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Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 4 May 2017

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 4 May 2017

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

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Documents

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce the receipt of the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled, "Planning for School Infrastructure: Department of Education", dated May 2017.

[Notices of motions given.]

Motions

GRANVILLE TRAIN DISASTER

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge in the gallery today the family and friends of those who were so profoundly affected by the Granville train disaster in 1977, particularly the families of the 83 victims, emergency services personnel and the many people whose lives were forever impacted by this tragedy. We welcome you to the gallery. I welcome also the Federal member for Lindsay, Emma Husar.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (10:11): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that on 18 January 1977, 83 men, women and children were killed and 213 injured in the Granville train disaster.
- (2) Recognises that acknowledgement of the profound and lasting effect the disaster had on victims, their loved ones and the community more broadly, is long overdue.
- (3) Offers a deep and sincere apology to those people whose lives were irrevocably changed at Granville that day.

There are tragic days in history that have a lasting impact on our collective memory. We very rarely see them coming, but their impact and the way we choose to respond to them have a profound and lasting effect on victims, their loved ones and the community more broadly. The day of 18 January 1977 was such a day. It was the day of the Granville train disaster, which was then and still remains the worst rail disaster in our nation's history. It was the day that 83 innocent men, women and children lost their lives. Another 213 people on board were injured, many trapped in crumpled carriages for hours and hours.

They were just going about their lives the way they would on any other day. Most were on their regular daily commute to work and school, sitting in the seat they sat on most days on the train they caught just about every morning. As the scale of the disaster unfolded that day, our city did respond. Thousands of Sydneysiders rolled up their sleeves to donate blood to help the victims, and volunteers gathered to assist in whatever way they could. Many of those on the train who were not seriously injured did anything they could to help fellow passengers.

The first responders—and I want to make a special mention of them today—put their skills and training into practice when it was needed most. They included the Police Rescue Squad, the Fire Brigades, the Ambulance Service, emergency medical teams, railway workers and volunteer organisations. They all did their services proud in an extremely difficult situation.

I want to take this opportunity, after 40 years from that sad and horrific day, to acknowledge and apologise on behalf of the State Government to all those who still suffer today as a consequence of what happened that day. I acknowledge the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure who raised this on behalf of the Government and I thank him for ensuring that this apology occurs today. We appreciate also that many of you in the gallery were part of that process to ensure that the very least we could do was to make this important commitment to you today in terms of an apology.

There were following inquiries to the disaster and there was a significant commitment made to invest in safety in the rail system, and that continues to this day. But I also know in my years as transport Minister that the responsibility of ensuring the safety of hundreds of thousands of commuters every day on the rail network weighed heavily on me. I know it weighs heavily on the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and anyone who has held

that position. Today billions of dollars are invested to make sure our system is fully maintained and to ensure the utmost safety on our rail network at every opportunity.

Today is about making amends by giving an apology and acknowledging that it should have been given 40 years ago. I know that is why you are here today. I also know that some victims and their families feel so aggrieved that the apology did not happen before today that they did not attend here; they still carry a sense of burden about the way they were treated after the tragedy occurred. I want to say to all of you here today, we appreciate your attendance. We appreciate that this does not give you closure but that it does allow you to continue your journey of healing. That is certainly the feedback I have received from many of you in the gallery who have spoken to me over the years about what you felt that day and in the decades since.

I want to stress also the impact that this disaster on 18 January 1977 had not only on the victims and their families but also on the first responders, who walked onto the scene into a living nightmare. They displayed great professionalism and courage to get people out of the train as quickly as possible. Today our emergency services are well-equipped and supported in their response to tragedies, but perhaps that was not the case 40 years ago. Many first responders did not receive the type of support after the event that they may receive today in order for them to deal with those tragic consequences and with what they witnessed that day. We take that on board as well in our thanks to the first responders and acknowledge the services and support they did not receive in dealing with the consequences of the disaster that day and what they had to deal with.

Forty years ago the field of paramedicine was in its early years; little was known about crush injuries. The people on the ground that day learned from what they saw and passed on the lessons. They dealt with some horrific circumstances, many times on their own. Perhaps one of the greatest developments over the past 40 years has been in the way that we handle the emotional and psychological effects of disasters. Unfortunately, many families did not receive the support they needed at that time, and the support that the first responders should have received at that time was not forthcoming. We are deeply sorry about that. We thank all of you for reminding us about the lessons we needed to learn from that day. You carry the pain and the scars, but you have also taught us many lessons that we have since applied in the past 40 years.

The community and the first responders stepped up to help the victims in the immediate aftermath. But the lifelong impact on survivors and the unimaginable grief felt by those who lost a loved one on that dreadful January day have never been formally acknowledged. I accept that this acknowledgement is long overdue—40 years overdue. I hope today goes some way in expressing to you how deeply sorry we are, not only for your loss but also for the fact that it was inappropriately acknowledged. We are acknowledging your loss today. Hopefully, this will go towards making amends for what you have experienced not just on that day but over the past four decades.

On that day families endured anxious hour upon hour waiting for news of their loved ones. Tragically, some experienced enormous grief. Many families did not feel supported, and we apologise for that. We hope our words of acknowledgement and apology today give you some comfort and a sense of healing. That is why 40 years on from that disaster we offer and express our sincere and deepest apologies to those whose lives were irrevocably changed at Granville that day. On behalf of the people and the Government of New South Wales, I express my genuine, heartfelt sorrow for the terrible trauma they suffered at the time and the devastating pain and loss that they have had to live with for many years. I have no doubt that the pain they feel today can be as raw and as real as it was the moment they first experienced their loss. Just as there is no way to make sense of lives lost in such an unthinkable way, there is nothing we can do to take away the pain. But we hope the apology today goes some way to acknowledging their loss and supporting them into the future.

Yesterday I met with the secretary of the Granville Train Disaster Association, Meredith Knight, who is in the gallery today. I first came into contact with Meredith in 2013 when I was the Minister for Transport and attended the ceremony commemorating the train disaster that January. She told me her family circumstances. She lost her father when she was just 15. I thank Meredith for sharing her story with me that day; it has had a lasting effect on me. I acknowledge the impact Meredith has had on bringing today's apology before the Parliament.

I acknowledge Barry Gobbe, who is also in the gallery. Barry was one of the first responders on the day of the disaster. I spoke to Barry yesterday and he reminded me that when he turned up at the disaster scene there was no other responder around and he dealt with what he could as best he could. Barry has published a number of books on the history of Granville and has taken time to support the families in the healing process. He has also been instrumental in bringing today's apology before the Parliament. They are just two of the many people who have been impacted by the train disaster.

After this formal apology we will acknowledge not only those in the gallery, the victims and their families, but also many of the first responders, who still suffer as a consequence of what they experienced 40 years

ago. As I said at the beginning of my contribution, we cannot take away the pain people experienced and are still experiencing as a result of this tragic accident. We cannot take away the fact that they were not supported at the time of the tragedy, 40 years ago. I hope that today's apology goes some way to demonstrating that we understand the magnitude of their loss. We will do everything that we can to ensure that such loss is not suffered by anybody else in the future.

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (10:22): On behalf of the Opposition I speak in support of the Premier's motion on the Granville train disaster, which occurred on Tuesday 18 January 1977. The Granville rail disaster remains our nation's worst single post-war accident. Eighty-three men, women and children and, it turns out, an unborn child did not survive the accident. We rightly mark the passing every January at the spot where the accident happened when we toss roses onto the unforgiving steel tracks.

It has been four decades since the eight crowded carriages left the rails almost two hours into the journey from the Blue Mountains. We have to imagine the scene that morning, the morning of a blazing hot mid-summer's day during the school holidays. Some of the people were on their way to work, playing cards or board games on a train from the Blue Mountains. A minute out of Parramatta the train slowed from the authorised 80 kilometres an hour on the left-hand curve. A track fastening was loose, allowing the leading right-hand wheel to come off the track. Derailed train 108 hit the supports of the Bold Street bridge. The bridge itself had not been well constructed. To make it level, an extra 200 tonnes of concrete had been added. We can imagine the impact; in less than 10 seconds the bridge collapsed onto the wooden train carriages. Half the passengers in two of those carriages died instantly.

One woman lost her stepmother, her father and her two little girls. We can understand why she says that she has thought about them at some time every single day in the past 40 years. She often wonders about the lives they could have led. Of course, time has also not erased the hurt of those who were injured and survived the day. One survived after losing a leg on her first train journey to work. She was saved by a police officer who crawled through the wreckage. The police officer thought he had detected a pulse; others had thought she was dead. There is an old saying that adversity introduces us to ourselves.

On that morning we found, not for the first and not for the last time, that our emergency services workers and volunteers have the most compassionate hearts and extraordinary determination. Rescuer after rescuer crawled through the crumpled metal and wreckage—splintered wood, jagged concrete—on a blazing hot midsummer's day to find the dead and to rescue the living. People were in agony, some struggling for their last breath amidst the twisted wreckage. Rescuers were naturally fearful for their own lives, but they just kept going. They carried on because that is what they do. I met several of them at the fortieth anniversary this January.

Michael "Scotty" McNally arrived at the scene and stayed for 17 hours. He spent a lot of time with one trapped victim, one of the last victims to be taken out of the wreckage alive. But the man died three days later and left behind a wife and four-year-old daughter. Scotty told me he has not been able to get on a train since. I also met Margaret Warby, who was a theatre sister at the Parramatta hospital that day. She spent hours clambering around the crushed carriages tending to the injured and the trapped. She was there for more than 12 hours, having refused to leave. She was later awarded the Queen's Medal for Gallantry for her services that day.

Of course, for many of the survivors and relatives Granville has been, despite the immensity of the tragedy, scandalously neglected in many ways. Today we as a parliament go some small way to redressing that neglect. All of us are sincere in that; all of us are genuine. We not only have compassion for what survivors and relatives have endured but genuinely hope that this apology gives them some small measure of comfort. The survivors of Granville have lived with their injuries and the trauma for four decades. They have lived with lifelong grief. Especially, but not only, on anniversaries they still weep. Every fatality was a loss; every life was meaningful; the possibilities of each life were infinite. Every year in January we gather to pray in an attempt to comfort those who survived and the relatives of those who did not, but until today we have not apologised to them.

The Premier at the time was Neville Wran, in the early months of his premiership. I know that he went to the scene of the disaster, but that was not widely known because he asked journalists not to mention that he was there. The focus was rightly kept on the rescue. The then Premier was determined to ensure that the rescuers had whatever they needed. On the day, there were 250 police at the accident site. They struggled to hold back a crowd 5,000 strong. The last body was not removed from the wreckage until the afternoon of the next day. The bitter lessons learnt that morning were absorbed by our emergency services, which changed and improved their procedures for future tragedies. Many of them worked tirelessly through fatigue and leaking gas for approximately 30 hours—holding the hands of those who were dying, guiding a priest through the rubble to give the last rites to the dying. Their commitment was genuinely heroic. Every one of the 83 victims had relatives, and this Parliament today, finally, is apologising to each and all of them.

Granville will never be just another stop on the line. I say to all members: If you have a moment, look up the list of the names of those who died that morning. You can find it at Granville; you can find it online. Read the list slowly. I think they will then appreciate the enormity and scale of this tragedy and why we are apologising today. Every name on that monument at Granville represents a human life—a person possessed of inherent human dignity who, on the morning of 18 January 1977, was imbued with hope, ambition and joy. Since then they have been resting in peace, and they will be forever remembered. To the victims, their loved ones and all those who assisted on the day, the Parliament of New South Wales apologises to you for what you have been through.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (10:31): I also welcome those in the gallery, particularly Barry and Meredith, whom I have come to know well recently and whom I thank for what they have done for the Granville Train Disaster Association. I stand in this place, more than four decades from that terrible day in Granville, to say sorry to those who lost their life, to those who still bear the scars of that day and to all the loved ones whose lives have never been the same since. An apology in this place is not just a set of words. Today the people of New South Wales embrace you all and say how sorry we are for what occurred on that devastating and unimaginable day 40 years ago.

As Minister for Transport, I know our responsibility to maintain safety on our transport system is paramount and cannot be forgotten. You cannot forget, so we must never forget. We must recognise the lasting impacts the Granville train disaster had and still has on those involved. These incidents have long-lasting impacts not only on the body but also on the human psyche. Today is about those who lost their lives and those who have grieved over Granville, those who battled to save lives, those who struggled in silence, and those who were treated, in many cases, very poorly in the days and years that followed. Today is about finally saying sorry.

Most of us know about the disaster—the day when so many lives were cut short, the day that would become a horrible chapter not only in our State's history but also in that of our nation. Not long after the fortieth anniversary on that hot day in January earlier this year, I received a letter from a very kind and gentle man who lost his father in the disaster. I spoke to him on the phone. I will share with the House a bit of what he shared with me. It is a powerful letter which highlights the scale and the enduring nature of this tragedy. I was moved by the letter because it highlights that the families and survivors in particular were not given any psychological support after the disaster. I will quote part of the letter:

My father was 47 years of age at the time and had celebrated his 24th wedding anniversary with my mother the day before the accident.

My mother passed away in July 2015 aged 83. She spent 38 years in which a day did not pass that she did not miss and grieve for my father. Although she was never formally diagnosed, it was quite apparent that Mum suffered from depressive symptoms and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder for all those years. As have I.

I vividly recall my mother screaming and sobbing with distress during the nights (weeks, months and years) following the event. I cannot begin to describe to you how distressing this was (and the memory still is).

While obviously everybody's journey is different, that letter demonstrates what has occurred in terms of not providing support. The letter went on to note that perhaps one of the only good things to happen after this tragedy is that counselling support services are now recognised as essential following major disasters.

Unfortunately, this story is only one example of many which demonstrate the lasting impacts of Granville. Every person's story is different. I have heard stories of young boys who were jolted awake and raced through the night in police vehicles to be taken to the morgue to identify a loved one. A victim's son who was in a court hearing over compensation was asked by a lawyer: "What are you doing here? There is nothing in this for you." A letter from a man who helped in the rescue effort said: "I have carried the memories of what I saw that day in my head and my heart ever since."

Today we not only remember and face these stories; today we also right a wrong. I was truly saddened that this unimaginable grief, compounded by past mistakes, was never officially recognised in the Parliament of New South Wales. Today we stand here as leaders 40 years on, and to those who have had lasting impacts from the Granville train disaster, we say sorry. Meredith Knight, the secretary of the Granville Train Disaster Association, who lost her father in the tragedy, is here today. I am sure she will not mind me using her words:

... whilst the apology ... can never fully ameliorate the errors of the past, I believe that a modicum of justice has finally been given to the 83 who lost their lives.

For the loss of 83 precious lives, we say sorry. For the lack of compassion and due care in the following days, weeks, months and years, we say sorry. As Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, let me say this comes from a genuine place. I will finish with the words of another, again, in a letter I received after the fortieth anniversary. It reads:

Unfortunately, your apology cannot undo what has been done ... The impacts of that day have echoed down through the last 40 years, like a tsunami that never ends.

For that too, we say sorry.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (10:38): I join the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure in extending an apology to those who lost their lives, those who lost loved ones, those who were injured and those who were traumatised by their role in rescue efforts during the Granville train disaster, which is Australia's worst rail accident. On 18 January 1977 an eight-car passenger train derailed and collided with the Bold Street bridge, with the bridge collapsing on the third and fourth carriages, resulting in the deaths of 83 passengers and injuries to a further 213. It is a day no-one will forget. Everyone I know who lived in Granville then and still lives there today has a story to tell about where they were that day and the people they know who joined in the rescue efforts. It is part of the collective memory of the people of Granville, as well as that of the survivors, the emergency services workers and volunteers, and the families of those affected, many of whom were traumatised for years by their experience that day. To them we offer our deep and sincere apologies. This is long overdue, and for that we also apologise.

The crowded eight-car commuter train left Mount Victoria for the city at 6.09 a.m. As it was approaching Granville railway station, it left the rails and hit a row of supports of the overhead Bold Street bridge. The derailed engine and first two carriages passed the bridge, but the first carriage broke free from the other carriages. Carriage one was torn open when it collided with a severed mast beside the track, killing eight passengers. Less than 10 seconds later, with all its supports demolished, the 200-tonne concrete deck of the bridge collapsed onto the third and fourth carriages, crushing them and the passengers inside. Half of the passengers in those carriages were killed immediately, and several injured passengers were trapped in the train for hours with part of the bridge crushing their torso or limbs. Some had been conscious and talking to rescuers but died of crush syndrome soon after the weight was removed.

The community of Granville rallied to help those trapped in the wreckage, and for that all of us will be eternally grateful. Many people volunteered to assist; tradesmen brought their tools, and everyone did what they could. One such volunteer was Father Les Campion, who rushed from Holy Trinity Parish Church. He was the first religious minister to arrive, and he provided pastoral care on the scene to the many injured victims, including those trapped in the wreckage. In following years, Father Campion blessed the 83 roses laid at the scene on 18 January each year to remember the victims until he passed away. Every year the people of Granville join these commemorations. The Granville memorial wall contains the names of everyone killed in the disaster and ensures that they are not nameless people of the past. John Hennessey organised the commemoration for many years and he was instrumental in raising funds for the original memorial. He passed away last year, but I acknowledge his contribution and also that of the Granville Train Disaster Association and Cumberland Council in upgrading the memorial this year.

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the Granville train disaster, and it is a fitting occasion on which to offer this long overdue apology. While the Premier of the day, Neville Wran, wrote to the families of the deceased and personally apologised, it is fitting that the Parliament as a whole apologises for the loss of life and the lack of support offered to those deeply traumatised by the accident and the situation that gave rise to it. The apology reflects the responsibility of the New South Wales Government for rail maintenance and safety, which were woefully inadequate over many years leading up to the accident. Division Engineers warned in a letter of the dangers of a derailment in November 1975, stating that maintenance policies were "in need of urgent major reassessment". On the 8.10 a.m. train from Mount Victoria that day, according to Barry Gobbe, there was a faulty leading wheel which had been identified months earlier but which had not been replaced. It was left on to run for another 50,000 kilometres until it left the loose track that day, causing the derailment. It certainly was not the case that the drivers or staff were in any way responsible, as early reports had indicated. They, too, are survivors and they, too, deserve our apologies.

The community of survivors, rescuers and the families of those who lost their lives in the Granville train disaster share a special bond. Over time, many of them have come to know one another well, sharing the same grief and trauma. In recent years they have come together more frequently. Through their support for each other they have been able to bring others into their fold, with a number of survivors and those who lost their loved ones attending the commemoration for the first time this year. It has been too painful for many of them before now. This year I was touched to meet Paul Touzell, one of the survivors, and his good friend Noel Boys, who was with the ambulance service and was his rescuer that day. Paul was fortunate that his usual seat on the train was taken. He was standing when the bridge fell on his carriage and was trapped and injured. His injuries would have been worse had he been sitting. The person who sat in Paul's usual seat was killed. Paul was the first person treated at the scene. He met Noel that day, and through this awful traumatic experience they have become friends, forging a bond that has lasted 40 years.

This year, for the first time, the survivors group organised the commemoration. They did a wonderful job, led by Barry Gobbe, the first ambulance officer on the scene, and Meredith Knight, who lost her father

that day. It was a touching tribute, commencing with the names of the deceased being read out at 8.10 a.m., followed by a memorial service at St Marks Church and a formal memorial service at the memorial hall. They have campaigned for this apology, and it is fitting that today the New South Wales Parliament comes together to do so.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the motion of the Premier be agreed to. I ask members to carry the motion by standing in their places for a minute's silence.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

DISCOUNT RATE REDUCTION (MISCELLANEOUS ACTS AMENDMENT) BILL 2017

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 23 February 2017

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (10:46): I am happy to lead for the Government in debate on the Discount Rate Reduction (Miscellaneous Acts Amendment) Bill 2017. With the greatest respect to the shadow Minister and member for Cessnock, who introduced the bill, I believe that the issues involved in the bill are too important for a dangerous thought bubble from the Opposition to be passed by this House. Given that, the Government opposes the bill. Indeed, many of the flawed characteristics which were the focus of the campaign mounted about the Land and Property Information [LPI] concession and which were vigorously opposed by the Labor Party at the instigation of the member for Cessnock are in this bill. The member's heart must surely have fallen when he learnt earlier this week that his misinformation about the LPI concession was rejected by the Victorian Labor Government when it announced that it, too, would privatise its land titles registry.

It is unfortunate and embarrassing to be found to be wrong publicly, but it is even more cruel to be exposed by one's own team. No-one could suggest that the Victorian Labor Government has rejected the dishonest arguments about the concession as a result of party politics because it is doing exactly what the New South Wales Government has done with LPI. Had the New South Wales taxpayers listened to what the Labor Party said about the concession, they would have lost the huge premium that was gained by New South Wales being the first State in Australia to have entered into such a concession arrangement. If they had listened to members opposite, they would have lost billions of dollars of infrastructure funding.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: The House is debating the Discount Rate Reduction (Miscellaneous Acts Amendment) Bill, which has nothing to do with the Land and Property Information debate we had several months ago. Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask you to direct the Parliamentary Secretary to return to the leave of the bill.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: To the point of order: It is about the economic management or mismanagement in the ideas put forward by the Labor Opposition, of which this bill is only one. I am raising a question about the credibility and veracity of the economic arguments put forward.

Mr Clayton Barr: Further to the point of order: I am very happy for the member to address the economic veracity of the argument as it relates to the discount bill. In my contribution I raised a number of economic arguments about the discount rate bill. I am very happy for the member to address those but it has got nothing to do with LPI.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I am doing you slowly, old son. Do not worry.

Mr Clayton Barr: You cannot even make up your own stuff.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I am just warming up.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Newcastle will cease interjecting. He will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate. The member for Ku-ring-gai has the call. As the member for Ku-ring-gai is aware, second reading debates are broad ranging in nature. However, I ask him to return to the leave of the bill.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: The simple point I wish to make, and it does relate to the bill, is that just as the New South Wales taxpayers would have lost billions of dollars if they had listened to Labor on the LPI concession, they will also lose billions of dollars if they listen to Labor and pass this bill before the House. I will explain why that is the case. The member for Cessnock is a bit like a dalek in *Doctor Who*. He sees his role as simply exterminating anything of utility that the Government puts up. He really ought to have regard to the true merits of matters.

Mr Clayton Barr: You do not understand the economy. Just stick to the laws.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cessnock will cease interjecting. His interruptions are causing the member for Ku-ring-gai to retaliate.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I am returning fire. As a Hunter boy, I know that the member for Cessnock has been brought up in an environment of robust discussions. The real problem is that this bill again exposes why the member for Cessnock and his colleagues have some serious flaws in their understanding of financial matters. It further highlights that in opposition they are every bit as financially dangerous as they were when they were in government for 16 years. Labor still represents a significant financial risk which the New South Wales people cannot take.

Part of the problem is that, with the greatest respect to the member for Cessnock, in his limited life experience he has had no exposure to an understanding of financial markets. Just as it would be undesirable to stick me in front of a classroom, which is part of the former life of the member for Cessnock, it is certainly dangerous and undesirable to give him and the Labor Party any control over the multibillion-dollar economy of New South Wales, which is one of the 50 largest economies in the world. His history as a staffer, as a council employee and working for a not-for-profit organisation hardly provides him with great economic experience to understand the true magnitude and consequences of this bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Newcastle will cease interjecting. This is his final warning.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: If this bill were to be passed by Parliament, workers compensation insurance premiums paid by employers would increase. If this bill were passed, there would be no other consequence but for that to have a detrimental impact on jobs. If this bill were passed, it would increase green slip insurance premiums, which this Government has tried to reduce. If this bill were passed, it would increase the cost of home insurance because most home insurance policies contain an occupier's liability component. If this bill were passed, it would increase professional indemnity insurance taken out by professionals and the citizens of New South Wales would pay more when they see their doctors, their accountants, their lawyers, their surveyors, their building certifiers, their architects, or their builders.

If this bill were passed, it would increase costs to business through their directors and officer insurance premiums and it would increase the cost of their business interruption insurance. New South Wales residents would pay for the cost increases created by this bill indirectly every time they made a purchase of a good or a service. Labor might want to increase the cost of living for people in New South Wales but the Coalition certainly does not. I could read and re-read the second reading speech of the member for Cessnock but there is no real answer to these propositions.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: Have you read it?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Yes, I have. I know the member for Newcastle rarely reads anything, but I read the bills that come before this House. I read second reading speeches. I know that that is beyond the wit of the member for Newcastle, but I do my homework.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: It is good to hear that you are reading the legislation and not just attacking people's personal attributes.

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

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Although the member for Cessnock tried to dress this bill up as only impacting on personal injuries claims, it has a much broader impact on many more transactions in the community than simply those. The bill will cost taxpayers and premium holders across New South Wales more than \$1.5 billion, which cost would inevitably be passed on to consumers with every grocery purchase, every clothing purchase, every purchase of services and other transactions. The bill is an example of classic Labor: Announce a huge budget spend with no way to pay for it—that is the way those opposite operate. They do not understand the economy and financial transactions at all and this bill is a classic example of that. The bill seeks to reduce the prescribed discount rate in the Workers Compensation Act, the Civil Liability Act and the Motor Accidents Compensation Act, which, I hasten to add, is a piece of legislation that has been changed recently by this Parliament, and this bill does not address it.

The bill seeks to change the discount rate to 3 per cent from 5 per cent. A court awarded lump sum payment for future economic loss essentially brings forward a series of future payments into the equivalent of a lump sum payment awarded at the time of a court determination or a settlement. In order to convert the future income stream into a current equivalent, a discount rate is applied to the future payments to adjust for the difference between investment earnings between the time of the award and the time when those future payments would have been obtained. It is called a discount for the present value of a future income stream. It is a common

step taken in legal proceedings throughout this State every day that the courts sit in every week of the year. The bill also seeks to remove the ability of the government of the day to prescribe the discount rate via regulation. As I have already said, the changes in this bill would affect legislation covering workers compensation, and motor accidents and civil liability through the setting of the discount rate. It concerns section 15J of the Workers Compensation Act and section 127 of the former Motor Accidents Compensation Act 1999 for the application of a discount rate where another rate has not been prescribed by regulation.

Discount rates are not unique to motor accidents or workers compensation schemes, as I have already said. Section 14 of the Civil Liability Act 2002 also provides for the application of a discount rate of 5 per cent where another rate has not been prescribed by regulation. The 5 per cent discount rate is based on longer-term expectations around market conditions, and is consistent with other Australian jurisdictions—most of which use discount rates of between 5 per cent and 6 per cent. All other jurisdictions in Australia that prescribe a rate in legislation or regulations have a rate of 5 per cent or more. For example, Queensland uses a discount rate of 5 per cent, while Victoria and Western Australia use 6 per cent. The Australian Capital Territory does not prescribe a rate, and therefore relies on the common law position set out by the High Court in its decision in *Todorovic v Waller* [1981] 150 CLR 402, which determined that a rate of 3 per cent is appropriate.

While the rate could be perceived as high, based on current rates and the extended period that interest rates have remained low, as a long-term view the 5 per cent rate is an appropriate value. At this point I will recap, from the second reading speech, the supposed justification for reducing the rate from 5 per cent to 2 per cent.

Mr Clayton Barr: Three per cent.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Three per cent, I am sorry.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: He keeps getting it wrong; he doesn't know what it is.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Settle down, old son. I know that you are signing letters. You are barely literate, but settle down.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Perhaps the member for Newcastle is hard of hearing. I have called him to order four times in this debate.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: The justification for the proposed reduction in the rate from 5 per cent to 3 per cent as stated by the member for Cessnock, according to the *Hansard* of 23 February 2017, is:

Can you spot the problem? The problem is that no-one anywhere in this country, or globally, can realise a 5 per cent interest rate in today's market.

No-one has been able to get 5 per cent since 2010, since the global financial crisis. The 10-year government bond rate today, as we debate, is set at just 2.61 per cent. The experts have determined that no-one will get anywhere near 5 per cent interest in the foreseeable future.

That statement exposes the lack of real-life financial experience or other business experience of the member for Cessnock. If he had any knowledge of how the litigation process operates and how clients who obtain lump-sum awards operate, he would understand. Typically, they obtain some financial advice as to how to deal with their lump sum award. Average people are not advised to invest all of a lump sum in government bonds. Government bonds provide the absolutely lowest rate of return that one can obtain. It is a risk-free rate of return, and it provides the lowest rate of return. Very low risk returns are available that are much higher than the government bond rate.

I will provide a few examples of the current rates of return on blue-chip Australian shares. People who invest in blue-chip Australian shares do not have any currency risk that would be involved in investing in overseas shares. For Commonwealth Bank shares the estimated yield, including franking credits, is 6.4 per cent. The estimated yield, including franking credits, on Telstra shares is 9.4 per cent currently. The estimated yield on Westpac shares, including franking credits, is 7.1 per cent and the estimated yield on Wesfarmers shares—the owner of Coles supermarkets and other businesses—is 5.9 per cent. So not only is the justification for the reduction in the rate from 5 per cent to 3 per cent proposed by this bill dubious to say the least, but also the impact of such a change would be significant.

Advice from the scheme actuaries is that any reduction in the discount rate percentage would result in significant premium increases. That is advice from people who are expert in this area, not a thought bubble from the member for Cessnock. It should be said that no State or Territory government that has turned its mind to this issue, and changed the common law position from *Todorovic v Waller*, has done what the member for Cessnock proposes. Not one government in any jurisdiction in Australia that has passed legislation with regard to the rate of return in this area has done what the member for Cessnock is proposing. He is proposing a rate of return that goes back to the 1950s. He is proposing a rate of return that is entirely out of touch with modern circumstances and what governments around Australia have done in relation to this matter. That shows the barren thought process

that operates within the Labor Opposition on these matters. It flies completely in the face of the advice of actuaries and the people who are expert in this area.

Actuaries estimate that the impact on green slip premiums of reducing the discount rate to 3 per cent would be an increase of between \$50 and \$80 per policy. That is the magnitude of the increase for motorists in New South Wales. As the member for Cessnock noted in his second reading speech, this is a complex area, and pricing can be difficult, particularly if changes like those contained in this bill are thrust upon insurers. The bill will not only increase costs for motorists through comprehensive third party [CTP] insurance and for businesses through workers compensation increases, but also increase costs for doctors, hospitals and businesses through impacts on medical malpractice and public liability insurance. The member for Cessnock needs to understand that the changes will cause loss through future business interruption and future economic loss outside personal injury cases. The 5 per cent rate strikes an appropriate balance between supporting injured workers, motorists and others, and keeping green slips, workers compensation, medical malpractice, public liability and other insurance premiums affordable.

Changing the provisions as per the proposed bill would have a significant impact on premium costs for each scheme outlined in the bill. The scheme actuaries have estimated this would be in the range of \$50 to \$80 per CTP policy, \$45 million to \$70 million per annum in premiums for the nominal insurer—noting that the current premium pool is approximately \$2.1 billion—and an increase of \$155 million to \$257 million in public liability, medical malpractice and other insurance products governed by the Civil Liabilities Act. Changing the discount rate to 3 per cent will have an impact on the State budget of \$920 million to \$1.52 billion based on the impact on workers compensation, CTP claims and civil liability claims.

The Government recently passed historic reform of the State's compulsory third party green slip scheme through the New South Wales Parliament, delivering premium reductions of more than \$120 on average to citizens across New South Wales. The bill seeks to undo almost all of those premium reductions by further inflating the cost of lump sum compensation claims under the scheme. CTP insurers are covered by an insurance industry deed that requires the Government to pay damages to each insurer of an amount sufficient to fully fund the increased liability caused by legislation or regulation retrospectively applied, which is adverse to insurers. The direct cost to taxpayers of this bill, if passed, would amount to \$525 million to \$875 million—that is between half a billion dollars to more than a quarter of a billion dollars.

