate. What do all the bypasses he mentioned connect to? They connect to the Hunter Expressway, which was a \$1.5 billion project funded by the Federal Labor Government, with a \$200 million investment from the New South Wales Labor Government. The member for Upper Hunter has been the beneficiary of that funding. This Government is so mean that in my electorate, which could also be connected to the Hunter Expressway, work on Testers Hollow has been shelved. Earlier this year I made a request for information under the Government Information (Public Access) [GIPA] Act.

I advise the House that in the past 10 years Testers Hollow has flooded on at least six occasions, requiring road closures of between two days and 17 days, cutting off the community. In fact, in April 2015—just after my

election to this place—the community was cut off for five days. In the previous January the Government failed to make the business case that it was an important road that should be maintained. I note that the member for Upper Hunter is in the Chamber; he should think about that. The business case that was presented prior to the storm events did not include the impact of community isolation for several days and the economic loss of \$500,000 in wages and millions of dollars in diversion costs for local business. A life was lost on that road because of the flooding.

This Government, in its bureaucratic way, got a \$15 million commitment from the Federal Government at the last election. Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] then released minutes saying that there was a political issue because there was a Labor Federal member and a Liberal Government and it would have to "spin" it—that is what it says in the information I obtained through my GIPA request—as more "investigation". Some \$15 million from the Feds is on the table. In the past couple of weeks the New South Wales Government has been embarrassed into coughing up \$2 million. The RMS said the project could not be completed without an allocation of \$30 million. If the Feds have put up \$15 million, why does this Government not put up the other \$15 million? The minutes state:

So in discussions with Martin—given the complications ... I suggest that we spin this as a piece of investigation.

The Auditor-General does not believe the Government. The Audit Office called out the Government. Only 10 per cent for regional roads is nothing. It is a disgrace. Those opposite do not have the right to criticise anyone in this place. [*Time expired.*]

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:28): In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Upper Hunter, Shellharbour and Maitland for their contributions to this debate. The one person I hoped would be in the Chamber for the debate was the shadow Treasurer because he could have told us exactly what projects those opposite will invest in and which they consider to be a priority. If Labor took seriously the need to invest in regional roads, the shadow Treasurer would be in the Chamber articulating and enunciating which projects the Opposition will invest in. The shadow Treasurer could have covered the small issue of the last election. When we asked for their plans, Labor released its 10-year infrastructure plan for the State. To its credit, the Labor Party said, "These are the projects we plan on investing in over the next 10 years." There was not one mention of the Illawarra.

It is this simple: You can have either bold plans or modest plans. The Leader of the Opposition said at the last election that he had modest plans—and he has much to be modest about. He said that he was going to forego certain business tax cuts in order to fund the Opposition's infrastructure program. All members want to see investments in their electorates that make a real difference to people's lives, and I commend the members who come into this place to argue for such projects. But one cannot build those projects on thin air and goodwill alone. Governments need to make tough decisions to make the changes that make our State stronger—the building blocks that provide for infrastructure. Resolution and leadership is required in order to deliver those projects.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maitland will come to order. The member for Shellharbour will come to order. I remind both members that they are on three calls to order.

Mr GARETH WARD: All I hear from those opposite is windy rhetoric. When it has blown away, all we see are opaque words without any substance.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: How many people are going to die before you fix—

Mr GARETH WARD: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Maitland and I say to her, with all due respect, that I have attended funerals in my electorate of people who have lost their lives on our roads. I am sure that many members in this House have done the same. For me, regional roads are a priority. That is why when people travel to the Shoalhaven and the South Coast they will see works at Burrill Lake and Termeil Creek, at South Nowra and at Berry and Gerringong. If they drive down the mighty Pacific Highway they will see works in the electorates of country members all the way along that highway. They can be proud of that.

In order to get this infrastructure investment the Government needs to make tough decisions. Labor governments failed to make the tough decisions, and consequently failed to invest in regional roads. I will continue to join my friends the member for South Coast and the member for Heathcote, my friends in The Nationals and my friends in the upper House to continue to argue for regional investment. The Premier has made it clear that she will be the infrastructure Premier. Actions speak louder than words, and we need only look at the new roads all over the State to see that this side of the House is delivering the infrastructure New South Wales needs. Those opposite have failed regional New South Wales.

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

The House divided.

Ayes50
 Noes31
 Majority.....19

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
 Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
 Constance, Mr A
 Davies, Ms T
 Elliott, Mr D
 Gibbons, Ms M
 Griffin, Mr J
 Henskens, Mr A
 Johnsen, Mr M
 Maguire, Mr D
 O'Dea, Mr J
 Petinos, Ms E
 Provest, Mr G
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Taylor, Mr M
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Mrs L

Aplin, Mr G
 Brookes, Mr G
 Coure, Mr M
 Dominello, Mr V
 Evans, Mr L
 Goward, Ms P
 Gulaptis, Mr C
 Hodgkinson, Ms K
 Kean, Mr M
 Marshall, Mr A
 Patterson, Mr C (teller)
 Piccoli, Mr A
 Roberts, Mr A
 Speakman, Mr M
 Toole, Mr P
 Ward, Mr G
 Wilson, Ms F

Ayres, Mr S
 Conolly, Mr K
 Crouch, Mr A
 Donato, Mr P
 Fraser, Mr A
 Grant, Mr T
 Hazzard, Mr B
 Humphries, Mr K
 Lee, Dr G
 Notley-Smith, Mr B
 Pavey, Mrs M
 Piper, Mr G
 Rowell, Mr J
 Stokes, Mr R
 Tudehope, Mr D
 Williams, Mr R

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Car, Ms P
 Cotsis, Ms S
 Dib, Mr J
 Harris, Mr D
 Hornery, Ms S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Minns, Mr C
 Scully, Mr P
 Warren, Mr G
 Zangari, Mr G

Atalla, Mr E
 Catley, Ms Y
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Doyle, Ms T
 Harrison, Ms J
 Kamper, Mr S
 McDermott, Dr H
 Park, Mr R
 Smith, Ms T F
 Washington, Ms K

Barr, Mr C
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Daley, Mr M
 Finn, Ms J
 Haylen, Ms J
 Lalich, Mr N (teller)
 McKay, Ms J
 Robertson, Mr J
 Tesch, Ms L
 Watson, Ms A (teller)

PAIRS

Barilaro, Mr J
 Berejiklian, Ms G
 Hancock, Mrs S
 Perrottet, Mr D

Foley, Mr L
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Mehan, Mr D
 Mihailuk, Ms T

Motion agreed to.*Private Members' Statements***EQUALITY FOR WOMEN**

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:40): With the exhibition of "A Fit Place for Women" having drawn to a close here in Parliament House, now is as good an opportunity as any to reflect on where we are in terms of equality for women. We know that women are grossly under-represented in almost every aspect of public life. We know that at our current rate of progress women will not achieve gender equality until 2186. But we also know that there are hardworking feminists and feminist allies in every community who dedicate every day to challenging assumptions that place limitations on women and girls.

My Hunter colleagues will be familiar with the groundbreaking Dads and Daughters Exercising and Empowered [DADEE] program, which is being trialled at the University of Newcastle in partnership with the Hunter Medical Research Institute, the Hunter Children's Research Foundation and Port Waratah Coal Services. The DADEE program aims to overcome the alarming rates of adolescent girls withdrawing from physical activity. It tasks fathers with the important job of being a role model for their daughters in encouraging physical activity, building resilience and promoting healthy body image.

The results of the first trial were so impressive that the program was extended for a further three years. The trial found that fathers actively engaging with their daughters instead of taking a more passive role acted as a circuit-breaker to the self-esteem and body image issues that prevented girls from participating in sport. Knowing how important maintaining a healthy lifestyle is for long-term health and wellbeing, I am delighted by the efforts to promote change in this area. In my electorate, I am very impressed with the efforts made by locals within their own organisations to ensure their sport is inclusive and supportive of women. For example, late last month, Lakes United Rugby League Football Club's inaugural women's team had its first match at Cahill Oval. Another example is Northlakes Warriors Rugby League Football Club. Whenever I speak to people involved with the Warriors, they are eager to promote the women and girls participating in their local footy club.

In terms of fighting for women's equality in sport, one cannot go past Sheena Harvey, Swansea's Local Woman of the Year. Twenty years ago, Sheena refused to accept that the NSW Surf Life Saving Championships did not have a women's division for the surf boat event. With the support of her local club, Caves Beach Surf Club—which is also my local club—Sheena lobbied Surf Life Saving NSW to introduce the women's division. In 1995, the championships had their first women's exhibition race at Blacksmiths Beach. It is easy to see that when women are supported they thrive in sport, despite the pervasive gender bias that exists. We know that netball has one of the highest participation rates in Australia, yet it receives just over one-fifth of the funding that rugby league receives. It is certainly disappointing to see this Government perpetuate the gender bias with its funding decisions.

It is even more disappointing when one considers that there is already a huge disparity between women's and men's sports in terms of the remuneration received by professional sportswomen in Australia and on the international stage. Whilst the average pay gap between men and women is currently 16.2 per cent, for professional athletes that figure blows out to 50 per cent. Many professional female athletes struggle to earn a living wage from their chosen sport, despite demonstrating over and over that they can be just as successful, if not more successful, than men's sporting teams. The Matildas are literally kicking goals all over the world; the Southern Stars have won more world cups than any other side, and have been crowned champions of the ICC Women's World Twenty20 more than any other side; and last year, more women than men represented Australia at the Rio Olympics.

With that in mind, I am very proud to be able to be in the caucus room and in this Chamber with an excellent role model for our girls. Liesl Tesch, the new member for Gosford and gold medal-winning Paralympian, absolutely embodies what renowned feminist activist Clem Ford said recently: women and girls can be and are so much more than half-time entertainment. I encourage the Premier and the Minister for Sport to do better on this front and to invest in our girls. It is time this Government put its money where its mouth is.

