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Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 9 May 2017

The SPEAKER (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock) took the chair at 12:00.

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery students and teachers from Wiley Park Public School, guests of the member for Lakemba.

[Notices of motions given.]

Private Members' Statements

ANZAC COMMEMORATIONS

Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (12:12): In the past few weeks I have attended a number of Anzac Day services in my electorate to pay tribute to the Australian soldiers who lost their lives in war, conflicts and peacekeeping missions around the world. This year's commemorations are particularly significant, as we mark more than 100 years since the soldiers of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps landed at Anzac Cove for the start of a horrific eight-month campaign against the Ottoman forces.

The reported estimates of Australian casualties in the Gallipoli campaign were staggering. Most of the casualties were young men who set out to war on the other side of the world, fighting to protect our way of life in Australia. These courageous soldiers paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to our nation. The Anzac arrival at Gallipoli and the subsequent campaign have become a symbol in the Australian community of the bravery and sacrifice of our armed forces. Some say that the Gallipoli landing marked the true birth of Australia as a nation, and it certainly paved the way for a greater sense of national pride. I am proud that each year my local Returned and Services League [RSL] council and residents in Vaucluse join together to organise many ceremonies that capture that spirit and pay tribute to our local service men and women.

This year the commemorations began early. On Friday 21 April I attended an Anzac Day service at the Emanuel Synagogue in Woollahra, joining local Jewish community groups which included the NSW Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women and the 3rd Rose Bay (Judean) Scout Group, led by scout leader Leon Waxman, deputy group leader Phillip Hynek and group leader Tom Wolf. I thank Rabbi Jeffrey Kamins and the Emanuel Synagogue board's president, Louise Thurgood-Phillips, for allowing me to share in that commemorative service. On the morning of Sunday 23 April, I participated in a march from Club Rose Bay, home of the Rose Bay RSL Club Sub-Branch, which travelled along New South Head Road and arrived at the Rose Bay War Memorial in Lyne Park. This year Sydney Church of England Girls Grammar School Darlinghurst, Sydney Grammar School air cadets and The Scots College Pipes and Drums joined the march to make it an extra special day. I thank Rosemary Stockley, OAM, honorary secretary of Rose Bay RSL, and Lee Stockley, president, for holding this service each year for local residents.

On Anzac Day the dawn service at North Bondi attracted more than 10,000 people. It must be the largest dawn service ever held at the beach. I joined the North Bondi RSL Sub-Branch president Robert de Graaf; Lucy Turnbull, AO; Waverley Mayor Sally Betts; Councillor Leon Goltsman and serving members of the armed forces, both past and present; president of Bondi and Districts Chamber of Commerce, Mary Ann Cronin, and thousands of people for a memorable dawn service at the North Bondi War Memorial. This service is an important one. It ends with a tradition where we turn to face Bondi Beach to reflect on how the young men would have felt arriving at Anzac Cove on that day. There was a great sense of camaraderie as the community gathered. Afterwards we shared a barbecue breakfast.

The next event that day was a service at the Waverley cenotaph, which is on the border of my electorate and that of the member for Coogee, Bruce Notley-Smith. This was a special service as hundreds gathered—more than last year—with Waverley Council Mayor Sally Betts, Deputy Mayor Councillor Tony Kay, Councillor Joy Clayton, Councillor Leon Goltsman, Councillor Bill Mouroukas and students from Waverley College and the local public schools, to pay respect to servicemen and servicewomen, past and present. The guest speaker was Captain John Metz, Senior Navy Logistics Officer Director with the Royal Australian Navy, who gave a moving

address. The commemoration was jointly hosted by Waverley Council, Bondi Junction Waverley RSL, Bronte RSL, North Bondi RSL and the Eastern Suburbs Legion Club. Local schoolchildren laid tributes as well.