Clearly, those opposite need to be reminded why we needed to reform the scheme. Put simply, the old CTP scheme was seriously broken. The adversarial nature of the scheme meant that only 6 per cent of benefits were paid out in the first year and 22 per cent were paid out in the second year. The majority of payments to injured road users did not start flowing until years three, four and five. Injured road users received only 45¢ in every green slip dollar, with the balance being subsumed in costs. This is systematic of a grossly inefficient scheme. Compensation delayed is compensation denied, and the delay under the former scheme was denying people compensation. Under the new scheme, 55 per cent of benefits will be paid in year one and 56 per cent by year two. In simple terms, this means that people injured on our roads will receive better payments faster so they can focus on rehabilitation and return to good health, rather than being left out of pocket while a protracted dispute between lawyers and insurers takes place.

Under the reforms, 57 per cent of premium dollars will go to injured people, of which 65 per cent will be paid to those people with more serious injuries. It should be noted that under the new scheme claims for economic loss can also be made where dependants of the deceased can prove another driver was at fault. The new scheme also retains access to modified common law damages for injured people who can establish another driver was at fault and do not have soft tissue or minor psychological injuries. This means people with injuries less than or equal to 10 per cent whole of person impairment will continue to be able to make a claim under common law for economic loss. Those with injuries above 10 per cent whole of person impairment will be able to make claims for economic loss as well as pain and suffering. The cap for non-economic loss payments for pain and suffering will be \$521,000, which is the current cap under the existing scheme and is indexed. It should be stressed that such a person with ongoing needs will remain entitled to defined medical and care expenses for life, if needed.

The Government is committed to ensure that compulsory third party insurance remains affordable for all motorists—in contrast to the Labor Party, which is the party of higher premiums, budget blowouts and poor economic management. The bill has an estimated impact on green slip premiums of between \$50 and \$80 per policy—which is \$50 to \$80 ripped from every motorist in New South Wales. With regard to workers compensation, nothing emphasises the difference between the two parties more than the management of the workers compensation scheme. The Baird-Grant Government fixed Labor's bankrupt scheme and returned it to solvency. This Government is continuing those changes and is providing generous support to the most seriously injured workers. After 16 years of Labor, the Government inherited a scheme that was more than \$4 billion in deficit, businesses were facing a premium hike of 28 per cent and 12,000 jobs were at risk. New South Wales had

one of the worst return-to-work rates in the country, and most seriously injured workers were not getting the support they needed. In other words, the workers compensation scheme was failing on all fronts.

Compare that scheme with the one we have today. It has improved the return-to-work rate, reduced business premiums by 17 per cent and its reforms have delivered benefits for the business community and workers across the State. That is just one reason that this Government is known in New South Wales and across the nation as the Government of the worker. This bill is quintessentially New South Wales Labor. It seeks to undo all the solid economic reform undertaken by this Government and to ensure that consumers, businesses, taxpayers and premium holders pay more. Only a Liberal-Nationals Government has the commercial nous to understand the impact of Labor's reckless thought bubbles. Only a Liberal-Nationals Government can be trusted to manage our economy properly to ensure that jobs are retained and the cost of living is kept as low as possible. Through strong economic management only a Liberal-Nationals Government can ensure that the classrooms, hospitals, roads and transport services needed in this State are provided for our citizens. I urge in the best interests of our State that the reckless thought bubble of a Labor financial atrocity, as represented by this bill, does not pass through this Parliament.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:16): I speak in debate on the Discount Rate Reduction (Miscellaneous Acts Amendment) Bill 2017, which was introduced by the member for Cessnock. At the outset, let me say that the member for Cessnock is not a bad guy. He is a nice young bloke and I think he means well.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Did you say young?

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: I did. I am being generous—in all respects. I will start in a generous mood because I think the member for Cessnock is genuinely looking to solve what he perceives to be a problem. That is the way he sees it. But I think he has totally misunderstood or misrepresented the scenario. I will quote from his second reading speech to help make the illustration. The member outlined how he saw the problem being analogous to a one-day cricket match. In his second reading speech, he said:

Those who know anything about compound interest or financial growth or graphs and charts will know that if one path is set at 5 per cent and a second path is set at 2.61 per cent then from day one there is a gap. As the lines advance across the chart, over the years the gap between the two gets larger. The gap amount can never be recovered. The lines will not catch up ... In sporting terms, imagine a cricket match where one team bats for 20 overs at a run rate of five and another team bats for 20 overs at a run rate of 2.61. After the 20 overs, one team has 100 runs and the other team has just 52. The gap is 48. Imagine if that cricket match went on for 40 overs instead of 20. The gap grows and grows. After 40 overs the gap is 96. This is an area of expertise for me. I have watched a few cricket matches over the years—indeed, probably too many if you ask my wife. But in all the one-day cricket matches I have watched over many years I do not remember one where, from start to finish, there was a constant run rate. If anybody can tell me of an example, I will be only too happy to note it because that is one for the cricket tragi-comics. In fact, it is pretty typical of run rates to vary throughout the course of a game. Similarly, in the world of economics it is not unusual for interest rates to vary over time. In fact, my memory goes back—probably too far—to some great cricket matches in the early days of the one-day format, when players were still learning how to play it properly. The openers would start slowly. The early batsmen played very correct, Test cricket-style innings and left it to batsmen later in the innings to up the tempo. When somebody like Adam Gilchrist started his career, he did not open the batting; he came in at about number seven. The top four, five or six batsmen would go along in a fairly pedestrian fashion.

Mr Clayton Barr: 2.61.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: Or 2.61, as the member for Cessnock suggests. Adam Gilchrist would come in and smash the ball to all parts of the park and blow the run rate off the chart. That was how it was done in the early days of one-day cricket. At the end of the 50 overs, the run rate could be dramatically different from what had been set in the early stages. We have seen the game evolve and players now try to lift the run rate at the start of the innings, in the first 15 overs and at various other points. Indeed, the rules have changed to allow the tempo to be upped at different times. But the point remains: The run rate varies and we have to look at the whole innings, the entire spread of time, to make sense of what is the run rate in one-day cricket.

Similarly, we have to look at the long term to work out what is a typical return on investment over an extended period. In his second reading speech, the member for Cessnock used the example of a person who was aged 45 and who therefore needed 20 years of income replacement if severely injured until he reached retirement age at 65. Twenty years is not an unreasonable time frame because we would expect, with the ebb and flow of interest rates and market movements over that period, to get a reasonable understanding of what the rate of return ought to look like. So I did that. I went back to 1997 to see what the Australian 10-year bond rate was at any particular time since the beginning of January 1997.

Mr Clayton Barr: I did 30 years.

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY: The member for Cessnock did 30 years; that is good. In my limited 20-year research, I found that, in the 245 months from the beginning of January 1997 until now, for 121 months the rate of the 10-year bond was between 5 per cent and 6 per cent; for 45 months, it was more than 6 per cent; and for eight months it was more than 7 per cent. For only 71 months during that time was it less than 5 per cent. In fact,

if we look at the 20-year period then the very basis of the member for Cessnock's case is eroded. There is no issue if we take the long-term view—as governments should, and do. There is simply no foundation for the member's assertion that the run rate is not good enough.

Therefore, it is totally irresponsible to risk hundreds of millions, perhaps billions, of dollars of taxpayers' money by changing legislation based on a flawed premise. It is simply not good enough, as the member for Ku-ring-gai said, to react to a thought bubble—and that is what this bill is. That is why State governments around the country typically have reduction rates of 5 per cent or 6 per cent, because the long-term view suggests that that is a realistic and sensible rate. The Australian Government 10-year bond historical data shows it to be so, and we know that is a risk-free investment. It is the base line. Better returns are available, but it is the risk-free base line.

Sadly, the bill would be damaging to the finances of the people of New South Wales. It would undercut the Government's ability to provide services for the people of New South Wales—the facilities and benefits they need—because we would be frittering away money. The member for Ku-ring-gai outlined some of the costs involved. We would incur an average increase of \$50 to \$80 on every compulsory third party [CTP] policy. It would mean an increase of \$45 million to \$70 million per annum in premiums for the nominal insurer, which would have to be met, and an increase of \$155 million to \$257 million in public liability, medical malpractice and other insurance products governed by the Civil Liabilities Act. In total, changing the discount rate to 3 per cent would have an impact on the State budget of between \$920 million and \$1.52 billion, based on the impact of workers compensation, CTP claims and civil liability. It would be absolutely irresponsible of us to countenance that on the basis of a flawed premise—a premise that says the scoring of your stodgy opening batsman is the best run rate you can achieve. That is not the case.

We, as a government, must take the long-term view. We understand that interest rates are low at present, but history tells us that they will be high at other times. The proposal from the member for Cessnock reminds me of the old Mr Magoo television cartoon—which he is probably too young to remember. The catchcry was, "Oh, Mr Magoo, you've done it again". In this case, the member for Cessnock has done it again. Mr Magoo was hopeless at driving; he could not see what he was doing. The member for Cessnock is proposing that we drive using the view from the rear-vision mirror—looking in the rear-vision mirror to see what interest rates have been in the past five or six years, not what they will be in the future. Of course, by not looking far enough ahead the member for Cessnock is driving without his glasses—he is terribly short-sighted, like Mr Magoo. He cannot see the long-term view; he only sees the short term. If he drives the economy, he will leave a trail of destruction wherever he goes—just like Mr Magoo in the cartoon. As a Government, and as a Parliament, we would be wise not to accept this sort of proposal and not to waste taxpayers' money. We must defend the bottom line so that we can provide the services, facilities and support that the community of New South Wales needs.

Visitors

VISITORS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I call the Parliamentary Secretary and member for Drummoyne, I warmly welcome to the gallery members of a delegation from the Maharashtra State Legislature of India, who are visiting Parliament House to sign a memorandum of understanding with the New South Wales Parliament later today. The delegation is led jointly by the Hon. Shri Ramraje Naik-Nimbalkar, Chairman of the Legislative Council, and the Hon. Shri Haribhau Bagade, Speaker, Maharashtra Legislative Assembly. I extend a very warm welcome to you on behalf of all members and the New South Wales Parliament.

Bills

DISCOUNT RATE REDUCTION (MISCELLANEOUS ACTS AMENDMENT) BILL 2017

Second Reading

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (11:27): I state outright that the Government will oppose the Discount Rate Reduction (Miscellaneous Acts Amendment) Bill 2017. The bill will cost taxpayers and premium holders across New South Wales something in the vicinity of \$1.52 billion. As the member for Ku-ring-gai said earlier, the bill is a Labor classic—and we have seen some classics in our six years in government. The bill seeks to reduce the prescribed discount rate in the Workers Compensation Act 1987, the Civil Liability Act 2002 and Motor Accidents Compensation Act 1999 to 3 per cent from 5 per cent. A court-awarded lump sum payment for future economic loss essentially brings forward a series of future payments into an equivalent lump sum payment. In order to convert the future payments into a current equivalent, a discount rate is applied to the future payments to adjust for the difference between investment earnings and future inflation if the claimant invested the lump sum today. That was articulated quite comprehensively by the member for Ku-ring-gai.

The bill also seeks to remove the ability of the government of the day to prescribe the discount rates via regulation. As was also mentioned earlier, that has not been seen anywhere in this country before. The changes in the bill will affect legislation covering workers compensation, and motor accidents and civil liability through the setting of the discount rate at 5 per cent, unless prescribed by regulation. Obviously, the bill seeks to reduce that rate to 3 per cent. Section 151J of the Workers Compensation Act 1987 and section 127 of the Motor Accidents Compensation Act 1999 provide for the application of a discount rate of 5 per cent where another rate has not been prescribed by regulation.

Discount rates are not unique to the motor accidents or workers compensation schemes. Section 14 of the Civil Liability Act 2002 also provides for the application of a discount rate of 5 per cent where another rate has not been prescribed by regulation. The 5 per cent discount rate is based on longer term expectations around market conditions and is consistent with other Australian jurisdictions, most of which use discount rates of between 5- and 6 per cent. All other personal injury jurisdictions in Australia that have prescribed a rate in their legislation or regulations have a rate of 5 per cent or more. For example, Queensland uses a discount rate of 5 per cent, while Victoria and Western Australia use 6 per cent. The Australian Capital Territory does not prescribe a rate and relies on the position of the High Court as outlined in a number of cases.

While the rate could be perceived as high based on current interest rates and on the extended period that interest rates have remained low, as a long-term view the 5 per cent rate is an appropriate value. Advice from the scheme actuaries is that any reduction in the discount rate percentage would result in significant premium increases. The estimated impact on green slip premiums of reducing the discount rate to 3 per cent would be an increase of between \$50 and \$80 per policy, an increase in cost for motorists in New South Wales.

As the member for Cessnock has noted in his second reading speech, this is a complex area and pricing is and can be difficult, particularly if changes like those contained in this bill are thrust upon insurers. Not only is the bill seeking to increase costs for motorists through compulsory third party [CTP] increases and businesses through workers compensation increases, it will increase costs for doctors, hospitals and businesses through impacts on medical malpractice and public liability. The 5 per cent rate is an appropriate balance between supporting injured workers and motorists and keeping green slips, workers compensation, medical malpractice and public liability premiums affordable. Changing the provisions as per the proposed bill would have a significant impact on premium costs for each scheme outlined in the bill.

The scheme actuaries have estimated that this would be in the range of \$50 to \$80 per CTP policy; \$45 million to \$70 million per annum in premiums for the nominal insurer, noting that the current premium pool is approximately \$2.1 billion; and an increase of \$155 million to \$257 million in public liability, medical malpractice and other insurance products governed by the Civil Liabilities Act. Changing the discount rate to 3 per cent would have an impact on the State budget of \$920 million to \$1.52 billion based on the impact on workers compensation, CTP claims and civil liability. The Government will oppose this bill.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (11:32): I speak in the debate on the Discount Rate Reduction (Miscellaneous Acts Amendment) Bill 2017 to support my colleagues on the Government benches in opposing this bill. However, I acknowledge the efforts of the member for Cessnock to make changes in discount rates. As members have heard, the bill seeks to amend certain legislation to reduce the discount rate on an award of damages for future economic loss from 5 per cent to 3 per cent. Discount rates are used to reduce damages for future economic loss by a certain percentage, given that the plaintiff has benefited for early receipt of future moneys that may be invested and earn interest. The use of the discount rate is therefore important in determining how much is to be paid in order to compensate for amounts that would be received in the future.

The personal injury jurisdictions in Australia that have prescribed a rate in their legislation or regulations have a rate of 5 per cent or more. The current discount rate in New South Wales is also consistent with other Australian jurisdictions, most of which use discount rates of between 5- and 6 per cent. Changing the provision as per the proposed bill would have a significant impact on premium costs for each scheme outlined in the bill. The scheme actuaries have estimated that this would be in the range of \$50 to \$80 per compulsory third party [CTP] policy, or \$45 million to \$70 million per annum in premiums for the nominal insurer, noting that the current pool is approximately \$2.1 billion. There would be an increase of \$155 million to \$257 million in public liability, medical malpractice and insurance products governed by the Civil Liabilities Act.

The key risk associated with this position is the public perception of disadvantaging injured workers, motorists and those injured under civil liability by not reducing the discount rate. No other jurisdiction is undertaking or planning to undertake a review of the discount rates. I ask the Opposition to consider some impacts on the State budget. The member is advocating a cost to the State budget in the order of \$1 billion or more. This change in the rules would expose the Government to significant costs, with increases in the liabilities of the Treasury Managed Fund for workers compensation and medical malpractice of hundreds of millions of dollars.

If this bill were passed, the Government would be liable to pay the CTP insurer for the fully funded value of the estimated increase in liabilities. This would amount to somewhere between \$500 million and \$800 million.

We are looking to reduce the cost of living for the people of New South Wales. That is why we have reformed the CTP to reduce the cost of premiums by \$120 on average statewide—\$180 in the Sydney metropolitan areas, \$75 in Wollongong and Newcastle and \$50 in country New South Wales. We on this side of the Chamber oppose this bill, but I do commend the member for Cessnock for his interest in this area.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:35): In reply: I thank the member for Wollondilly, the member for Drummoyne, the member for Riverstone and the member for Ku-ring-gai for their contributions to the debate on the Discount Rate Reduction (Miscellaneous Acts Amendment) Bill 2017. I know the member for Wollondilly and the member for Drummoyne cut short their contributions so that we can finish debate on this bill today. This is an important bill and it is appropriate that it is before the House now.

In the past six years, interest rates have been at record lows. One of the arguments put by those opposite in opposing this bill is that other States have not adjusted their discount rates. I put it to Government members that part of claiming to be the number one State in Australia is about setting the pace, setting the terms and setting the agenda. The reason this bill is before the House before any other State has changed its discount rates is that I am trying to set the lead for the other States. I believe the discount rate I propose in this bill is reasonable and fair. The discount rate needs to be fair. It needs to be fit for purpose, and not fit for a budget.

Earlier today the Premier moved a motion to apologise to the families affected by the Granville train disaster. It was an entirely appropriate and solemn apology, and during contributions to debate on the motion I believe there was not a dry eye in the Chamber. We should imagine if those who survived the Granville train disaster had been entitled to a lump sum payment today. Effectively we would be saying to those people that even though we know interest rates on investments at the moment are about 2.5 per cent, we will pretend that interest rates are 5 per cent and therefore adjust the lump sum payment accordingly. That would be inherently unfair.

There was the recent tragic shooting of Curtis Cheng outside the NSW Police Force headquarters in Parramatta. He took a bullet to the head and died instantly. Had he survived, he would have suffered enormous brain trauma and would have been entitled under workers compensation to a lump sum payment. Despite today's economic conditions, he and his family would have been told that although we know interest rates on investments are nowhere near 5 per cent, we would pretend that that was the interest rate and therefore would make a 5 per cent deduction from the lump sum payment. The reality is that Mr Cheng's family would only get an interest rate of around 2.5 per cent on investing the lump sum.

These are the very real life experiences that this bill aims to tackle. We should not sit in this Chamber, where we are safe and uninjured, and pretend that we can get an interest rate on investments of 5 per cent and therefore the discount rate in New South Wales is appropriate. I have just given two very sharp examples of the effect that this would have on people's lives. We in our hearts know that the discount rate is not appropriate or satisfactory. Let me put the other side of the argument. Every single member of the Government who made a contribution talked about the increase to compulsory third party insurance [CTP], workers compensation and civil liabilities insurance. If it is so important to not drive up the price of CTP or workers compensation by \$70 or \$80 per annum, the same logic should apply and the discount rate should be shifted to 7 per cent to save another \$80, or to 9 per cent to save another \$80. That would save billions of dollars on the State budget bottom line. However, that 7 per cent or 9 per cent are as much a fantasy as is 5 per cent.

If the bottom line is all anyone cares about, we can make it any number we like. We can probably save hundreds of dollars by shifting the discount rate to 20 per cent, but we all know that that would not be fit for purpose—and nor is 9 per cent, 7 per cent or 5 per cent. A 5 per cent discount is not fit for the purpose it is intended, which is to assist an injured person, such as those injured in a tragic train accident or someone being attacked because of where they work.

A fit-for-purpose discount rate must reflect the interest rate and investment rate of the next 10 years, as per government bonds, and of the last six years since the global financial crisis. That is a 16-year window when the discount rate of 5 per cent is pure fantasy. A discount rate of 3 per cent is much more appropriate. I referred in my speech to a number of actuarial accounts and specifically to the High Court ruling of 1983 which set the discount rate at 3 per cent, which was 10 per cent lower than Australia's then interest rate. If that negative 10 per cent was applied today, a positive interest rate of 7 per cent would be applied to a lump sum. We have to follow the logic.

I warned Government members not to use future actuarial assessments because of their difficult and complex nature and that many people had already tried this method. I also indicated that I had gone to the insurers and asked for projections from their actuaries. As I informed the House, the actuaries of the various insurance

companies gave me an enormous range of projected future costs and implications. It is about being fit for purpose, the purpose being to help those who are injured. If we do not have a rate that is fit for purpose, one wonders why we have it at all. We cannot imagine that the global financial crisis did not happen.

This incredibly serious bill has been dismissed by the Government. I do not know whether that is because of my personality or my perceived lack of economic integrity or simply because it comes from the Opposition. This is an incredibly important piece of legislation that needs to be addressed by this Government and, indeed, by any State government in power today, Labor, Liberal or other. The discount rate needs to be changed. I commend the bill to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes32
Noes50
Majority.....18

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Dib, Mr J
Harris, Mr D
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
Mihailuk, Ms T
Parker, Mr J
Smith, Ms T F
Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Haylen, Ms J
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McDermott, Dr H
Minns, Mr C
Robertson, Mr J
Tesch, Ms L
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Daley, Mr M
Greenwich, Mr A
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
Mehan, Mr D
Park, Mr R
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Donato, Mr P
George, Mr T
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Johnsen, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Provest, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Aplin, Mr G
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Davies, Ms T
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Kean, Mr M
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M
Piccoli, Mr A
Roberts, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

Ayres, Mr S
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Hazzard, Mr B
Humphries, Mr K
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Piper, Mr G
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

PAIRS

Finn, Ms J
Foley, Mr L
Harrison, Ms J
Zangari, Mr G

Berejiklian, Ms G
Grant, Mr T
Hancock, Mrs S
Lee, Dr G

Motion negatived.

PUBLIC HEALTH AMENDMENT (REGISTERED NURSES IN NURSING HOMES) BILL 2016**First Reading**

Bill received from the Legislative Council, introduced and read a first time.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I advise the House that the Speaker has received a written authority from the Hon. Robert Brown, MLC, advising that the member for Orange will have carriage of the bill in the Legislative Assembly.

I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a future day.

*Motions***HEART HEALTH**

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (11:52): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises that advances in diagnosis, clinical care and treatment have substantially reduced heart disease mortality.
- (2) Commends the foresight of the Premier's priority to reduce obesity rates of children by 5 per cent over 10 years.
- (3) Supports the Government-funded community health campaigns such as "Make Healthy Normal" to encourage families to be more active and to eat healthier.

This year the Heart Foundation's Heart Week runs from 30 April until 6 May. The focus of this year's Heart Week is the importance of diagnosing and treating high blood pressure—which is often evident in this place. Six million adult Australians have high blood pressure, which can lead to a heart attack, a stroke and kidney disease. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in New South Wales and Australia. It was responsible for one in every eight deaths in 2015, and 30 per cent of mortality in this State. This condition places considerable burdens on the health system in terms of costs in inpatient and outpatient services. It also causes disability, loss of income and reduced quality of life.

The good news is that high blood pressure can be controlled through simple lifestyle modifications. The number of cases and the rate of cardiovascular disease-related deaths has declined substantially over the past three decades as a result of the many advances that have been made in diagnosis and treatment of this very debilitating disease. However, it remains a serious concern because it is estimated that we may still be losing up to 26 lives each day in New South Wales as a result of this disease. When someone has a heart attack they experience a sudden blockage in a coronary artery. The blood supply to part of the heart muscle is stopped, and that can be fatal. Any delay in getting treatment is likely to result in further damage as the heart muscle starts to die.

The State Cardiac Reperfusion Strategy, which has strong partnerships between clinicians and NSW Ambulance, has been implemented. This strategy aims to restore healthy blood flow to the heart muscle in as brief a time as possible, which reduces the likelihood that the heart muscle will die. The strategy includes a number of models that involve timely ECG transmission, expert interpretation training for paramedics, and speedy access to appropriate treatment. All these actions can occur in the field or while the patient is being transferred to a hospital. However, getting rapid and appropriate medical care is dependent on patients knowing that they may be having a heart attack and recognising the need to seek urgent medical help.

The Heart Foundation campaign aims to inform people about the warning signs of a heart attack so that they are able to recognise the symptoms and seek urgent treatment. NSW Health's Better Value Healthcare initiative is driving further improvements in the delivery of care. Hospitals throughout the State are commencing clinical audits to identify other areas in which we can improve care and deliver evidence-based treatment to further reduce unnecessary deaths. However, reducing heart disease requires more than timely treatment. The key focus of the New South Wales health system is to provide effective, efficient and evidence-based safe and high-quality health services and a range of preventative initiatives.

The Premier's priority aims to reduce overweight and obesity rates in children by 5 per cent over 10 years through strategic and coordinated investment across agencies and sectors to change environments and to support individuals to achieve and to maintain a healthy weight. This will help us to avoid preventable chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy supports the work of the Premier's priority to reduce the number of overweight people and childhood obesity. The strategy aims to encourage the people of New South Wales to make healthy lifestyle choices and to be supported in those choices by health-focused planning, built environments and transport initiatives, and improved access to healthier food and improved food labelling.

The problem of childhood obesity cannot be solved by the health system alone. The New South Wales Government will drive partnerships with key stakeholders to support children and young people to achieve and to maintain a healthy weight throughout their lives. The Government is enhancing the Make Healthy Normal social marketing campaign with new messages for families that focus on healthy eating and active living. The Government is also supporting general practitioners and other health professionals to identify children above a healthy weight and to refer them to appropriate programs. It is also supporting schools in implementing the new Healthy School Canteen Strategy in all government schools and the menu labelling initiative to help people to make lower kilojoule choices when eating out. It is also developing guidelines for the planning, design and development of healthy built environments, which we know influence a family's ability to live healthy lives.

All these initiatives help in lowering the risk factors that lead to cardiac disease. As I said, there are no silver bullets to solve any problem of this nature. Therefore, it is important that we implement every possible initiative, whether it be through government strategies to promote healthy living, the collating of survey information and feedback data to improve services, or better training. It is important that during Heart Week all of us from both sides of politics can bring such an important issue to the forefront of community awareness. Education is always a great way to enlighten people and highlight problems.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (11:59): I thank the member for Drummoyne for raising this important issue and for its timeliness, given it is Heart Week. From 30 April to 6 May, the Heart Foundation has been pumping out its message: Get your blood pressure checked. This year the Heart Foundation has joined forces with Alzheimer's Australia to help people understand that high blood pressure is not only bad for your heart but it is also a significant risk factor for dementia. High and untreated blood pressure is the main determinant of the onset of dementia.

I cannot imagine that there is anyone in this place who does not know someone or who has not lost someone close to them to heart disease or dementia. Quite frankly, the statistics are frightening and they are getting worse. The statistics in the Hunter are particularly shocking. Cardiovascular disease prevalence is 100 per cent higher in the Hunter than in the Sydney central business district. I learnt that this week and I find that completely shocking. The Hunter Valley had the fourth highest number of heart-related hospital admissions in New South Wales. Across the State, the average rate of heart disease related admissions per 10,000 people is 44.8 but the Hunter recorded an average of 58.8 admissions. Of those Hunter residents who presented to hospital with heart disease, 33 per cent were obese, 12 per cent were smokers and 51 per cent were insufficiently active.

In December last year I had the opportunity to speak at the Heart Foundation morning tea in Newcastle. It was wonderful to join local researchers, clinicians and supporters to learn more about the Heart Foundation's valuable contribution and work in the Hunter. Five Heart Foundation research grants had recently been awarded to University of Newcastle researchers on topics from stroke recovery to reducing smoking among Aboriginal women. I am pleased to report that that particular study on reducing smoking among Aboriginal women has since led to international collaboration with the Mayo Clinic in the United States of America and is another example of the tremendous research being undertaken in the Hunter by the University of Newcastle and the Hunter Medical Research Institute.

I am happy, as is the New South Wales Opposition, to support any investment in making our communities stronger, more active and healthier. I look forward to hearing good things about the Make Healthy Normal campaign. It is clear from the statistics on cardiovascular disease in our communities and from speaking with researchers that the Government can do more. It is widely understood that there is a need for a holistic approach to turn the statistics around. The peak bodies and stakeholders recognise how important this is, as evidenced at this week's Heart Foundation function in Parliament House. It was heartening to see the Heart Foundation and Alzheimer's Australia partnering in their messaging this week. It was also great to see representatives from other stakeholders and peak health bodies in the room.

As is often the case, the Government can take a lot of lessons from non-government organisations, peak bodies and advocates who work tirelessly to make a difference on the ground. They are working together; they are seeing what makes a difference, and the Government departments must do the same. It is not necessarily good enough to spend a billion dollars on a new stadium when school playgrounds are too cramped for students to run around. It is not good enough to spend \$17 billion on one new road when public transport reliability in the Hunter has gone backwards. It is not good enough when transport planners are told to ignore public transport, focus on roads and leave cycleways and active transport options as an afterthought.

High quality public health campaigns are to be applauded but they cannot work in isolation from inclusive city planning, active transport being taken seriously and reliable public transport. In an effort to tackle the shocking prevalence of heart disease in the Hunter, the Heart Foundation has partnered with other organisations to propose the CycleSafe Network, which is a 90-kilometre network of shared pathways. This is a practical measure which would see people becoming more active throughout the Hunter. It goes to the crux of the issue that we need to

address and it is another example of stakeholders forming partnerships to propose real solutions that could make a real difference.

Whilst a goal to reduce obesity is worthy, practical and tangible, projects are needed to really tackle this issue. People need to be supported to eat healthily and become more active in their daily lives. I urge the Government to look at the CycleSafe Network as one practical piece of a larger puzzle that could change people's lives for the better. In this Heart Week the take-home message for us all is: What is good for your heart is good for your brain. The action item is this: Get your blood pressure checked and take advice from your health practitioner. I commend the motion.

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (12:05): I thank the member for Drummoyne for bringing this important notice of motion to the attention of the House. Advances in diagnosis, clinical care and treatment have substantially reduced heart disease mortality. The State Cardiac Reperfusion Strategy assists people to receive the best possible care in the shortest possible time. The faster the treatment is provided, the better the patient outcomes will be. Clinicians are constantly looking at ways to improve care. Initiatives such as NSW Health's Better Value Healthcare assists medical staff to identify ways we can further improve healthcare delivery. Additionally, the Ministry of Health is coordinating a whole-of-government approach to meet the Premier's target to reduce childhood overweight and obesity by 5 per cent in 10 years. Actions currently underway across the New South Wales Government include the Department of Education's recently released new Healthy School Canteen Strategy. This aims to support student health by providing access to healthy foods and drinks to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

The New South Wales Government is providing more integrated transport and planning solutions to facilitate active living and improve health. The built environment counts. Places where children live, learn and play are vital to their physical and mental health. Cities and towns need to make it easy for people to be active and to easily access fresh, affordable and nutritious food from local shops or nearby community gardens. This can only happen if health and urban design professionals work together on strategies to make walking easy, promote recreation and provide open green spaces.

The New South Wales Ministry of Health is working with the Department of Planning and Environment to develop guidelines for the planning, design and development of healthy built environments. The Greater Sydney Commission, the Department of Planning and Environment and the Office of the Government Architect are working to deliver the Sydney Green Grid, which will promote a healthier urban environment, improve community access to recreation and exercise, encourage social interaction, support walking and cycling connections and improve the resilience of the greater Sydney area. These initiatives will support the Premier's target to reduce childhood overweight and obesity by 5 per cent in 10 years.