CAMDEN CRICKET CLUB

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (16:45): Today I speak about Camden Cricket Club. Camden Cricket Club has a long history in the Camden region, with the first recorded game of cricket played between Camden Cricket Club and Campbelltown Cricket Club on Boxing Day 1843. Throughout the 1840s the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Empire* newspaper sent reporters to rural districts to send back results from the bush to Sydney and Melbourne to be printed. Camden, Campbelltown, Menangle and Appin were among the local clubs to have their results published in these newspapers. Over the years, as the population has increased, more clubs have joined the local competition.

This year a total of 17 local clubs played in the Camden District Cricket Association competition. Each year membership continues to grow, with the Camden Cricket Club fielding 16 junior teams and seven senior teams in the 2016-17 season. In addition, the club successfully ran a Milo In2Cricket program with 39 participants and a T20 Blast program with 31 participants, the latter of which is an essential stepping stone to red ball games.

It is a great pleasure to inform the House that Camden Cricket Club was recently awarded—at the Melbourne Cricket Ground of all places—the Community Cricket Club of the Year at the Cricket Australia inaugural A Sport for All Community Cricket Awards. Hundreds of nominations were received from all over Australia and the top two finalists in each category were flown to Melbourne for the announcement. The Community Cricket Club of the Year Award recognised a community club that exemplifies cricket's vision as a sport for all Australians. Camden Cricket Club supports players of all ages and skill levels to become a part of the

club, whether through Milo In2Cricket, Milo T20 Blast, mixed junior teams or senior teams. This is an outstanding honour and a fitting acknowledgement of the work of the many volunteers whose knowledge, commitment and energy make the club the success that it is.

Acknowledgement must be given to the very hardworking committee headed by president Benham Dodd, junior vice president Derek Warwick, senior vice president Jon Shaw, secretary Greg Little, assistant secretary Wayne Harris, treasurer Roger Cubitt, registrar Clair Hard—whose role also is to promote the women's game, and she does an outstanding job—sponsorship coordinator Greg Pinnington, equipment coordinator Rory O'Reilly, umpires coordinator Steve Faulds, director of coaching Graeme "Crackers" Hardy, social events coordinator Michelle Warwick—and the club is very social—and chairman of selectors Paul Brewster.

I congratulate Simon Niech, who was awarded life membership of the Camden Cricket Club at the awards presentation night I recently attended for my boys Tom and Matt, and I acknowledge all life members of the club, including Sid Dunk, Robert Bryne, Hugh Shaw, Trevor Durrington, Mervyn Durrington, Colin Fairall, Chris Webb, Robert Cartwright, Bob Merlino, David Harries, Gloria Pinnington, Simon Neich, Ross Neich, Colin Ferguson, Bruce Clark, John Geyer, Pauline Ferguson, Paul Pinnington, Wayne Shaw, Ian Stone, Jeff Camarsh, Frank Cahill, Bill Foster and Kyle Malcolm. It is appropriate for me to acknowledge also Mrs Gloria Pinnington, who was involved with Camden Cricket Club for the past 45 years and who was the club patron for 35 of those years. Sadly, Mrs Pinnington passed away during the season, but her contributions and legacy will be felt at the club for many years to come.

The inaugural Gloria Pinnington memorial trophy recognising contributions to the club by a female member was awarded to Sarah Howard, who has played all her junior years with the Camden Cricket Club and held her own in the Boys 16/1 division this year. I congratulate Sarah and wish her continued success with her cricketing future. Of course, no club is successful without its sponsors. I thank the following: Camden Valley Industry, McDonalds, Combined Real Estate Narellan/Camden, All Cricket Gear, including Lifestyle Sports and Physiotherapy, Camden Hire, JLM Conveyancing, Vicki Patterson Chiropractic, Camden Removals and Storage, Jaycol Homes, Dufty Automotive, Plus Fitness, Dorsal Constructions, Enviro Solutions, Signature Pools and Ebeling Constructions. I congratulate all involved in Camden Cricket Club on their continued success.

COOTAMUNDRA ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (16:50): I am very pleased to highlight once again the infrastructure investment in the Cootamundra electorate and the work that is happening right now throughout the 35,000 square kilometres that I represent. At Junee last week, I turned the first sod at the Junee Correctional Centre to mark its 480-bed expansion, part of the New South Wales Government's \$3.8 billion investment into increasing prison capacity across the State. This is a massive boon for the Riverina town of Junee and the broader region, with the expansion to create almost 300 jobs during construction and around 130 valuable new jobs once completed. The expansion, which includes refurbishment to existing buildings, including the gatehouse, kitchens and administration wing, is equivalent to 22 years of growth for Junee.

This is big news for the town, but, of course, such growth does place pressure on local infrastructure, in particular the local sewage treatment plant, which is currently at capacity. I have met with the New South Wales Minister for Water Resources and had several telephone conversations with him urging him to act quickly in supporting Junee Shire Council, which has had to bring forward its plans to upgrade the sewage treatment plant as a result and require funding support of some \$3.5 million to undertake the necessary upgrades. I look forward to working with the Minister to progress this particular issue for Junee.

It is important to note, however, that thanks to the Minister for Water Resources and the New South Wales Government, there are vital water infrastructure projects underway elsewhere in the electorate. For example, work is underway on the \$9 million upgrade of the Grenfell sewage treatment plant, which is largely supported by an \$8.81 million investment by the New South Wales Government. I am looking forward to making similar announcements in the very near future in relation to other parts of my electorate. These projects will have long-term impacts on water security in the area and are absolutely vital to the ongoing prosperity of these communities.

A new ambulance station has been announced for the Central West town of Grenfell this week, thanks to the New South Wales Government's wonderful rural ambulance infrastructure reconfiguration program. The new facilities will be a major improvement on the current 119 year-old station on Main Street in Grenfell and add to the new stations currently under construction in my electorate at Coolamon, Ardlethan and Harden. That is four new ambulance stations; it is wonderful. Meanwhile, at Narrandera, we have seen the completion of the \$150,000 expansion of the Narrandera-Leeton airport general aviation parking, which will enable the airport to meet parking demands and attract more charter flights to the Riverina region.

On bridges and roads we are seeing a lot of activity as a result of the Fixing Country Roads program. Structural assessments of 10 bridges across Narrandera Shire are underway, as well as a \$1.2 million upgrade of Kolkilbertoo Road between Barellan and Weethalle, and construction works have commenced on the foundations of the \$1.45 million Tara-Bectric Road Bridge replacement, with the support of Temora Shire Council. On the Burley-Griffin Way, east of Harden-Murrumburrah, \$560,000 in road safety works is underway. In West Wyalong, a \$2 million New South Wales Government funded important realignment of the railway crossing project is also underway and work has recommenced on the next stage of the West Wyalong heavy vehicle alternate route. By improving freight transport routes through projects like these, we are greatly enhancing the efficiency and productivity of local primary producers, which in turn supports our very important economic growth.

I take this opportunity to thank the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, for her unfailing support for road infrastructure projects throughout my electorate and for making herself available to meet with a number of my local councils to discuss ongoing infrastructure priorities for their areas. At Gundagai, Cootamundra, Harden and Young we have seen some terrific small infrastructure projects at each of these towns commence as a result of the smaller grants funding available through the New South Wales Government's Stronger Communities Fund. Grants of up to \$50,000 have gone towards new storage sheds, equipment and so on to support local community organisations from youth groups to golf clubs.

I look forward to working with the respective councils as community consultation gets underway for the second stage of the Stronger Communities Fund, with \$15 million for Hilltops Council and \$10 million for Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, which will help to deliver vital, major infrastructure projects in the newly merged council areas. As I have said in this place many times, my electorate is the third-largest in New South Wales. In each and every pocket of it the New South Wales Government is investing and building new infrastructure, enhancing the local economy, supporting regional areas and ensuring regional New South Wales continues to be a great place to live, work and also to do business. I thank the House for its attention.

NIRIMBA EDUCATION PRECINCT

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (16:55): I bring to the attention of the House the progress of the Nirimba Education Precinct, which is a world-class educational community spanning Catholic and public senior secondary schools, and TAFE and university sectors, and that provides a unique delivery of education and training through a collaborative partnership. The precinct is located on a former naval and air force site straddling Schofields and Quakers Hill. In 1953, the Royal Australian Navy naval air repair yard, Schofields, was commissioned as HMAS *Nirimba*, a joint aircraft repair and technical training establishment for the navy's fleet air arm. The site had been the home of a Royal naval air station during World War II. The aircraft repair function was short-lived, and the focus soon turned to naval apprentice training.

The traditional naming of Royal naval air stations was after seabirds, so it was named Nirimba, which is derived from an East Coast Aboriginal word meaning pelican, and the pelican became the main theme for the HMAS *Nirimba* crest. More than 13,000 naval technical trainees were trained in the fields of marine engineering, marine hull engineering, weapons electrical engineering and aviation engineering at Nirimba, which was the daily work place for approximately 1,300 defence personnel and 130 civilians. It covered an area of 300 hectares, and housed some 200 buildings. When it was decommissioned in February 1994 a partnership of the University of Western Sydney Hawkesbury and TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute prepared a joint expression of interest in the site to continue its educational history.

In 1995 the University of Western Sydney, TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute, the Department of School Education and the Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Parramatta, signed a memorandum of understanding that demonstrated the shared commitment of the partners to the establishment and development of the Nirimba Education Precinct. The precinct is now home to St John Paul II Catholic College, a Catholic co-educational secondary school with its Nirimba senior campus catering for Years 11 and 12; Wyndham College, a New South Wales Government co-educational college catering for Years 11 and 12 and part of the Nirimba Collegiate multi-campus group of schools; TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute; Nirimba College; and Western Sydney University "The College", a wholly owned entity of the Western Sydney University

There are more than 12,000 students and more than 850 staff and 60 residents currently using the precinct. These numbers are expanding annually with larger increases expected over coming years. The precinct has its own childcare centre and accommodates other educational organisations such as the Nirimba Office of the NSW Department of Education and the BREED Business Centre. The TAFE Western Sydney Institute offers a wide range of practical and creative courses, including a variety of building-related trades, childcare and music. I have been privileged as the member for Riverstone, since my election six years ago, to visit some of the upgraded facilities that have been opened in that time.