Later in the morning, I attended a service organised by Woollahra Mayor Toni Zeltzer at the cenotaph at Steyne Park in Double Bay. I also joined the President of Woollahra History and Heritage Society, Peter Poland, OAM; Jewish House CEO, Rabbi Mendel Kastel; New South Wales State Emergency Service Waverley-Woollahra Unit Local Controller, Kim Edwards; Councillor James Keulemans; Councillor Katherine O'Regan; Councillor Deborah Thomas and Councillor Tony Marano. I read an excerpt from that wonderful poem *For the Fallen* by Laurence Binyon. There has been such a large turnout of people at Anzac Day services this year. That was certainly reflected in the attendance at all of those services I have mentioned. It was fantastic to see so many Australians, especially younger Australians in my electorate, commemorating the spirit of Anzac. Judging by this enthusiastic turnout 100 years on from the Gallipoli campaign, we can surely say that the Anzacs have not been, and will not be, forgotten. Let us not forget.

LAKEMBA ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (12:17): Today, as thousands of students across the nation sit their National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN] tests, the sad reality is that the outcome of what was once meant to be a diagnostic test to identify and address areas of improvement for students has become more of a measure of schools than was originally intended. Now, this private member's statement is not about NAPLAN—I have had plenty to say about that issue, and will have more to say in the future—but I do wish every student the very best, and I remind them that life is a journey and that we are not shaped by one examination. Certainly the world is the greatest of all teachers, and the measure of a person is not found in a simplistic examination that comes around once a year.

I do want to talk about great schools, though. In the gallery there are a number of mums from the Wiley Park Public School. It is a wonderful school in my electorate—a school that embodies all of the things that a great education system aspires to achieve. Led by the outstanding Rene Demos, the Wiley Park Public School is a model of what schools can do to create a better life outcome for students and their families. We are joined here today by Schools as Community Centres facilitator, Ms Lambros, and community leader, Ms Asenati Mareko, whom I have had the great pleasure of working with for many years.

The school understands the meaning of community engagement and today it is the parents who are on an excursion, not the students. For the vast majority—and they would not mind me saying this—a trip to the oldest Parliament in Australia is just as much a learning experience for them as it would have been for their children. Most of the mums here have a cultural heritage that is non-English-speaking. They come from every part of the world and they have formed bonds of friendship, courtesy of the school's understanding that education is not merely about students, but that in some places it is also about their families. Better still, this excursion is all part of a Mother's Day activity. I look forward to seeing them later for that. We have toured Parliament and will later have lunch in the Domain. All of these things that many of us take for granted are new experiences for every one of the mums here. Being in this place is all about being able to use the privileges we have to make even the smallest of differences.

I had been heavily involved with the school prior to my entry to Parliament. I could not do the school justice by merely listing how much it does to provide an excellent education for its students and the community at large. More than 85 per cent of the students come from a non-English speaking background, and many come to the school with limited, if any, English. The school provides the experiential learning that many of us take for granted so that the students have the best shot at life. The school engages the community at every opportunity—for example, information sessions on assisting children; support services; father and son, mother and daughter and family events, which I have attended; and countless community initiatives. I am inspired by the school's incorporation of the diversity of cultures at the school within a greater Australian context. I have spoken previously about the school's community initiatives, especially the free language classes for parents on a Friday morning. The learning of language is the aim but another benefit of these lessons is the opportunity for mums and dads to build self-confidence, to establish a network of friends and to have a community touchstone once a week.

I have spoken previously about the crude measures used in education to rank schools and, in some cases, create league tables. The question is: How do we measure schools? What do we see as important? Do we pay lip-service to the notion of a community school or do we honour it? A school is a community hub and in many communities this open-door policy enables families to understand a new country, to assist their children to succeed, and to value and feel blessed for what we have. I say to my guests in the gallery today to tell their children that anything is possible, that in Australia we all belong and we all can aspire to fulfil our dreams. I am proud to be associated with them and I am proud they are in attendance because they have stepped outside their comfort zone.