I went to the Heart Week breakfast which was held earlier this week. Blood pressure is the first step in this insidious creep on people's health. It affects a person's kidneys; it affects eyesight; it affects people's brains. Alzheimer's Australia were also at the breakfast. My mother passed away with Alzheimer's. She had high blood pressure for most of her life. Obviously the connections are now being made. High blood pressure also causes damage to kidney health. I applaud the member for Drummoyne for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. It is important that we make sure our constituents in all of our communities are aware of their health. Over the last couple of years I have taken part in Healthy Heathcote, which deals with these issues—how to eat properly and exercise locally. It points out local exercise options such as free yoga in local parks and those sorts of things. It has been a source of joy to me that people have taken that up and are living a healthier lifestyle. Most of those people are over 65 years of age. I commend the motion to the House.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (12:09): I am pleased to speak on this motion as it is Heart Week, and heart disease and its prevention are issues that are close to me. My father died from heart disease in 2004. More specifically, he developed an infection in one of his replacement valves that never cleared, despite the best efforts, over eight months, of the staff in the cardiac unit at Westmead Hospital. He had a second valve replaced about a decade after the first one became infected. In the time between the two surgeries I could see the enormous improvements that had taken place in clinical practice. Those improvements assisted in his faster recovery from surgery. Since then, further improvements now make recovery from heart disease and heart surgery far more successful than it has been in previous decades. Still, heart disease remains one of the most common causes of preventable death in Australia. I commend the Heart Foundation for its work in promoting and researching how to improve heart health. I also commend the Government's Make Healthy Normal campaign to encourage families to be more active and to eat healthier. But the campaign needs to have further reach—that is quite important.

With respect to this motion I take issue with the comments about the Premier's priority to reduce childhood obesity by 5 per cent over 10 years. It is a very important objective, and it has been in place for a number of years now, but thus far there has been no improvement whatsoever. Childhood obesity is still at 22 per cent in New South Wales. Small trials and initiatives in many places in the world have been successful in reducing

childhood obesity. These initiatives have involved working with schools and communities to encourage healthy eating and in making children more active. Programs need to involve a high level of intervention to be effective. While it is commendable to have an objective of reducing childhood obesity by 5 per cent, achieving that objective will prove hard. So far there has been no improvement.

One thing that is missing in much of the Government's analysis of childhood obesity and lifestyle diseases is the socio-economic impact that they have, and the strong link between economic disadvantage and childhood obesity. The fact is that children living in poor communities have far better access to unhealthy food than to healthy food. They have far less access to parks and green spaces, walkable communities and recreational facilities than children living in more affluent communities. That needs to change. In my electorate this has not been helped by the closure of Parramatta pool. Every week dozens of schools held their carnivals there and went swimming there. They had to move to other pools. Many children learned to swim in that pool. That pool has closed, to be replaced by a new stadium. A lot of people have welcomed that, but ironically people go to the stadiums to sit down and watch professional athletes play sport rather than doing sports—like swimming in a pool—themselves. This is reflective of the challenges that this Government faces, and is reflective of the reasons we are not getting anywhere in reducing the levels of childhood obesity.

We need to look at this issue in much more detail. We need to spend more money on greater intervention. It is very difficult, because much of this is the responsibility of parents and families, but schools have a role to play. Schools need to engage with the whole community. Town planning also has an important role to play in making sure that communities can access recreational facilities and healthy food options.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (12:13): I speak on the motion of the member for Drummoyne. We all have a responsibility to do what we can about childhood obesity. I will pick up on a point that the member for Granville made with respect to the responsibility of parents. It is a very good point. Childhood obesity starts at home. I am not simplifying the argument, and I understand that governments and schools need to help some families by educating them. We must do everything we can but, at the end of the day, the first step is for parents to take a responsible role in their children's behaviours and activities. To be quite frank, I get frustrated that adults do not take responsibility. The first step must take place in the home, but, yes, the Government needs to do what it can to educate people so that they understand.

I turn now to schools. Why does the Government need to legislate with respect to food at schools? This is ludicrous. Public and private schools have a responsibility. It is a no-brainer. You would not feed a brown dog—I am serious because this infuriates me—the junk that comes out of some of those canteens. This is 2017 and everyone knows that there is zero nutritional value in soft drinks. If a parent wants to let their child have soft drink at home on the weekends as a reward, so be it; but there is no value in having soft drinks in school canteens. I am not saying that we should have no milk-based products in canteens, and I am not on an anti-sugar campaign, but the canteens should stock items that have some nutritional value.

There is enough junk available in supermarkets or in our own pantries. Kids should not be forced to make a choice between a cream bun, a chocolate bar or an apple at school. If we are fair dinkum and serious about this we must help them. Every public, private or faith-based school has a responsibility. People cannot look to government to legislate common sense; schools must look to their own canteens. The parents and citizens associations do an outstanding job, but parents must think about what they want their kids to eat. School canteens should not be just about making a profit and putting a new barbecue or something else into the school.

As a member of this place I do not shy away from my responsibilities, but it is not our role to legislate for common sense. It is our role to do the best we can to ensure that we give families and schools enough literature and support—whatever is needed—to make healthy choices, but the buck stops in the home, in the school and in the community.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:18): I commend the motion put by the member for Drummoyne relating to Heart Week and healthy living, and providing appropriate choices for children at home, school or wherever they may be. Today I mention statistics that affect my electorate. The *Northern Daily Leader* has today revealed the latest statistics from the Australian Health Policy Collaboration with respect to the national overweight and obesity averages. The western side of Tamworth is officially the fattest in the nation, with eight in 10 adults being overweight, and almost half are obese. According to the *Northern Daily Leader*, almost 80 per cent of adults are overweight, while 48 per cent of those are obese, placing the area made up of Westdale, Coledale, Taminda and half of West Tamworth at the top of the list. It saddens me to think that we hold that title and it is incumbent upon all of us to be responsible adults and look at what we can do to educate our children so they can make healthy choices. In my view, we need to do more.

One looks at those who are doing their absolute best for their children. It is difficult for those on the two-week welfare payment cycle to make healthy choices when they have budgetary constraints. A couple of

loaves of bread and a \$5 order of hot chips can sometimes feed up to four hungry mouths in one session. That is not a healthy option but it is an economical one, and that is the predicament they find themselves in when having to feed hungry mouths. We need to look at both sides of the argument. As parents we must continue to promote healthy options. I am a father of three and all of my kids have played sport. We must look at what they are having for breakfast, lunch and dinner. We must also look at what they are having for snacks as well as what they are eating from the school canteen. We must observe what our local school canteens are doing and not make a sweeping generalisation of canteens across the State. Parents must talk to principals about healthy options being offered in their children's schools.

As a society, we also must think about the mother who, as a result of the money she had available, bought a couple of loaves of bread and \$5 worth of hot chips to feed her family; it may have been the only option she had to put food in their bellies. We must do more. I thank the member for Drummoyne for moving this motion.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:21): By leave: I congratulate the member for Drummoyne for bringing this motion relating to Heart Week before the House. When one looks at heart problems, the major causes of cardiovascular disease are tobacco use, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, and harmful use of alcohol. Reducing those these risk factors provides significant benefits to the individual and also goes a long way to reducing the risk of diabetes and kidney disease. This week is Heart Week and I wish to draw the attention of the House to the theme of hypertension, which is also known as high blood pressure. Many people are unaware they have high blood pressure and for that reason it is known as the silent killer. Keeping blood pressure down will lower the risk of cardiac disease.

Individuals can also aim to have a healthy lifestyle that includes regular physical activity, a healthy diet, weight monitoring and a limited intake of alcohol. It can be challenging to adopt and maintain healthy habits, consequently health coaching services are also being promoted to reduce the risk factors we are discussing today. Cardiovascular disease may lead to a heart attack or stroke. An effective heart health strategy must focus on all aspects of prevention, early identification of disease and acute events, as well as long-term management and secondary prevention. No single initiative will be sufficient to prevent or reduce heart disease. The range of initiatives that have been highlighted today will support patients to maintain good health practices.

The New South Wales Government recognises the cooperation between hospital staff, ambulance services, general practitioners, patients and carers to work together to reduce death as a result of cardiovascular-related diseases. We heard the contribution from the member for Tamworth when he spoke about his local area. Cardiovascular disease is an issue in my electorate of Myall Lakes. Dr Sesh is a cardiologist at the Manning Base Hospital, and he is doing an outstanding job fighting to reduce the impact of cardiovascular disease in the area. It is interesting to hear what the member for Tamworth is saying about the correlation between socio-economic areas and cardiovascular disease; there is a link. Myall Lakes is one of the lowest socio-economic areas in Australia, and demographically it is the oldest electorate in New South Wales. When age is combined with a low socio-economic society, people have to make those choices that the member for Tamworth spoke of.

It is a problem and it is great that the clinicians in the Myall Lakes electorate and across New South Wales are working hard with the community and with the non-government organisations to bring about awareness and prevention, because prevention is always better than cure. It is much better to prevent a heart attack than try to rehabilitate a person after having one. Once again, I thank the member for Drummoyne for bringing this motion before the House.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (12:25): In reply: I take this opportunity to thank a number of members who made a worthwhile contribution to an important notice of motion. I thank the member for Heathcote, the member for Port Stephens, the member for Granville, the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Camden and the member for Tamworth. The member for Port Stephens made a very good contribution and highlighted some of the statistics in her community. I was fascinated and startled, to be honest, that there are 100 per cent higher rates of cardiovascular disease in her area than in the central business district. That is not good. There has been a lot of great work done in the research she alluded to. The member for Port Stephens also pointed out the benefits of the holistic approach needed to improve the results on this particular issue. She also spoke about the very important benefits of active transport. I am very keen on it and, in particular, I have looked at Drummoyne. We must do more. I know this Government has played a significant role in that particular sphere. Obviously lobby groups always think that we can do much more. We are heading in the right direction.

The member for Heathcote spoke about the great work clinicians are doing and a number of various strategies that have been implemented and are being implemented as we speak. He spoke about the Healthy Heathcote Program and other initiatives in his electorate of Heathcote, where healthy eating and regular exercise is encouraged. From memory, that was Healthy Harold. The member for Granville made a worthwhile contribution, speaking about her personal experience of a family member with heart disease. She spoke about the need to drive down the obesity rate and the socio-economic links between income and obesity, and the need to

spend more money on intervention. I have learned a lot from Heart Week and from the contributions of many members today. The member for Myall Lakes told us that alcohol, a lack of exercise and unhealthy eating are some of the main causes of heart disease and the focus of Heart Week this year is hypertension. A range of initiatives are being used to try to drive down the obesity rate.

The member for Camden also made a worthwhile contribution and spoke about the responsibility we have as parents to guide our children, particularly when they are at an impressionable age. That guidance starts at home. Parents should take greater responsibility for the products that are sold at school canteens, for example. That is an important driver. Finally, the member for Tamworth, spoke about his electorate and, like the member for Port Stephens, cited some frightening statistics. It is mind boggling that eight out of 10 adults are overweight and 48 per cent are obese. He spoke about healthy choices and options, and of course the budgetary pressures on many families, particularly in rural and regional New South Wales. I commend the motion to the House, and thank each and every member for making a significant contribution in Heart Week.

Motion agreed to.

BUS DRIVER SAFETY

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:30): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the great work of bus drivers in providing public transport to the community of Wallsend.
- (2) Notes that the level of assaults on drivers has increased dramatically, with drivers being verbally abused, spat on and physically attacked.
- (3) Notes the pending privatisation of Hunter public transport and private bus fleets have been shown to have even less safety measures in place in their vehicles.
- (4) Calls on the Minister for Transport to ensure bus drivers have the safest possible work environment.

Bus drivers all over Australia are reeling from the murder of Manmeet Sharma in November last year. Mr Sharma was a Brisbane driver. He was a hardworking and decent person, a well-known figure in the Australian Punjabi community and a man who was just doing his job. His tragic, pointless death highlighted the dangers faced by bus drivers all over Australia, including in Wallsend. Chris Prestons, the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU] divisional secretary, said:

When driving buses, our members are being verbally abused, spat at and, in some cases, physically abused. Like any worker, they should have the right to go on their shift and not cop abuse. It was not long ago that we had a driver seriously assaulted at night in Newcastle by some drug addicts.

In recent years, more and more drivers have come forward with reports of being verbally abused, spat on or physically attacked. In 2014 a bus driver was brutally attacked in the Hunter area: A bottle was smashed over his head, and he was punched and stomped on. What incited this incident? The driver asked two disruptive, intoxicated individuals to get off his bus. Even when police are called to address antisocial and threatening behaviour on buses, it is no guarantee of safety for drivers and passengers.

An incident on the 100 bus in 2014 illustrates this. About 20 young people began causing trouble and were ejected from that service by the driver for antisocial behaviour. Police attended the scene, but this did not prevent further antisocial behaviour. When the same group caught the next bus service, according to reports, police officers refused to assist the driver by riding the bus until the antisocial group got off. Within 15 minutes a passenger's hair had been set on fire. That passenger, unsurprisingly, required medical attention. The transport and police Ministers must know about these events; they are not isolated incidents.

I am told that it has been five years or more since transit officers regularly rode Newcastle buses. Although they sometimes patrol trains and the buses that have replaced rail services from Hamilton to Newcastle, transit officers are rarely, if ever, seen on outer suburban or Nite Owl buses, according to drivers and commuters. A bus driver in Newcastle told me, "Our drivers are constantly blowing up. Talk to any one of our drivers and their biggest concerns will be the lack of transit police on their buses. The lack of transit officers encourages anti-social behaviour. This is especially true on late-night services, when you have people who might have been taking drugs or drinking heavily, crammed onto services without oversight—they think they can get away with anything." It is a shame that the Government has allowed security to slacken so noticeably in recent years. The same driver continued, "The Government has washed its hands of us." I think that is how many bus drivers feel.

The situation is even worse for drivers on the private services that are already operating in the Newcastle area. There are fewer closed-circuit television cameras, no security screens as found on public buses in the Hunter and they usually drive longer, more remote routes. Of course, police will always respond as quickly as they can

to any incident on public transport, but they should not have to. Police in the Hunter region are understaffed and under-resourced as it is—I have argued for more staff and resources many times in this Chamber. Having to respond to emergent incidents on public transport stretches those limited resources even further, when they could be avoided altogether by better security on our buses.

I call on the transport and police Ministers to take steps to ensure that bus drivers in Wallsend, the wider Newcastle area and around New South Wales are as safe as possible. I call on the Ministers to engage with the RTBU, with drivers and with the broader community to ensure that our drivers and their passengers reach their destinations safely, no matter where or when they are travelling.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (12:36): It is a pleasure to speak to this motion moved by the member for Wallsend, which notes the great work of bus drivers in providing public transport in the Wallsend community. Members on this side of the House also commend the great work of the many bus and other public transport drivers. However, the member made some comments that we certainly do not agree with. The New South Wales Government commends the great work of all public transport workers who provide services to communities across the State, including bus and train drivers who get people to and from their destinations—whether they be commuters at peak hour in metropolitan areas or workers in the outer suburbs of the Hunter or on the North Coast of our great State. Those workers deserve to be able to perform that task without being assaulted, harassed or ill treated by people who use those services.

Members on this side of the House will always stand strong and protect community workers who are doing a fantastic job. The safety and security of drivers and the customers who travel on our public transport system is paramount. The offences and incidents outlined by the member for Wallsend are completely unacceptable. It is not acceptable that anyone should be placed in that position by people who are affected by alcohol or drugs, as the member has outlined, or who are misbehaving in such a manner as to threaten and harass. Our thoughts are with the victims of those incidents and their families. Transport operators deserve to be treated with the utmost respect. It is never appropriate for a customer to abuse or assault a bus driver, a train driver or any other public transport worker.

Under the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act, a victim's vulnerability due to their occupation—such as being a taxi driver, bus driver or other public transport worker—is an aggravating factor to be taken into account by the court when determining the appropriate sentence for a person convicted of an assault offence. The existence of the aggravating factor will generally result in tougher penalties being imposed on the offender. Having worked in local courts as a prosecutor, I have seen a number of those offences come before our courts. It is certainly the case that magistrates, when dealing with these matters, take those offences most seriously. The offences are frowned upon because there is a deep understanding that the victims are simply engaged in their occupations and do not deserve to be the victims of crime.

One way to reduce the incidence of assaults on public transport workers is to have a strong police presence on public transport. I believe that is the best way to deter crime on public transport. In May 2012 the NSW Police Force took over security for the entire public transport network under a new dedicated Police Transport Command. One great benefit of having the Police Transport Command patrolling our public transport network is the increased presence of uniformed, frontline police on our transport system. Public transport customers and workers find this reassuring. These police officers not only detect crime but also deter crime. I recently attended a function at the Blacktown police command, where I spoke to officers about the nature of the work they do across the local area. They told me about the valuable assistance given to their local area command by the Police Transport Command.

The Western line runs through the suburbs of Blacktown and Seven Hills. Blacktown police officers told me that one benefit of the Police Transport Command is that it can coordinate investigations. Command officers understand that an offender may travel by train or bus a great distance from the scene of the offence to a place that is in a different local area command, where they may well commit more offences or cause a disturbance. The Police Transport Command's coordinated approach means the command can take control of any incidents and bring the offender before the courts. Another benefit of the Police Transport Command is that officers have a good understanding of the public transport network. They know the different environments the network travels through and the typical habits of inhabitants of those environments. That means the command is in a good position to detect and prevent crimes.

Officers from the Police Transport Command are based at three metropolitan hubs in central, south-west and north-western Sydney, and at seven satellite hubs. The satellite hubs include the Hunter, Central Coast and Wollongong regions. More than 600 Police Transport Command officers patrol the public transport network, providing a dedicated presence on our trains, our buses and even our ferries. Those officers have the power to check tickets, issue penalty notices, deal with minor offences and remove customers who engage in antisocial behaviour. Their presence provides a sense of security on all modes of public transport and means that the officers

are able to reduce crime on our public transport network. Police Transport Command officers are trained in counterterrorism, criminal detection and conflict resolution. This greater police presence complements security measures that are already in place across the network. Those measures include closed-circuit television, visible customer help points and enhanced safety lighting.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (12:44): I speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Wallsend about bus driver safety. I too note the great work of bus drivers in our public transport system as well as the increasing number of assaults on drivers, which is greatly concerning. There have been recent assaults on bus drivers in Newcastle, where the Government is starting its experiment in privatising buses, ferries and the proposed light rail service. I have grave concerns about the safety measures that have been put in place on the private fleets that are replacing our public transport network. I also call on the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure to ensure that bus drivers have the safest possible work environment.

I come to this debate from two perspectives. First, before I entered Parliament I spent 10 years working in work health and safety. When workers leave home in the morning they need to be sure that they will return home safely at the end of the day. Nothing is more important to workers and their families. Tragically for the family of Brisbane bus driver Manmeet Sharma—a hardworking and decent person who was well known in the Australian Punjabi community—he did not come home following a fatal attack. Unfortunately, violence against bus drivers is not isolated to Queensland. In Newcastle, attacks on bus drivers are, sadly, not uncommon. Such attacks are becoming more common with the increased use of drugs such as crystal methamphetamine—ice.

It is a tragedy when those who serve and help people in the community, such as workers in our hospitals or ambulance and transport officers, including bus drivers, are the victims of pointless attacks perpetrated by people who are under the influence of ice. Our bus drivers do not sign up for that, and they do not deserve to fear what may happen as they go about their work. A recent attack on a bus driver was highlighted in the *Newcastle Herald*. The online story included a horrifying video of the attack, showing its menacing nature. The accompanying article stated:

MATTHEW James McAlister says he can't recall brutally attacking a bus driver who was simply doing his job, but judging by the screams of the passengers on board it will live with them forever.

The attack was captured on camera and on phones. The attacker thought he might have been drunk, but it appears that he was under the influence of ice. After talking to many bus drivers about their fears, I have grave concerns about the increased incidence of violence on Newcastle buses. They told me that transit officers used to ride on Newcastle buses and trains, but over the past five years very few of these officers have been in evidence on our public transport network. This lack of transit officers has resulted in reduced public safety on the public transport network. We need more transit officers on our buses, ferries and trains.

I call on the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and the Minister for Police to take steps to ensure that bus drivers in Newcastle, Wallsend and the Hunter are as safe as possible. I call on those Ministers to engage with the Rail, Tram and Bus Union, with drivers and with the broader community to ensure that our drivers and their passengers reach their destinations safely.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:53): I support the contribution of the member for Seven Hills to debate on the motion moved by the member for Wallsend concerning bus driver safety. The motion notes the great work of bus drivers in providing public transport to the community of Wallsend. I would add that our bus drivers do a magnificent job in providing public transport across New South Wales—in rural and regional New South Wales, such as in my electorate of Tamworth, and in the metropolitan centres of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. One of the best ways to deter crime on public transport is to have a strong police presence. The Police Transport Command [PTC] is responsible for security on all modes of public transport. Customer satisfaction with safety and security is at its highest level ever, reaching 94 per cent for buses.

The New South Wales Government prioritises the safety of public transport users and operators and is committed to ensuring that a range of measures are in place to combat crime. When we talk about buses, that includes school buses. There may be unruly schoolchildren on buses as well as general passengers who seek to commit a crime by assaulting a bus driver who is going about their daily work. Assisting those bus drivers, particularly in regional and rural New South Wales, can be quite difficult, as there may be some distance between pick-ups and towns. Sometimes general passengers may board a bus travelling on a school route between Gunnedah and Tamworth, so what are categorised as school buses may have a combination of students and general passengers. At times, we rely heavily on two-way radios in regional New South Wales to update a bus company command centre as to what is occurring on a particular bus, whether it is unruly student behaviour or a risk to the safety of the driver. Drivers can warn and even offload students who behave in an unruly fashion or who endanger other students. Drivers can also report the action to head office or their command centre, and ultimately the police, and a particular student or passenger can be banned.

Whether in Wallsend, Tamworth, Temora, Wagga Wagga, Wollongong, Camden or the Central Coast, we need to make sure that we provide a safe environment for our bus drivers. The New South Wales Government announced the formation of the PTC in 2012. PTC officers can remove any customers who engage in antisocial behaviour, and they have training in conflict resolution. Importantly, PTC officers are also trained in counterterrorism. This training is reflected in the crime statistics on the public transport network. Offences against customers on rail have decreased by 10 per cent, while there have also been 66 per cent fewer robberies and 6 per cent fewer assaults. We note the great work of bus drivers in providing public transport not only to the community of Wallsend but also across New South Wales.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:52): I thank the member for Wallsend for putting this issue on the agenda today and for being such a strong advocate for her community and for the workers who support her community—in this case, bus drivers. As the shadow Minister for the Hunter, I know only too well that the looming privatisation of our public transport network in the Hunter is of deep concern to many. It is of concern to residents who rely on a safe, affordable and timely method for reaching their destination, and it is a troubling time for the workers who fear for their jobs and the conditions they will be operating under with a new privatised provider. This Government's record on public transport in the Hunter is well known. In an act of complete treachery, it ripped up the rail line before there was any other viable public transport option. It failed to deliver new routes to the growing western communities of Wallsend and Maitland. It increased fares with Opal, and it ended the eight-trip maximum fare.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Point of order: I ask the member to return to the leave of the motion before the House as moved by the member for Wallsend. It is not about services; it is about the safety of bus drivers.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! I will hear further from the member for Port Stephens, but I remind her that the motion before the House is about bus driver safety.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Absolutely, and it all goes to the same point. Instead, we have this Government's vanity project: the two-kilometre light rail in the Newcastle central business district [CBD]. It is failing to connect residents in the suburbs and risks becoming the biggest white elephant of this Government's tenure.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! The member for Port Stephens will return to the leave of the motion before the House. It has nothing to do with the Newcastle central business district light rail.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: All the disruption felt in the Hunter's public transport is being felt hardest in areas outside the Newcastle CBD—the areas of Wallsend, Maitland, Swansea, Lake Macquarie and Port Stephens. It is the people outside the city whose voices have not been heard, yet we are the Hunter residents who are most affected. Labor recognises that many people who use public transport in regional areas are those with no other choice—people whose income, age or disability precludes them from driving. Jobseekers are particularly vulnerable to public transport changes.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Point of order: The member is speaking not about bus safety but about passengers having access to services. Mr Temporary Speaker, I ask you to bring the member back to the leave of the motion.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! The member for Tamworth must state the standing order that has been breached.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: Rather than seeing public transport as an expense, we should see it as an investment in connecting workers to businesses, residents to services and families to destinations. With this morning's long-awaited apology to the families and survivors of the Granville train disaster, the importance of safety on our public transport system—

Mr Kevin Anderson: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 72, relevance. The member is nowhere near the subject of bus safety.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): Order! I have directed the member for Port Stephens to return to the leave of the motion, and she will do so. I believe the pertinent Standing Order is No. 129.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: I seek an extension of time.

Leave not granted.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:56): I acknowledge the member for Wallsend for bringing this motion before the House. It is specifically about bus driver safety, not about other issues. The member for

Wallsend made very clear in the four points of her motion her concerns and her constituents' concerns regarding bus driver safety in her region. I had the pleasure of attending the opening of BusNSW two weeks ago. This is a fantastic group of people representing our community in public transport. There are two bus providers on the Central Coast, Busways and Red Bus Services, which do an outstanding job looking after commuters and protecting drivers in their day-to-day working environment. The New South Wales Government commends the great work of all the public transport workers in buses across the State of New South Wales. The safety and security of those drivers and of customers is paramount.

As the member for Seven Hills outlined, under the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999, the victim's vulnerability due to their occupation, such as that of bus driver, is an aggravating factor to be taken into account when criminals and perpetrators take action against the hardworking bus drivers not just in the electorate of Wallsend but also on the Central Coast. The member for Seven Hills also outlined that there are more than 600 Police Transport Command [PTC] officers patrolling the network to ensure that bus drivers are kept safe. Actions taken by passengers that are not acceptable to the public—such as violence against a bus driver or any public transport employee—should not be tolerated by any community and should be dealt with in the harshest possible way.

The PTC was established in 2012 as a dedicated body to oversee the security of the entire public transport network. About 89 per cent of the Newcastle State Transit Authority fleet vehicles have security screens around the driver's cabin to protect drivers from the abhorrent behaviour of some customers. It is a sad state of affairs when people believe they can abuse and assault transport workers. This issue strikes at the heart of individual behaviour and holding people responsible for their actions. All the buses in the Newcastle State Transit Authority fleet and the existing systems will be transferred to Downer EDI Hunter, which means there will be no reduction in safety or security on buses or for bus drivers. All buses on our public transport network must meet the same strict safety standards.

As I said, I commend the member for Wallsend for raising her concerns in this Chamber. Unfortunately, some of the detail in her speech was incorrect. Drivers will be provided with the same safety measures across the network. Driver and passenger safety is of paramount concern to the Government. Anyone engaging in unruly, disruptive or dangerous behaviour will be dealt with by the Public Transport Command to the full extent of the law, and they will be subject to the tougher penalties that have been included in the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act.

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (13:01): In reply: I thank the members for Seven Hills, Newcastle, Tamworth, Port Stephens and Terrigal for their contributions to this debate. We all agree that the safety of bus drivers and passengers is paramount. We also agree that everyone deserves to be able to work and to travel on public transport safely both during the day and at night, regardless of whether they are in the city or regional and remote areas. All members have agreed that the Public Transport Command [PTC] does a great job. The fundamental problem, and the reason I moved this motion, is that we need more PTC officers and more resources. The PTC officers are doing a wonderful job, but members on this side of the House—and I am sure members opposite—have been approached by commuters saying that when they travel by train and by bus they feel unsafe, and particularly at night. That is not the fault of anyone in particular but because at times intoxicated people use late-night services.

Drivers feel vulnerable because they do not see many PTC officers and the police are overstretched. I take my hat off to the police and I believe that they are overworked in what is an extremely stressful job. However, I do not want people in the Hunter to stop catching buses or to take risks by driving their cars when they should not because they feel unsafe travelling on buses. I also do not want bus drivers to be worried about doing their shift at night and not getting home. I have received concerning, factual reports about bus drivers having their hair set alight and being abused and spat on. That is disgusting and it is not acceptable anywhere in our community.

Why should bus drivers feel unsafe? I do not feel unsafe in my job, and I am sure members opposite do not feel unsafe as they go about their duties. I am asking the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure to take this issue seriously—I am sure he does. I want him to examine the services being provided and the number of officers in the PTC. I urge him to consider increasing the command's funding in the next budget so that people using and working on remote bus and train services—particularly those in Newcastle—feel safe. The PTC should have enough funding to enable it to employ sufficient officers to allow bus drivers to feel safe.

People tell us that PTC officers are invisible and that it has been years since they have seen one on a bus or train in the Wallsend and Newcastle area, or on a Sydney service. We must take this seriously. We should not simply talk about transport safety; we should do something about it. I know that the Minister can do something and that he will. I know that he is committed to our public transport system. However, I want him to improve it

to ensure that everyone using it and involved in it is safe. That is what we deserve. I hope all members will support this very worthy motion.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes35
Noes46
Majority..... 11

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Donato, Mr P
Greenwich, Mr A
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McKay, Ms J
Minns, Mr C
Piper, Mr G
Smith, Ms T F
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
Mehan, Mr D
Park, Mr R
Robertson, Mr J
Tesch, Ms L
Zangari, Mr G

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

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Davies, Ms T
Evans, Mr L
Gibbons, Ms M
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Pavey, Mrs M
Piccoli, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

Aplin, Mr G
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Dominello, Mr V
Fraser, Mr A
Goward, Ms P
Hazzard, Mr B
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Elliott, Mr D
George, Mr T
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

PAIRS

Dib, Mr J
Foley, Mr L
Harrison, Ms J
McDermott, Dr H
Washington, Ms K

Barilaro, Mr J
Berejiklian, Ms G
Grant, Mr T
Rowell, Mr J
Sidoti, Mr J

Motion negatived.

Visitors

VISITORS

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): I welcome to the gallery members of the Kiama State Electoral Conference of the Liberal Party of Australia (NSW Division) and president Jason Horton, guests of the member for Kiama.

*Motions***YOUNG SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPION AWARD RECIPIENT****Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:12):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates Nabiac farmer Joshua Gilbert on winning the Young Sustainability Champion award at the Government's Green Globe Awards on 26 October 2016.
- (2) Commends the organisers, attendees and award winners at the seventeenth annual award ceremony.
- (3) Notes that Mr Gilbert is a previous Chair of the NSW Young Farmers, a passionate advocate for environmental issues and a proud Worimi man.
- (4) Notes the comments of the seven-person judging panel that Joshua demonstrated a wide range of interests, activities, advocacy issues, outcomes and solutions in his nominations and were delighted to see such vision and values achieving sustainability impacts.

It was fantastic to see a young man from the Myall Lakes electorate and more specifically from Nabiac receiving such a prestigious award. He was also awarded Australian Geographic Young Conservationist of the Year. He is a young man with principles, vision and a passion for the environment as well as for farming. The text of the motion mentions that he is a proud Worimi man. Worimi is one of the two Indigenous cultures in the Myall Lakes electorate. Worimi takes in the south of Forster-Tuncurry and Nabiac. Biripi is centred on the Manning Valley and Taree within the electorate.

In 2015 Josh's activities and advocacy for the environment as a farmer came to the attention of Al Gore, who invited Josh to be part of his Climate Reality Project. That was of great significance to Josh. Josh has been instrumental in empowering others. He has spoken for the Office of Environment and Heritage, Oxfam International, the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, and Common Grace. He is passionate about sustainability. Josh has also been recognised in his own area of Nabiac. Along with Dr David Gillespie, the Federal member for Lyne, I had the pleasure of being at the Nabiac Show a couple of years ago when Josh had the honour of opening the show. It was great to meet with and talk to him about what he has been doing.