I make brief mention of the productivity boot camp, a joint venture with TAFE Western Sydney, which provides young people with challenged histories a way back into the workforce and into useful living. It is an eight-week course that gets young people work ready, focusing on arming them with foundation skills to enter the infrastructure industry. It is a good project that is having great outcomes. The College of Western Sydney University assists students who might not otherwise proceed to university by providing them with a pathway that bridges the gap between school and university, supporting them in accessing the courses to which they aspire.

St John Paul II Catholic College is the senior campus of a year seven to 12 Catholic college, previously named Terra Sancta College. Its co-location on the Nirimba precinct has allowed a wide range of curriculum offerings and great shared facilities. I was fortunate to attend the Anzac Day event at St John Paul II College on Thursday 27 April, a very impressive and respectful commemoration of the sacrifice of Australian service men and women. I finish by noting the wonderful performance of Wyndham College, the public school on the site. A local resident and constituent, Mr Richard Holland, wrote to me about the principal and staff of that school, stating:

In the later part of 2015 we came to you via your office with a key issue around our eldest daughter Aloka Holland ... [about an incident] ... that affected her health, and subsequent learning/studying capacity that occurred at the very beginning of her Year 12 quest at Wyndham College.

Through [your office staff]... these issues were relayed directly to the Principal Karen Smith.

Subsequently, Aloka was supported at school and went on to achieve a very satisfactory Higher School Certificate [HSC] result. Mr Holland said:

... none of this would have been possible without the combined support from your office, home and Karen's direct involvement from Wyndham College, and then subsequently Aloka's entire teaching staff ...

In closing, I have only ever felt the need to contact my local member twice in 22 years of living in Quakers Hill and both times for my children Jack & Aloka Holland, both times, Mr Conolly, you and your team have been the catalyst for assistance and both times Wyndham College via Karen Smith and her team have assisted greatly with both of my eldest children and I look forward to both of my other two children attending this excellent public senior college in the coming years.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (17:00): I acknowledge the good member for Riverstone for his support of the Nirimba Education Precinct, which incorporates the multi-campus operations of many great educational institutions. I point out that the University of Western Sydney is part of the multi-agency precinct. I commend Professor Barney Glover, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Sydney, for giving the university direction in its role of instilling educational values in Western Sydney. The university is an important change agent in the region. Of particular note is the opening of its Parramatta central business district campus, with something like 10,000 students attending. Parramatta is becoming a "town and gown" city. Finally, I commend all students for their hard work in attaining an education.

OPEN AND GREEN SPACES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (17:01): Every afternoon, every lunch break, and every weekend, a battle is played out on park benches, sporting fields and baby swings across the inner west. Open and green spaces are at a premium and every square metre of grass is accounted for. Residents using these spaces in a variety of ways crash into each other, sometimes quite literally. The former Marrickville council area has less green space than almost every other local government area in New South Wales. And as our population grows and density increases, the pressure on our open spaces only intensifies. Across this State, our parks, reserves, beaches, wetlands, foreshores and trees are under threat. But what is also under threat is the vision of a truly liveable city, defined by its sustainability, creativity and accessibility.

The benefits of open and green spaces are undeniable. They enhance our local environment, providing vital habitat for native fauna and offsetting carbon emissions. They make our cities more liveable, creating microclimates that reduce urban heat and improve air and water quality. They improve public health, giving our kids somewhere to run and be wild. They ensure that our sports teams have somewhere to play. They improve local economies, promoting tourism and benefiting local small businesses. While we know the benefits, far too often in the city we take our open spaces and wild places for granted. We know their value, but perhaps fail to appreciate how at risk they are.

The Total Environment Centre's SOS Green Spaces campaign is about educating the community about just how precious and threatened our wild places are. The centre has released a map, which I recommend to members. It tracks the threatened green spaces across the Sydney region. Unfortunately, more than 80 green spaces are at risk, including the Reg Coady Reserve in my electorate in Haberfield. The campaign also identifies Callan Park in Balmain and Sydney Park in St Peters as threatened, and notes that Ashfield Park is an example of where a community campaign resulted in green space being saved. I acknowledge the Save Ashfield Park group for its incredible work on this front.

Reg Coady Reserve is a small parcel of land on the banks of Iron Cove Creek. It is an unassuming piece of land that has become a flashpoint in the WestConnex campaign. The reserve was regularly used by residents for walking, dog walking and kicking around a ball. It was an important link between Timbrell Park and the busy Ramsay Street, and it was used by students at the nearby Dobroyd Point Public School. When the environmental impact statement for the WestConnex M4 was released, it was clear that Reg Coady Reserve would be decimated. Century-old fig trees would make way for a giant turning circle for trucks hauling spoil 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Once construction started, residents started reporting the removal of additional trees. My office received complaints that cars were parking in sections of the reserve not already dedicated for WestConnex construction and that pedestrian access through the reserve had been cut off altogether.

At the same time, trees along the route from Homebush to Haberfield were being ripped up, heritage homes were being destroyed, local roads were being filled with rat runners—all for a polluting toll road and unfiltered exhaust stacks. Along the entire length of the project, WestConnex is destroying open spaces in the city. From Cintra Park to Sydney Park, WestConnex is carving up our parks as it carves up our communities. Other spaces at risk in the inner west include the tracts of land along the banks of the Cooks River. Heritage trees across Haberfield were lopped by Ausgrid, which has apologised and will replace those trees as a result of concerted community pressure. The Berejiklian Government continues to propose extensive rezoning along the Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor, with no planning for open or green spaces. If the plans go ahead, 100,000 extra people will be crammed along the corridor, without any extra parks or places to play.

The Government has promised that the Greater Sydney Commission will take a more overarching view of planning that will lead to better environmental outcomes. I believe that that is a goal that we can all support. But I note that in the first draft of the plans, there was not a single new open space proposed in the electorate of Summer Hill—no new parks; no new sporting fields to meet the ever-growing demand. The commission's commitment to delivering a green grid for Sydney is commendable, and I hope and trust that visionary projects like the GreenWay will form part of its spine. This commitment provides an opportunity for a real discussion about the value of our open spaces and the need for policies in this place that protect them. We need a city that has not been planned by colouring in maps. It must involve real consultation with communities and it must have as a goal the vision of a city that is liveable, creative and accessible to all.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (17:06): I support some of the comments made by the member for Summer Hill about the importance of our green space and the importance of Sydney's green grid. I bring to the attention of the House a pilot of the green grid in Parramatta, which is fully supported by the new Minister for Planning, Anthony Roberts. The planned green grid connects homes, parks and green corridors to jobs and central business districts so that people do not have to commute on congested roads. Parramatta has put its bike plan and shared pathways on exhibition for comment. Parramatta is developing an excellent network of green corridors, especially on the riverfront, so people have the option of commuting by bicycle or on foot rather than on the roads. Green spaces are important, and the pilot of the green grid in Parramatta is especially important.

INVERELL DISTRICT HOSPITAL

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (17:08): As we all know, health facilities and health infrastructure are critical to sustaining and growing country communities in rural and regional New South Wales. That is why I am very pleased to provide another update on the progress of the \$30 million redevelopment of Inverell District Hospital. I am proud to say that construction work on the redevelopment has moved a giant step closer recently with news that the State Government has approved the final detailed business case for the redevelopment. This was the final planning hurdle that we needed to overcome before we were allocated the capital funds to crack on. We are now calling for tenders to start the construction work.

The Inverell community has campaigned passionately and consistently for over a decade for this crucial redevelopment. It is now truly a case of, "Show us the money, Minister" because Inverell is ready to roll. We are ready to put a spade in the ground, get the bulldozers on site and the shovels ready to start construction on what will be a once-in-a-generation opportunity to completely change health facilities and models of care in the Inverell community and district. This district is growing above the trend for rural and regional New South Wales.

I have already made it clear in this House and to the Minister, the Treasurer and the Government that this project is the number one priority for the Northern Tablelands electorate. It has been the number one priority for that community for well over a decade. We are very close to starting that redevelopment, but we are not quite there yet. The Inverell community has been persistent in its advocacy for this project and we would not have got to this point if it was not for the strong support of the Inverell Shire Council. I pay tribute to Mayor Paul Harmon, Deputy Mayor Anthony Michael and General Manager Paul Henry. I also acknowledge the passionate support, campaigns, research, letters and petitions generated in the community by people like Bob Bensley and Steve de Gunst.

When I was first elected to this place, Bob presented me with reams of files and paperwork in which he had charted the history of that hospital from the early 1920s when it was first built. Most of that building is still in use and doctors, nurses and other staff have to work around antiquated infrastructure to try to deliver modern first-class health care to the Inverell community. I also acknowledge Brad Hilton who did a lot of work to gather support and signatures and met with me to ensure that we have better medical staff or doctor coverage at that hospital. I am pleased to say that from 1 April we have had 24-hour doctor availability at the hospital, one doctor for the general practitioner [GP] clinic that is open seven days a week and another doctor permanently stationed at the emergency department—something our hospital has not had for many years. That is supplemented by the work of our local GPs who visit the hospital with visiting medical officer rights.

I also acknowledge Di Baker for her leadership of a magnificent organisation in Inverell called Operation: Operating Room, which over the past 10 years has raised more than \$100,000 for essential and non-essential equipment for the hospital to make the lives of patients and families with loved ones in that hospital more comfortable and bearable. No-one wants to spend any time in hospital but it is a fact of life that people do and people need to. Whilst there, Operation: Operating Room cares for and comforts them, complementing the wonderful work of some terrific, hardworking and dedicated staff in the Inverell District Hospital.