I am proud to be associated with a school that truly understands that by going above and beyond, outside the classroom and the school gate, it can change people's lives. Today, as thousands of children stress about their future and our schools will be measured on the basis of who has been best trained to game NAPLAN, I say to the mums in the gallery and anyone who wants to listen: a great education is more than just the classroom. A great education prepares students to be intelligent, kind, generous, welcoming, accepting and self-confident people. A great, well-rounded education is not the measure of a simplistic test but rather the measure of the person a student becomes when their schooling days are over.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (12:22): On behalf of the Government, I welcome the guests in the public gallery to Australia's first Parliament. This is the place where democracy was first put to the test in our community. Since Governor Macquarie instituted the first Legislative Council, the members of Parliament have voted to determine the future lives of the people of this State and the way in which the government has invested the money it receives from taxes to assist the colony to grow. The contribution of the people in the gallery, as mothers of students at the Wiley Park Public School, is a new chapter in that fantastic story. Our flag in this Chamber has the Australian symbol of the Southern Cross. That cross was first stitched onto a blue background by mothers of immigrants at Eureka. Do not let anyone take that story away from you. The stars on the flag, which are often portrayed as the most prominent Australian symbol, first made their way onto a flag because immigrant mothers sewed them on. Your story is as important as that of anyone you may meet at Parliament House today.

ANZAC COMMEMORATIONS

Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (12:23): Many men and women in the electorate of Heathcote left their families and their homes to join the world wars. Leading up to the commemoration of Anzac Day on 25 April, the first ceremony I attended was at the Woronora RSL on Saturday 22 April 2017. This small club punches well above its weight when it comes to staging a moving and poignant ceremony. Woronora school students sang the national anthem of New Zealand and Australia. A notable moment was when the President of the RSL, Barry Grant, blew a trench whistle to start his speech—you could have heard a pin drop. Woronora RSL takes great pride in its Anzac Day commemoration. I am grateful for the invitation and congratulate all members on their efforts. On Sunday 23 April I attended the Bundeena RSL Sub-Branch commemoration. The outlook alone was worth the trip. The RSL building burnt down in 2015 and is still a skeleton. It provided the backdrop to the ceremony. There was local content with poets and artists singing and leading us in the ode and national anthems of New Zealand and Australia. A special mention must be made of the women's auxiliary, who supplied a glorious spread of refreshments. I also make special mention of master of ceremonies, Paul Griffiths. He did a great job.

In the afternoon I attended the Engadine RSL commemoration. The ceremony is always well attended and this year was no exception. In fact, I think this year was bigger than the last. With the haunting sounds of bagpipes, the Sing Australia Choir and the Navy band performing, the Engadine RSL did not leave anyone disappointed. I congratulate Jack Abernathy again on a very well run event. On Monday evening I joined the member for Wollongong, Paul Scully, at the Vietnam Veterans ceremony at Flagstaff Hill, Wollongong. Ms Melva Crouch, CSM, spoke eloquently about her military service and her experiences in the United Nations. Again, you could have heard a pin drop when she painted a picture of the morning of the first democratic election in Libya. It was spine-tingling as the cold of the evening heightened the senses and created a mood of reflection.

On the morning of Anzac Day I joined my son at Heathcote where many hundreds of local people came out to silently stand in reverence in the gloom of the morning. Cadets stood guard while the chill of the dawn approached. The Heathcote Anzac morning is especially touching because many of the villagers of the then Bottie Forest sent their boys off, never to return. As the sunrise peaked over the trees, kookaburras were heard while we sang the national anthems of New Zealand and Australia as our combined communities came together to commemorate Anzac. It is heartwarming that so many young people are becoming involved and learning more of what others gave up for them and our country in the name of war. Lest we forget.

ARTARMON PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (12:26:2): I have joyous news from my electorate of Lane Cove, specifically the redevelopment of the Artarmon Public School and the addition of a much-needed and highly anticipated new hall. We know that schools are the incubators for the next generation of community leaders and family founders. All members like to tell of the brilliance housed within the schoolrooms in their electorates. The Artarmon Public School is made up of a mix of brilliant teachers, talented students and an innovative and supportive parents and citizens [P and C] community. The school is led by its esteemed principal, Louise Green. The P and C is guided by President Daniel McDougall, who is ably assisted by current and former members Johanna Wang, Karen Pearson and Ian Dysan, together with community members such as the Artarmon Progress Association President, Peter Wilton.