Josh has a love of the land. He is a fourth generation Braford cattle farmer. He has been involved with wheat and sheep, but more particularly he has worked on the family farm in Nabiac. When he was working on the farm, he developed an interest in the vast potential of agriculture and the ways young, educated farmers were responding to climate change and sustainability. As I said, Josh has received two great awards: the Young Sustainability Champion for the Office of Environment and Heritage; and the Australian Geographic Young Conservationist of the Year. He currently works with PricewaterhouseCoopers Indigenous Consulting. I commend Josh on his passion. There is no-one more passionate about the environment than farmers.

The current generation of farmers can see that what was believed to be the best science of the day 200 years ago was wrong. Farmers of today are very passionate about sustainable farming and agriculture because they do not want to degrade their environment or their farms. They want to be able to pass something on to the next generation. Many farming practices of yesteryear are no longer practised today and through science many things have become achievable. Once upon a time, a farmer would repeatedly plough a paddock until the soil was almost like powder. Today, farmers use a method called direct drill whereby they do not plough at all; they simply direct drill seeding into the paddock as it is. They no longer plough it to the point of it becoming powder.

When I was a boy, there were huge wind storms out west and dust would come over and envelop the Sydney metropolitan area. Those days are gone, and it is the farmers who are pushing these changes. It is the same with water and erosion: the farmers are using science and leading the charge. Scientists go to the farmers with ideas and the farmers work with those scientists to bring about change and better practices. Josh is a young man who has identified this great need. He is very passionate about it. I congratulate him on his endeavours and achievements and on his prestigious awards. I commend Josh Gilbert to the House.

Motion agreed to.*Business of the House***POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS****TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith):** I call on General Business Notice of Motion (General Notice) No. 1541, relating to Nowra Bridge, and postpone it on behalf of Ms Anna Watson.

*Motions***HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (13:20): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises the housing affordability crisis in New South Wales, with a large number of low- and middle-income households now in housing stress.
- (2) Notes the long overdue recognition that inclusionary zoning has a role to play in the provision of affordable housing in New South Wales, particularly in Greater Sydney.
- (3) Calls on the Government to set ambitious affordable housing targets of 30 per cent for all significant new developments, including the Central to Eveleigh precinct, the Parramatta Road renewal and the Sydney Olympic Park redevelopment.

The issue of inclusionary zones is just one of many mechanisms available to this Government and to governments across the country to address the issue of housing affordability. Inclusionary zoning defines a situation whereby certain patches of land have affordable housing targets set. In setting those targets, we start addressing the real issues around affordable housing. People in New South Wales earning very low to moderate incomes are increasingly unable to access housing that is affordable. Demand for affordable housing consistently exceeds supply by a vast degree. The competition for affordable housing adds to the upward pressure on rents and house prices, leading to a decline in the number of available affordable properties.

Last week, Anglicare released its latest rental affordability snapshot. It found, yet again, that affordable housing options for people on low incomes, for families depending on income support, for single people surviving on the aged pension and for young people on the Youth Allowance just do not exist in Greater Sydney and the Illawarra. For couples on the aged pension and for anybody earning the minimum wage, there is an extreme shortage of suitable, affordable properties. We have heard governments at State and Federal levels debating housing affordability. Members say that they want to address affordability and they keep waving this magic wand called "supply".

On the one hand governments say that there is a record amount of supply, but if they were to open the Domain section of a certain newspaper—I provide a level of solidarity to the staff who are currently on strike—they would see that there are also record house prices. It seems that the more supply goes up, the more house prices go up. So maybe the magic wand of supply is not the answer. I am not saying that inclusionary zoning in itself is the answer. It is one solution that is available. Let me get a little pointy headed for a moment and explain that inclusionary zoning is a planning tool that can be used by governments to increase the supply of affordable housing. Mandating targets for affordable housing dwellings within new developments is a guaranteed and proven way to supply homes where rents are affordable and will stay affordable.

Inclusionary zoning requires developers to deliver a proportion of dwellings within a development as affordable housing units or to make a monetary payment to build the affordable housing elsewhere. The Greater Sydney Commission's district plans include proposals for inclusionary zoning. While this is welcome, I question whether targets of 5 to 10 per cent of affordable housing is sufficient when we are facing such a housing crisis in this State. That is really concerning. Those targets will not prove to be a game changer. We need targets that are much more ambitious, and we also need to make sure that there are not caveats, such as areas being deemed feasible, thereby making those areas the only places where those targets would apply.

The New South Wales Federation of Housing Associations has called for targets up to 30 per cent, which would come a lot closer to addressing the desperate need for affordable housing across Sydney. There is no reason why those targets of 30 per cent cannot be met by government-led projects or in developments where the land has been rezoned to increase its value. In the electorate of Newtown, there has been rezoning along the Parramatta Road renewal and around the Central to Eveleigh development. In those areas there is the potential to seriously address the housing affordability crisis in this city by mandating high levels of affordable housing. If the Premier and this Government want to address the issue of housing affordability then that is something that is open to them right now.

We need to recognise that there is a desperate need to address housing affordability in this State. Any member of Parliament who has come to Macquarie Street this week or in past weeks will have seen a growing number of people sleeping rough not far from Parliament House. While we debate this in the Chamber as a theoretical problem, and we hear spin about the issues of how we are going to solve housing affordability, the rates of homelessness in this State go up and people are sleeping rough just outside this building. The Government has the opportunity to address this immediately by putting in place measures such as inclusionary zoning which would address the issue of the shortfall of affordability housing in our community. According to 2011 census data, 28,191 people in New South Wales were experiencing homelessness. That means that more than 28,000 people

do not have a place to call home. Meanwhile the Government rezones and develops areas in our inner city without mandating targets for affordable housing. This is a massive loss. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for this Government to address housing affordability.

Of course, inclusionary zoning is not a silver bullet that on its own will address the housing affordability crisis. But committing to ambitious, affordable housing targets through inclusionary zoning is a practical step that would deliver large numbers of affordable housing properties. The Greens and many housing advocates are committed to inclusionary zoning. It could be a simple solution to address the crisis in housing affordability in this State. There are many examples, both here in Australia and overseas—in cities including London and New York—where inclusionary zoning has had real impacts. I call on the New South Wales Government to urgently commit to ambitious and mandated affordable housing targets in all substantial new developments, particularly in government-led projects where the Government can control development—in places like the Central to Eveleigh Corridor, the Parramatta Road renewal, at the Bays Precinct and at the Sydney Olympic Park redevelopment.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (13:27): I move an amendment to the motion, as follows:

That the motion be amended by removing all words after "That" with a view to inserting instead:

"this House recognises the work of the New South Wales Government in providing more housing for New South Wales in order to address the housing supply and put downward pressure on housing prices."

It is a well-known fact that, unfortunately, after 2011 the Government was left with a massive housing shortfall right across New South Wales, but particularly in the Sydney metropolitan area. For years, the previous Labor Government had neglected to release enough land and neglected to provide sustainable and suitable infill development. It relied upon the existing infrastructure, but the existing infrastructure could not support infill development. The Labor Government failed to provide services to the north-west and south-west areas of the Sydney metropolitan area and failed to provide public transport and road infrastructure and the necessary services such as sewerage and water.

When a government fails to address all levels of service delivery and to release enough land for sustainable housing, a situation develops where demand outstrips supply. This Government is still addressing that shortfall in New South Wales. Currently, the demand for homes, particularly by young families, means that there is not enough supply to push the spiralling prices down. Prices are levelling to some degree; we are not seeing the huge spikes that we saw a year or 18 months ago.

Debate interrupted.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): I will now vacate the chair until 2.15 pm.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome everybody to question time this afternoon. In particular, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to members of the Kiama SEC, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, Parliamentary Secretary for Education, and member for Kiama. I also welcome students and teachers from Koorringal High School, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Centenary of Anzac, Counter Terrorism, Corrections and Veterans Affairs, and member for Wagga Wagga. I would also like to welcome and acknowledge in the gallery today Damien and Aya Benson, and their children, Mia and Jack, guests of the member for Orange. I also welcome a good old friend of ours here, the Hon. Barry Collier, former member for Miranda.

Mr Ryan Park: One more time, Baz.

The SPEAKER: I have spoken to him before. He is enjoying his retirement on council. I would also like to inform the House he has received a Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM]. Congratulations to you, Barry, it is well deserved. He is here today with his wife, Jeanette, and I welcome her too. I also welcome the wife and daughter of the member for Wyong here today.

Question Time

SCHOOLS INFRASTRUCTURE BACKLOG

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:20): My question is directed to the Premier. Why is the Department of Education conducting a sensitivity analysis on increasing school class sizes, as revealed by the Auditor-General today?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:20): I say to those opposite that this Government is not about increasing class sizes, and I place that on the record. What we are increasing is the maintenance to our schools, the number of teachers and the number of new classrooms.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members who behave in a disorderly manner will be removed from the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am very proud of the fact that our Government to date is spending record amounts on education, and that will continue into the future. Let us not forget that the Labor legacy was to leave a billion-dollar infrastructure backlog in the New South Wales education system. *[Interruption]*

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the Clerk to stop the clock. Yesterday there were too many arguments and discussions between members across the table. That will not occur today. I remind members that interjections are disorderly at all times. It is also unacceptable for members to yell at each other across the table. Members who continue to interject will be removed from Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I take this opportunity to thank all of our teachers, our principals, our hardworking school communities and assure them that they have a government which will deal with their maintenance issues. In fact, only this week the Minister for Education and I committed to dealing with the maintenance issues of 2,100 schools. In last year's budget, as this House will well remember, we gave a record boost to education infrastructure to ensure that we continue building new classrooms and dealing with capacity issues.

I found it curious when the Leader of the Opposition chose to visit one of my primary schools, Chatswood Public School, on the North Shore not too long ago, when in fact the capacity issues in the inner west, the north shore and Western Sydney were created by those opposite. I again want to reiterate this Government's absolute commitment to education. I want to thank the current Minister for Education, the previous minister and the department for working to make sure we deliver on the Government's commitments. I also want to acknowledge that this commitment to education would not have been possible unless we turned our budget position around.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Let us not forget that the asset recycling strategy of this Government has made sure that an extra \$1 billion will be going into education. Those opposite do not like to hear the truth, but the truth is that we will provide more classrooms, more schools and more teachers.

WESTERN SYDNEY INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (14:24): My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the New South Wales Government delivering for Western Sydney?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:24): I am very pleased to talk about our Government's commitment to Western Sydney. This is a longstanding commitment. From day one we have been committed to giving the infrastructure and services the fastest growing part of New South Wales deserves. We are really pleased because we know that the population of Western Sydney is expected to expand to more than 2.9 million by just 2031. We could not be more excited by the amount of activity going on in Western Sydney. Whether it is above the ground or below the ground, this Government is getting on with the job of delivering. I am extremely pleased that progress is being made on the Western Sydney airport and the incredible opportunities this will provide for all of Western Sydney. This week I was pleased the Federal Government committed to building the airport, which is vital infrastructure not just for Greater Western Sydney but for all of New South Wales. It will make a huge difference. To create a hub of aviation and innovation, as well as a centre for jobs of the future, is truly exciting and it is going to be amazing for all residents of our great State.

We know those opposite unfortunately do not support the vital infrastructure we are putting into Western Sydney, including WestConnex, but it is for people who spend too much time in congestion. The problem with those opposite is they cannot see Western Sydney beyond the inner west. For them, Strathfield is Western Sydney, but we are talking Penrith and beyond. We appreciate that Western Sydney goes beyond the inner west, which is all those opposite care about.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The massive construction we are doing in Western Sydney is creating the infrastructure of the future, which will reduce time in traffic and will mean that people can have jobs in the communities in which they live. We also know that our massive infrastructure boom is also creating jobs. WestConnex alone is indirectly or directly creating 10,000 jobs for the people of this great State. We are also investing in public transport. I thank the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure because the Sydney Metro Northwest will have such a positive impact on Western Sydney, as will both the Parramatta light rail and the South West metro. I know the member for Parramatta is almost embarrassed about how much we are spending in Parramatta. We keep giving him billions and he keeps wanting more.

I also commend the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure because it is not just these new projects we are building. We are increasing services and we are increasing the speed by which people move around—and not just to get to the Sydney central business district. We know the biggest opportunity lies with people being able to move within Western Sydney. So whether it is improving easy access or building more car parks around stations, our Government is making sure we deliver for Western Sydney. Let us not forget the amount of infrastructure we are putting in Western Sydney when it comes to our hospitals. We are developing the Westmead, Blacktown, Mount Druitt and Campbelltown hospitals. The Nepean Hospital is the next major cab off the rank, with the redevelopment delivering a new and expanded emergency department, a dozen new operating theatres, a new neonatal intensive care unit and 18 new birthing suites.

I am very proud to say that our Government is delivering health services in Western Sydney beyond imagination and we will continue to do that. It gave me great pleasure recently when the Minister for Health and I were at the Liverpool and Blacktown hospitals, as well as some other facilities, looking at the improved facilities at those locations. It is wonderful to be able to visit staff who cannot thank us enough because it is making their jobs easier. Of course patients and families are also benefiting enormously, but to have staff tell us that their jobs are made easier by those facilities is extremely encouraging. The new family facilities were in Blacktown Hospital. I recently toured this hospital with the Minister for Health. We spoke to family members who said they could stay overnight in comfortable surroundings to be with loved ones who were in hospital. We found it extremely positive to hear this feedback. The Minister for Health will have an opportunity to expand on my comments. [*Extension of time*]

Western Sydney is also benefiting from education. I was pleased to be with the Minister for Education and the Minister for Women when we visited the Fernhill School on Monday to conduct its official opening. What made the opening even more special was that other schools in that community came to the ceremony to support this special needs school. It was a wonderful experience. There will be many more such openings in the future because we are expanding the public education system in Western Sydney. We are also building new schools in Parramatta, such as Arthur Phillip High School, Parramatta High School and O'Connell Street Public School. The new Hurlstone Agricultural High School will be upgraded along with three other schools in the area.

Mr Dominic Perrottet: Awesome.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As the Treasurer said, it will be awesome. It is not just about building vital infrastructure. It is also about making Western Sydney the place for all of us to visit. I was pleased to be with the Minister for Western Sydney and the Minister for Planning, who are outstanding Ministers, to announce the extension of Western Sydney parkland. This Government paid \$45 million for 81 hectares of land and returned it to the community. That is what a good government does. We appreciate that families want somewhere to enjoy themselves and utilise facilities. These families are not just in greater Western Sydney because all of us will have access to this parkland. We should take time to walk through this public space because it is amazing. It is very relaxing and I recommend that all of us take the opportunity to visit this space. This Government not only provides vital services but also provides the amenities to make Western Sydney the place to live, to work and to recreate.

SCHOOLS INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:32): My question is directed to the Premier. What plans does her Government have in place to respond to the inevitable pressure that will be placed on the overcrowded and underfunded public education system in New South Wales—

Mr Adrian Piccoli: Point of order: That is an incorrect assertion.

The SPEAKER: Order! That may be the case, but it is not a point of order. The member for Maroubra is entitled to ask a question.

Mr Adrian Piccoli: It is an opinion, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The member for Maroubra has couched it in a question, which is acceptable. The member may begin the question again.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: My question is directed to the Premier. What plans does her Government have in place to respond to the inevitable pressure that will be placed on the overcrowded and underfunded public education system in New South Wales in the event that the Turnbull Liberal Government carries through with its cuts to the Catholic education system?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:33): Let me assure the people of New South Wales that this Government's record spending on infrastructure for education will continue. I want to take this opportunity to go through a list of schools that have opened and the list of schools that we have upgraded since we have been in government. There are about 50 of them, but I will go through the list one by one. There is a note that just happened to be in my folder, so I can list the schools. Schools completed since 2011 include Cairnsfoot School in the Rockdale electorate, Cammeraygal High School in the North Shore electorate and Fernhill School in the Mulgoa electorate, which was opened on Monday. There are also George Bass School in Bankstown, Lake Cathie Public School near Port Macquarie, Marie Bashir Public School in Strathfield—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: —Oran Park Public School in Camden, Parry School in Tamworth—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. My question was about the contingency plans that will arise from the Federal budget next week when Prime Minister Turnbull cuts funding for the Catholic education system.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier remains relevant to the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The list I have gone through was of schools we have already completed, and there are more on this list. However, I will jump to the briefing note on schools currently under construction or in design planning stage. This list will give members of the Opposition further information. On the list are Ajuga School in Macquarie Fields, Arthur Phillip High School in Parramatta, Bardia Public School in Macquarie Fields, Bella Vista Public School in Baulkham Hills, Bellevue Hill Public School in Vacluse, Bolwarra Public School in Maitland, Bourke Street Public School in Newtown, Campbell House School in Macquarie Fields, Cherrybrook Technology High School in Epping, and Coolah Central School in Barwon. These schools are currently under construction or in the planning stage, not ones that have been completed.

Mr Troy Grant: Pretty impressive list.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Exactly. The Dubbo network specialist schools are also on the list. Another school in Macquarie Fields is Glenfield Park School.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The member for Strathfield should thank us because Homebush West Public School is also on this list along with Hunter School of the Performing Arts. I think those opposite get the drift. They spoke a lot about improving education infrastructure; we are actually delivering.

WESTERN SYDNEY ROADS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (14:36): My question is addressed to the Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport. How is the New South Wales Government investing in Western Sydney roads to improve travel times for commuters and provide efficiencies for local businesses?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (14:37): I thank the member for Holsworthy for her question because I know that she is a passionate advocate for her community and understands the importance of roads, including the upgrade to the Dead Man's Creek bridge, which has improved traffic flows in her electorate. One of the early wins of this Government was widening the M5, which continues to deliver significant results for the electorates of Heathcote and Holsworthy. This Government knows the importance of communities right across Western Sydney. It also knows that communities across Western Sydney recognise the importance of upgrades to their roads as part of an integrated transport plan. The transport plan also includes rail improvements—the North West Rail Link, South West Rail Link and light rail, particularly light rail to Parramatta and the western Metro. We are developing roads right across Western Sydney.

On top of the megaprojects like WestConnex we are also delivering roads in local communities to ensure that all local communities in Western Sydney are getting their fair share. We are delivering roads in places like Hawkesbury, where there are upgrades to Kurrajong Road and improvements along the Bells Line of Road. This is an important arterial road linking metropolitan Sydney with regional New South Wales, allowing the movement of goods and services around our State to ensure that small businesses across Western Sydney are able to access growing communities in regional New South Wales. We are supporting the Commonwealth Government in its

development of the second Sydney airport by making sure the road infrastructure is in place before the airport comes online as part of our \$3.6 billion road infrastructure program. The program includes a \$200 million local roads program. We are also building upgrades and links between key roads, and one of those in Western Sydney is the Werrington arterial, linking the Great Western Highway with the M4. We are making sure that we provide relief on a number of those interchanges across the Penrith and St Marys areas. This is a fantastic achievement that this Government is bringing online, making sure that people can access the roads that they need.

A huge road program is happening in the south-west: the Bringelly Road upgrade in the electorate of Camden. Over \$500 million is being delivered for that road program, with 4.3 kilometres of stage two of Bringelly Road. There is significant growth across south-west Sydney, which is where new families are buying land and building their homes. This Government is delivering the roads to ensure that those communities can continue to connect to services and economies all around Sydney. Without those roads we will have more of the dormitory suburbs that we saw for too long under Labor because those connections were never put in place.

Another major road program across Western Sydney is the huge Northern Road upgrade—a 35-kilometre widening of the Northern Road, linking the south-west growth sector with the north-west growth sector. Those corridors will sustain the lifeblood and future growth of New South Wales. The largest population growth in our State will be along those north-south corridors, and the Northern Road is absolutely crucial to that. The Government is also making sure that areas of commerce are being opened up. Recently the Old Wallgrove Road link was opened. It has opened up opportunities for new land to be released in the Western Sydney Employment Area, meaning there are more opportunities for jobs to be created. The Government's leading investment has allowed the private sector to invest with confidence across Western Sydney. This is how to create local jobs for communities in Western Sydney: We put the infrastructure on the ground, we open up the land and then the private sector comes in and creates jobs.

I will turn to some of our more established areas—places like the Penrith central business district [CBD]. We have announced the widening of Mulgoa Road. It is a crucial link road from the north to the south of the broader Penrith local government area, which will link the Londonderry, Penrith and Mulgoa electorates, and ensure that existing bottlenecks will be opened up and cleared out. This is probably the most sought-after road project in the Penrith community. We have already allocated \$70 million towards the development of the Jane Street project, which will open up the road beneath the railway lines, and another \$100 million has been allocated to stage one of the Mulgoa Road project, which will widen the road from before the M4 towards Glenmore Park leading to the Penrith CBD. [*Extension of time*]

These are tangible road projects in communities across Western Sydney. They are the local roads that link to the main State arterial roads. They are the roads that every family, local business and tradie knows must function so they can get home or to their sporting clubs and businesses. This is what happens when the economy is managed properly. This Government is generating revenue and it is not only investing in the macro roads and motorways that we need to allow our State to continue to grow but also in making sure that every community gets its fair share. I have heard a couple of interjections about tolls from the other side of the House. This is how far the Labor Party has deteriorated in New South Wales. Once upon a time the Labor Party in New South Wales understood that Western Sydney needed roads to be built.

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

Mr STUART AYRES: In conjunction with the Federal Government, Labor built the M7—a road that many users across Western Sydney know. Guess what? Labor put a toll on it because it knew that road was important for opening up new opportunities. I congratulate Labor on what happened in the past, but, unfortunately, we cannot extend the M4 or widen the M5 unless we are able to fund it. I know the Opposition has struggled with how to manage the economy. It ran out of money pretty quickly, but we are being upfront and transparent—the same way Labor was with the M7. That is exactly what we are doing now with the M4 and the M5—we are making sure that we deliver the roads that Western Sydney needs. It is about time Labor looked at its own history books and got on with it.

CHATSWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOL LAND

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (14:44): My question is directed to the Minister for Education. I refer the Minister to a letter to the Premier that he wrote as the Minister for Planning in which he suggested that residents who wanted to acquire an adjoining block of land for the expansion of Chatswood Public School should contact the Department of Education. Now that he is the Minister for Education, will he acquire the land and relieve the chronic overcrowding at Chatswood Public School?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (14:45): I thank the member for Lakemba for his question. I acknowledge that he is a nice man and a gifted educator. On that note, I point out another nice man and gifted educator—the former member for Miranda, Professor Collier, who is in the gallery. If only more on the other side had read his seminal text, *Introducing Economics*, perhaps they might have more idea about how to run the economy. I have had the opportunity to talk to some parents from Chatswood, and I have undertaken to look at the issues raised. I understand from memory that the specific block is not adjacent to the school, but I have asked the department to look at it. The letter that the member raised sounds like a very sensible response from the former Minister for Planning.

I am a mild man. I fancy myself as more of a lover than a fighter. But some things break my chain; some things get me angry. Some things make me want to go down to the abattoir and start punching carcasses; some things make me so angry that I want to get my Scotch Finger and just break it in half. One of those things is the failure to do homework, and this is what we have in this case. Clearly the member—well meaning though he may be—has not had the opportunity to have the insight that the local member and Premier has in this matter.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

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

Mr Jihad Dib: Unlike the Minister, I have actually been to Chatswood Public School.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question. The member for Lakemba will resume his seat.

Mr Jihad Dib: The block is adjacent and the kids go to another school next door.

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

Mr Jihad Dib: I have done my homework. I have been there; you haven't.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I call the member for Lakemba to order for the second time. I call the member for Lakemba to order for the third time.

Mr ROB STOKES: I take issue with what the member for Lakemba has said, because I had the opportunity to speak to parents at an event—an event that I did not see the member for Lakemba at. I have had the opportunity to speak to the local member about the upgrades at Chatswood. We are looking at the upgrades; they are afoot and parents are very keen to see them progressed. As the Premier has already articulated, we have a strong plan to deliver for the future of growing enrolments in our New South Wales public schools. We have a great story to tell, and that will unfold in the weeks and months ahead. This State is experiencing great growth in enrolment numbers. As a society, we should celebrate that because many Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development economies are facing the opposite challenge; that is, they have declining populations and therefore declining enrolments in their public schools.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bankstown will cease interjecting. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the second time. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the third time.

Mr ROB STOKES: In contrast, we have an exciting challenge and we are looking forward to working with communities to identify the best ways in which to deliver the extra schools and the extra capacity in schools that we will need in the future.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Maroubra to order for the second time. I remind the member for Strathfield that she is on three calls to order. Members will come to order.

TAFE NSW

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (14:50): I address my question to the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills. How is the Government enabling TAFE NSW to innovate and better serve the needs of students and industry in Western Sydney and across the State?

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Rockdale told me he had lost his voice, but I can still hear him.

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (14:50): I thank the member for Parramatta for his question, and acknowledge the excellent work he is doing in his electorate. Money is flowing in, the area is growing and activity is increasing in his electorate just as it is across Western Sydney. That is underpinned by strong investment by this Government in many major infrastructure projects throughout the west. The population explosion and the many infrastructure projects underway present a challenge for business and industry, and also for government. We must ensure that

businesses have access to the skilled workforce they need, and that they can meet the growing demands placed on them to employ skilled people to get the job done in Western Sydney. Last week I had the pleasure of joining the Deputy Premier in Queanbeyan. He is not a bad bloke. We announced yet another new initiative for TAFE NSW that will help business and industry in Western Sydney to meet that challenge. Nine new TAFE NSW SkillsPoints will be established around the State, including in Western Sydney.

Dr Geoff Lee: Where will they be?

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: I am happy to inform the House that the member for Parramatta has secured one of those SkillsPoints. He is a good local member.

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

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: I know the member for Mount Druitt will be happy—he is always happy—that another SkillsPoint will be established in his electorate. Another will be established at Ultimo and six will be established in regional New South Wales. Queanbeyan will have a SkillsPoint dealing with health, wellbeing and community services; the Dubbo SkillsPoint will deal with the supply chain and e-commerce; the Coffs Harbour SkillsPoint will deal with tourism and experience services; and the Tamworth SkillsPoint will deal with career pathways, Aboriginal languages and employability skills. The member for Murray is extremely happy that a SkillsPoint dealing with agribusiness will be established in his electorate, which is a rich agricultural area. The sixth regional SkillsPoint will be established at Newcastle. We are still waiting for the local member to thank us for that.

The September launch of the Newcastle SkillsPoints will be the first of six established in regional New South Wales. These hubs are important because SkillsPoints will work closely with business and industry to develop course and course content across TAFE. Before this Government introduced One TAFE NSW and reformed the vocational education and training sector, there were 10 TAFE institutes across the State, each developing courses and course content independently. Not only was that a duplication of services, it also resulted in inconsistency in courses and course content delivered in various parts of the State. Under the old model, people doing a Certificate II in aged care at Port Macquarie or at Dubbo ran the risk that although their qualification was the same their course and the course content were different. That causes a problem for businesses and industries because when they employ people they want to be able to rely on the fact that not only has a prospective employee obtained the appropriate qualification but also that what they have studied is consistent and relevant to industry requirements.

SkillsPoints will be working hand in glove with industry. These centres of excellence will employ 12 to 15 people who will work with industry to ensure that the courses provide students with the skills that business and industry want. That means businesses will know that students undertaking a course in a particular field at any TAFE across the State will have all studied the same course and course content. Students will also know that if they obtain a TAFE qualification, business and industry will employ them because they have studied with the premier vocational education and training provider in this country, and that their course content has been developed in partnership with industry. Business and industry will know that TAFE graduates are the very best and that they can be employed with confidence. That is particularly true in the Western Sydney, where there is money, activity and growth, and where we need a skilled workforce for today and tomorrow.

FAIRFIELD HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (14:56): I direct my question to the Minister for Health. What is the Minister's response to Fairfield Hospital's head of paediatrics, Dr Laurence McCleary, who wrote to him on 26 April this year stating that "the Government's plans for the emergency department are in violation of the recommendations of the Australian guidelines on the provision of care for children in hospital emergency departments"?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (14:57): When I get correspondence as the Liberal-Nationals Minister for Health, I take note and ensure that it is responded to appropriately. That is in contrast to what members opposite did when they were in government. Doctors tell me that when the Labor Party was in government they were rarely heard. That doctor did write to me expressing concerns about the fact that planning did not reflect sufficient consultation with paediatric service providers in hospital emergency departments. I raised that issue with senior NSW Health officials in the ministry and in our 15 local health districts. I asked why this doctor felt that the issues had not been appropriately considered. I was advised that other medical professionals in the same speciality had been consulted. However, as I always do, I emphasised to them that they should take into account every clinician's viewpoint. If a clinician goes to the trouble of writing to the Minister for Health, they should always be respected and their views

considered. I asked departmental officers to talk to that doctor. The information that the member for Prospect has is a little out of date; it appears that he received the letter a few days ago.

Dr Hugh McDermott: I received it on the same day you did.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I got it a few days ago. I responded. I actually found out and did some things about it. The member for Prospect received it and waited until now to read out the same hollow phrases. Big deal: "I am a little bit too late and a little bit too slow but I am excited because we have got a letter." Big deal. "Whoo!" Seriously.

Ms Kate Washington: Wait until you check your blood pressure.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Actually my blood pressure is going really well but I am excited to have a question on health. I just love it. Back to the topic at hand, while the member for Prospect was sitting there with his letter, thinking: "Ooh! One minute I might get a go to ask the Health Minister a question!" I went and did it; I fixed it. I spoke to the Health department. I said to them, "Can you make sure that you consult this doctor?" The report that I got back was that they have actually talked to him. I have not yet spoken to the doctor but the advice from the department was he is now satisfied that there was consultation but there is more work they can do and they are doing the work. I remind members, what a great job our Government is doing in Western Sydney: \$700 million into Blacktown hospital, \$1 billion into Westmead Hospital and another \$500-odd million going into Nepean. My God, what a great Coalition Government! We are delivering on every front. It does not matter whether it is in the regions or in Western Sydney, we are doing the job. And let me say, there is a lot more to come.

Dr Hugh McDermott: Point of order: It is Standing Order 129. We did not ask about hospitals. We want to know what the Minister is doing about a master plan. Talking to the doctors is not enough. What is the Minister doing about it?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question. The member for Prospect will resume his seat.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It is a great thing that the member for Prospect asked me a question that gets right to the detail, and I should have referred it back to the department but I knew the answer. Come with a better question next time.

WESTERN SYDNEY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (15:01): My question is addressed to the Minister for Mental Health. What investment is the New South Wales Government making in mental health services in Western Sydney?

Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (15:01): I thank the member for his question. I had the pleasure of meeting with the member for Riverstone yesterday to discuss mental health in his electorate. I commend him for his tireless advocacy on behalf of his community. We know the Western Sydney region is one of the fastest growing in the State. The population is expected to increase to almost 1.3 million by 2031. That is why it is so important that the Government continues to support the mental health needs of residents of Western Sydney.

This Government has a vision for a brighter future and a vision for world-class mental health services. We have a vision for Western Sydney. Let me be clear to those in the gallery and those watching today, we are the only government with the capability to deliver on this vision. We have a proven track record that we do what we say we will. The New South Wales Government is delivering comprehensive services to the people of Western Sydney. Members on this side are committed to leading innovation in the delivery and financing of health services in New South Wales. Innovation is a hallmark of this Government; it is what sets us apart from the Opposition. This Government is embarking on innovative new models for financing social services through social impact investments. Investment and innovation are not in the vocabulary of the Opposition, so I will explain to those opposite exactly what I mean. The Oxford dictionary defines innovation as "a new method or idea", something we have never seen from those opposite.