I was able to visit the hospital recently with the mayor to release the business case and the plans and to show that it is not only a refurbishment of ageing facilities and buildings. This projects represents an almost completely new hospital for the Inverell community. Over 80 per cent of this project will be a brand-new build, which is different from the Armidale redevelopment of \$60 million that is well underway. This project is critical not only for Inverell but also for the entire Northern Tablelands electorate. With \$30 million committed to this project, I reassure the people of Inverell that I will continue fighting in this place to ensure this commitment is followed through.

ANZAC COMMEMORATION

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (17:13): Like many members of this House, I attended a number of Anzac Day commemorations that took place before and after Anzac Day. I will point out a few of them because I am encouraged by the degree to which my Coogee community is embracing the Anzac tradition. On 22 April the Randwick-Coogee-Clovelly RSL sub-branch held its annual pre-Anzac Day march. This one is particularly special to me because my grandfather was a member of that RSL and used to take part in that march until his death in 1963, which was before I was born. I was honoured to go there representing my family as well as the constituents of Coogee.

From there it was on to Randwick Public School, which held a beautiful service in the school hall. The wreaths had been made by the children and were presented at a cenotaph that they had constructed. It was a truly moving experience. South Coogee Public School had a catafalque party from the nearby Randwick Barracks. Many of the parents of the students of South Coogee Public School are service men and women who live locally and serve this nation in uniform. Claremont College had representatives of the Navy and the Army in attendance. The representative of the Navy had attended the school, and the son of the Army representative is at the school. The Coogee Surf Life Saving Club held a service at the Fallen Lifesavers memorial at Coogee Beach. Coogee Beach also held a dawn service. A number of years ago when I was mayor only 200 people came to the Randwick dawn service; at dawn this Anzac Day 17,000 people attended.

Last Saturday I attended the Coogee Synagogue which every year commemorates Anzac Day with a special service. There I spoke about the service of one Jewish serviceman who contributed much to this nation's efforts in the First World War: General Sir John Monash, the man whose tactics were developed in the Battle of Hamel and later used in the Battle of Amiens in August 1918—a decisive victory which was the beginning of the end of the First World War. So revered were General Monash's tactics that he was knighted in the field by George V—the first commander in 200 years to be knighted in the field. But for all of this, General Sir John Monash has never received an Australian honour. There have been moves headed by former Deputy Prime Minister, Tim Fischer, to have him recognised as a field marshal and elevated to that rank prior to Armistice Day, 2018, the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War.

I encourage the Jewish community, and indeed everybody, to write to the Prime Minister of Australia and seek to have General Sir John Monash afforded the promotion to the rank of field marshal prior to Armistice Day next year. This could fit quite well with the commemoration of the Battle of Beersheba in Israel in October this year, which the Prime Minister is attending. General Sir John Monash was a great engineer, a great Jewish man, a great military tactician and leader, and, most importantly, a great Australian who deserves the honour of the rank of field marshal.

Business interrupted.

*Bills***GAS AND ELECTRICITY (CONSUMER SAFETY) BILL 2017****Returned**

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

*Members***INAUGURAL SPEECH**

The SPEAKER: The gallery is full this afternoon, and I know why. I extend a very warm welcome to the family, friends, and supporters of the new member for Manly. In particular, I welcome Lindsey Cane, the chief executive officer of Royal Far West; Mr John Somerville, the national managing partner-advisory at KPMG; the Hon. Helen Coonan, former Senator for New South Wales; the Hon. Mike Baird, former Premier and former member for Manly—we all miss you!—Mr Jason Falinski, member of the Australian House of Representatives for Mackellar; and Mr Michael Griffin, AM, Integrity Commissioner and head of the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity. This esteemed group of people are the guests of the member for Manly.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:21): It is an honour and a privilege to be here, and to serve the people of Manly. No matter the time or day that I am in this place, the comfort of Manly is never far because the window in my office looks directly out at a huge Norfolk Island pine planted across the road in The Domain. The Norfolk Island pine is an iconic symbol of Manly. The now massive trees were planted along Manly Beach in the 1850s. These symbols of Manly even adorned the letterhead of my predecessor, the member for Manly, Mike Baird, who I am delighted to acknowledge here this evening.

Autumn in Manly is a beautiful time of the year. With the sun rising over the beach in the crisp morning air, looking north one can see the Central Coast, and at every beach from Manly to Curl Curl surfers will be enjoying the swell. Weekends in my electorate are reminders of the timeless appeal of our beautiful natural environment. With beaches, national parks, dams and walkways, the people of Manly, often joined by thousands of tourists, certainly make the most of our piece of paradise. Manly's environment is one of our single greatest assets and is something that I will promote and protect. This evening people are lining up to get on the ferry, hopping on a bus or getting in their car to head home to Manly. It is a picturesque place that 20 years ago my family first visited as classic tourists.

Falling in love with Manly, mum and dad bought a block of land where they built the family home and still live today. It is important that I mention that mum and dad still live in Manly, because for all their married lives, and for the first 13 years of my life, we lived the nomadic lifestyle of an Australian Army family. Growing up as an Army brat is good fun. Along with my brother Tom, and sister Elle, we enjoyed postings everywhere from Townsville to Sandhurst in the United Kingdom, Melbourne to Randwick Barracks. We saw most of the Australian East Coast and every year brought with it a new adventure, a new school, new friends, and new community. However, it also meant that nowhere was ever really home. After 20 years on the move, mum and dad decided that Manly was to be the final stop. For years we had been visitors in someone else's community, but now had a place that we could call home. As a family we immersed ourselves fully into Manly. What a community to live in.

The fabric of Manly is woven and held strong by volunteer groups, institutions and associations which selflessly serve our community and which have done so for decades. From the Manly Community Centre, Rotary, the Friends of Freshwater and Manly Warringah Historical Society to name a few, to the proud, iconic surf lifesaving clubs of Manly, North Steyne, Queenscliff and Freshwater. The many volunteer organisations, along with the sporting giants like the Manly Rugby Union Club—I acknowledge the president of the club, Anthony Bergelin, who is here tonight—and the Manly Cricket Club, make Manly a shining example of the power of voluntary civic participation. These groups, institutions and associations consistently demonstrate that the old fashioned concept of community is alive and well in Manly in 2017. It was one of these community groups that led me to where I stand now. A number of years ago, the Little Manly Community Forum required a new chairman. I am grateful to Ray Mathieson, who was, and still is, a pillar of the Manly community, for giving me a go in that role. I acknowledge Ray and thank him for being here tonight.

Everything I do in this place will have the community of Manly at its centre. I am here to speak for the thousands of Manly families who deserve continued improvements in public transport and roads, who deserve local schools that give their kids the best opportunities to learn, and who deserve safe neighbourhoods. I am here to speak for the local business owners, the entrepreneurs just starting out, and the young couples looking for their first home. I am here to speak for the grandparents who want to ensure the quality of life they enjoyed in Manly

is retained for their grandkids. I am here to speak up for the vulnerable and voiceless in our community. Winston Churchill said it best when he said:

If we open a quarrel between the present and the past, we shall be in danger of losing the future.

I believe that the more things change, the more things get smaller, faster and more connected, the more we must be guided by our traditions, customs and values that have stood the test of time. The lessons of our history pave the pathway to an even better future. I believe that liberalism is the most effective and best-equipped approach to managing the changing realities and challenges that our society faces. As a Liberal, I believe in the freedom of choice and a fair go for all. The chance to succeed in life must be available to all in our society, irrespective of race, colour, creed, postcode or family history.

The opportunity to thrive in our society, to live peacefully, to participate actively and to enjoy the rewards of our own hard work should be based on nothing more than personal choice and initiative. This Liberal Government has turned this State around. It has delivered on more than 200 commitments, including new hospitals, new schools and record jobs growth. This Liberal Government has the energy to do even more over the next two years, and I am excited to join its ranks.

My primary goal is to ensure that Manly continues to get its fair share. If the people of Manly need something, I will not stop fighting for them. There is a long list of initiatives, policies and ideas that I want to ensure are delivered for Manly. Some of these include: delivering the B-line, which includes a fleet of new double decker buses that will save valuable commuting time to and from the city; three new commuter park-and-ride facilities at Brookvale, Dee Why and Manly Vale; and new bus bays, lane widening and road improvements to support these new bus services. I propose to push for more ferry services; fast tracking the use of the Opal card; opening up a new direct route from Manly to Barangaroo; an upgrade at the Manly wharf to ease the commute when it rains; opening the \$50 million Brookvale Health Centre; fixing up Curl Curl Lagoon; fighting for more funding for our local community groups; and progressing the concept of the Big Bear Cottage.

The Beaches Link tunnel is long overdue. Over the next six months 235 borehole sites will be tested. I am grateful to Roads and Maritime Services for the excellent level of engagement it has already had with the residents of my electorate who are most likely to be affected. I stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Manly in saying we welcome the commitment from this Government for the Beaches Link tunnel and look forward to the completion of the geotechnical drilling. Only a Liberal Government will see the tunnel become a reality.

I believe that the long-term success and prosperity of Manly rests on its ability to foster a high-growth, high-tech, local innovation economy. This is coupled with the light manufacturing zone in the already buzzing Brookvale area. I am especially proud to have had support from the Manly Chamber of Commerce, and I acknowledge two executive members, Mark Stanley and Drew Johnson, who are here this evening. I look forward to continuing to work closely with the Chamber of Commerce.