Recently, the fantastic Artarmon Public School community alerted the Government to the need for a new hall. They had a very sensible proposal and the students ran a tremendous campaign to bring it to the Government's attention and to mine. As a result, I had the pleasant task of attending the school to announce a \$26 million commitment by the Berejiklian Government for the school's redevelopment. That is no small allocation, but I can assure the House that the money will be well spent. The redevelopment includes a three-storey building comprising 21 new teaching spaces and a new library. A new amenities block will be built and Abbot Lane is earmarked for closure to improve the linkage between the school's two sites. This Government gave the green light for this comprehensive program after widespread community support was expressed. I am proud to announce that a contractor has been engaged and work has started. The redevelopment is scheduled for completion by early 2019.

The strong community support I mentioned also made clear the view that the Artarmon Public School deserved a new hall. A new hall will be a central element of the new look school. This is the type of positive news that makes this local member proud to be part of a progressive and understanding Government. My good news does not start and end with the Artarmon Public School. Those on the Opposition benches who were here when Labor last governed look surprised that a member can speak of money being spent on education infrastructure. They remember the dark days of Labor ripping money from education and capital works. Under the Liberal and Nationals Government, the North Shore has seen a number of major education infrastructure projects. These include the opening of the Cammeraygal High School for years seven to 10 in 2015, and more recently the new Anzac Park Public School and an expanded Mowbray Public School. And, the good news, under this progressive Government, will continue to roll out.

In coming years the Berejiklian Government will build the Lindfield Learning Village and Cammeraygal High School Senior Campus. Both of those projects are at now at the design stage. Also in design—I am excited to announce—are upgrades to the Willoughby Public School, the Willoughby Girls High School and the Killara Public School. Members from both sides of the House will be interested to know that the total capital investment in New South Wales public school education infrastructure in 2016-17 is almost \$554 million—yes, over half a billion dollars for the year.

The Government, of which I am proud to be a member, has allocated \$2.6 billion for capital investment in public schools over the period 2016-17 to 2019-20. It is clear that while Labor talked but failed to deliver in education, on the Government side of the House we believe in supporting and adequately funding all aspects of education. I began speaking about the proposed new hall being incorporated within the rebuild and redevelopment of the Artarmon Public School. I look forward, as the local member of Parliament, to attending many an award ceremony and cultural event at the already spectacular Artarmon Public School.

LOWER HUNTER HOSPITAL, MAITLAND

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (12:30): I inform the House that on 15 May there will be a public meeting in Maitland regarding the future of the proposed Lower Hunter hospital, Maitland, that has been planned by this Government for more than six years. In fact, on 17 February 2011 the then New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Opposition announced a new Lower Hunter hospital at Maitland, along with upgrades to the existing hospitals at Cessnock and Kurri Kurri. Since then there have been delays in how this plan has proceeded. An expression of interest process was started at the end of 2012. Finally, on 30 August 2013, there was a site selection, which is the Metford site. Throughout this process the Government has flirted with the idea of privatisation of this promised hospital under a public-private partnership model.

I note the comments of the Minister for Health in the past few months concerning this hospital. Approximately two months ago the new Minister visited Maitland and he invited me to accompany him to the hospital. At the meeting with the hospital staff he stated that the public-private partnership model was back on the table, along with the public model. He said there would be consideration of the two models. I am very concerned that members of our community get the chance to put their view to the Minister that this hospital should be publicly funded. We had a rally concerning the proposed hospital in Maitland in October 2016. The Minister would be aware that 700 or more people attended that rally and said that they wanted the hospital to be a public hospital and to be built now. They also said they wanted the hospital to be the size that was originally promised—that is, the same size as the John Hunter Hospital.

The Minister is not able to attend the planned meeting on 15 May. However, he is sending the chief executive officer of the Hunter New England local health district, Mr Michael DiRienzo. The meeting will be chaired by a representative of the local newspaper, the *Maitland Mercury*. A senior lecturer in economy and society at Macquarie University, Dr Ben Spies-Butcher, will also speak at the meeting, along with representatives of the Nurses and Midwives' Association, the Health Services Union and the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation.