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

Ms TANYA DAVIES: Investment is defined as "an act of devoting time, effort or energy to a particular undertaking with the expectation of a worthwhile result"—again, something that those opposite probably do not understand. It is evident to this House and to everyone watching this exchange that those opposite do not care about people with mental illness. Shame on you!

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting. I remind the member for Strathfield that she is on three calls to order.

Ms TANYA DAVIES: Social impact investments are an innovative way of bringing together private capital and expertise from the public, private and non-profit sectors to deliver better health outcomes for the people of New South Wales. Through these innovative financing models, we are making smarter investments in services which not only allow us to provide more services than if we went it alone but also enable savings to the Government by ensuring people get the care they need before they reach crisis point and present in our emergency departments.

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

Ms TANYA DAVIES: In an Australian first, the Liberal-Nationals Government has partnered with Flourish Australia to provide enhanced community-based care for vulnerable people suffering from mental illness. Flourish Australia will deliver the Resolve program to mental health patients in Western Sydney and western New South Wales over seven years. The program will provide participants with two years of comprehensive, recovery-oriented community mental health support. It will include a residential program with 24/7 peer support and person-centred psychosocial support in the community. The Resolve program will complement existing mental health services and is supported by a \$7 million social benefit bond that will be raised by Social Ventures Australia.

Social impact investment offers an opportunity for the New South Wales Government to lead the way in mental health care and work together with the private and non-profit sectors to deliver better outcomes for the people of New South Wales. The people of Western Sydney deserve better than the legacy that Labor left behind after 16 years. That is why the Government is acting now. This financial year the New South Wales Government is investing \$149 million in mental health services in Western Sydney. The Government is expanding the Got It! program, delivered in partnership with schools, which supports young children who are at high risk of behavioural problems or disorders. [*Extension of time*]

The Government is also expanding the specialist perinatal mental health service which supports women during and after pregnancy. This service not only supports Western Sydney mothers but also offers a statewide outreach service from Westmead Hospital. Western Sydney is at the centre of this Government's decade-long mental health reform program. This reform is shifting the balance from hospital to community-based care to ensure people with a mental illness can live well in the community. Members on this side remain resolute in our determination to implement "Living Well: a Strategic Plan for Mental Health in NSW 2014-2024" because we believe that everyone who has a mental illness deserves the best and highest quality care. Our immense investment in Western Sydney is only a fraction of what we are doing for mental health in New South Wales.

This week I announced the successful projects under the \$8 million Suicide Prevention Fund which will provide prevention and early intervention services for those at risk of suicide. Successful projects under the New South Wales Mental Health Innovation Fund are also being rolled out. Let me make it clear, this is not ad hoc spending such as that seen under Labor. This is smart investment in innovative, evidence-based solutions which are building a service system for the future. This financial year the New South Wales Government is investing \$1.8 billion in mental health—that is \$106 million more than was invested in the last financial year. Members on this side deliver budgets with innovative investments in social services, and I am pleased to tell the House that there is more to come. Under the \$8 million Suicide Prevention Fund six programs are being funded in rural and regional New South Wales. One of those is in the Central Coast and Newcastle region.

NEWELL HIGHWAY

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (15:09): My question is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. On 8 March this year the Minister referred to the Newell Highway as the "inland spine of New South Wales". This highway was closed for more than six weeks last year due to floods, significantly affecting surrounding communities and local businesses that rely upon it. Will the Minister please advise when this vital roadway will be floodproofed?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (15:10): I thank the member for Orange for his question. It is a very interesting question from a member of a party—the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party—that voted against asset recycling and multibillion-dollar infrastructure going to regional New South Wales.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: That is a very interesting policy position of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The Newell Highway is one of the most important freight routes in New South Wales and Australia as a whole. It stretches 1,058 kilometres from Tocumwal in the south to Goondiwindi on the Queensland border. The flood event that was referred to had a huge impact on the region. About 12 kilometres of the Newell Highway just north of Marsden was submerged below floodwaters for up to six weeks. That flood was considered to be greater than a one-in-20-year flood event. It is estimated that raising the level of the road and installing more culverts or a bridge in this area to achieve flood immunity would cost greatly in excess of \$100 million. I know this because the Government has done the work to analyse what we need to do.

The Government did that work as a result of the work of one person—the member for Cootamundra, who, since that flood event, has regularly raised the issue, in a constructive but passionate way, in our joint party rooms. She has highlighted issues and suggested solutions on behalf of farmers and the community in her electorate. For example, the member suggested that when the Bland Creek is swollen following periods of high rainfall, four distinct cement tunnels running beneath the road would act as a weir, diverting water back onto crops rather than allowing water to flow easily through to Lake Cowal. The member for Cootamundra has come to the Government on behalf of her constituents with solutions and ideas to fix the problem.

I acknowledge the earlier interjection from the member for Murray. He is correct: the area is a huge flood plain. We cannot stop it raining, and nor would we want to. I also acknowledge that the member for Cootamundra brought the Mayor of Narrandera, Neville Kschenka, to meet with me about this issue on 30 March. It was a very positive exchange. He also came up with ideas about natural disaster declarations and the \$2 million in funding that he has been allocated. He made suggestions about how the Government could do more to improve the situation, and we are investigating the issue. The Government is committed to the Newell Highway. In 2015 the Government announced a \$500 million package for the Newell Highway. It was an historic funding package. The Government was able to do that because it had signed up to leasing the poles and wires. Regional New South Wales will benefit enormously from that infrastructure. I remind the member for Orange that his party voted against that.

Mr Philip Donato: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129. How are the Minister's remarks relevant to the question that I asked?

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

Mr Troy Grant: To the point of order: The fact that the member for Orange cannot handle the truth is not a point of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member for Blacktown will come to order. His behaviour is uncouth.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The Government will continue to work with the member for Cootamundra to identify positive suggestions and ideas. The Government is investigating many of the ideas that her community has put forward. We will continue to invest that \$500 million in this important road network.

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

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: The Government will continue these works because the people of New South Wales deserve these upgrades. This Government is not just building for the future; it is playing catch-up after 16 years of neglect by those opposite. We will ensure that New South Wales remains number one.

WESTERN SYDNEY TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:15): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. How is the New South Wales Government ensuring value for money for Western Sydney taxpayers in its Transport budget. Is the Minister aware of any alternative plans?

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order. Those members who are not interested in the answer may leave the Chamber. The member for Maroubra may leave the Chamber.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:16): It is always great to get the last question on a Thursday, and I thank the member for Seven Hills for his sensible question about that sacred responsibility of looking after taxpayers' dollars. Those on this side of the House know how to do that well. I am proud to have fulfilled that contract with the people of New South Wales since our election in 2011. In the electorate of Seven Hills, the Government has three projects underway to improve station access at Wentworthville, Toongabbie and Pendle Hill. It is also great to be delivering upgrades across Western Sydney at Harris Park, Rooty Hill and Homebush. I look forward to the member for Strathfield sending me another thankful tweet about that.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield, the member for Lakemba, the member for Bankstown and the member for Prospect will resume their seats. They will show some respect for the Chamber.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I have a fact for the House. In Western Sydney alone, the Government's financial management has meant that we have been able to deliver 8,623 additional weekly services. We are investing \$1.3 billion on more trains and more services.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: That will massively improve the capacity for train commuters from Western Sydney.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I observe that the Government is getting on with the job when it comes to train procurement, which will also benefit Western Sydney. There are 24 brand-new Waratah trains on the way. The member for Blue Mountains has been misrepresenting the procurement of the intercity train fleet since the day the project was announced. It is necessary for us to upgrade that part of the track, particularly through the Blue Mountains, as there are currently seven sets of trains on the network that cannot run to the Blue Mountains because those opposite never got on with the job of upgrading it.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Given the necessity to have a network that is fit for current and future trains, I was a little shocked to hear that the member for Blue Mountains and the member for Strathfield had promised to tear up the new intercity fleet contract—a \$2.3 billion contract. The Leader of the Opposition also has indicated that he is going to rip up the contract. The shadow Treasurer, of all people, has said that he is going to rip up the contract. As a result, they will spend 25 per cent more of \$2.3 billion delivering those trains and, guess what, they will take an extra couple of years to deliver—that is, if Labor has any capacity to deliver. It is an odd strategy from those opposite: pay more and get less. I thought the intellectual purists opposite were interested not in money but in Australian manufacturing. So I was absolutely horrified yesterday morning to see the shadow Treasurer, who wants to rip up the contract to deliver Australian manufacturing jobs, driving a Hyundai into the Parliament House car park. Guess who is making the new intercity fleet trains? It is Hyundai. Those opposite want to rip up a contract with the makers of the car that the shadow Treasurer drives. I cannot work it out.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. What do Hyundai and cars have to do with a question about public transport?

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. Members will come to order. The Minister has the call.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The shadow Treasurer is running around the community saying, "I am going to rip up a Hyundai contract when it comes to trains but I am happy to drive a Hyundai car." It does not stop there. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Maroubra to order for the third time. I direct the Clerk to stop the clock. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Keira will come to order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Labor members' love affair with Australian manufacturing is over—there is not a Holden amongst them. The members who represent the electorates of Maitland, Port Stephens, Blacktown and Swansea are Toyota drivers. The member for Summer Hill and the member for Strathfield drive a Mazda.

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129, relevance.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The only purist amongst them is the member for Liverpool, who drives an East German Trabant, 1965 model. It puts out some fumes out every now and then.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr Clayton Barr: Respectfully, I realise, Madam Speaker, that you have ruled on points of order regarding Standing Order 129, but the Minister has just read out a list of the cars that Labor members drive in answer to a question about public transport.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: The only time those opposite spend any time in an Australian Holden is when they are in the back of a paddy wagon. We know where the Leader of the Opposition has been, and it is not on the Volvo NightRide bus. Let's call a spade a spade.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat.

Mr Michael Daley: I think we should notify security that the Minister has been stalking people in the car park. If you have time to do that, you are not working hard enough, mate.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will take that as a comment. There is no point of order.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: In closing, I draw to the attention of the House this bit of mendacious propaganda that was issued yesterday after question time by the member for Strathfield. She cannot Google, cannot tell the truth and obviously cannot Airbnb.

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**.

The CLERK: I announce that the following petition signed by more than 500 persons was lodged for presentation:

Retirement Villages

Petition calling on the Government to review the existing legislation governing retirement villages and requesting the appointment of a specialist Ombudsman to relieve the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal system, received from **Mr Alister Henskens**.

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

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:26): As Chair: I speak about the Legislation Review Committee's thirty-fifth digest for the Fifty-sixth Parliament. Thirty-five is a significant number of digests and reflects both the extensive consideration that members of the committee bring to their statutory task of reviewing bills introduced and the regulations made in New South Wales, as well as the accumulated experience brought to the review process. The committee has reviewed more than 160 bills and commented substantively on 27 regulations in the Fifty-sixth Parliament. In this context, it is important to describe a number of key contributing factors that assist the committee in discharging its functions. The committee has a long tradition of reviewing both bills and regulations, and this marks the thirtieth year of the committee's work.

As part of its task, the committee has established practices that ensure that it is well placed to review the Government's busy legislative program reporting to the Parliament in every sitting week on the bills tabled in the previous sitting week. With this hectic schedule in mind, the secretariat and the chair work closely together to ensure that the chair's draft reports on the bills and regulations are prepared quickly and circulated to members as soon as possible prior to each meeting. As part of this expedited process, the committee meets on the first day of each sitting week to ensure that the digest of the reports adopted by the committee can be tabled on the first day in order to inform debate on bills introduced in both Chambers. These committee practices, combined with the expertise and experience of the committee members, ensure that the digest reports tabled have been submitted to a rigorous committee process.

In fact, some members are longstanding committee members with an extensive involvement in digest preparation, which has traditionally been a collaborative and bipartisan process. Given this history of collegiality and collective effort in reviewing reports every sitting week and adopting and tabling the digest of reports each sitting week, members can imagine my disappointment when recent media coverage included reporting on a draft digest that had not yet been considered by a meeting of the committee. It was evident that a journalist had been made privy to the contents of that draft digest in circumstances where such contents were still confidential. The Legislation Review Committee is a joint committee administered by the Legislative Assembly in accordance with the standing orders of this place. Standing Order 300 provides that:

The chair shall prepare the draft report for consideration by the committee and may circulate it on a confidential basis to committee members only. In accordance with Standing Order 297, all committee records, including draft reports, are confidential documents and may be made available to others only by order of the committee, the House or, in limited circumstances, the Speaker. Once reported to the House, committee reports are in the public domain. The public release of any material contained in a draft report prior to tabling and any public exposure of records of the committee without authorisation is a breach of parliamentary privilege and may be referred to the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics and dealt with by the House as a contempt of the Parliament. During the committee meeting on 2 May 2017, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane from the other place, who is a serving committee member, remarked, "I didn't know it was confidential". I find it bewildering that a member of such experience, having taken his seat in the other place on 3 December 2009, apparently did not know this. That is ridiculous and/or complete incompetence. But who am I to judge? I am just the chair. I cannot accept that the provision of the information in relation to the contents of the draft digest was accidental or executed without knowledge of the standing orders.

The media report was, unsurprisingly, inaccurate in its characterisation of the work of the committee and the position of the Government in relation to current and proposed law. But, most disappointingly, it politicised the work of the committee. Members of the Legislation Review Committee work hard to identify and discuss issues with the bills that are introduced in this place. This means we often highlight potential trespasses on personal rights and liberties that arise in Government legislation, and members acquit this function without fear or favour. It is galling to read media reports that, on the rare occasion on which the committee applies its forensic focus to an Opposition bill, accuse Government members on the committee of having a particular political stance arising out of an issue the committee has a statutory function to identify. The committee has now explicitly noted Standing Orders 300 and 297 and, as chair of the committee, I assure members of this place and the other place that I will not tolerate any further breaches of the standing orders. I commend the thirty-fifth digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:31): I make a contribution on behalf of the Opposition to the take-note debate on the thirty-fifth digest of the Legislation Review Committee. I note the comments of the chair, the member for Upper Hunter. From the Opposition's point of view, I think it is important that the work of the committee has been elevated to the level of media reports. The committee often comments on the form of legislation that is drafted by this Government. Time and time again, the committee notes particular items and, time and time again, those items are not addressed by the Government in any way whatsoever—not in debate and not even through the courtesy of a reply to the committee. I will not go through the entire digest, but a matter that

comes up a number of times is in reference to the Gas and Electricity (Consumer Safety) Bill 2017, item 8. The digest states:

The Committee notes a number of clauses in the Bill enable the Minister to create regulations that are contrary to the primary legislation.

We have commented on that several times. It is completely undemocratic of this Government to use legislation to create regulations that are contrary to legislation, outside legislation and at odds with the democratic right of this Parliament to scrutinise the law of the State. Our committee has put that on paper many times but it has never been addressed by any Minister or the Government in draft legislation or in debate. Therefore, I am happy to see the work of the committee elevated to the level of media commentary; I hope we see more of it. As the chair said, the committee does important work, but time and time again the Government ignores the committee's comments.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): Order! The member for Upper Hunter will come to order. He will cease arguing across the Chamber.

Mr DAVID MEHAN: The Government should pay more attention to the comments of the committee. The committee performs an important function. It ensures that legislation introduced in this place does not infringe the rights and liberties of the people of New South Wales. We should pay it more attention. We should not quibble that the work of the committee has been reported in the media; we should welcome it. We should say, "Let us pay more attention to the digest and use it to direct us how to legislate in this Parliament. " I commend the digest to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:34): The purpose of the Legislation Review Committee is set out in sections 8A and 9 of the Act. The committee is meant to be bipartisan. It does not reflect on the politics of legislation or regulation; its job is purely to consider matters raised in legislation. It looks for possible transgressions of people's rights and liberties; it is not about the underlying politics of legislation. Section 8A states:

8A Functions with respect to Bills

- (a) to consider any Bill introduced into Parliament, and
- (b) to report to both Houses of Parliament as to whether any such Bill, by express words or otherwise:
 - i trespasses unduly on personal rights and liberties, or ...
 - ii makes rights, liberties or obligations unduly dependent upon non-reviewable decisions.

The committee may comment on those functions, and this has worked well for a number of years. However, the member for The Entrance continually seeks to politicise the committee and to consider the politics of legislation, which is contrary to the committee's specific role as set out in section 8A. Any breach of the standing orders should be referred to the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics. It is certainly not the role of the committee to refer matters to the media, an action the member seems to be so proud of. When we go down that road, bipartisanship is lost. Members lose the ability to raise issues in the committee and to debate them fearlessly and openly. The member for The Entrance seems to think he has a monopoly on intelligence; unfortunately, his comrades in the Labor Party think the opposite. That has certainly been proven today.

Members of a bipartisan committee should not go behind closed doors and refer matters to the media. The committee's role is to highlight matters for Parliament; it is then up to Parliament to act. The Government of the day will decide. I assure the member for The Entrance that during the fifty-second, fifty-third and fifty-fourth parliaments the Legislation Review Committee raised issues and referred them to Parliament. That is what should happen; there should not be leaks to the media. I think this matter should be referred to the privilege committee. By his own admission, the member for The Entrance leaked to the media; he is proud of it. A breach of the standing orders should be dealt with by the privilege committee. The member's actions are absolutely disgraceful.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (15:38): I make a brief contribution to the take-note debate on Legislation Review Digest No. 35/56. In view of the comments that have been made about the politicisation of the Legislation Review Committee, I ask the chair of the committee to refer any breaches of the standing orders to the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics for investigation. That will settle the matter once and for all.

Report noted.

Matter of Public Importance

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE REMEMBRANCE DAY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (15:39): Today it is with a heavy heart that I join the commemoration of those who held candlelight vigils across our nation yesterday for National Domestic Violence

Remembrance Day, a day to remember those who have died and the ones left behind due to family and domestic violence. The purpose of the candlelight vigil is to bring the community together and to recognise not just the ones who have lost their lives but the ongoing impact on those in our community, and also to pay tribute to the services that work with the victims and survivors. It is also a day of action, calling on all of us to speak out against domestic and family violence and to encourage those experiencing violence to seek support. Family and domestic violence affects every single person in our community. I thank organisations such as Destroy the Joint, which raises awareness in social media and in other forums about the number of women, particularly, who lose their lives due to domestic violence in our community. But we need to remember that every death in our community due to domestic and family violence is one too many.

While men and children are also the victims of domestic and family violence and homicide, on average every three weeks one woman in New South Wales is killed by someone with whom she was in an intimate or domestic relationship. Over the last few years, women killed as a result of domestic and family violence make up something like 80 per cent of all women killed. That is a shocking statistic. In any one year, about 20 women just in New South Wales are killed by an intimate partner or someone with whom they have lived, and these deaths constitute more than three-quarters of the deaths of women in our community. These women are important, every single one of them. They are mothers, sisters, children, siblings, grandmothers, colleagues and friends. They were loved by their families, their friends, their colleagues, their workmates, their customers and people who interacted with them in all of their capacities. They were women who have contributed to our community, and they are now gone.

It is estimated that some 15 per cent of women have experienced physical or sexual violence from an ex-partner, the most likely type of known perpetrator for a female victim. In New South Wales that equates to some 579,000 women, well over half a million women in this State alone, who have experienced physical or sexual violence from an ex-partner. Former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, "There is one universal truth applicable to all countries, cultures and communities: violence against women and children is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable". That is why it is so truly shocking that Australian women are most likely to experience physical and sexual violence in their homes at the hands of a former or current male partner. Our homes should be the safest and most loving places for all of us to be. In our homes we should be surrounded by loving and supportive family members; it is a fundamental human right. It does not cost anything to have someone love you and support you, and it should not cost anything to make sure your partner does not hit you or perpetrate any other form of violence against you.

On Wednesday, Moving Forward Domestic and Family Violence Case Management Services, as part of the National Domestic Violence Remembrance Day, held an event at Parliament House and invited all members of our community, including members of this place, to reflect, acknowledge and honour the women, children and men killed by domestic violence. Just as we did last year, many members of this place joined our community and representatives of the services that help victims and survivors to place roses on the fence outside—red for women, white for children and yellow for men. It was a very sad rainbow of colours, because we lose too many people to this terrible crime. This commemorative day, which has been held for some 20 years in parts of Australia, facilitates our grief and our ability to pay respect. I urge all members to continue to support these vigils in the future.

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (15:44): I speak in support of this matter of public importance on domestic violence. Yesterday was National Domestic Violence Remembrance Day. Outside Parliament House roses were placed along the fence in honour of victims—red for women, white for children and yellow for men. It was pleasing to see that a number of members, including the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, took part and placed a rose on the fence on Macquarie Street. We should all remember those children, women and men who have lost their lives as a result of domestic and family violence. Domestic violence is a heinous crime. It is about power and control. The evidence tells us that domestic violence is rarely a one-off incident; it is a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour. Domestic violence can take many forms: physical, sexual, financial, emotional and psychological. I cannot imagine what it would be like to live in a house not knowing whether your partner will abuse you and living in fear of what happens when your partner is with you.

People should feel safe in their own homes; they should not be in fear of their partner abusing them and subjecting them to domestic violence. This Government and this Parliament are committed to preventing domestic and family violence in New South Wales. The 2016-17 budget doubled the investment in specialist domestic violence initiatives to more than \$300 million over four years. This is in addition to the hundreds of millions of dollars the Government spends each year through mainstream services in justice, police, health, child protection, social housing and homelessness services. Safer Pathways, the integrated multi-agency response to high-risk domestic violence victims, is now operating at 27 sites. If we want to reduce violence for women, men and children, we need to target the perpetrators of violence as we have never done before.

This Government has invested \$22 million over four years to roll out the Police High Risk Offender teams. These teams complement the wonderful work the police already do to target perpetrators and the work of our domestic violence liaison officers. Changing the attitudes and behaviours of perpetrators is essential. The Government has committed \$15 million over four years in non-government organisation-led, community-based perpetrator interventions. This support for non-government organisations is in addition to the \$237 million investment the Government is making to reduce the rate of reoffending in our prisons. It is our obligation as a community to stand up and speak out when we know domestic violence is occurring. We must not protect the perpetrators; we must protect the most vulnerable in our communities, especially the children and the women. I commend the motion to the House.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:47): I support this matter of public importance on domestic violence raised by the member for Maitland. The member is the shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and I thank her for bringing this matter before the House. Yesterday was National Domestic Violence Remembrance Day when members participated in a commemoration at the gates of Parliament House to honour all those who have lost their lives as a result of domestic violence homicide. We remembered those who are left behind and have been traumatised and we committed to the prevention of domestic violence. It is imperative that we stop and reflect upon the harm people experience as a result of domestic violence—violence that is perpetrated by someone they should be able to trust. Today I reflect especially on the harm, hurt and damage inflicted upon the children who are victims and witnesses of domestic violence.

It is widely known that children who live in homes where there is domestic violence grow up with fear, anxiety, unpredictability, tension and pain. These children—and I was one of them—are forced to worry about the future every single moment of their young lives, desperately trying to predict what might happen next and desperately attempting to protect themselves, their brothers and sisters and their mum. The emotional trauma and the psychological injuries can often last a lifetime. On behalf of all the children, I acknowledge in this place the helplessness, the grief, the dread, the anger and tragically sometimes the death of children. As I lay my white rose yesterday with colleagues and the community outside, I was very thankful for the efforts of the Moving Forward team for organising such a symbolic activity. I thank all those who work in the domestic violence sector. It is a tough place to work, both in a climate of funding cuts and amidst horrors. I acknowledge Destroy the Joint, who count and remember dead women. I acknowledge the Australian Services Union and campaigns to both end domestic violence and fight for leave provisions. It is important that we make it stop.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (15:50): In reply: I thank the member for Parramatta and the member for Blue Mountains for their contributions and also the members who are in the Chamber to pay their respects to those we have lost. It is important to pause to remember the women who have survived the violence that has become a daily occurrence in their lives and the children—as the member for Blue Mountains so eloquently spoke about—and the men who are impacted by that. Violence against anyone is unacceptable. It starts in such a small way that it is often unrecognisable until it becomes something that engenders a sense of fear and physical harm on a daily basis. It can start in such a small manner, but it is so easy for victims and survivors to fall into a style of life where the only end to the relationship is death.

We know that women who choose to leave their partners and choose to escape violence are often at extreme risk of death from a partner when they leave. Yet people still ask, "Why don't they leave?" The National Day of Remembrance of Domestic Violence is a day to acknowledge those who have not been able to escape, but it is also to engender in all of us a responsibility to do whatever we can to work harder to ensure that those in domestic violence relationships are able to escape. I specifically did not talk about government funding or government programs because today is a day for victims and survivors who are living this experience on a daily basis. As the member for Blue Mountains articulated, this day is for the services and the workers who work every day to support those people. Every member on both sides of this Chamber knows that there is never enough money for this cause, there is never enough money to do enough. We must all work not to defend how much we have spent and whether it is more than the other side spent but to put more resources into stopping the deaths of women, children and men at the hands of those who would seek to control them and ultimately end their lives.

Community Recognition Statements

NORTH COAST FLOODS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:54): I inform the House that Dundaloo Support Services has raised \$1,115 for the Salvation Army Flood Appeal in response to the recent natural disaster on the New South Wales North Coast and parts of Queensland. The organisation held a fundraiser on 13 April to support the cause. Food and gifts were donated by local businesses, while staff members contributed Easter eggs and chocolates for a raffle. Dundaloo Support Services chief executive officer Shelly Sabey said the organisation wanted to help the Salvation Army appeal in any way it could. She commented, "Everyone at Dundaloo wants to

be part of their community, and raising funds for people experiencing a natural disaster is one way to join with others in making a difference."

Taree Salvation Army captain Louise Beamish had firsthand experience of the devastation of the floods, as she was enlisted in Cannonvale in Queensland to administer emergency relief. She spent a week at recovery centres in the region, distributing food and clothing vouchers for those in need. Ms Beamish said the scene of flattened houses, fences and sugar cane fields was confronting. Dundaloo's donation was presented to the Salvation Army on 24 April. It was a fantastic contribution. Dundaloo's effort and consideration is testament to the wonderful spirit of the Myall Lakes community as a whole.

SWANSEA BELMONT SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (15:55): As a surf lifesaver, I always find it exciting when clubs from around New South Wales come together to compete. It is even more exciting when a local club cleans up. Recently, Swansea Belmont Surf Life Saving Club did a fantastic job hosting the State championships at Blacksmiths Beach, and its members did incredibly well on their home turf. I congratulate the locals who placed in different events over the weekend: Nicholas Stoddart, who claimed six medals; Saxon Coates, who won two medals; Ashby Allen, who won four medals; Kaitlin Rees, who placed in the female under-9 surf race; Xavier Coates, who placed in the male under-10 surf race; Zac McDougal and Sam Murphy, who, along with Xavier, won the under-10 board relay; Ty Leadbeatter, who won the under-11s one-kilometre beach race; Ty's mum, Angela Leadbeatter, who won the female 40 to 44 years two-kilometre beach run; and Ryan Cook, who placed third in the male 35 to 39 years surf race. Well done to everyone at Swansea Belmont Surf Life Saving Club.

JERILDERIE NETBALL COURTS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (15:56): What a great day it was for the community of Jerilderie with the opening of the new netball courts at Monash Park on 22 April. The upgrade of the courts with additional lighting and the construction of new shelters and spectator seating had been a longtime goal of the club. The cost of the upgrade was \$304,000, with funding primarily from the Stronger Communities Fund through the Murrumbidgee Council, together with \$80,000 from the fundraising efforts of the Jerilderie Netball Club. It was wonderful that life members Melinda Rorato, Bobbie Furletti, Kellie Thomas and Zenda Purcell could be present at the opening. I was pleased to be part of the event with the chair of the Murrumbidgee Council Local Representation Committee, Ruth McRae. I also acknowledge the council administrator, Austin Evans, and the operations manager, Denis Gelle, for their efforts and support. Congratulations to Jerilderie Netball Club president Tiffany Sutton and project manager Tanya Rorato for their persistence and dedication. They have achieved a magnificent outcome with the new courts.

ETHNIC COMMUNITY SERVICES

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (15:56): The Ethnic Child Care, Family and Community Services Co-operative in Marrickville is a vital organisation for those from culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] backgrounds. It works to connect services and to ensure CALD residents have access to children's services, aged care services, and services for the elderly or the disabled. It works alongside other fantastic organisations in the inner west, including Community and Cultural Connections, that work to give independence to vulnerable members of our multicultural community. I recently met with key staff at these organisations to learn more about the unique challenges CALD residents face. While the focus of both organisations is very different, they share a common goal: to overcome the barriers faced by CALD people so that each and every one of us can participate fully in community life. During my visit, I was reminded just how challenging and isolating modern life can be if you do not have access to many of the things we take for granted, including support, resources, and language. The staff at both of these organisations are heroes. They are compassionate, professional and devoted to helping their clients achieve their full potential. I congratulate the staff at both organisations on their important work of making our community more inclusive.

PORT MACQUARIE IRONMAN TRIATHLON

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:58): I recognise Port Macquarie resident Nathan Pensini on his efforts to raise funds for juvenile arthritis. Nathan will be competing in this weekend's Port Macquarie IRONMAN in honour of his daughter Alyssa, who suffers from the debilitating condition. Juvenile arthritis is a serious, persistent medical condition of childhood, and research continues into its cause and treatment. Alyssa, now 17, was diagnosed with the condition at 11 years of age. Nathan has competed in many IRONMAN events but says this year will have added meaning for him: "Every time I go out I realise the pain that lasts for 10 to 12 hours or a few days after an IRONMAN for every competitor is the type of pain Alyssa goes through every day". Nathan has arranged a GoFundraise website for the race. On behalf of the Port Macquarie-

Hastings community, I wish him much success with his efforts, both in the Ironman race and in raising funds for this worthy cause.

DHARMA CLOUD MONASTERY

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:58): I recently had the great pleasure of attending a foundation stone laying ceremony with the Australian Buddhist Foundation. Community leaders and special guests were invited to help lay the foundation stones for the construction of the Dharma Cloud Monastery at Horsley Park. Despite the unfavourable weather conditions on the day, the ceremony was well attended, with the people coming from far and wide to take part in this momentous occasion. I commend the Australian Buddhist Foundation for its promotion of a peaceful, harmonious and multicultural community. I look forward to seeing the temple upon its completion.

KU-RING-GAI LITTLE ATHLETICS CENTRE

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (15:59): This Sunday, 7 May, I will attend the Ku-ring-gai Little Athletics Centre presentation day, which will recognise a great year for the athletics centre as well as the individual successes of many children. The centre's fortieth season saw 622 children, aged from five to 16, participate. The Little Athletes performed strongly at a State level, securing 11 gold medals, 15 silver medals and 10 bronze medals. Another 35 top eight finishes were recorded. Three athletes were selected for the Little Athletics NSW State team. This is the second time in the centre's history that three athletes have been selected. These athletes competed on 22 and 23 April 2017 at the Australian Little Athletics Championships, winning two gold medals, a silver medal, and a bronze medal. I congratulate Ku-ring-gai Little Athletics Centre on a strong year, especially the three athletes who admirably represented New South Wales.