The concepts of work and manufacturing are undergoing profound shifts around the world. Robotics, new technologies and globalisation are not only changing business models but are leading to the changing nature of many traditional jobs, both blue and white collar. Jobs are not disappearing; they are changing. Manufacturing is not disappearing; it is changing. And so the proximity of Manly to the Brookvale light industrial area and the central business district [CBD] makes it a smart location for people to live, work and invest. That is why one of the five community panels I am forming will consider innovation and the local economy. As a priority, I will be banging on the door of Jobs for NSW to discuss expanding their Sydney Startup Hub into Manly. Tonight I am issuing an invitation to business, big and small, to consider Manly and Brookvale as a destination for investment and workspace. As a former start-up co-founder, I am not advocating for government to take the place of enterprise but to fill the gaps, remove red tape and support people willing to have a go.

We have witnessed dramatic technological change over the last two decades. A manufacturer in Brookvale can sell products in a global marketplace with the click of a button. We are also seeing the evolution of work, including the rise of the "gig economy". Governments are struggling with the reskilling and retraining needed to help keep up with this change. The solution to this lies in education. I wholeheartedly agree with remarks of Minister Constance in his inaugural speech in 2003. He said:

Education is the silver bullet. It lowers unemployment, improves economic growth and engenders social change for the better.

I believe the right to choose a school for one's child should not just be a privilege for the rich. The right to a first-class education should be blind to financial circumstance. One of the proudest moments for me during the election campaign was attending the opening of the \$13.5 million upgrade for Harbord Public School with the Premier and the Minister for Education, Rob Stokes. The families of Manly deserve the best education available. I will continue to fight, just as Mike Baird did, for more funding for local schools across Manly.

In Manly we have a proud military history. Every Anzac Day tens of thousands of people attend services throughout Manly. It is, however, a national tragedy that suicide has claimed more Australian soldiers' lives than the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined. Suicide impacts not only the families involved but entire communities. We must and we can do something. That is why I am supporting the veterans group Soldier On in their bid to lease the vacant North Head School of Artillery.

The North Head School of Artillery consists of 34 buildings and is set amongst 74 hectares of pristine bushland. The site sits largely empty and parts of it are up for lease. Soldier On intends to provide mental health respite and rehabilitation services for returned service men and women and their families. I believe that connecting the successful Veterans Employment Program recently launched by the Premier and the Minister for Veterans Affairs with the good work of Soldier On and other existing health providers at North Head would go some of the way towards dealing with this tragic problem. I invite the Minister for Veterans Affairs to visit the North Head School of Artillery for a tour and to meet with the Chief Executive Officer of Soldier On to discuss their vision for the site.

Mr David Elliott: Done.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: First job done—it is that easy. Thanks to the good work of this Government, Sydney won the bid to host the 2018 Invictus Games. The Invictus Games are an international sports tournament for wounded and injured veterans. The games use the power of sport to inspire recovery and support rehabilitation. I take this opportunity to also extend an invitation to the organisers of the Invictus Games and its patron, Prince Harry, and ask them to strongly consider Manly as a venue for some of the sporting events as part of the eight-day program in October 2018.

Mr David Elliott: That might be a bit harder.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: We will talk. No part of Manly is more than two kilometres from either the harbour or the ocean. Surrounded by the world's best harbour, brilliant beaches, national parks and Manly Dam, we are blessed with our natural environment. Mum, yes, I do agree with you that the Northern Beaches walkway is fantastic and should be funded to include North Head. The continuous 36-kilometre all-weather coastal walkway from Palm Beach to Manly is a joint initiative of the Northern Beaches Council and this Government. The walkway integrates with the B-Line and will support hundreds of local businesses along the way. It is made possible through the Stronger Communities Fund. Tonight I call for the walkway to be fully completed and instead of ending at Marine Parade, Shelly Beach, link up with the existing North Head walking track.

Over the next two years I believe all of the above can be achieved or will be underway. This is only the case because of the hard work done by the Liberal governments of O'Farrell, Baird and Berejiklian, along with the members in this place. I am immensely grateful for all the opportunities I have been given in life. I am grateful for my high school education not far from here at St Mary's Cathedral College, which is, in fact, the oldest Roman Catholic school in Australia. It was founded in 1824 to educate mostly poor children of the emerging colony of New South Wales. I am proud to have attended St Mary's Cathedral College.

I had the privilege of meeting John Brogden when he came to the school to address the student leadership group. As college captain I met John and gave him a tour of our school. I am not sure who spoke the most because by the end of it John had sparked an interest in me for politics. I am grateful to him for that. I am grateful to the University of Notre Dame Australia. Notre Dame is unequivocally Catholic but welcoming of people of all faiths and of none at all. Notre Dame is an excellent university and I am proud to acknowledge two of my lecturers here tonight, Dr Peter Dean and Dr John Rees. As Harold Garnett said:

The best teacher is ... the one who kindles an inner fire, arouses moral enthusiasm, inspires the student with a vision of what he or she may become, and reveals the worth of permanency of moral and spiritual and cultural values.

Peter and John, you certainly did that. I am grateful for my time at KPMG. KPMG employs more than 5,000 people across Australia. Through its 5,000 people, it is deeply embedded in hundreds of local communities. KPMG has a soul and a conscience and is led by good people. It demonstrates that profit, people and purpose can and do coexist. I am proud to acknowledge the presence of many friends—in particular, Greg Daniel—and former colleagues from KPMG here tonight.

To the Liberal Party members of Manly: Without you, I simply would not be here. You demonstrated your commitment to the values of our party when you got out there during this campaign. People forget that our party is a volunteer-driven organisation. So much is expected of you, and time and again you prove you are up to the challenge. It is also a pleasure to acknowledge the former member for Manly, David Hay, who is here this evening. David, I am proud to follow in your footsteps, with Jean right beside you.

To Chris Stone, Alicia McCumstie, Ian Zakon and the phenomenal Stuart Smith, thank you for your energy and professionalism. I thank my campaign executive and, in particular, Phil Nicol, Dan Rubenach and

Tom Loomes, along with Lee Furlong, Stuart Sprott, Mark Westfield, David Begg, Natalie Ward, Adam Achterstraat, Steve Pickering, Chris Rath, Matt Cross, Liz Young and Phil Young. To the Young Liberals who came out in droves to support the campaign: Your involvement brought a level of energy that the Manly conference welcomes with open arms and we look forward to growing that relationship. Alister Henskens and Catherine Cusack, thank you. From street stalls to doorknocking, I cannot thank you and the other members who helped me throughout the campaign enough.

Thank you to my Federal counterparts Jason Falinski, who I proudly acknowledge here tonight, and my friend Tony Abbott, whom I look forward to sharing the surf with again soon. I especially look forward to working with you, Tony, in our mutual support of Soldier On. Along with Rob Stokes, Brad Hazzard and Jonathan O'Dea, who went above and beyond for the campaign, we all look forward to delivering for the Northern Beaches as a team. A huge thanks to all the Ministers who supported the campaign. I will see you in Manly soon. Premier, thank you for making so many trips to Manly. The people of Manly thoroughly enjoyed having you back and look forward to seeing more of you. Thank you for your friendship and support.

Family is everything to me, and I am blessed to have such a wonderful family. I thank Jann, Rob, Eliza and Angelica for coming up and helping me. The support of Viv, Uncle James and Jenny, Jimmy Archer, Tamo and Edwina has been amazing. I say to Mum, "You are an inspiration." She has achieved so much in her life—from being the first female Commandant of Victoria Barracks to achieving the rank of major. From her, I have learnt how enthusiasm and positivity are often all that is needed to kickstart an idea. She has such a big heart, and I love her. I say to Dad, "From being a bricklayer to becoming a brigadier, you have given your family every opportunity they could ever need or want in life." He instilled in us the belief that public service is a noble pursuit, and that we should all try to fulfil our civic duty in some form or another. He taught us that respect, honesty, integrity and compassion are the foundations of a life well lived.

I thank Elle for travelling halfway across the world to campaign for seven days straight. I am proud of, and take full responsibility for, introducing her to the Liberal Party as I know that one day, if she so chooses, she will become a leader in her own way. I say to Tom, "You are, and always have been, my best mate." His forthright and fearless advice whether on the footy field—where it was often wrong—or in the arena of life is something that I am grateful for and value. I thank Annie for her level-headed and unwavering support. There was not a voter she did not impress. And I say to Elissa, "You have been there for me through thick and thin. You are my single greatest source of inspiration. You are the most impressive woman I have ever met. I love you and I cannot thank you enough for the encouragement, ideas and support you give me every day. Ted would be so proud of you and I know he is up there watching."

I believe leadership comes from both the head and the heart. I once sat in the gallery as a visitor to listen to an inaugural speech of someone who said, "Governor Lachlan Macquarie was an example of what a visionary leader can achieve for this State." Well, the person who said those words, Mike Baird, is, in my mind, the modern example of what a visionary leader can achieve for this State. I say to Mike, "You have set the standard, and I look forward to carrying on your approach of integrity, passion and achieving results for Manly." Mike Baird should be so proud of what he achieved for Manly and for New South Wales. I thank him for his support, guidance and friendship for what has now been over a decade. As a side note, I remind him that he left two surfboards in the office—so I will just assume I can keep those! I cannot find words adequate enough to express my thanks for the honour that the people of Manly have given me. John F. Kennedy said:

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.

Over the coming years I hope that the people of Manly will feel that I have listened and have served them with distinction. I hope they will see how hard I have worked to ensure that our schools continue to get the funding they require and that the tunnel gets underway. I hope they will see how hard I have worked to ensure that the vulnerable in our community get the care and support they need. I hope that the people of Manly will be proud of my efforts. Ultimately, I hope that people will feel optimistic about the future of Manly with me as their member.

To conclude, I learnt from my Dad about the value of humility and the work ethic. Humility and fierce resolve deliver outcomes. With that, I shall stand in this place, hoping that I will make a lasting, positive contribution for the good people of Manly and to the State of New South Wales.

Members stood in their places and applauded.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I congratulate the member for Manly on an excellent inaugural speech. They were called maiden speeches when I first came to this place. Well done and congratulations. I look forward to your friendship and comradeship.