GLEBE LIBRARY TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (16:00): I congratulate Glebe Library on its twentieth anniversary. The story of the library, which was officially opened on 19 April 1997, is the story of a group of big-thinking people in the neighbourhood who spread the word and raised funds to keep the old Sydney Hospital site in the community's hands. The library came into being as the result of an inspiring community campaign, backed by the local chamber of commerce, which included local people selling raffle tickets to help raise the funds for the council to purchase the site from the State government. This great library and community space has been continually and successfully used to this day. This wonderful library is the result of incredible hard work and dedication by many local people, including leaders Christine Newton and the late Tanya Iverach, and committee members Dr Elizabeth Hindmarsh, local architect Alison Chiew, Robin Lawrence and Marie Mackie. These powerful women have remained friends to this day.

SOUTH COAST WINTER WINE FESTIVAL

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (16:01): I take this opportunity to encourage all members and parliamentary staff to visit the South Coast this June long weekend and experience the South Coast Winter Wine Festival. Celebrating its fourteenth year, the festival sees the region's cuisine and wines on display as thousands of visitors flock to the South Coast, driving up our local successful tourism industry. From 10 to 12 June, nine of the region's wineries open their doors to showcase the best the South Coast has to offer. Visitors will experience live music, long lunches, winemakers' dinners, market stalls, art exhibitions, wine education talks, vineyard tours, barbeques and more. Well done to the festival's sponsors: Integrity Real Estate; Macey Insurance Brokers; Unicorn Cheese; 96.5 Wave FM; Radio 2ST; and Power 94.9 FM. I congratulate this year's organisers, who ensure this event is a success each year and that it grows from strength to strength.

ST GEORGE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH PRAYER SERVICE

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:02): On Saturday 22 April, it was my solemn honour to attend a service at St George Coptic Orthodox Church, Kensington, to pray for the martyred and wounded following the shameful bombing of two Coptic Orthodox churches in Tanta and Alexandria, Egypt, on 9 April 2017. Nearly 50 people were killed and many more were wounded when Daesh struck innocent civilians praying on Palm Sunday, one of the holiest days in the Christian calendar. When evil seeks to menace the most basic right of freedom of worship, we stand in solidarity with those who mourn, no matter the differences of our beliefs. This is part of what it means to be an Australian. The Scriptures tell us that, "Deceit is in the hearts of those who plot evil, but those who promote peace have joy." I thank the leadership of St George Coptic Church, particularly Bishop Father Marcos Tawfik, Father Rafael Iskander, Father Matthew Attia, and Father Kyrillos Farag for the solemn honour of joining them in remembering the departed saints. May the peace they seek bring them joy.

AUSTRALIAN BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS JUNIOR TITLE

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (16:03): I congratulate Casuarina teenager Ethan Hartwig. Ethan has set his target to represent Australia in the 2020 Olympic Games. Earlier this month that target became even more within reach when Ethan won the 80 kilogram national junior under-17 title at the Australian Boxing Championships in South Australia. This title is recognised throughout the world under the International Boxing Association. It offers Ethan a direct path to the Olympic Games and Commonwealth Games selection. I congratulate Ethan on an amazing result from all his hard work.

WOLLONGONG HOSPITAL PET SCANNER

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:04): I draw the attention of the House to the wonderful work of Fay Campbell, who has been a tireless stalwart in the fight for better health care and an Illawarra activist for over 40 years. Fay has served as the chairwoman of the Illawarra PET committee, which fought tirelessly to secure a PET scanner for Wollongong Hospital. The addition of this new \$2.5 million machine has drastically improved the detection of cancers and heart and brain diseases. More recently, Fay has taken up the fight to ensure this medical technology is made available to all members of the community. We stand with her in this fight. Fay is also the chairwoman of the Illawarra Thoracic Committee and has been instrumental in ensuring that the Illawarra has access to a dedicated thoracic surgeon. Literally thousands of members of the Illawarra have benefited from Fay's hard work, commitment and dedication over many years. I look forward to her continued commitment and advocacy for our local community.

TRIBUTE TO MERLE PHILLIPS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:05): I congratulate Merle Phillips, who recently celebrated her 100th birthday in typical daring style. Merle went on a helicopter joyride the day after she turned 100. Last Friday, I dropped in on her birthday party and joined her family, including Tony and Collette Phillips and Jennie, Peter, James, Gus and Ellie Wilkinson. Merle's grandson Gus had travelled all the way from London to be there. I also caught up with Merle at the Maitland Park Anzac Day Service, which she has attended for many years. Merle enlisted as a nurse during the Second World War, achieving the rank of lieutenant and working alongside Lieutenant-Colonel Vivian Bullwinkel. I nominated Merle to attend the Jean Arnot lunch last year. It was lovely to honour her, Beryl Capp and Edna Millett from Maitland at this very special event, which celebrates women over 90 years of age who have done work throughout our community to improve the status of women. This year's nominations open next week, and I urge all members to submit the names of women in their electorates.

TANGARA SCHOOL FOR GIRLS MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (16:06): Last Friday, 28 April, I had the pleasure of attending a performance of *Mary Poppins—The Broadway Musical* performed by students of Tangara School for Girls. It was a fantastic night. I compliment the stars of the show: Isabel Fernandex-Villaverde played Mary Poppins; Rachel Chedid played Bert; Christabel El-Rahi, who gave an outstanding performance, played Miss Andrews; Sarah Kennaugh played Mrs Brill; and Erika Mercado played Robertson Ay. These performances cannot happen without the generous support of teachers and parents. I acknowledge the many parents involved in fundraising for the event and those who worked backstage to ensure that it was a success. It was supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

WYONG HOSPITAL PRIVATISATION

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:07): On Wednesday 26 April, health workers and passionate community members came together outside Wyong Hospital to hold a candlelight vigil to protest the Government's plans to privatise the hospital's operations. The event was supported by health workers and the unions that represent them. I congratulate and thank the Health Services Union, the Nurses and Midwives Association and the United Services Union for all their fantastic work in fighting for their members and our community. I also thank the wonderful performers at the event, Quin Carter and Brad Hughes. The reception from those who attended and those who drove past was huge. They made their voices and horns heard. The community has once again made its view clear and sent a message to the Government: Wyong Hospital is not for sale.

TRIBUTE TO JACKIE LENZ

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:08): I acknowledge Jackie Lenz of Kangaroo Valley. On 20 March 2017, Jackie celebrated 30 years as the official caretaker of the Kangaroo Valley Showground and all its associated facilities. For Jackie, it has been a labour of love and dedication, and most of her time is spent working well beyond the call of duty. She is an outstanding volunteer and most of her work is unpaid. She mows, gardens, sweeps, cleans toilets, maintains the community hall as if it were a piece of fine furniture, and handles all the bookings and inquiries. Jackie is a true unsung community hero. She does not seek recognition for her efforts but she is certainly deserving of it. Today, on behalf of a very grateful Kangaroo Valley community, we salute and

thank Jackie Lenz for her 30 years of dedicated community service. She is a great member of a wonderful community.

HAWKESBURY HEIGHTS WALKING TRAIL

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:08): Today I acknowledge the members of the Hawkesbury Heights community who have worked with me to improve the access and amenity of Hawkesbury Road for local residents. The Hawkesbury Heights community have been asking for a walking track for years. This vital and relatively simple infrastructure is desperately needed. In 2015 NSW Labor committed \$100,000 for a walking track between the Hawkesbury lookout and Winnalee shopping centre along Hawkesbury Road. I call on the State Liberal Government to do the same. This pathway will benefit kids who walk or ride to school, parents with prams, walkers and older people who access this route regularly. I particularly acknowledge residents, including Melinda Pearse, Kathleen Denbrok, Gerard Murphy, Dan Dunn, Lynette Monahan, Rebecca McHardy, Kerry Herger and Kim Dwyer for their persistence. I acknowledge the efforts of Susan Templeman, the Federal member for Macquarie, in seeking funding for this project. I also acknowledge Councillor Shae Foenander. I pay my respects to Allan Hyslop, who passed away recently. He walked the road each day. I acknowledge his contribution to the community.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (16:09): I recognise the valuable contribution of Meals on Wheels New South Wales, which supports some of the most vulnerable in our society. There are eight Meals on Wheels services in my electorate. They are at Cowra, West Wyalong, Temora, Cootamundra, Junee, Coolamon, Narrandera and Young. I thank the team at Young whom I visited recently, including David Parr, Jane Hogan, Julie Leoflath, Trudy Griffiths and president Jim Reeves. They and their 180-plus volunteers do a tremendous job. I encourage our Federal colleagues to ensure this vital service is funded in this year's budget so it can continue its phenomenal work in supporting the elderly and infirm and those with limited ability to provide for themselves. Thank you, Meals on Wheels, for your support of regional communities such as those in the Cootamundra electorate.

ANZAC COMMEMORATIONS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:10): On Anzac Day I joined the Consortium of Tamil Associations for its very special multicultural community's commemoration of Anzac Day at Ring Rose Park in Wentworthville, accompanied by a number of members of Parliament, including the member for Parramatta. As the daughter of a serviceman, Anzac Day is incredibly important to me. It is very special that this community of new arrivals to Australia put on a special Anzac Day commemoration of their own. That community has recently endured the horrors of war so it is particularly touching that Tamil Australians join us in acknowledging the sacrifices our ancestors made to make Australia a free, safe and democratic society that we call home. My thanks go to the president and the committee of the consortium for their kind invitation to attend Anzac Day this year.

PRIX DE LAUSANNE BALLET COMPETITION

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:11): Today I acknowledge Jessi Seymour of Bonnet Bay, who was a finalist in the Swiss ballet competition Prix de Lausanne, which took place earlier this year. Jessi is a young, aspiring ballerina who has been dancing since she was two years old. She joined the Sydney's Alegria Dance Studios full-time when she was only 14 years old in order to take her dancing more seriously. Recently she was asked to visit the Royal Ballet School in London and was selected out of 338 candidates to compete against 35 other countries in the Prix de Lausanne. Amazingly, she finished as one of the 20 candidates to qualify for the finals as a most promising talent. The extraordinary level of success that Jessi has achieved is due to hundreds of hours of dedication and hard work. I am proud to be the member for Miranda and to witness the incredible talent from our young, aspiring professionals growing up around the shire. I congratulate Jessi on her remarkable achievement and look forward to following her journey as she strives to achieve her dream of becoming a professional ballerina.

BOISHAKHI MELA FAIR

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:12): Shuvo Noboborsho—happy new year! The Boishakhi Mela fair was held at Tempe Reserve on Saturday 8 April, celebrating Bengali New Year. The event was a huge success and ran for the entire day. I wish the New South Wales Bengali community a happy, prosperous and healthy new year and congratulate the organising committee, the Bangabandhu Porishad Australia, led by Mr Alam, and his fantastic volunteer committee on the huge success of Boishakhi Mela Fair. Thousands of people from across Sydney turned out to celebrate Bengali culture, dance and music. With so many people coming together to celebrate Bengali culture, dance and music with their families in our multicultural Australia I feel that

I can say on behalf of everyone in this place that Australians are beneficiaries of multiculturalism. This diversity strengthens our community. Thank you to the Bangladeshi Australian community for your contribution to Australia.

WORLD MASTERS INDOOR ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (16:13): Today I recognise the incredible sporting achievements of Selina Ellis, a Berowra Heights local, and Janet Naylor from Berowra Waters. Selina and Janet competed in the World Masters Indoor Athletics Championships in South Korea and came back with outstanding results. Selina competed in the 60-metre sprint, the javelin, pole vaulting and the hammer throw. Selina then went on to win the women's 45 years pole vault championships, which is an incredible feat, especially at an international level. Janet also excelled at the championships in South Korea, taking home a gold medal for her part in the women's 50 years 4 x 200 metre relay team. For Janet, this was her fourth time as the team manager for the Australian Masters Indoor Athletics team. This was an exceptional accomplishment and her involvement in the team demonstrates her dedication to the success of Australia's team. We are very lucky to have these world champions and gold medallists in our area. I thank Selina and Janet for representing Australia. Congratulations to both locals for their outstanding sporting achievements.

SYDNEY GAY AND LESBIAN MARDI GRAS EVENTS

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:14): The Metropolitan Community Church in Petersham provides a welcoming space for all community members, particularly those from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning [LGBTIQ] communities who feel excluded elsewhere. I was pleased to attend the inspiring blessing of the Mardi Gras service at the church this year, to address the congregation and to inspect the works done to the facilities through the support of a New South Wales Government Community Building Partnership grant. Thank you to Reverend Gavin Ward and board members Brad Fisher, Raymond Holmes, PJ Dwyer, Joey Yung and Sara de Rooy for all that you do.

It was also my great pleasure to wave the rainbow flag at the Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby Rainbow Run this year with other members of the New South Wales parliamentary friends of LGBTIQ group. Congratulations to all the participants who came out to run in cold and wet conditions and congratulations to the lobby's Lauren Foy and Chris Pycroft, the many volunteers, the infamous Rainbow Run Drag Queens, Dykes on Bikes, DJ Sveta and emcee James Brechney for their fabulous contributions and to the Sydney Park Café, which kept participants pumped with coffee.

WOOLLOOWARE GOLF CLUB LEGACY DAY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (16:15): I congratulate Woollooware Golf Club on successfully hosting its fifty-sixth annual Legacy Day on Saturday 28 April with 128 players, which concluded with a very moving flag ceremony. Many members would be familiar with the outstanding services Legacy has provided to Australian service personnel and their families since the organisation's inception in 1923. Legacy provides support to approximately 70,000 families of veterans who have died or been injured while serving our country. Over the lifetime of this event Woollooware Golf Club has raised almost \$1 million for Legacy. This year's event raised a very impressive \$24,000. This is an outstanding achievement. I congratulate Woollooware Golf Club and president Shirley Herbert on continuing to show strong support for Sydney Legacy, particularly as the demand for Legacy's vital services continues to grow.

KARATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:16): I recognise JKS Sydney and the karate event that it conducted on 22 April at Liverpool. The opening ceremony featured contributions from, amongst others, Sheikh Ibrahim Chafei; the Japanese Consul-General in Sydney, Keizo Takewaka, as well as the Consul, Kazuma Hatano; and JKS President Gayeth Al Shelh. The master of ceremonies was JKS Sydney secretary-manager Kim Al Shelh. The event featured a Japanese champion, Sensei Yasuhisa Inada. This was an interesting event for a number of reasons. The emphasis upon developing sporting opportunities for young people, especially focusing on self-discipline and self-control, is one pursued enthusiastically by JKS Sydney. There is also a quite interesting human exchange through sport between people who do not necessarily understand the language of other participants. Finally, it was a classic example of multicultural Liverpool: the Japanese Consul-General and a Japanese karate champion with young men and women in what is usually an Islamic college, with an Arabic-speaking crowd in attendance, to be covered by a Bangladeshi community newspaper.

SCHOOL MAINTENANCE FUNDING

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (16:17): I congratulate the Premier and the Minister for Education on their announcement earlier this week to

blitz the maintenance backlogs in schools across New South Wales. This is the second biggest injection in maintenance backlog spending in the State's history. I welcome a record \$1,550,000 funding injection for Colo High School in the electorate of Hawkesbury. This investment will ensure that those schools with the greatest need receive the most urgent attention. This is another fine example of the New South Wales Government fixing the mess Labor left behind. We on this side inherited a massive Labor deficit of approximately \$1 billion, but through our work we can improve and deliver the services the people of New South Wales need and invest in Hawkesbury for the next generation. I congratulate Colo High School on receiving this much-needed funding boost. I look forward to visiting them in the future. I am very excited to see these vital upgrades to their school take shape.

IRAQI AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES FORUM

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:18): Recently I was fortunate enough to meet with committee members of the Iraqi Australian University Graduates Forum led by President Dr Bushra Alobaidi and including one of my constituents, Mr Edward Rowell. The forum is a non-profit, professional-social firm founded in 2008. It represents Iraqi graduates of Australian universities and helps unify different sections of the Iraqi Australian community. The committee consists of Iraqis from Mandeian, Assyrian, Muslim and Christian backgrounds to name a few and welcomes both Shia and Sunni. The forum proudly supports women's rights as well as Iraqi artists, with regular events showing off their achievements. Another important function of the forum is to provide support services for the settlement of Iraqi professionals and academic migrants, as well as assisting its existing membership in integrating effectively into the Australian culture so that they can be proud citizens who understand their rights and duties. Their flagship event is the annual Iraqi Cultural Festival. I happily thank and acknowledge the Iraqi Australian University Graduates Forum for their outstanding contributions to our society.

NSW ALL SCHOOLS STROKE PLAY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:19): I inform the House that Wingham's Reid Brown claimed the NSW Combined High Schools Sports Association silver medal on the first day of the NSW All Schools Stroke Play Championships, held at Taree golf course on 3 May. Reid finished the day with a score of 145. Reid had two pars, a birdie and an eagle on par four. The Wingham local sparked a friendly rivalry with the product of the Central Coast, Jordie Garner. Despite finishing day one in overall fourth, Jordie claimed the gold medal for the Combined High School class ahead of Reid. St Clare's High School's Pyper Hollis from Taree finished well, with a score of 178. We have some wonderful young talent in the golfing community of Myall Lakes, and I wish them well in their upcoming competitions.

ANZAC COMMEMORATIONS

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:19): On behalf of everyone who attended a dawn service, the Anzac march through the streets of Wollongong or the memorial service at the Wollongong Town Hall, I thank the volunteers involved in making the commemorations of Anzac Day in Wollongong such a special event again this year. In particular, I acknowledge and thank the President of the Wollongong RSL Sub-Branch, Peter Poulton, as well as Doug Johnson, Kim Kearney and Joe Davidson for their coordination of events on the day. I also acknowledge and thank David Paloff, President of the Vietnam Veterans Association Illawarra Branch for arranging the service on Flagstaff Hill on the evening before. That service was addressed by Melva Crouch, who reflected on her years of service as a peacekeeper. It was the first time that a peacekeeper had addressed the service. It was also great to see a number of younger veterans participate in Anzac commemorations this year. It reminds us all that in the same way that we remember those who have passed on, we need to support those who remain as they deal with the injury, trauma and scars of their involvement in conflict and peacekeeping operations.

MULWALA WATER SKI CLUB

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (16:21): Congratulations to the board, management and staff of the Mulwala Water Ski Club on their success in the recent Australian Club Entertainment awards held in Sydney. Their commitment to live and free entertainment won them the venue award for excellence and commitment to entertainment. The Mulwala Water Ski Club is renowned for its wonderful live band performances, and their new facilities make the venue one of the best in southern New South Wales. I send special congratulations to Greg Hough, Cathy Randell, Kaye Ferguson and Chief Executive Officer Peter Duncan on their dedication and service to the club.

WAYAHEAD MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION NSW

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:21): I commend WayAhead Mental Health Association NSW for its 85 years of work to increase community awareness and understanding of mental health issues. This is also the tenth anniversary of WayAhead's workplace health network, WayAhead Workplaces. This community-based charity organisation provides information like the Mental Health Support Line, WayAhead Directory, mental

health factsheets and education seminars, anxiety support groups and self-help anxiety courses throughout New South Wales, and coordinates mental health promotions such as Mental Health Month, workplace activities and Perinatal Depression and Anxiety Awareness Week. WayAhead plays a key part in an innovative shared office with mental health consumer group Being and carers group ARAFMI in Woolloomooloo in my electorate, which provides support for smaller organisations working with common purpose. I am proud to support this initiative. WayAhead's work is vital and I thank all those involved since its establishment for their commitment to support, inclusion and recovery.

AUSTRALIAN JILLAROOS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:22): I recognise and congratulate Port Macquarie resident Simone Smith on her selection to the Australian Jillaroos Rugby League team. Having already claimed the Port City Breakers club and Group 3 player of the year awards, Simone then moved on to be selected for the Indigenous All Stars and was then selected for the Newcastle Knights women's team. Simone has been on the cusp of national selection for some time and has now been selected for the vital position of halfback. Simone will make her debut on Friday night as part of the double header women's and men's Anzac Rugby League test matches in Canberra. A somewhat shell-shocked Simone said she is honoured to be representing her region and country whilst crossing the goal of becoming a Jillaroo off her bucket list of achievements. I wish Simone Smith all the best in her future sporting endeavours while proudly representing her country.

KATHY'S KITCHEN

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:23): I acknowledge the tireless and inspiring work of Kathy Low, an amazing woman with a passion to address one of the most important issues confronting children today. Kathy Low is the founder and driving force behind Kathy's Kitchen, which is the school canteen at Blairmount Public School. Kathy has a passion for healthy, homemade and natural food. With no set menu, Kathy is constantly coming up with new and creative ways to inspire healthy eating amongst the kids at Blairmount Public School. With statistics showing around 22 per cent of children aged between 5 and 16 are overweight or obese, the prevalence of the issue remains high and of serious concern. Programs such as Kathy's Kitchen are a positive and proactive step to counteract the growing concerns with childhood obesity. It helps to foster an understanding and appreciation for a lifelong passion for healthy and nutritious eating. Meeting people like Kathy is without doubt one of the privileges of my job and a reminder of the many wonderful and amazing people we have in Campbelltown and throughout our State.

AUSTRALIA MY COUNTRY COMPETITION

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:24): On Saturday 13 May I will attend the awards ceremony for the Australia My Country competition run annually through the Forestville RSL Club. The competition encourages students in years three to 10 to enter an artwork, poem or essay. The entry should reflect the Anzac sacrifice, loyalty, history, service, and pride in being Australian. The competition is a great opportunity for students to engage with Australian history in a creative and diverse way and pay respect to the Anzac memory. I congratulate the students who have participated in the competition this year and commend the Forestville RSL, under the leadership of sub-branch president John Scifleet, for another successful year running the event for the local community.

TURKISH WELFARE ASSOCIATION

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:25): I acknowledge the Turkish Welfare Association. The association was established in 1973 by members of the community with a Turkish background. The association's activities include education and social activities and various social services. They aimed to assist Turkish migrants to Australia. The association now reaches out to other Turkish-speaking nations, including North Cyprus, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, as well as Uyghurs and Turkish speakers from Kirkuk in northern Iraq. The association held a friendship dinner on 7 April at premises at Gelibolu Parade, Auburn, which I was happy to attend. The invitation was extended to me by the association's long-term and well-known president, Besir Karasu. I acknowledge the association's secretary, Ezel Jupiter, and the association executive. I acknowledge others present including: Mehmet Saral, who has been involved with the Affinity Intercultural Foundation; Hakan Evecek, the Director of the Australian Turkish Advocacy Alliance [ATA-A]; and Baris Atayman, Executive Secretary of ATA-A.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID ANDREW CARTY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:26): David Andrew Carty was born in 1971. He was raised on a property outside Parkes in the Central West of New South Wales. He always had aspirations of joining the police force and was elated when he was accepted into the NSW Police Force on 20 February 1994. On 18 April 1997, Constable David Carty had finished his late shift and enjoyed the company of other work colleagues at the local

pub. Later that night, at approximately 2.10 a.m., as he was leaving the hotel, Constable Carty was set upon by a number of offenders and stabbed to death. Senior Constable Michelle Auld, who had gone to his assistance, was also seriously assaulted in the cowardly attack.

Constable Carty's death sent shockwaves through the local Fairfield community and the NSW Police Force. Both Constable Carty and Senior Constable Auld were awarded the Commissioner's Valour Award. At the time of his death, Dave was 25 years of age. Dave was well liked and respected by his colleagues. He was loved by his close friends and adored by his family. Dave had a dry sense of humour and could make anything using his hands. Dave is survived by his mother, Lorraine, brother Paul and sister Janine, sister-in-law Monique and brother-in-law Phil. He is loved by his extended family and friends. We thank him for his service; it will never be forgotten.

SYDNEY KOREAN FESTIVAL

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:27): I acknowledge the Korean Australian community, which has made an enormous contribution to Australia and to my electorate of Canterbury. On Sunday 2 April I had the privilege of joining the Consulate General, the member for Strathfield, Jodi McKay, and the Hon. Ernest Wong at the Sydney Korean festival at Darling Harbour in Sydney. The festival showcased the unique history of Korea and provided an experience of Korean music and culture and the chance to try delicious Korean cuisine. I congratulate the festival committee, the performers, and the many other people involved in creating such a wonderful event. I am very proud that schools in the Canterbury electorate teach the Korean language, with Campsie Public School offering a bilingual Korean class. Labor supports the teaching of second languages. I support the teaching of Korean in my electorate and other electorates.

SUTHERLAND ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:28): On 4 March 2017, the Sutherland Astronomical Society celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. The Astronomical Society was formed in June 1961 and is one of the two founding organisations of the National Australian Convention of Amateur Astronomers. In 1967 the society was granted occupancy of the present site at Green Point Reserve where the members built an observatory. Over the years the members of the society have collectively discovered two comets and two novae. I congratulate the current society President, Craig Goulden, on creating a society that actively promotes observational astronomy in our local community. This includes a number of public star-viewing nights and an annual practical astronomy course. I joined astronomical society members as they buried a time capsule which will be retrieved in 25 years. Originally the forefathers were to bury a time capsule at the time the library was constructed, but they forgot. It is lovely to see their wishes carried out 50 years later. I congratulate Sutherland Astronomical Society for their efforts over the past 50 years and wish them even greater success for the next 50 years.

MOUNT PRITCHARD PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:29): Last week I was pleased to attend Mt Pritchard Public School to present school leadership awards to the school captains and prefects. I was very impressed with the intelligence and maturity of these young leaders, who all have bright futures ahead of them. The presentation of these awards coincided with the school's assembly commemorating Anzac Day and the spirit of those gallant heroes who sacrificed everything so that we all could have a better future. All the parents and teachers were impressed with the good behaviour shown by students, from the smallest kindergarten kids to the year 6 students. Even some technical issues with the public announcement system did not distract or cause any disruption to the behaviour of the children. Wreaths were laid in the school's memorial garden, the flag was raised, and it was back to the classrooms. Congratulations to the school teachers, leaders, all the students, the principal and staff at Mt Pritchard Public School.

Petitions

SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Discussion

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (16:30): Here we are again. The last time we were here we delivered more than 17,000 signatures; this time there are 10,000 more. I thank the members of the Chinese, Lebanese and Indian communities for having the courage to speak out. These parents were quite rightly outraged at the ideologically charged Safe Schools program, which was nothing more than a radical left-wing recruitment drive and an attempt to mainstream the dangerous pseudoscience of gender fluidity. The parents of our multicultural communities have spoken loud and clear and we are lucky to have an outstanding Minister in Rob Stokes, who is present in the House, who is prepared to listen to them. He has abolished Safe Schools and proposes to replace it with a broad-based anti-bullying program, a solution that is much more in accord with

community expectations. The game is up. We have already seen this week a campaign led by a group of celebrities—some of the most privileged and potentially out-of-touch people in the world—openly admitting that Safe Schools was an ideologically charged program and promising it will be different next time if the Prime Minister brings it back. In an open letter to the Prime Minister, which is accompanied by 4,500 signatures online, the signatories said:

We understand and accept that programs implemented in recent history, such as Safe Schools have become highly politicised and controversial. We wish not for controversy but for a program with a goal that everyone can agree on: an end to bullying and domestic violence in Australia.

...

In a marked distinction from Safe Schools, the group says a new program should be advised by a board of experts handpicked by Education Minister Simon Birmingham, and consult paediatricians, education specialists and criminologists rather than sociologists.

The question must be asked however: Why did it have to come to this? We should hang our heads in shame that this program ever saw the light of day, let alone that there were those who saw fit to allow it to be used in schools. Today we must ask for greater accountability from those who are charged with writing those programs, those who are assessing their suitability and those who are funding them. Parents deserve better than this if they are to retain the trust that they place in our schools. Of course, today we will witness outrage, concocted hysteria and disruption and we will hear name calling and emotive and dishonest arguments to try to stop us from thinking. They will try to lead us to believe that there is no other way possible to address bullying than this thinly veiled Marxist program, and they will treat those who disagree with hostility and contempt. That is the level of respect they have for parents' rights and for those who signed these petitions.

Parents can now see that we have their back. The silent majority is not so silent any more. Mainstream Australians expect representation. They deserve representation, and the Coalition is here to provide that. I can assure them that the members opposite, obsessed with political correctness and identity politics, show that they do not want or deserve the support of parents and the wider community. The removal of this program has been a long fight. There are those who have been desperate to silence the debate through name calling and hostility which is, of its own nature, bullying. There are some in Labor and The Greens who have nothing but contempt for the Coalition and the everyday mums and dads whom we represent. I say to Luke Foley and to those in Labor who continue to support Safe Schools: If they are so intent on trampling the rights of parents and dismissing their concerns, if they are so committed to joining The Greens on the fringes of the far Left, and if they are so determined not to represent the interests of mainstream Australians, make it an election issue. Tell the people of Australia that they want to bring back the program because The Greens need to be exposed for the radicals they are.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:35): In September last year we discussed an almost identical petition. Since then, the new Minister has announced that Federal funding for the current Safe Schools program will run out in June and it will be replaced by a new anti-bullying strategy to be implemented later this year. I will not stoop to name calling and to throwing barbs across the Chamber; this discussion is about trying to find a solution. In some senses, much has changed since the previous debate. But we should also remember that so many significant aspects of the debate have not changed at all. NSW Labor will continue to assert that it is a right of every single child, regardless of their gender, sexuality, race or religion, to enjoy a school environment that is free from bullying and discrimination and one in which they feel confident, comfortable and safe.

I speak in this discussion as someone who has worked in schools. My entire career prior to entering politics was spent working in schools, especially secondary schools, where the issues that we are discussing today are particularly relevant. My observation is that most schools, led by their principals and teachers, do a pretty good job of recognising their diverse student populations and already have a focus on inclusion and preventing bullying and discrimination as a general issue. But we must remember why the Safe Schools program was created and remind ourselves that the risk for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex [LGBTI] students has not gone away and their teachers still need help in supporting them. The program came about because of the disproportionate number of bullying incidents directed at those students, which had terrible consequences in terms of mental health, self-harm and suicide.

As I noted recently on radio, LGBTI students can be especially vulnerable, not just at school but also in their families and communities. We need to support them and their teachers and principals, many of whom are very committed to student welfare but feel ill-equipped to deal with these issues. This petition demands that any future program be run by the Department of Education. I have no issue with that. In fact, I think it is a step forward if it means that the department is going to take some ownership to get this right. I have been greatly disappointed about the disproportionate level of controversy surrounding this program. My observation is that there has been a lot of misunderstanding and, in some cases, a vacuum of information that former Ministers and the current incumbent have been content not to fill.

Parental concern on all sides of the issue has not been properly addressed, understood or explained. NSW Labor is supportive of requiring resources, guides and information to prevent all bullying, including of LGBTI students, to be incorporated into a broader anti-bullying and support framework for students and their schools. But we insist that this not become an exercise of burying any mention of LGBTI kids; they are not invisible kids. They are, as are all students in this State, valuable members of society and of the school communities that we serve. During the discussion of last year's petition, I reflected on the contribution of a remarkable young woman, Georgia Valis, who is a former student of Burwood Girls High School and a proud Christian now studying at the University of Sydney. In 2015 she wrote a touching opinion piece in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. She talked about the process of coming out as a young gay woman in a school environment. Pleasingly, that school environment, when put to the test, proved to be truly inclusive and affirming. I will quote her again because her words are still relevant and remain a sobering reminder of what is at stake. She said:

Being a gay person attending school is not a philosophical issue—but forcing gay students to a life of invisibility and lies is. We forget that discrimination of LGBTI students, denying them role models and visibility, is the first push towards poor health and death; from suicide, drugs or alcohol, or social death as they pull away from the mainstream altogether. Schools are incredibly complex places and I know that many members on both sides of the House have worked in them. I would like to think they bring with them an understanding of the complexities that schools face. Schools are complex and growing up has always been a complex process. Life is more grey than black and white. We train our teachers to be respectful and supportive professionals who are able to deal not only with the academic needs of their students but also with their wellbeing. That is an important point. I still firmly believe we need to ensure that principals and teachers are well supported in their efforts to create a supportive and inclusive environment for all students, especially those who are most at risk from the harmful effects of discrimination and bullying. This approach is heading in the right direction if it means that all students feel school is a place for them, where they feel safe, secure and supported. But we cannot just lump everyone in together. We know that within the framework very specific things need to take place. Every single child is somebody's child and every single child is important. We have a role and a responsibility as educators to make sure that every single person has a place and that no-one falls through the cracks.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! The member with the call will be heard in silence. Members will treat each other with respect.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:40): I say at the outset how pleased I am that the Minister for Education is in the Chamber for this discussion. When I became Parliamentary Secretary for Education, fighting against bullying in our schools was one of my top three priorities. I was a student with a fairly obvious disability, so I know what it is like to be different and to be on the end of unfortunate jibes and bullying. Bullying will never be tolerated in New South Wales public schools, whether it be because someone is overweight, they have a disability, they are from a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex [LGBTI] background, their skin is a certain colour or for any other reason. Students and parents should expect that schools are places of safety. Schools remain some of the most secure and trusted public institutions in our community, as they should be. Students who are struggling in our schools, for whatever reason, need support and should always receive it in the New South Wales public school system. I am sure that is something all members of the House can agree on. Schools are places where knowledge should be imparted, but not ideology.

The Safe Schools program masquerades as an anti-bullying program when so much of its materials are anything but that. The Safe Schools Coalition is constantly linking to all sorts of web pages, sites and resources that would shock all parents. One site regularly referred to is the Minus18 website. Their page on how to bind your chest is not something I would consider an appropriate resource. It also goes on to link to other sites such as "The Tool Shed," which is an international erotic toy store. Bowing to public pressure, that link was removed by the Safe Schools Coalition. We also need to look at some of the chief driving forces behind the Safe Schools Coalition. A major group behind Safe Schools is the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, and one of its main figures is La Trobe University sexologist, activist and Marxist Roz Ward. At a conference on Marxism last year in Melbourne, Roz Ward bragged about how she developed the Safe Schools program for the express purpose of implementing Marxism in the classroom. She has spoken repeatedly about how she wants to use the school system to agitate for Marxist economic and social policy. She said:

To smooth the operation of capitalism the ruling class has benefited, and continues to benefit, from oppressing our bodies, our relationships, sexuality and gender identities alongside sexism, homophobia and transphobia. Both serve to break the spirits of ordinary people, to consume our thoughts, to make us accept the status quo and for us to keep living or aspiring to live, or feel like we should live, in small social units and families where we must reproduce and take responsibility for those people in those units.

I want all our schools to be safe schools for all students. But the Safe Schools program should serve as a reminder that the role of the education system is to impart knowledge to all students in an accepting and tolerant environment. As for many of the controversial elements championed by the Safe Schools Coalition, I respectfully argue that the focus of the program ignores many of the other causes of bullying while advancing ideology over outcomes.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:43): The news that the Safe Schools program will be discontinued after the Federal Government pulled its funding comes as a blow to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex

[LGBTI] community, who understand its value to young people. They understand what it means to young LGBTI children coming to terms with their diverse sexuality or gender; they understand what it means to teachers struggling to find the best way to support kids in their classrooms who are subjected to demeaning bullying; and they understand what it means to us as a society that the program represented a move towards a more progressive and respectful Australia. I pay tribute to the many people who work so hard to bring greater respect and acceptance to our schools. I acknowledge the many researchers, educators, activists, students and parents who continue to make our schools safer for everyone. Bullying and intimidation by anyone, anywhere and for any reason is utterly unacceptable.

We must act to stamp out the harassment of young people in schools regardless of whether it is on the basis of appearance, race, religion, disability, class, sexuality or gender. Our classrooms and playgrounds should be where our kids feel safest. They should be positive and nurturing environments in which kids can learn and thrive and develop the social skills that make for harmonious and respectful communities. We know that the reality is far from that. I will strip back the politics of this debate and refer to the experts. A 2015 University of South Australia study revealed that 20 per cent of school-aged children regularly experience bullying. The Centre for Adolescent Health says that kids who experience bullying are three times more likely to have depression. The Australian Human Rights Commission notes that 74 per cent of the bullying experienced by young LGBTIQ kids occurred at school and 89 per cent of that was in high schools.

The organisation beyondblue notes that LGBTI people, youth in particular, have the highest rates of suicidal thoughts and 50 per cent of gender diverse people will attempt to commit suicide in their lifetime. A young LGBTI person is 14 times more likely to commit suicide. That is the enormity of the problem that faces us. The facts are clear and it is time for the politics to end. We cannot let kids who have diverse sexuality or gender be punching bags. We need a program for our schools that is developed in full consultation with key LGBTIQ, health, education and advocacy groups. That program must specifically support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer kids and their families. We must work together to send a clear message that no student should ever be intimidated or bullied at school because of who they are or who they love.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:46): By leave: On behalf of The Greens I join debate on this petition with sadness. It has been disheartening to watch the crusade against the Safe Schools program that aimed to prevent bullying against vulnerable young people, promote acceptance and understanding of diversity and tell lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer [LGBTIQ] young people and students from diverse families that they are welcome and safe in New South Wales schools. It is disheartening to read the content of this petition today. When programs like Safe Schools are attacked, it has a real impact on the young people who have relied on such programs to support them. When opponents of Safe Schools say that homosexuality is not natural or normal, they are sending a message to those young people that we do not accept them or they are strange and weird. That is not something any young person needs to hear. Government members speaking in support of this petition are sending a damaging message.

I call on the Premier and the Minister for Education to make a clear statement in support of LGBTIQ young people to combat the damage done by the bullies in their party who are fuelling this scare campaign. Bullying or discriminating against someone based on their sexuality or gender identity is unacceptable at an individual level. When amplified by shock jocks in media outlets and elected members of this Parliament, that behaviour is downright shameful. To the young people hurt by this I say that The Greens, members on our side of the Chamber, so many in the community and I stand with them against the bullies. Like those young people, we know the cultural diversity of the LGBTIQ community. We know that those who experience racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia need to be united in rejecting all forms of bullying discrimination. We know that diversity is not something to be tolerated but something to be celebrated.

School is a difficult time for young people as they begin to understand who they are, start to discover themselves and think about their future. During that time young people must feel safe in their community and their school. When a young person questioning their sexuality or their gender identity hears ugly criticisms of programs designed to help them, immense harm is done. This week a new fund designed to prevent programs targeting at-risk LGBTIQ people was announced by the New South Wales Government. The Government recognises this is a problem. We should not be cutting resources to support LGBTIQ young people; we should be doing everything that we can to reduce this harm. Last time this issue was debated, my colleague the member for Balmain raised the voices of young people in this place. It is the young people who are being hurt by these actions. There have been genuinely damaging activities, and I call again on the Premier and the Minister for Education to send a message of support to LGBTIQ young people that, despite the harmful words that have been said, they support these young people and they will ensure that they are safe in schools.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:50): By leave: School is a vital part of development and the impact of discrimination, unfair treatment, abuse or bullying on young people at school can have lasting impacts.

Countless studies have shown that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex [LGBTI] students experience high levels of verbal and physical homophobic abuse at school. The Australian Human Rights Commission 2015 Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Rights report, launched by Federal Attorney General George Brandis, identified that young LGBTI people face unique challenges at school because of their sense of difference, LGBTI status and the attitudes of peers and families during a vulnerable developmental phase. It is no wonder that LGBTI people have the highest suicide and self-harm rates in Australia.

The Safe Schools Coalition program worked to reduce discrimination towards young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or same sex attracted. The program provided teachers with evidence-based materials developed to suit various age groups in line with the Australian curriculum. It is voluntary and each school can select whichever material suits students' needs. The program operated in government and non-government schools, as it still does, including faith-based schools. Evidence shows that students benefited. Claims that Safe Schools does not have parents' consent, violates rights, contains inappropriate content and is forced on schools are false. It is unfortunate that scare campaigns sought to play on parents' fears about children's safety and had an impact on the funding of this important resource.

The way the New South Wales Government announced the replacement of Safe Schools with a broad anti-bullying resource was also concerning because it created fear not confidence in LGBTI communities. Doing it via tabloid media by a commentator who actively campaigned against Safe Schools looked a lot like the Government was making a politically motivated decision at the expense of vulnerable LGBTI people. Indeed, the lack of information left many with the view that the bullies had taken away an anti-bullying program. As a result, I know the Government's new program will be scrutinised by people across the Parliament and the community. I welcome the New South Wales Government's commitment for a comprehensive anti-bullying resource, with an LGBTI-specific component developed in consultation with advocacy groups.

I have recommended groups like the AIDS Council of New South Wales [ACON], the New South Wales Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, 2010 incorporating the gay and lesbian counselling service, the Gender Centre, Rainbow Families, and the Organisation Intersex International. The program will complement other initiatives such as gay-straight alliances and Wear it Purple in targeting discrimination of vulnerable young people. I hope that the resource is a success and that materials get used. I call on this Parliament, the Federal Parliament and the media to stop using the lives and wellbeing of LGBTI youth as a political football, as we are seeing today with this petition, which is based on nothing more than misinformation. History shows that Australians are at their best when they celebrate diversity, support those in need and call for their fellow citizens to be treated equally and fairly. We are at our worst when we do the opposite.

Private Members' Statements

RESIDENTS VERDICT—NOT DODGE CITY SCREENING

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:53): I report to the House the public screening of a film entitled *Residents Verdict—Not Dodge City*. The film was screened at the Miller Community Centre in Miller Square, off Woodward Crescent, Miller, on Friday 21 April. This film was made in partnership with a number of groups, including the 2168 Residents Action Group, the Community 2168 Project, the 2168 Project, the 2168 Food for Life market and the Community Star. There was help from other community members as well. The executive producers included Joan Silk and Galavizh Ahmadina. Funding came from Liverpool City Council, via Miller Art and Fact, with some additional funding from Community 2168 and in-kind support from the Centre for Health Equity Training, Research and Evaluation [CHETRE]. The film has an extremely interesting genesis, which is to be found in a film from 1973 entitled *Whatever Happened to Green Valley?*

The 1973 film was written and directed by Peter Weir and produced by Anthony Buckley. It was funded through Film Australia and shot on 16 millimetre film. That film was interesting in a number of ways. It was groundbreaking in technique because it gave cameras to residents of the Green Valley Housing Estate to film aspects of their own lives rather than simply have them as objects filmed by others. Then, as now, areas like Green Valley were the targets of tabloid media shock-and-horror stories, which focused on entertainment rather than on news and had zero regard for the residents such as those living in Green Valley. The tabloid media in the 1970s referred to the area as Dodge City, among other unflattering descriptions.

The area was written off in mainstream tabloid presentations. Construction of the Green Valley estate commenced in 1961 and finished in 1965. The film is set 12 years after construction commenced. It also contained an hilariously funny spoof with Peter Weir dressed up as a tabloid news reporter for a segment called "Valley Of Doom". Weir had a lot of fun sending up the tabloid media of the day. At one point he paddled around in a rubber dinghy referring in truly tabloid terms to the social disaster of Green Valley as "the *Titanic*". His satire was powerful as well as being extremely entertaining. The actual result of the residents doing the filming was very

different to the tabloid presentations. Residents are seen in a struggle to create a better life for their children and having increased space, although facing financial worries and confronting issues about inadequate services.

Regrettably, some things do not change. Tabloid media coverage of the electorate that I represent still occurs and often inaccurately focuses on issues that portray an altogether different picture of the suburbs concerned. I have particular memories of media coverage about a decade ago that was promoted and exploited by former Minister Costa. A group of community-based organisations thought it timely to replay the Weir film at a public meeting to discuss the film and whether there was any contemporary resonance. There was to be a public discussion to follow the screening focusing on community strengths, social inclusion, community pride and the stigma imposed on the area. The public screening occurred in April last year with about 80 or so residents present, including me, as well as a number of people from the 1973 film and community meeting.

In fact, the filming of the community discussion which formed the basis of the film *Residents' verdict: not Dodge City* was screened in April this year. Interestingly, the screening occurred in a facility that had been refurbished by a Community Building Partnership grant. The audience for the 2017 screening included Dorothy Shard, who was in the 1973 film. A comparison of the films is interesting in a number of different ways: the continuities are very strong; the resilience, aspiration and community spirit identified in the 1973 film continues to be part of contemporary Green Valley; and residents think the area was pretty good in 1973 and that it continues to be pretty good. That is not to say it was perfect then and that there were not issues to be faced either in 1973 or now. To quote Colleen Boler, chair of the 2168 Residents Action Group, "it was and still is a great community." Ken Twomey, whose mother Dot was a star of the 1973 film and who himself grew up in the area, said in words that gave the film its title, "It's not Dodge City".

The 2017 screening commenced with a minute's silence for the passing of Eileen Neale, a community resident and activist whose funeral had tragically occurred earlier that day. Eileen featured in the film. She told how devastated she was in the early 1970s when she was told she would have to move to Miller. However, within two weeks she never wanted to live anywhere else. She also had some harsh words for the Liberal Federal and State governments, especially over their incomprehensible decisions about the hub community health facility. This is not to say there have not been changes since the 1970s. There have been changes in family structures, there are issues about mental health and substance abuse, and there is much greater cultural diversity. As Eileen said, the vast majority of people living in the area were fine. Our area has a healthy mixture of people and, in Eileen's words, that is good.

One good example is Bernadino Siry who came to the area in 1990 from East Timor. He loves the place and is very happy. But not everything was or is perfect. Rosheen Saunders spoke of police not taking domestic violence seriously and of levels of racism towards Aboriginal people. Rosheen is seen in the film sitting next to Del Leslie, a well-known Aboriginal community activist. George Smith noted that the Busby to Miller bus service is still inadequate and that council still needed to install footpaths. I was fascinated by Debbie McNamara's stories about Banks bush and growing up in the area. She was in the film sitting next to her mother, Irene, and her sister, Heidi. I also note her mention of her late father, John, who was a good friend of mine. One of the other interesting stories came from Charlie and Mel Fruen. Charlie is a youth worker at Miller. When he started he was told by his manager that he would not last two weeks; nineteen years later he is still there. Miller and Green Valley are great places to be. The film I have reported gives a much fairer presentation than does the tabloid media.

PRINCES HIGHWAY UPGRADES

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (16:58): On many occasions in this Chamber I have spoken about the Princes Highway and its importance to the South Coast. As the region's transportation spine, the Princes Highway drives the local economy, from the transportation of goods to carrying hundreds of thousands of visitors to the Shoalhaven's 49 towns and villages at peak tourist times. In various addresses to this House, the member for Kiama and I have highlighted tragedy, injury and death on a major road which is simply not keeping up with the growing needs of a growing region. Between April 2009 and March 2014 there were a total of 2,045 recorded crashes, of which 953 were recorded as casualty crashes, resulting in 38 fatalities. One death is too many.

Having been the member for South Coast since 2003, for eight years I saw significant underinvestment in the Princes Highway from a Labor government that simply did not care about the needs of South Coast residents. However, since 2011 the story has changed dramatically, and I am really pleased about that. Record funding continues to be delivered for our region in order to improve major sections of the Princes Highway. Over the past six years, the New South Wales Liberal Government has delivered long overdue major upgrades to the Princes Highway at South Nowra, Gerringong and Termeil Creek. Minor works have been completed to improve the intersections along the Princes Highway at Browns Road and Flinders Road, South Nowra, and Little Forest Road, Milton.

This term we will complete planning for and commence construction of the Albion Park Rail Bypass, thanks mainly to the continued efforts and advocacy of the member for Kiama; complete the expansion of the Foxground and Berry bypass to a four-lane divided carriageway; work with Shoalhaven City Council to develop and improve pedestrian and cyclist access and facilities in Nowra; complete planning and commence construction of a new Shoalhaven River crossing; improve information to motorists through the use of variable message signs and other intelligent transportation systems; and, pleasingly, finally complete construction of the \$58 million replacement bridge over Burrill Lake. Work continues to improve dangerous and precarious sections along the Princes Highway to ensure the safety of motorists in the first instance and also to ensure this corridor transports families and visitors to their destinations in the quickest time possible. On 13 April I had the opportunity to inspect and open improvements made to the Princes Highway at the Log Cabin near Tomerong.

The New South Wales Liberal Government allocated \$1 million to make safety improvements in that area, widening the highway to accommodate a new southbound right-turn bay into the service station and installing arrangements to ban northbound overtaking. There is a long history of southbound vehicles being hit from behind while waiting for a break in traffic to turn into the service station, while head-on collisions between vehicles have also occurred. In fact, this section of the Princes Highway in the five years to July 2015 has witnessed seven crashes resulting in four injuries, including one very serious injury. Working with Roads and Maritime Services, Shoalhaven City Council, local business owners and the community, I was pleased to secure the necessary funding from the New South Wales Government to improve this section of the highway. Whilst major works are necessary, these minor works are essential to continue to increase safety for local motorists on this important highway.

The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government continues to work with all stakeholders to deliver a safer and more efficient Princes Highway. In August 2016, the Roads and Maritime Services released the Princes Highway Corridor Strategy, a vision for the Princes Highway and the actions that should be achieved over the next 20 years to improve the performance of the Princes Highway and meet the specific corridor objectives. Setting out short-, medium- and long-term priorities for a series of works and studies, this important strategic document ensures that the Princes Highway will cease being a political football and that the current Government and governments of the future are guided by a plan to manage and direct the development of the road corridor to improve safety, traffic efficiency and sustainability.

However, I put this Government and any future government on notice that as the member for South Coast I will hold them all to account every single day for the delivery of this plan. One death is too many, and I have seen too many deaths of former students, friends and relatives along that corridor of the Princes Highway. It is incumbent upon this Government and the Federal Government to invest in the Princes Highway and, in particular, for the Federal Government to match the latest announcement of \$50 million for the new river crossing at Nowra. Of course, \$50 million is just a drop in the ocean; however, let the bidding war begin. Let us hope that the Federal Government can match and double that investment. We need a new bridge over the Shoalhaven River, so let us see whether those amounts will be included in next Tuesday's Federal budget.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:03:4): I congratulate the member for South Coast and the member for Kiama on their great work. In government they have fought hard to deliver record funding for the Princes Highway and the Berry bypass, after 16 years of inaction from the previous Labor Government. I congratulate these local members of Parliament, who, as community advocates, time and time again come into this House to fight hard on behalf of their electorates. This Government delivered in the last State budget almost \$74 billion over the next four years for much-needed infrastructure and record spending in the Health, Roads, Transport, and Education portfolios, and much more. I congratulate the member for South Coast on her great work.

RURAL FIRE SERVICE PRESENTATION

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:04): I recently had the honour of attending the Rural Fire Service medals presentation at Taree. The 87 recipients who were presented with medals and clasps have given 2,137 years of service. The ceremony was conducted by Cam Baker, who was joined by Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers, Anthony Day from the State Emergency Service, Randall Grawne from Marine Rescue, and Jim Coulduck—who is known as the mayor of Moorall Creek—and his wife. Members of the Rural Fire Service do much more than fight bushfires; they also fight structure fires, attend motor vehicle accidents, and help out at all types of disasters. Many of them have fought fires throughout New South Wales, interstate and overseas. A number of members of the local Rural Fire Service recently travelled to the Northern Rivers to help out with the floods.

Honoured on the day were: Bruce Blackburn, from the Kings Creek Brigade, who received a National Medal for 18 years of service; Janice Kempe, from the Diamond Beach Brigade, who received a National Medal for 18 years of service; Andrew Gatehouse, from the Moorall Creek Brigade, who received a National Medal for 23 years of service and a Long Service Medal and 1st Clasp; Jason Donkin, from the Seahampton Brigade, who

received a National Medal for 24 years of service and a Long Service Medal and 1st Clasp; Bruce Kerry, from the Burrell Creek Brigade, who received a National Medal for 38 years of service and a 2nd Clasp; Geoffrey Ayling, from the Burrell Creek Brigade, who received a National Medal for 40 years of service, 1st and 2nd Clasps, and a Long Service Medal 3rd Clasp; Alfred Snowden, from the Tinonee Brigade, who received a National Medal and 3rd Clasp for 50 years of service; and Douglas Weller, from the Nabiac Brigade, who received a National Medal and 1st, 2nd and 3rd Clasps for 54 years of service, and a Long Service Medal 4th Clasp. In addition, Ian Bartholomew from the Bulga-Singleton Brigade, and William Evans from the Wallaby Joe and Bulga Brigades received a Long Service Medal for 10 years of service.

The following people received Long Service Medals for 11 years of service: Robert Eddie from the Moorall Creek and Bundeena Brigades; Frances Kellner from the Gloucester Catering Brigade; Kathryn Pilgrim from the Gloucester Great Lakes Communications Brigade; and Nathan Williamson from the Currumbark Brigade. Ronald Dando from the Johns River Brigade, and Jason Newport from the Taree, Wallaby Joe and Mid Coast Community Engagement brigades received Long Service Medals for 12 years of service. Robert Butler from the Wallaby Joe and Bulge brigades, Stephen Timewell from the Johns River Brigade, and Gregory Walker from the Burrell Creek Brigade received Long Service Medals for 13 years of service. Martin Davies from the Diamond Beach, Tinonee, Davidson and Berridale brigades, John Dorrington from the Wallaby Joe, Mid Coast Community Safety and Manning Aviation Support brigades, Joanne Eddie from the Moorall Creek Brigade; Christopher Goodridge from the Burrell Creek Brigade; and Aatto Pietlainen from the Johns River Brigade received Long Service Medals for 14 years of service.

Further, Lorin Bradford from the Currumbark Brigade; Calvin Dever from the Currumbark Brigade; Christopher Golla from the Currumbark Brigade; John Docherty from the Bulga Brigade, Beverley Gallagher from the Mitchells Island Brigade; Michael Height from the Bulge Brigade; Timothy Kennedy from the Wallaby Joe Brigade; Glen Payne from the Johns River Brigade; Lindsay Segal from the Moorall Creek Brigade; Paul Segal from the Moorall Creek Brigade; Bob Stegh from Currumbark Brigade; and Ian Thorpe from the Killabakh Brigade received Long Service Medals for 15 years of service. In addition, Matthew Conomos from the Currumbark Brigade and Keiron Gatehouse from the Moorall Creek Brigade received Long Service Medals for 17 years of service. Leslie Butler from the Mitchell Island Brigade, Darren Godwin from the Johns River Brigade, and Daniel O'Gorman from the Moorall Creek Brigade received Long Service Medals for 19 years of service. Judith Hilverda from the Wherrol Flat Brigade and Philip McGilvray from the Coopernook Brigade received Long Service Medals for 20 years of service. Kelvin Bridges from the Moorall Creek Brigade and Jim Cliffe from the Currumbark Brigade received Long Service Medals for 21 years of service.

The following people received Long Service Medals for 22 years of service: Jeffrey Nicholls for service with the Bulga Brigade; Christopher Sheed for service with the Bulga Brigade; David Matthews for service with the Tinonee and Stratford Brigades; and Iain Sutherland for service with the Killabakh Brigade. The following people received Long Service Medals for 23 years of service: Ian Martin for service with the Wherrol Flat Brigade; John Meldrum for service with the Old Bar Brigade; and Brian Styles for service with Nabiac Brigade. Wayne Brown from the Wherrol Flat Brigade, Rhonda Delaney from the Moorall Creek Brigade, and Michael Munns from the Marlee Brigade received Long Service Medals for 24 years of service. In addition, Barry Forrest received a Long Service Medal for 25 years of service with the Killabakh Brigade; Lesle Zanardi received a Long Service Medal for 26 years with the Wallaby Joe Brigade; Brett Moore received a Long Service Medal for 27 years with the Bobin Brigade; Robert Cowley received a Long Service Medal for 28 years with the Bulga Brigade; Fay Moore received a Long Service Medal for 29 years with the Bobin Brigade; and Christine Yarnold received a Long Service Medal for 25 years with the Bobin Brigade.

Robert Pope received a Long Service Medal for 31 years of service with the Rural Fire Service; Barry Sandwell received a Long Service Medal for 25 years of service; Robyn O'Meara received a Long Service Medal for 31 years of service; and Brian Joyce received a Long Service Medal for 36 years of service. The following people received a Long Service Medal for 40 years of service to the Rural Fire Service: Denis Cuneo; Jeffrey Bower; Lyndon McCarthy; and Peter Plain. Elevenia Simeon and John Simeon received a Long Service Medal for 42 years of service; James Anderson and Alan Moore received a Long Service Medal for 43 years of service; Damien Kuik received a Long Service Medal for 45 years of service; Donald Gibson and Edward Gibson received a Long Service Medal for 51 years of service; Elaine Alley received a Long Service Medal for 52 years of service; and Ronald Smith received a Long Service Medal for 61 years of service.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! I remind the member for Myall Lakes that the time limit for a private member's statement is five minutes. If the member has 30 minutes worth of material he should cut it down to five minutes.

UNDEREMPLOYMENT

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (17:11): I refer to an article that appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 20 March 2017 by Anna Patty, entitled "Underemployment skyrockets to 1.1 million Australians". In that article workplace researcher Professor John Buchanan from the University of Sydney Business School said that the number of people who are underemployed had increased from about 176,000 in the late 1970s to 1.1 million, according to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures released the previous week. In 1978 more people were unemployed than underemployed: 430,000 unemployed compared with 176,000 underemployed. Today more than 748,000 are unemployed and 1.1 million are underemployed. While unemployment reflects cyclical booms and busts in the economy, Professor Buchanan said underemployment was more structural in that employers were creating more jobs with part-time hours. He went on to say:

It is not just cyclical, it is structural, which means employers are building jobs which are dependent on part-time work and often people can't get enough hours.

It's not just a sign of a weak economy, it is a structural problem in the quality of the job offers.

The February figures show that 304,000 people across New South Wales were underemployed. The high underemployment rate deserves attention for a range of compelling social and economic reasons. On an individual level, research has found that underemployed workers are more likely to exhibit lower job satisfaction, higher job turnover, poorer mental and physical health, and persistently lower income. Furthermore, underemployed workers are overwhelmingly employed as casuals, with little job security and negligible superannuation accumulation. Banks are severely adverse to extending credit to individuals lacking secure and sufficient income, which means underemployed individuals often find themselves trapped in rental accommodation with little chance of breaking into the housing market.

Underemployment is not evenly dispersed across different demographics—for example, women are overrepresented in the underemployment figures. Another group hit hard by the growing trend is young people. Aside from women and young people, other groups found to be at risk are immigrants, people with a lower educational attainment and individuals living in rural areas. This is of concern to me and people throughout the Central Coast because the Central Coast participation rate has fluctuated between a low of 53 per cent in August 2000 and a high of 61.6 per cent in November 2006. In August 2015 the participation rate stood at 57.5 per cent on the Central Coast, below both the New South Wales participation rate of 63.3 per cent and the Greater Sydney participation rate of 65.7 per cent. The two-year average participation rates were 59.6 per cent for the Central Coast, 65.7 per cent for Greater Sydney and 63.2 per cent for all of New South Wales.

Since August 2000, the unemployment rate in the Central Coast has fluctuated between a low of 5.1 per cent in January 2011 and a high of 7.9 per cent in February 2005. In August 2015 the rate was 6.1 per cent higher than the New South Wales rate, which was 5.9 per cent, and the Greater Sydney rate, which was 5.2 per cent. The average unemployment rate for the Central Coast was 6.5 per cent, 5.3 per cent for Greater Sydney, and 5.7 per cent for New South Wales. The rate of youth unemployment for the Central Coast was also above the rate of Greater Sydney and New South Wales. In the most recent unemployment figures from March, the rate for New South Wales is 5.1 per cent while that of the Central Coast is 5.4 per cent. Youth unemployment was at 12 per cent for New South Wales and 16.6 per cent for the Central Coast.

Creating more full-time jobs has to be the number one priority for governments of any persuasion, no matter what political party is in power and whether at a State or Federal level. Recently I have begun writing to prominent organisations and retailers inviting them to visit the Central Coast and the Wyong electorate, in particular, to see the advantages of locating or relocating their operations to our area. The first targets have been Google, Costco and Ikea. The Central Coast is currently home to more than 320,000 residents and is accessible to many more potential customers in the western Lake Macquarie area, including Morisset. I will continue to talk to companies about the advantages of locating on the Central Coast to create better employment opportunities.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:16): I thank the member for Wyong for his speech on the difficulties with unemployment in the Central Coast region. The only solution to reducing unemployment on the Central Coast, across Sydney, New South Wales and Australia is a Liberal-Nationals government.

Mr David Harris: So why are the figures going up?

Mr MARK COURE: They are not. Members on this side of the House have seen record spending on infrastructure, education, health and transport not only in Sydney or in the southern and western suburbs but also on the Central Coast and across rural and regional Australia. That record spending on infrastructure is decreasing unemployment and increasing employment.

SYDNEY FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (17:17): Today I wish the mighty Sydney Football Club [FC] well in their A-league grand final match against Melbourne Victory this Sunday at Allianz Stadium. It is no secret that my family and I are passionate supporters and we will be there cheering on our team on Sunday. Of the 27 games Sydney FC have played this season, they have won 20, drawn six and lost one. Although I am not bitter, I was at the one they lost and was very dubious about the result. They finished the season as premiers and as the competition's highest goal scorers. I congratulate them on this wonderful, historic achievement thus far. Sydney FC have a very successful history. Since the club's official launch in late 2004, it has won two A-league championships, in 2006 and 2010, and two premierships, in 2009-10 and this season.

Sydney FC have played in the Asian Football Confederation [AFC] Champions League group stage three times and qualified for the knockout stage once. They will return to the AFC in 2018. Sydney FC also hold the distinction of being the only club to have won the A-league as well as its two affiliated competitions: the women's league—and all credit to them for that wonderful success—and the National Youth League. The team knows the job is not done yet and I look forward to them finishing the most outstanding A-league season in history this Sunday night. There are many differences between this year and our last grand final appearance against Victory, with this playing group being the best Sydney FC has fielded to date. The coaching and support staff have done a remarkable job. Unlike the last appearance, 40,000 people in sky-blue jerseys will be cheering their team home this year.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Name them.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: That will come next week. I look forward to Sydney FC putting to bed the ghost that was the 2015 grand final and ensuring that Victory players are sent home to Melbourne with their tails between their legs. I acknowledge the outstanding members of the Sydney FC team this year. They have worn the sky-blue jersey with pride. They are Andrew Redmayne, Danny Vukovic, Alex Wilkinson, Jordy Buijs—

Mr David Harris: They are all Mariners.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: There are a couple of successful Mariners there. I will continue with the rest of the team: Michael Zullo, Aaron Calver, George Timotheou, Sebastian Ryan, Rhyen Grant, Joshua Brillante, Miloš Dimitrijević, Miloš Ninković, Brandon O'Neill, David Carney, the great Brazilian Bobô—Deyvison Rogério Da Silva, and Bernie Ibini-Isei. The wonderful captain that has led the team so well this year is No. 14, Alex Brosque. I continue: Matt Simon and George Blackwood, Filip Hološko—an outstanding asset to our team, Charles Lokolingoy and Bai Antoniou. I also mention our wonderful coaches: head coach Graham Arnold, who has taken a great group of men to an outstanding historical season; assistant coach Steve Corica; head of strength and conditioning, Andrew Clark; and head goalkeeping coach, John Crawley. John has set records, with the least amount of goals scored against us this season.