*Private Members' Statements***NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME**

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:47): I too congratulate the new member for Manly on a very good speech. Well done, and it is great to have him on board. Gandhi said that the true measure of any society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. The Berejiklian Government's rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] in New South Wales has left many people with disabilities—particularly in my electorate of Canterbury—and their families and carers uncertain about their future level of care and support. As the Government moves to abrogate its responsibility for some of our most vulnerable people with the complete withdrawal of government disability services provision, there is major concern in the community. In two months' time the National Disability Insurance Scheme will become available in a number of local government areas in Sydney and in greater western New South Wales in remote and regional communities.

In my electorate of Canterbury in the inner west, the inner city and the south-east there are many ethnically diverse communities. About 44 per cent of my constituents come from countries where English is not the first language. Many people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who are currently not receiving disability services and support but who will be eligible to receive them under the National Disability Insurance Scheme need to know about the NDIS.

The Berejiklian Government must do more to ensure that these people are appropriately informed as to how to access these services once they are implemented in these communities so that they are able to exercise the choice and access that the Government speaks about. The principle of the National Disability Insurance Scheme is choice and control. Unfortunately, this Government has not adhered to choice and control. Ageing, Disability and Home Care has always been a government service provider, but it also provides support to many no-government organisations and to people with very great and complex needs. From 30 June 2018, the New South Wales Government will no longer be providing these services—the only jurisdiction in Australia to stop doing so.

I want a guarantee from the Government that our State's most vulnerable people will be looked after and that no-one will be left behind, particularly people in my community. As I mentioned earlier, 44 per cent of my constituents come from other countries and speak very little English. They need to be provided with information about the availability of services. The National Disability Insurance Scheme is a proud Labor achievement, designed to give people with disability freedom and choice over their care. However, from the outset, the Government's process for tendering out its disability services has been deeply flawed.

People living in Ageing, Disability and Home Care group homes across New South Wales were initially told that they would be given a shortlist and would be consulted about which provider they would prefer to take over their group home. Many of the people with disability and their families in my community and in other communities that I have spoken to have stated that they prefer the Government to remain as the provider. However, the Government has chosen otherwise. The Government did not provide a shortlist; it listed only one provider. That is not choice. The Government has had many years to prepare and to build capacity within non-government providers and it has not done so. The Government has failed people with disability.

This Government has sped through the tender process, denying people with disability and complex behavioural needs real choice about their service provision. In my discussions with people in my electorate—people with disability and their families and their interpreters—the transfer process has frequently been characterised as shambolic and confusing. According to the New South Wales Auditor-General, the non-government sector's capacity to provide complex clinical support is limited and the supply and choice of services in rural and remote areas will be limited. The Government must do something about this immediately.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I welcome to the Chamber and to the oldest Parliament in Australia the Deputy Mayor of Ipswich, Mr Paul Tully. If you are down here to spy on our football tactics we are not going to give them to you. We look forward to beating you in the State of Origin matches. I also welcome the Deputy Mayor of Clarence, Tasmania, Jock Campbell. My son has just returned from Tasmania; he competed in the Targa down there. Unfortunately, the clutch in the vehicle that he and Oliver Sellars were driving failed and so they retired. But from what I understand, they spent some money down there and really enjoyed their stay in Tasmania. As you are guests of the member for Heffron, I hope that he buys you dinner.

*Private Members' Statements***PARRAMATTA NORTH HERITAGE PRECINCT**

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (17:53): Parramatta North heritage precinct is another step closer to becoming the jewel in the crown of Parramatta. On Sunday I was proud to join the Premier and the Minister for Planning, and Minister for Housing for the announcement of a \$310 million up-front investment in the precinct. The Parramatta North heritage precinct is important because it boasts the largest and most notable collection of early colonial and European buildings; it is a collection of iconic buildings and sites along the river. This money will mean that Parramatta will develop Australia's best heritage precinct and that Parramatta will be known for its heritage and become a destination for hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of tourists from interstate, intrastate and overseas.

This money will allow the preservation, refurbishment and adaptive reuse of those assets that are important, not just for the city of Parramatta and Western Sydney but for the whole of Australia. The up-front investment will see major landscaping and infrastructure works on the site such as roads and cycleways, the creation of new parks and play areas and the rehabilitation of the river foreshore. The funding demonstrates that the Liberal Government is committed to making this site more attractive and accessible to the public and to building a vibrant new community. Thousands of residents, visitors and workers will ensure that our heritage precinct is not only sustainable but also opened up to the public and is accessible to future generations. This will be a place that is buzzing with activity and excitement—a place to rivals The Rocks.

Under successive governments this important site has suffered decades of neglect. I am proud to say that now, through the adaptive reuse of our heritage assets, we will create a successful and sustainable heritage precinct. The approach of this Liberal Government means we will preserve our unique heritage for future generations. In the words of the Minister for Planning, the Hon. Anthony Roberts, it is a gift to future generations. The Government's approach finally provides a sustainable model and paves the way for further restoration works. Repair works are already underway on five heritage buildings in the precinct as part of \$18 million being spent on the first conservation program. Long-awaited repairs to more than 40 heritage buildings are now possible as a direct result of the work undertaken by UrbanGrowth, with all work on the site adhering to strict heritage controls.

Significant cultural landscapes and buildings are being protected and enhanced, including the Female Factory, Lunatic Asylum, Roman Catholic Orphan School, Parramatta Girls Industrial School, Front Entry Gardens, Sports Oval, and the riverfront. For the past six years I have championed the preservation of this nationally significant site so that Parramatta becomes known for its heritage. This Liberal Government recognised the site's importance and announced a master plan in 2012. This move marked the first real concerted effort to preserve and safeguard this area's heritage. At the time, 12 government agencies and as many Ministers had vested interests in the site, so it was a complex task. UrbanGrowth has successfully managed this complexity. It has worked hard to actively engage and consult with all the key stakeholders, including the council and heritage, community and business groups.

Another milestone was passed in 2014 when the Liberal Government declared Parramatta North a State significant site. This was an important step forward in realising a vision for the Parramatta North heritage precinct. It is fantastic to know that every day this site is getting closer to being preserved for future generations and opened up to the public. And while work is still underway, the goal of opening the heritage precinct to the public is becoming a reality. This month UrbanGrowth NSW will be holding an open day on the site. This will allow members of the community to come and see what is happening. They will be able to learn more about what is planned over the next seven to 10 years as we conserve, unlock and share the heritage of Parramatta North. They will also be able to see archaeologists hard at work. Approximately 20 to 30 people are on site for around six months, cataloguing our rich history.

I am proud to say that this is the first time there has been such a concerted effort to explore and better understand our history and our connections to this important site. These archaeological works are a direct result of the commitment of the Liberal-Nationals Government to the Parramatta heritage precinct. The recent announcement by this Government of a \$310 million up-front investment is yet another significant milestone. Not only does the funding guarantee the precinct will be preserved and opened up to the public but also that it will deliver much-needed housing and job opportunities over the next 10 years. It is about building a precinct that really rivals The Rocks.

CITY COUNTRY ALLIANCE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (17:58): I refer to my trip to Mungo for the City Country Alliance Conference. The City Country Student Club is terrific for schools. As the title suggests, it is schools from the city and schools from the country. It involves public schools, government schools, some of the most exclusive

independent schools and some of the most disadvantaged schools. The City Country Student Club is an alliance of schools that brings children together. Brian Debus, a former principal of Menindee Central School, invited me to visit and I started off in Broken Hill.

The reason I wanted to go was to support one of my local schools, Wiley Park Girls High School. I often speak about this school, which is in my electorate, and its achievements under the leadership of principal Grahame Steigler-Peters and deputy principal Debbie Agapitos, who is in charge of this project. Their aim is to strengthen connections between rural and city students and to enrich students' cultural knowledge of one another. When this project talks about "country", it means being really out there in places like Broken Hill. In November, I hope that the Parliament will host some kids from places like Broken Hill. I will be approaching members on both sides of the House to allow a student from a country school to shadow them, perhaps for just a few hours, so the students have the experience of how Parliament operates.

It was not my first trip to Broken Hill, but this time I had the chance to visit some schools in the region. One of the schools I visited was Broken Hill High School—and I visited it on a stinking hot day. The deputy principal, Paul Gauci, was exceptionally welcoming and showed me around the school. I met a lot of the kids, although I did not get to play a game of handball. I pride myself on being the handball champion of New South Wales against year 7 kids. One day I may participate in a handball game at Broken Hill. I chatted with the kids about why I like to visit remote schools.

Far be it from me to advise the Minister, because I know he does the same thing. It is easy for us to visit Sydney schools to see how they operate. As I have an educational background, I come to schools with particular ideas—although those ideas are largely contextualised in south-western Sydney. But as parliamentarians, we need to govern for all schools in the State. We cannot just talk about what is happening in regional areas. There is nothing like visiting these schools to see how they operate. We need to walk in the footsteps of the teachers, the parents and the community members to see what challenges they are facing.

That was one of the reasons I went to Broken Hill. There I saw a school community that works exceptionally hard despite the difficulties under which it operates. The school community is inclusive of everyone and, like all school communities, works its guts out to provide its students with a good education. I also visited Morgan Street Public School and the School of the Air Broken Hill, one of my favourite schools. Putting on my teacher's hat again, I gatecrashed one of the classes and did some teaching of students. I do not know if I helped any of them; I think I was more of a hindrance than a help. An interesting thing about the School of the Air is that it is so different from other schools.

I spoke to two of the students from the School of the Air. One of these young boys lives six hours away from the school and the other lives four hours away. All the students are given an opportunity to pop into the school. The school teaches kids in an exceptional way. I joined some of the kids at the art gallery and delivered a lesson. I took a photo of the group and put it on my Facebook page. One of the many questions I asked of the students was to put up their hand if they had an annoying brother or sister. Every single one of them—including me—put up their hand.

I stayed at Poongari Lodge in Mungo National Park and got red dirt on my shoes. I looked around and thought it was the most beautiful place in Australia. It is uniquely Australian with its purple hues and other beautiful colours. Photographs do not do it justice. There I saw kids of different faiths, different colours and different backgrounds celebrating together being Australian and getting to know one another. It does not take much to get passionate about education. Sometimes we measure success through Higher School Certificate and National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy results, but in education we can make some enormous changes by bringing people together. I thank the people from the City Country Alliance Mungo Conference for inviting me to attend.

CO.AS.IT.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (18:03): Co.As.It. is a well-established community organisation that has been providing community and educational services since 1968. It provides allied health services and a range of education services, including the Italian Bilingual School, a registered primary school that delivers the curriculum in both English and Italian. Co.As.It. is the peak Italian organisation in New South Wales. In 2006 the State Government advertised the Yasmar grounds for tender. Three responses were received, and Co.As.It. was the successful tenderer. In 2007 Co.As.It. signed a 40-lease with the then Labor Government for the eastern wing of the Yasmar Estate at Haberfield. The lease outlines that other community activities would be co-located on the premises, including an Italian Multimedia Resource Centre. The first stage included the relocation of the Italian Bilingual School from Norton Street, with other community services set to follow.

Initially, the then mayor of Ashfield supported the proposal but this was later withdrawn and Ashfield Council ultimately denied development consent. The appeal to the Land and Environment Court was unsuccessful, given that access to the site provided to Co.As.it. was precluded by a narrow passageway for pedestrian and vehicle access. Co.As.it. eventually managed to convince the previous Government to acquire a one-metre strip of land from the neighbouring State school, Haberfield Public School. After much resistance, the acquisition was eventually gazetted in 2011. Notwithstanding all of the above, the board of Co.As.It could not wait any longer for the access issue to be resolved and in 2011 it purchased an alternative property for the Italian Bilingual School at Meadowbank. The inner-west community now has to live with the fact that the school has had to move out of what has always been considered traditional Italian heartland.

To add insult to injury, in 2013 Co.As.It was compelled by political and community leaders to rescue the Italian Cultural Centre on Norton Street to ensure it remained in the hands of the Italian community. The cultural centre sits on land that was gifted to the Italian community in 1988. That was no small financial feat. With the support of the community, Co.As.It fought the administration process to ensure the desired outcome was achieved. In 2015 Co.As.It took ownership of the property.

Co.As.It has an in principle agreement to enter into a joint venture agreement with Opal Aged Care depending on circumstances coming to fruition. The proposal will result in the construction of a 120-bed high-care facility at Yasmar. It will be open to the general community, but give a particular focus and priority of access to people from culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] backgrounds. The facility will employ approximately 130 staff, including administration and nursing staff, diversional therapists, and kitchen and domestic staff. Both Opal Aged Care and Co.As.It are eager to proceed with this project and lodge the development application. The primary obstacle is that they currently have an agreement with the State Government for only 40 years, with 30 years left.

In a meeting with the department on 18 May 2016 there was agreement to reset the current lease to 40 years, presumably commencing now. However, the viability of the project requires a total lease period of 50 years. The cost of this request to the New South Wales Government is nil. In fact, additional aged care options with a particular focus on the provision of care to people from CALD backgrounds will provide a benefit to the community, alleviate the burden on the health system and assist the Government to create jobs and meet community need. Although there was a verbal agreement from the department to reset the lease, Crown Lands has denied Co.As.It both an extension to the lease and a change of use to enable people to reside on the site. Co.As.It has further been accused of having proposed underhanded deals by having been assigned the land without any due process. The denial of the amendments to the lease will essentially mean that the project cannot get off the ground. We have already lost the Italian Bilingual School in the inner west. Now we stand to also lose a viable project that will provide enormous benefit to the local community.

A residential care facility is much needed in the inner west to meet the growing demands of an ageing population. There is a lack of availability in the area of aged care beds, particularly for people from CALD communities. Given the status of Co.As.It as a not-for-profit organisation, the site and the envisaged project will clearly provide direct community benefits. The Italian-born Australian population is the most rapidly ageing group in Australia. This issue is at crisis point. The Italian community, which is the largest CALD group in the country, is ageing more rapidly than the general population and is now facing major challenges of care, dementia and declining health. This crisis is coupled with a major lack of culturally appropriate community or residential care options.

Co.As.It is a respected and professional organisation. It has expended a substantial sum of money on this site over nine years. It has done so in good faith and with community benefits always in mind. As the peak organisation and service provider for Italians in New South Wales, the Co.As.It board has direct obligations to its members and a moral obligation to the Italian community. The community fully supports and expects a successful resolution to this matter that quite simply has gone on for too long. I am convinced that the partnership and proposed model of care will be well received by the community at large.

ANZAC COMMEMORATIONS

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (18:09): Last Tuesday hundreds of people gathered across the St George region to commemorate Anzac Day, and this year I had the privilege of attending the service at Bexley RSL Club. The dawn service has played an important role in Anzac Day commemorations for 101 years. The first unofficial dawn service in Sydney was held in 1927. Five returned servicemen were heading home in the early hours of Anzac Day after attending an Anzac Eve function and came across a lone elderly woman laying a wreath upon the cenotaph in Martin Place. They joined her in a moment of silence and prayer, remembering the fallen soldiers. These men used the next meeting of the Australian Legion of Ex-Service Clubs to institute an official dawn service for the following year. It drew a crowd of about 150 people, and dawn services have been held

around the country ever since. They provide a peaceful moment for Australians to reflect on their history as a nation while the sun rises.

Anzac Day, 25 April, marks the anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli—the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces—but it also commemorates and honours all Australians who have served our nation in many military and peacekeeping campaigns, as well as paying respect to those men and women who are currently serving in operations around the world. Anzac Day is a time to stop and consider what it means to be Australian. Charles Bean wrote in 1946 that the Anzac spirit was about:

... reckless valour in a good cause, for enterprise, resourcefulness, fidelity, comradeship, and endurance that will never own defeat.

Today, the idea of the Anzac spirit revolves around mateship, larrikinism and equality. The Anzac spirit contributes greatly to our national values—a sense of egalitarianism and togetherness in the face of adversity. Unity is one of the greatest legacies of Anzac. Sceptics in the 1970s and 1980s believed the significance of Anzac Day would fade as the number of surviving veterans declined. These sceptics could not have been more wrong, with Anzac Day becoming more significant and more powerful each year. This has been helped by a growing awareness amongst our young Australians of the sacrifices made by men and women that led to the freedoms we enjoy today.

As we celebrate Anzac Day I believe it is important to acknowledge that some who return from fighting on behalf of their country return to Australia with deep mental wounds as a result of the trauma of being in a war zone. Homelessness NSW has reported that up to 10 per cent of homeless people in this State are veterans, with as many as 3,000 former service members living on the streets. Regrettably, some soldiers told the ABC in 2015 that they feared speaking openly about mental health issues because it may harm their careers and that accessing entitlements from the Department of Veterans' Affairs was a long and arduous process. I acknowledge the new member for Manly and his commitment to the Wounded Warrior Project, which he outlined in his inaugural speech earlier this evening. Elected members of Australia's parliaments owe a special debt to those we send to fight in the country's name. We cannot forget them when they return home. Anzac Day is a time for remembering the sacrifice and bravery of those who served our country. Lest we forget.

NORTH COAST FLOODS

Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (18:12): Tonight I speak about the floods we just experienced in the Northern Rivers area. I have lived there all my life and this is the largest amount of floodwater I have ever witnessed in the Northern Rivers. In Murwillumbah alone the river's flood level exceeded the 1954 flood level. In Lismore the river's flood level got to 11.6 metres—one metre less than the 1974 flood level. However, right throughout the area there was more water in different places than in 1974. A lot of people did not appreciate that every gully, every creek and every river were already full before we got 400 millilitres to 600 millilitres of rain in one night—and that caught those people out.

I could go on for hours honouring the response of the community but, quite simply, we were proud of the efforts of the community in pulling together to assist people who were caught out by this flood. There are stories of buildings that had not been affected by flood for 65 years. For example, in south Murwillumbah water started to enter a building so people decided to move their trucks to higher ground. When those people returned, there was more than one metre of water in that building. The towns of Murwillumbah and Lismore were devastated; it will continue for a long time to come. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the support we received from the Federal and State governments. Sadly, yesterday we saw this flood becoming political. I remind members opposite that before they try to play politics with a natural disaster they should look at their record of support during the floods since the late 1990s. As I have said, I have lived through a number of floods and I know what support has been given to this area. I am proud of the support that the Federal and State governments are giving to the Northern Rivers communities.

The Premier and the Deputy Premier visited the area soon after the flood, and the Minister for Emergency Services has visited twice. Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, and the Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education have also visited the area. His Excellency General the Hon. David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd) and Mrs Hurley have visited the area twice. The member for Tweed and all The Nationals members on the North Coast have offered us a lot of support. I commend Superintendent Greg Martin for his leadership of the emergency operations centre and all the organisations that were represented there. I also thank Richmond Tweed State Emergency Service region controller Andrew McPhee, Lismore City Unit State Emergency Service local controller Melinda Mapstone, Murwillumbah State Emergency Service unit controller John McGregor and all those associated with them. I thank the NSW Police Force, Ambulance Service of NSW, Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW Rural Fire Service, Mayor Isaac Smith and General Manager Gary Murphy of Lismore City Council, and Mayor Katie Milne and General Manager Troy Green of Tweed Shire Council.