The players and coaches would be the first to acknowledge all of the trainers and staff who have helped out this season. I acknowledge the A-League football manager, Terry McFlynn. He has done an outstanding job. With respect to the support staff I mention Mike Conway, who is the mental analyst. Mike is a friend of mine. He is someone for whom I have the utmost respect. He has ensured the team's psychological growth and health and has built on Sydney FC's positive mentality game in, game out. I know that Mike will be with the boys again this Sunday night. I also acknowledge Scott Barlow, chairman of the board, and all board members, and chief executive officer Tony Pignata. Finally, I wish the boys well. I know that they will do a fantastic job and finish what they started. I acknowledge family friends Mick and Ann Elisha and their wonderful children, young Mick, Isabella, Matt and Christian, who have been supporters from day one, as well as Sydney FC sponsors from the beginning Australian Careers Business College. They too will be there cheering the boys on.

MANLY ROTARY FUN RUN AND WALK

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:22): Today I wish to share with the House the great work Rotary does in all of our communities and especially in my electorate of Manly and also speak in support of the upcoming Manly Fun Run and Walk on 21 May. Now in its eighth year, it will raise a significant amount of money for a wide variety of local charities and organisations. The route of the fun run is one of the most spectacular in this State. Starting and finishing on Manly beachfront, the run presents a wonderful opportunity for people to enjoy the surrounds of Manly. The Rotary Club of Manly is an active supporter of many local charities that are doing incredible work in our community. The importance of this fun run cannot be overstated as it raises much-needed funds for community organisations throughout Manly.

The Rotary Club of Manly is a pillar of the Manly community. Over time, the club has received a variety of awards, including the Significant Community Service Project Achievement Award from Rotary International. That award goes some way in demonstrating the tremendous work the members do for the community. I wish

Manly Rotary the greatest success possible for the Manly Fun Run and Walk. Along with thousands of others, I am looking forward to the event. I will be running, albeit slowly, in the 10-kilometre event, but there are also two- and five-kilometre events where everyone is welcome to walk or run to help raise much-needed funds. The important charities and organisations supported through the Manly Fun Run include the Clontarf Foundation, the Manly Community Centre, the Manly Women's Shelter, Pioneer Clubhouse in Balgowlah, Royal Far West, Sailability Manly and Stewart House in Curl Curl.

Rotarians have a motto, "Service above self", and Manly Rotary certainly does that. I have seen firsthand the important work that the recipient organisations do in the community with Rotary support and it is my great honour to speak for them today. I encourage members in this place to support the run on Sunday 21 May. The Manly Rotary Club has a committed president and executive team. I acknowledge the president of Rotary Manly, Richard Schroder, and event organisers Enza Prestipino, Maggie Shanahan, Doug Miller and Ted Waters for their efforts in organising the fun run. I look forward to working with these organisations to ensure they continue to receive support in their service to the community of Manly. Registration for the fun run is open online until 20 May at manlyfunrun.org. I look forward to seeing the community support a truly worthy cause while having good fun in beautiful Manly.

I take this opportunity to speak of the mighty Manly Marlins Rugby Club and to express my support for the season. The Manly first-grade team currently sits at the top of the Shute Shield competition table. The Marlins have an unbeaten 5-0 record this season. As they were runners up last year, things are looking positive. I wish them all the best for the match this weekend against Randwick to be held at Manly Oval. I acknowledge the incredibly generous contribution of Mr John Hinton. John is a significant supporter of the club and has been for more than 35 years. John has supported the club in a variety of ways, both financially and through other means. John—or, as he is affectionately known, Swansea—became involved in the club in 1982 and since that time has become part of the fabric of the Manly Marlins. Of particular note is his support of more than 100 players to gain career opportunities outside rugby. On behalf of the club and the community I say thank you, John.

CABRAMATTA ELECTORATE MULTICULTURALISM

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (17:27): South-west Sydney, including Cabramatta, Fairfield and Prospect, is a melting pot of cultural diversity, a proud area of hardworking families and communities who get along harmoniously and respectfully. The recent attacks on multiculturalism by disgraced former *Sky News* employee Mark Latham are not only offensive and abhorrent but misleading and deceptive. Mark Latham is the former member for Werriwa and had an office in Liverpool. I saw Mr Latham in the Cabramatta-Fairfield area only once or twice during that time. I did not see him mixing with his neighbouring councils. We need to set the record straight about multiculturalism for the sake of the people of Cabramatta and south-west Sydney. We must give people from outside the area the correct impression.

I am fortunate to represent the electorate of Cabramatta in this place. I am of Serbian extraction and was born in Egypt. I came here as a refugee and now represent an electorate filled with more diverse cultures than one could imagine. Although Cabramatta is probably most well known for having large Chinese and Vietnamese communities, it should not be forgotten that it is home to many people of Lao, Khmer, Spanish, Islander, Arabic, Assyrian, and Turkish backgrounds. When I first arrived, Cabramatta was populated by Serbs, Croats, Anglos, Italians, Greeks and Maltese. There are now new migrants from Sudan, other parts of Africa, Syria and many other places. All of these cultures, each of these people, enrich our way of life in south-west Sydney and make Australia a better nation. If members were to walk through or drive down John Street in my electorate, they would see that Mark Latham's comments are disingenuous. His sensationalism is just a blatant ploy to keep himself in the limelight. His arguments are illogical and his implications offensive.

Each day in Cabramatta there are old Eastern Europeans eating and shopping at predominantly Asian stores. Temples, mosques and community halls adorn almost every street. I probably attend more temples and mosques than I do my own Christian church. That is what makes our area great and proves that multiculturalism has been a success. People come to Cabramatta on organised food tours. Schools from other parts of Sydney and New South Wales visit Cabramatta to soak up the atmosphere and experience the culture for themselves. The temples also offer tour visits to schools from outside the area in an effort to share their religious customs and cultures. Rugby league superstar Jarryd Hayne, who is of Fijian background, played his junior football for the Cabramatta Two Blues. Former Soccerroo and English Premier League player Harry Kewell honed his skills locally amongst many different cultures at St Johns Park High School and then at Westfield Sports High School. Imagine that, Australia's finest football export taking the stories of multicultural Western Sydney to the world.

Harmony Day is celebrated once a year in most places in New South Wales but every day is Harmony Day in Cabramatta and south-west Sydney—the expression of vibrant colours through cultural festivities, the amazing range of food from different countries, the blend of different experiences as people from

one culture interact and socialise with those from another and, most importantly, the friendships that bind us all as migrants who have come to this country hoping for a better life, who have been educated and nurtured here, who have worked hard and contributed to Australia economically and culturally, and who have had children who carry on their own cultural traditions and learn about new ones every day. That is why multiculturalism is not only an amazing story but the Australian story. For Mark Latham to criticise one of the basic fabrics of Australian society simply confirms why people do not like him and why most people do not listen to anything Mark Latham has to say.

SUTHERLAND FOOD SERVICES

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (17:31): I congratulate the staff and volunteers at Sutherland Food Services Meals on Wheels, who this year are celebrating 50 years of delivering meals to frail and elderly residents in the Sutherland shire. This organisation receives funding from the Department of Social Services for eligible individuals. Non-eligible individuals are able to access the service for a small fee. Its customers range from young people with disabilities to older people who wish to remain independent for as long as possible. If that independence can be maintained for just one year the taxpayer saves around \$50,000 a year per customer. This reflects the cost of housing and caring for someone in an aged care facility, as opposed to them staying in their own home.

There are around 70 active volunteers at Sutherland Food Services who pack and deliver meals each week or who provide important administrative support. They do an outstanding job and their generosity makes a significant difference in many people's lives. The importance of Meals on Wheels, not just to the service's recipients but to the community more generally, cannot be overstated. Nationwide 80,000 volunteers deliver around 14 million meals each year to 75,000 recipients in cities and regional and rural areas. Good nutrition is a vital component of this service and Meals on Wheels works closely with dietitians to maximise the nutritional value of the food they provide. According to a report prepared by Access Economics in 2010, if those clients who are identified as "poorly nourished" on commencement of the service were provided a daily meal containing 60 per cent of their protein and energy requirements, this would generate savings to the Australian health system of more than \$463 million over 10 years.

While this is certainly a noteworthy economic benefit, the value of Meals on Wheels to the community cannot be measured in numbers alone. The social interaction that comes with the service is, for many people, more important than the meal itself. It gives them an opportunity to interact with someone on a regular basis, and to have someone they can trust and depend on if they ever need a bit of help. It is estimated that more than 750,000 older Australians suffer from social isolation. Not only can isolation adversely impact an individual's mental health, it can also mean that signs of physical deterioration go unnoticed and can result in hospitalisations that might have otherwise been prevented. The service provided by Meals on Wheels is particularly effective for monitoring the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people. There are even instances of lives being saved as a direct result of a client failing to respond to a scheduled visit.

Sutherland Food Services Meals on Wheels links or refers customers to appropriate social support programs or health services so that they can maintain the level of independence they are willing and able to achieve. It is effectively three services in one: nutrition, monitoring of safety and wellbeing, and social inclusion. I mentioned earlier the terrific volunteers who give up their time to assist Sutherland Food Services and its clients throughout the shire. I also acknowledge the permanent members of staff who make this service possible: Anna Zamora, operations and systems coordinator; Marti Carr, accounts clerk; Virginia Casimatis, client services and coordinator; and Sue Green, manager. This is a wonderful milestone for the enthusiastic team at Southern Food Services to celebrate, and I was delighted to join their celebration last Friday. I wish them all the best for the future and congratulate them on their outstanding service to the community.

COFFS HARBOUR SLIPWAY

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (17:34): Some time ago the Government had an obligation and an opportunity to decontaminate the Coffs Harbour Slipway, which had been in operation for many, many years. The slipway was obviously contaminated with old anti-fouling paints and so on and needed rectification. Unfortunately, since that decision was taken there have been three lands Ministers and, at the end of the day, advice was given, I believe by the local office, not to replace the slip. Coffs Harbour is the only safe port between Newcastle and the Queensland border. All other ports have sandbars that become very dangerous in heavy seas, and many vessels have come to grief on them.

Following restoration, there are no rails leading to the slipway. Coffs Harbour has a large commercial fishing fleet and we were promised that the facility would have cranes to lift the vessels. Some of the vessels that utilise Coffs Harbour weigh 65 tonnes. It costs in the vicinity of \$500 to \$600 to run a vessel up a rail. While the decontamination was taking place, Coffs Harbour fishermen took advantage of slips on the Clarence River in the

Clarence Valley. I have dockets to show that that cost approximately \$574, but it takes vessels a day to steam up and back. The Government and the lands department promised subsidies for any boats that had to be craned in under the new arrangements where there is a concrete pad and a slipway that is no longer suitable for the purpose. Currently, anyone slipping a boat in at Coffs Harbour must pay \$1,300—double the price—just to lift it out of and back into the water. The Coffs Harbour commercial fishing fleet supplies something like 40 per cent of the snapper that is sold to the Sydney Fish Market.

Mr Geoff Provest: Beautiful fish.

Mr ANDREW FRASER: It is beautiful fish, as the member for Tweed knows. Recently a 12-tonne yacht was refused slippage because it was too heavy, yet we were told initially that yachts weighing up to 65 tonnes could be lifted out. That may have been an anomaly, but many boats in our commercial fishing fleet weigh 45 tonnes. If it costs \$1,300 to lift a 36-foot boat, what will it cost to lift a 65-tonne boat—if that can be done at all because it will involve two cranes? I urge the Government either to build a new slip yard on the opposite side of the harbour as part of the precinct plan that is currently under discussion or, alternatively, to subsidise both the commercial and the recreational fishermen who need to use the existing slipway.

According to regulation, each commercial fishing vessel must undergo a survey each year. If boats cannot be lifted onto the slip or if it costs \$1,300 for the seaworthiness survey to ensure the vessels meet State and Federal regulations, the owners deserve an opportunity to have their costs reimbursed. I have had meetings with the new Minister for Lands and Forestry. I implore him to begin providing subsidies to these people to ensure that our fishing fleet remains viable and commercial. If not, we will lose that industry from Coffs Harbour. We will also lose the boats that must be slipped on a regular basis for defouling and repairs. The situation is so unfair. I must say that I have lost faith in the local lands department employees over this issue. I ask the Minister to investigate it fully.

WEST WALLSEND BUTTERFLY CAVE

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:40:0): Yet again I speak about the beautiful and sacred Butterfly Cave in the village of West Wallsend in the Cessnock electorate. Those who have been following my contributions on this matter will know that the Butterfly Cave is a beautiful, natural sandstone cave in the West Wallsend bushland that has been a place of tradition for female Aboriginal peoples for about 35,000 years. Long before we had structures and buildings or thought about concrete and bricks, the Aboriginal people used the natural beauty of our land to do what they needed to do. In this case, the Butterfly Cave was made a place for special women's business. As I have previously described, special women's business could be a ceremony, the birth of a child or a spiritual or other type of gathering. I do not mean to desecrate the culture by mentioning it again today.

The Butterfly Cave now sits inside a large urban residential development that is in the vicinity of 400 lots. The owner of the land has been told time and again since the Planning and Assessment Commission approval in 2011-12 that a significant Aboriginal site was situated inside their development area. The then Minister for Environment Robyn Parker granted an Aboriginal Place designation to that spot but unfortunately placed only a 20-metre buffer around the area. The developer's bulldozers are now getting closer and closer to the Butterfly Cave. Stage seven of the development is before Council for approval and a number of vibration reports have been submitted. In the vibration report from Douglas Partners, I was drawn to a particular issue about harm and damage under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. Incredibly, the Act does not define "harm or damage". In the news yesterday, the now Minister for the Environment made the point that it is an offence to harm or desecrate an Aboriginal Place and the maximum penalty is \$1.1 million.

The trouble is if we do not define "harm or damage", how do we know when someone has done harm or damage? For example, to go to the extreme, if a single piece of sandstone smaller than a thumbnail flaked off this beautiful cave would that be damage? What if it was a little bit bigger like the size of a hand or a fist, or a lunchbox or shoebox? We can keep going. The point is there is a line somewhere but the line is not defined by the legislation and/or in the approvals given. Why is this important? Excavating equipment of up to 30 tonnes will be coming within 20 metres of this beautiful sandstone cave. Adjustments will be made to the water flow that keeps the moisture content in the sandstone to prevent it from drying out and falling apart. Without defining "harm or damage", it is incomprehensible that anyone will ever be prosecuted for damage caused to this beautiful cave.

I have been seeking support from the Government to preserve the Butterfly Cave for quite some time. I have informed it that the total cost of securing this unique 35,000-year-old Aboriginal culture and heritage site would be somewhere between \$1 million and \$2 million through negotiation with the developer. Earlier this week we heard a \$310 million announcement to preserve colonial heritage—white fella heritage—at Parramatta which includes the Parramatta Gaol, the Female Factory and the Roman Catholic Orphan School. It annoys the tripe out of me that we can be so clever and generous in saving our colonial heritage by allocating \$310 million but we

cannot find \$1 million or \$2 million to protect one of the most revered and sacred Aboriginal sites in the Hunter Valley. I again call on the Minister to find the funding in the upcoming budget.

TRIBUTE TO NATA FORTE

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (17:49): Nata Forte lived in Ryde for 47 years. Her parents, Lucia and Tomasso Decaria, moved to Ryde in the early 1950s and have been proud residents since then. Nata's legacy to the area is her two beautiful daughters. Isabella is 21 and Jessica is 17. They are remarkable young ladies, just like their mother. I know Nata was extremely proud of them. It was after Jessica was born that Nata pursued and nurtured her singing career. She sang at church services, funerals and weddings and in 2002 decided to spread her wings, taking on more and varied singing roles outside church. She became very successful in the Italian community and the broader community as a singer and performer. Nata continued to sing voluntarily at nursing homes, fundraisers and special events. She also volunteered her services for the Lady of Grace Feast Day masses as well as other religious feast days for the San Francesco Committee based at Ryde. She was a parishioner of St Charles Borromeo at Ryde and would also give of her time to sing at their services as well as at fetes and other functions.

Her children attended Marist Sisters College at Woolwich where Nata was active on the parents and friends committee. She also gave assistance to the Holy Cross College in Ryde. For the past 11 years Nata was a chorister for the Macquarie Park and North Ryde Rotary Club Carols on the Common, a local event that had small beginnings and has now become a major event on the Ryde calendar and attracts thousands to enjoy this spectacular concert. In 2010 Nata generously gave her time and talent to enrich our community by producing a beautiful CD of religious songs. Nata Forte was diagnosed with stage four stomach cancer and knew her time was short. Despite this, Nata was determined to maintain a quality of life and spend time with her daughters and family. Nata was a shining star and had a beautiful personality that left a mark on everyone who met her.

This week I attended Nata's funeral service, which was extremely moving. The church was full and hundreds of people amassed outside to pay their respects to a beautiful lady who, at only 47 years old, was taken from this earth far too young. During the service people spoke of the dignity Nata showed in the months since her diagnosis. She never gave up; she was always fighting. She valued life and always understood what was happening. During the service, the priest said that his parishioners believed in everlasting life. I have no doubt that is what has happened to Nata. She has simply moved from this life to another everlasting life. She was a beautiful person with a gorgeous, generous heart. She donated so much of her time to help her community. She brought many blessings for us. While she is our loss, I am sure she is singing with the choir of angels in Heaven. We should be grateful for the time we spent with Nata. I have no doubt she still looks down on us and that whenever someone in Ryde sings and thinks of Nata she is with them. Rest in peace, Nata. We love you and we thank you for your time with us.

ANZAC COMMEMORATIONS

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:50): I wish to update the House on how I commemorated Anzac Day, as many colleagues have done recently. As we all know, Anzac Day is a sacred and symbolic day that is commemorated across our nation when many thousands of people show their respect to those who have died serving their country. In the Tweed I attended many deeply moving Anzac commemorations. I started the day at the 4.28 a.m. dawn service at Tumbulgum, which recently suffered significant flood damage. About 300 locals, including families of those who died at Gallipoli, attended the service. It was a cold morning and those who attended appeared through the river mist. We paid tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the war.

Following the Tumbulgum dawn service I travelled to Tweed Heads where I was one of about 6,000 people who attended the Tweed Heads dawn service. Joe Russell, John Griffin, Mike Fraser and Bruce Loynes also attended the service with other leading identities from the Coolangatta RSL. I was pleased to see that families with young children and some with teenagers participated in these services. I then attended the Anzac Day march at Pottsville, where I laid a wreath. The march was attended by about 2,000 people, including John Hawes. Following that, I attended the Kingscliff main service. The service was attended by the Vice President of the Kingscliff RSL, Brian Vickery, OAM. The guest speaker was Commodore Malcolm Wise, OAM, RAN, who spoke about the future commitment of our military forces.

At the dawn services I think about what the young Australians at Gallipoli were feeling when they stormed the beach. I think about their expectations of life and their ideals and how quickly those were changed by the blood and guts on the beach and seeing their mates blown apart. There are war memorials in all our local areas and we have looked at the names chiselled into the stone of these memorials. This year being the centenary of Anzac, we recognise some of the surnames from a long time ago. It is of deep significance to the people of the Tweed that the area has lost two soldiers during the past four years.

Our most recent loss was three years ago: Sapper Rowan Robinson, a member of the Special Air Service Regiment [SAS] perished in Iraq. I knew him when he was a young lifesaver in the Tweed, and I know his family. It is one thing to honour through Legacy those who have gone before and to support their families. It is different to stand at a war memorial side by side with the mum, dad and brother of a soldier who has died so recently. Sapper Robinson made the ultimate sacrifice for his country. We hear the word "sacrifice" a lot on Anzac Day. Seeing a family who suffered a bereavement so recently is very moving. His funeral was attended by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. His highly trained and tough colleagues were pallbearers.

At the conclusion of the ceremony the officialdom went out the front door and when I walked around the back I noticed that five of his colleagues were crying under a tree. It was so moving; it brought the horror of war to me. It reminded me of the ultimate sacrifices made by those fine service men and women, their families and friends through all those wars. Young people were ripped out of towns never to return. I cannot see how we can ever repay the debt of gratitude for their ultimate sacrifices. Anzac Day is always a very solemn day. I am 100 per cent committed to Anzac Day in the Tweed.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:55:0): I thank the member for Tweed for his great work in attending many local Anzac Day services on and around 25 April 2017. Anzac Day is one of the few commemorative days that is universal in its meaning to all Australians, whether one is a new Australian or an Indigenous person whose lineage extends back thousands of years. Each and every one of us appreciates the great sacrifices of the young service men and women who defended the democratic values of this country. Anzac Day allows us all to show our eternal gratitude for the freedoms that we enjoy each and every day.

IMPACT100 SYDNEY MENTORING PROGRAM

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (17:56): This evening I inform the House about a wonderful new mentoring program in my electorate for young women. A new philanthropic organisation called Impact100 Sydney recently awarded its first \$100,000 grant to Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre and SOS Women's Services to operate a mentoring program for disadvantaged young women who are residents of Lillian's in Erskineville and The Girls' Refuge in Leichhardt. The manager of the Leichhardt Women's Health Centre, Roxanne McMurray, works tirelessly for women and girls. I am pleased to inform the House that they were awarded the grant out of 52 applicants.

The Impact100 model aims to attract 100 donations of \$1,000 to provide a grant to an organisation that can have a real and measurable impact. It is great to see Sydney businesses and other members contributing in this way. The mentoring program will assist 40 girls aged between 16 and 21 to go through life-changing career mentoring. The girls in these refuges are not at home because of issues such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, neglect, parental drug addiction, or family breakdown or they have been rescued from forced child marriage. These girls are among the most vulnerable members of our community and ensuring their safety and creating pathways out of homelessness, poverty and abuse are critical because they are so young. Some are so young that they arrive at the refuges with their clothes and a teddy bear.

Both refuges have a home-like environment with strict curfews for the girls' safety and a very strong focus on girls remaining at school. Nights are spent doing homework together and staff help with completing assignments. The girls who go on to university create a highly inspirational environment for the whole house, particularly the younger girls. It provides genuine hope that they are worth something and that it is possible to overcome their difficult family backgrounds and abuse. The older girls are particularly driven to succeed and to create a more positive life than the one they came from. Due to a lack of parenting, the girls do not have the usual weekend activities that other girls take for granted, such as ballet or netball, nor do they have parents to look up to or wider networks of relatives and friends to provide strong role models. It is difficult for most people to imagine, having come from a regular home, but not having those things creates a major gap. That is what this mentoring program aims to address.

Some of the girls doing courses at TAFE are being matched with strong female mentors in the community to provide guidance, work experience and ongoing contacts for their future careers. It is hoped that the girls will be able to continue to stay in touch with their mentors and, in some cases, to continue to volunteer and gain further work experience. It will give them on-the-job experience and help their communication skills and confidence. The mentoring program is a 10-step program that matches the girls with business leaders in the Sydney community, as well as other mentors such as health and youth workers who may mentor girls interested in careers such as nursing.

PricewaterhouseCoopers has stepped up and kindly agreed to provide mentoring for the girls, including advice about curriculum vitae, interviews and presentation skills. The steps include going to a mentor's workplace and completing a substantial activity, being advised on interviews and presentation, and attending a work-related social event with their mentor. Jules Sebastian, ambassador for the Sebastian Foundation, will also do a workshop

with the girls and an end-of-year lunch. I have visited what was known as Detour House and is now The Girls Refuge in Leichhardt, which is in my electorate. I attended an event recently and saw firsthand the great work done by the Sebastian Foundation. Guy Sebastian and Jules Sebastian were there doing an amazing renovation of The Girls Refuge. It is fantastic to see their ongoing support.

I am also proud to have contributed to upgrading and supporting The Girls Refuge by helping to facilitate a grant through the Community Building Partnership program. I hope this program will be successful; in fact, I am sure it will. I hope also that this model is used by other youth refuges to assist not just these young girls but other young people in the community. The support the girls receive at this time will help determine the rest of their lives and will have a flow-on effect in the lives of others: the girls' future children, their family, their friends and the wider community. I wish all these girls well and congratulate Roxanne and all those involved in SOS Women's Services for being the first-ever recipient of this prestigious new grant which will give these girls the opportunity of a successful future. I commend all of those involved, the businesses and individuals at Impact100 Sydney.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:01:1): I too place on record my congratulations to the Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre and other organisations and particularly to Roxanne McMurray, whom I have known for more than 20 years, on the great work that she and the centre have done in mentoring women of all ages. They have done a wonderful job for many years in Leichhardt, not just in mentoring but also in providing low-cost and affordable medical health care and in improving the lives of women in and around the inner west of Sydney. On behalf of both sides of the House, I acknowledge the great work of Roxanne, the grant that was received, and the businesses involved.

NORTH COAST FLOODS

Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (18:02): By leave: Sadly I did not have enough time to complete my speech last night on the floods in the Northern Rivers. Last night the ABC program 7.30 televised a report on homeless people. I want to reassure the community—and I am sure I speak on your behalf as well, Mr Temporary Speaker Provest, and member for Tweed—that Minister Goward and the Department of Family and Community Services have been working overtime to make sure that no-one is without accommodation. It may only be temporary accommodation, but everyone, from the department's ground level to the Minister, has worked tirelessly to make sure these people are looked after

The report televised last night stated that one lady was being forced to live in a tent this weekend. I have been assured that that is not the case. No-one will be evacuated onto the street. Both the member for Tweed and I have been invited to attend a peaceful protest on Saturday. Unfortunately I cannot be there, and I know that the member for Tweed has sent his apologies as well. But I assure the community and those who attend on Saturday that we have had 100 per cent support from Minister Pru Goward and her team. I place that on the public record. Many of the people who were evacuated came from the Greenhills Caravan Park, the majority of which had been inundated with floodwaters. Those people cannot return to the caravan park. Troy Green and his team from Tweed Shire Council understand that but also know that finding flood-free land on which to build accommodation in Murwillumbah is non-existent.

With the assistance of council and the State Emergency Service [SES], I have tried to find a suitable location on which to build new SES headquarters, but so far we have been unsuccessful. The difficulty is finding the appropriate flood-free land. We will face similar housing problems in the future if we do not. I place on record that like everyone in Lismore, my electorate office was inundated with water and I pay tribute to my own team of Bronwyn Mitchell, Annie Armstrong and Frangi Silsbury, who worked very hard to get the office up and running. I thank also the team here in Parliament House who are working closely with them. The office has to be completely rebuilt. I thank the team in Lismore, who have worked under extremely difficult conditions while still providing great support to the community. Again, tonight I pay tribute and thank them.

This flood has affected not only Murwillumbah and Lismore but also Burringbar, Moobal, Chinderah, Tumbulgum, Crabbes Creek and Uki. All the outlying areas have been affected, including the township of Kyogle and towns in the Byron shire. Everyone is experiencing very difficult times but the State, Federal and local governments are offering support in an effort to ease the burden. However, I reassure the business community and those suffering as a result of the floods that the recovery centres in both Murwillumbah and Lismore are still available to provide assistance and support, and I thank the people working in those centres. I congratulate them on the wonderful job they have done in providing support for our community.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:07): I place on record the Government's admiration for the excellent leadership role demonstrated by the member for Lismore and indeed the member for Tweed, who is in the chair. They have led the community recovery effort and supported those helping to lead it in what has been a trying and difficult period. I commend the member for Lismore for his private member's statement. I also

commend both him and the member for Tweed for their leadership of those local communities in these difficult times.

BANKSTOWN OVERDEVELOPMENT

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (18:07): By leave: The overdevelopment of Bankstown is one of the greatest concerns that is frequently brought to my attention by my constituents. As a lifelong resident of Bankstown I, too, share their concern at the number of large-scale residential developments that have begun construction in recent years. Undoubtedly, in recent times a number of questionable planning decisions have been made with the support of some former Bankstown city councillors which will have significant ramifications concerning the overdevelopment of the Bankstown electorate and wider Bankstown community. One such example of questionable planning involved the significant amendment of draft local area plans at the extraordinary meeting of the Bankstown City Council held on 11 May 2016. This meeting was convened in questionable circumstances and was the last action undertaken by council on the night before it was sacked and forcefully amalgamated with Canterbury City Council.

At the ordinary council meeting held on 26 April 2016, consideration of council's draft north central, north east, south east and south west local area plans was deferred to the next meeting. On 2 May 2016 former Councillor Jim Daniel, who at the time had been suspended by the Liberal Party, and his Liberal colleague Glen Waud contacted the Mayor of Bankstown City Council, Khaldoun Asfour, to call for an extraordinary meeting to approve the deferred local area plans. Word must have spread that the forced merger of council would be occurring imminently before the next general meeting, which was scheduled for 24 May 2016. Section 366 of the Local Government Act 1993 states:

If the mayor receives a request in writing signed by at least 2 councillors, the mayor must call an extraordinary meeting of the council to be held as soon as practicable but in any event within 14 days after receipt of the request.

Sadly for Bankstown ratepayers, then Mayor Khaldoun Asfour wasted no time in organising this meeting well within the 14-day deadline for 11 May, which, as we know, was the night before the forced merger with Canterbury. On this night, the draft local area plans were significantly amended on the council floor to increase the density and height of various streets against the direct recommendation of council officers and what had been available for public display, scrutiny and comment. The north central local area plan, which covers the suburbs of Yagoona, Potts Hill, Regents Park and Birrong in my electorate, had been initially exhibited for public consultation by council in September 2014 and exhibited for a second time again in November 2015.

Despite significant community concern that the original proposals would overdevelop town centres such as Yagoona in particular, Deputy Mayor Councillor Toan Nguyen and Jim Daniel moved an amendment to increase the proposed height limit for a number of streets—for instance, the properties between Highland Avenue, Dutton Street, and Yagoona Lane, Yagoona, had their height limit increased from six storeys to eight storeys. This amendment also increased the height limit for properties between 176-184 Cooper Road in Yagoona from six storeys to eight storeys and at 255-291 Cooper Road in Yagoona from four storeys to six storeys. At 1-31 Rookwood Road in Yagoona, which borders the playground of Bankstown North Public School, the height limit was increased from four storeys to six storeys.

When these amendments were put to a vote, they received the support of Councillors Jim Daniel, Nguyen, Tadros, Parker, Najjar and Waud. Mayor Khaldoun Asfour exercised his casting vote to ensure that these amendments were carried. Jim Daniel was also given the opportunity to move amendments to the proposed south east local area plan, which was also seconded by a Liberal colleague of his, Councillor Tadros. It was noted by my Labor colleague in the upper House, the Hon. Lynda Voltz, that these improved zonings in Swan Street and Polo Street, Revesby, directly benefited one of Jim Daniel's close associates, the convicted money launderer Carl Trad. I note that former Bankstown Mayor Khaldoun Asfour stated publicly in the local Canterbury-Bankstown newspaper *The Express* that he intends coming back. He stated:

There are a lot of challenges which the new city faces and I think we need an experienced mayor to make the new city function ...

The State Government is pushing for an increase in building density and population in the city, and I think we need a council that is able to push back if we don't have the infrastructure ...

In a letter, Robert Pallister suggested to the former mayor that perhaps he would be better off spending more time with his family rather than worrying about being re-elected. It is clear from council's public records which former Bankstown councillors were opposed to the overdevelopment of our community and which let it fester under their watch.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:13
until Tuesday 9 May 2017 at 12:00.**