I also thank the NSW Small Business Commissioner, Robyn Hobbs, and Kylie Bryden-Smith, Regional Manager of the NSW Business Chamber Jane Laverty, President of the Lismore Chamber of Commerce Deborah Benhayon, and Murwillumbah District Business Chamber Acting President Ilse Jaunberzins. Having surveyed the business district in just one week, they succeeded in getting 993 applications filled out. That was instrumental in the Federal and State governments providing category C disaster recovery assistance for those small businesses—on day two the North Coast floods were declared a natural disaster, which enabled category A disaster recovery assistance; two days later we had category B; and within a week we had category C for small businesses.

Rural landowners and farmers have also received category C disaster recovery assistance, with grants of up to \$15,000. In these difficult times the community has pulled together, but I do not know how some of these businesses have faced it. Shortly after the floods the small business team helped more than 200 small businesses in Lismore and about 180 to 200 in Murwillumbah to fill out forms. That made the difference in whether or not a business reopened. Finally, Euan Ferguson was appointed coordinator of the recovery centres and I thank him for his great leadership. Indeed, I cannot thank people enough for the support that has been provided to the Northern Rivers community.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (18:18): It is appropriate that I put on the record the efforts of the member for Lismore and the member for Tweed in organising, coordinating and staying close to their communities during this time of need. The member for Lismore and the member for Tweed have paid tribute to and acknowledged the great work of many, but they themselves have put in an extraordinary effort, doing everything they could to help, and they continue to do so. They should also be recognised for their efforts.

Matter of Public Importance

CROHN'S DISEASE AND ULCERATIVE COLITIS

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (18:19): It is appropriate that this House recognise Crohn's disease as a matter of public importance during Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Month. May is the month during which we raise awareness of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, which are commonly referred to as "inflammatory bowel disease" or "IBD". IBD is becoming more prevalent, more complex, and more severe, and affects approximately one in 250 people aged from five to 40 years. Approximately 70,000 Australians have Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, and that number is projected to increase to 100,000 by 2022.

Healthcare utilisation and costs are increasing, as are the direct costs resulting from hospitalisation, which lead to a significant cost burden. The models of healthcare used in this field are inconsistent and inadequate. The predominant model of treating only acute IBD flares is at odds with the need for long-term management. The benefits of improving IBD care cannot be ignored. Clinics and hospitals that have formalised and coordinated IBD care models have yielded significant benefits for patients, and those models must be extended to other healthcare institutions.

More work needs to be done in this area to address the gap in data on and knowledge of patient pathways and outcomes, service coordination, and resources. I commend Crohn's and Colitis Australia for launching the Can't Wait Card, which is designed to make life more liveable for people suffering with IBD. I thank Crohn's and Colitis Australia for providing the research that is the basis of my contribution on this matter of public importance. As I said, Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis affect more than 70,000 people and there is no known cure. It is generally known as a young person's illness because it is often diagnosed between the ages of 15 and 35 years. It can affect all age groups and demographics, and it is more common than multiple sclerosis, epilepsy and rheumatoid arthritis.

The symptoms of IBD include bleeding, fever, fatigue, bloating, pain, and frequent diarrhoea, which can be socially debilitating. It can mean that sufferers need urgent access to a toilet, and not being able to access one can lead to physical pain and embarrassment. The Can't Wait Card is issued to those who have been formally diagnosed with Crohn's disease or colitis to help them in gaining access to a toilet in times of emergency. To minimise any security concerns, all cards are registered and the person's name and their identification appear on the front. The organisation can therefore be contacted if there are any questions. Crohn's disease and inflammatory bowel disease should be recognised as a matter of public importance to create even greater awareness. A number of events will be held throughout the month, and 19 May is World Inflammatory Bowel Disease Day. This is a global campaign designed to raise awareness of Crohn's and colitis and to shine a light on the lives of people suffering with IBD, which, as I said, affects one in 250 Australians.

As part of the campaign, monuments, landmarks and national buildings in major cities of Australia will be illuminated with purple light, which is the international colour of IBD, to raise awareness of inflammatory bowel disease and empower people around the nation to spread the word about these invisible illnesses and the

work of Crohn's and Colitis Australia. This is the month to spread the word about this debilitating disease that can cripple the lives of those who are afflicted with it. It is appropriate that today in the New South Wales Parliament we debate Crohn's disease as a matter of public importance.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (18:24): Over the next five years it is expected that more than 100,000 Australians will be diagnosed with Crohn's disease or colitis—a set of illnesses collectively referred to as inflammatory bowel disease or IBD. The prevalence of IBD in Australia is amongst the highest in the world. I am fortunate to have the Hunter Medical Research Institute in my electorate and perhaps it would be appropriate for the institute to research this topic as I have not heard about any specific research recently on the disease. I would certainly support such research because it is through research that we get the required outcomes. IBD and Crohn's are gastrointestinal disorders that affect sufferers for life. According to Crohn's and Colitis Australia:

The conditions are largely unpredictable with significant variation in the degree and pattern of symptoms affecting each patient.

And I am sure every surgeon and gastroenterologist would agree with that statement.

The relapsing and chronic nature of the disorder has broader impacts on a person's emotional, physical and social wellbeing.

I am sure members would understand the debilitating nature of the disease and indeed many probably suffer some of the symptoms considering the stressful nature of our job and that we work seven days a week. It is a silent, invisible disease that is becoming more common and more complex, and unfortunately is appearing more and more in children. Sufferers can often feel isolated or embarrassed, although people should not feel embarrassed. The aim of Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Month is to encourage greater understanding of Crohn's disease and colitis while encouraging Australians diagnosed with these diseases to live fearlessly without letting the disease get in the way of their dreams. It may be time for those who feel unwell but have not been diagnosed to go to the doctor and be referred for appropriate testing because if left undiagnosed the disease will make people very sick and will shorten their life expectancy.

Members would be aware of people who were very unwell and who have died at quite a young age from this disease. I encourage sufferers or those who are unwell to seek support and be open to their doctor about their condition because they have heard the stories before and would not be embarrassed. I cannot think of a worthier goal, particularly this month. Also, those who do not suffer from IBD must meet these efforts with a commitment of our own; we must be a little more understanding of our colleagues who might be unwell. In researching Crohn's disease for this speech I learnt that United States President Dwight D. Eisenhower was a sufferer. Eisenhower was the Supreme Commander of Allied forces in Europe before going on to serve two terms as president from 1953 to 1961.

If anything should underline the truth of the stated aim of Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Month it is that Eisenhower won the Second World War and was the leader of the free world for eight years despite suffering from the disease; I honestly do not know how he did it with all the stress he must have endured. As my colleague said, Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Month is highlighted by the colour purple. I acknowledge Newcastle City Council because the wonderful Newcastle City Hall will also be in purple. I commend the member for Tamworth for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. It may be embarrassing for people to talk about, but it is an important matter to talk about.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (18:29): I support my colleague from Tamworth and praise him for his ongoing commitment to the wider community, particularly to those in the community who are suffering with Crohn's disease, which can involve any part of the gastrointestinal tract from the mouth to the anus and most commonly affects the small intestine and/or the colon. There may be areas of healthy intestine between those areas of diseased intestine. Collectively known as inflammatory bowel disease [IBD], the conditions are an emerging global disease. The prevalence of the disease in Australia is one of the highest in the world. More than 75,000 Australians live with these conditions and the numbers are expected to increase to more than 100,000 by 2022.

The main distinguishing features of Crohn's disease are the location and severity of the inflammation. In Crohn's disease the inflammation can involve any part of the digestive tract, although it most commonly affects the small and/or large intestines. Some parts of the digestive tract are affected while others may be unaffected. Unlike ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease affects all layers of the intestinal wall, not only the lining. I have known a number of people who have suffered from Crohn's disease, which is a debilitating disease. Those who suffer from the disease need greater support and greater public awareness of the disease. Societal attitudes preclude people from openly discussing bowel problems. This usually compounds people's sense of isolation and affects their willingness to disclose their condition to friends, family and work colleagues. Current statistics suggest that one in 10 Australians have a bowel condition requiring medication and regular monitoring by their doctor.

It is currently thought that the risk of the offspring of someone with Crohn's disease also developing Crohn's disease is in the order of 5 per cent to 10 per cent, whereas for ulcerative colitis the percentage is a little lower. With proper treatment, the majority of patients do well and do not develop any serious complications. Early recognition, proper treatment, good nutrition and a positive outlook are the most important deterrents to the complications of inflammatory bowel disease. In New South Wales there are support groups in Burwood, Chatswood, Surry Hills, the Sutherland Shire, Moree and Wagga Wagga. The one closest to the electorate of Tweed is on the Gold Coast.

I praise the member for Tamworth once again for bringing this important issue to the House, which affects a lot of Australians. As I said, it can create social isolation and unwillingness in people to talk to friends, family and colleagues or even to bring it up with their local general practitioner. Awareness is the key. Medications and treatments can make people's lives a lot easier than they may be. Well done to the member for Tamworth for raising this important matter.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (18:32): In reply: I thank the member for Tweed for his contribution on this important subject. I also thank the member for Wallsend for her contribution. A lot of the research and development that has gone into this matter of public importance this evening has come from a number of sources and sites. The member for Wallsend was talking about further research and development. I credit the Centre for Digestive Diseases at Five Dock in Sydney for some of the information we have been using. As the member for Wallsend would like to know more about the research and development into Crohn's disease, I direct her to the Centre for Digestive Diseases, which has several comprehensive phases of research and development currently underway in its department of research and innovation.

The member for Tweed spoke of making sure people contact their general practitioner [GP] if they are experiencing symptoms that are "not right" and they have a serious concern. This matter is certainly not something people would discuss with friends—possibly only with very close family. If people consult their local GP and get the correct diagnosis it will ultimately help make life more liveable if they are diagnosed with an inflammatory bowel disease. This is the month to raise awareness. I thank those members and others who have contributed to the discussion of this matter of public importance. Remember, 19 May is World Inflammatory Bowel [IBD] Disease Day. We encourage everyone to go purple on World IBD Day to show their support for patients living with inflammatory bowel disease.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:35 until
Thursday 4 May 2017 at 10:00.**