It is important that the Government listens to our community on this issue. The community has been promised this hospital for more than six years. Remediation work will start at Metford. I have had confirmation from Mr DiRienzo at a briefing that regardless of the model chosen for this hospital, construction will commence before 2019. I would urge the department and the Minister to ensure that construction is commenced as soon as possible and to move beyond the remediation works. My community grows by something in the order of five people per day, so each year more than 1,500 people move to Maitland to make it their home. They need this resource. However, in successive budgets this Government has failed to allocate sufficient funding to build a similar sized hospital, as was originally promised, to that of the John Hunter Hospital.

It has now been suggested that it might be half that size and that the existing Maitland Hospital will be closed. If we are to have a fully privatised hospital, such as the one at East Maitland and another modelled under a public-private partnership, where is the fully funded public hospital promised by this Government in 2011? We need more funding to progress this project. Much of the \$20 million already allocated for this hospital has been spent on other hospitals around the site, including the \$6.4 million subacute unit at Kurri Kurri built in 2013 and the refurbishment of the Muswellbrook Hospital and other surrounding hospitals. As I said, in the past six years the population in the area has grown by more than 1,500 people annually, yet not much of that funding has been spent on the Maitland Hospital. We want the Government to deliver on its promise to build a hospital on this new greenfield site at Maitland.

BATHURST ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (12:35):

Today I am pleased to inform the House about this Government's incredible investment in roads in the Bathurst electorate. For decades the Labor Opposition spoke about improving some of these roads, but this Liberal-Nationals Government is continuing to deliver for people in regional and rural New South Wales. Indeed, never before has there been such strong investment in roads infrastructure in my electorate. Our record investment in roads will ensure greater safety for those motorists who travel these roads daily as well as visitors to the region. In addition, the productivity of this State will be improved.

The Mitchell Highway between Bathurst and Orange is very busy, with more than 6,700 vehicles—including 950 heavy vehicles—travelling along it each day. Yesterday I attended the announcement of a \$1.54 million project to improve safety on the highway, about 26 kilometres west of Bathurst. Over the years there have been a number of motor accidents in this blackspot area, including a fatality. Roads and Maritime Services has commenced work in the area. The road is to be resurfaced and widened, and dangerous bends and trees are to be removed. However, the great work we are doing does not stop there.

Recently I was present at the opening of the \$104 million upgrade of the Great Western Highway at Kelso, which leads into Bathurst. For almost 20 years this section of road had been spoken about. Pleasingly, this Government has delivered not only for the Bathurst community but also for all Central West communities. With this 2.8 kilometre upgraded section of the Great Western Highway we now have a four-lane divided road into and out of Bathurst. A lot of work was involved in putting services underground and the entrance to the city has also been vastly improved by the replanting of a number of trees and shrubs. The contractors did a fantastic job—they finished three months ahead of schedule.

The Government is also making a significant investment in Bells Line of Road—a road that the Opposition was only going to look at upgrading in 2036—with \$50 million already invested for the construction of seven overtaking lanes on this important piece of road network. Already four lanes have been completed, construction of another lane has started and another two lanes are in the design process. Importantly, this upgrade will remove drivers' frustration in currently finding limited opportunities to overtake and pass heavy vehicles and slower vehicles in that area. The road has a high fatality rate, but the investment the Government is making will ensure that the road will become safer to travel on and will increase productivity for people living in the Central West.

This Government's investment does not end there. It does not matter which part of my electorate we look at, whether it is Bathurst, Blayney, Oberon, Kandos, Rylstone or even Lithgow, money is being spent on roadworks that we have not seen happening for a long time. It is great to see heavy machinery working in the area. About \$250 million is being spent on safety upgrades along the 40 bends heading into Lithgow. In Blayney, our Fixing Country Roads program is a great way to support local councils in ensuring that people have adequate and safe roads to travel on. The Errowanbang Road upgrade is making a significant difference; it means that the road can now be used to transport product from the mine and to help our farmers move stock to the abattoirs and the saleyards. These investments will not end there. There is more to come and this Government is getting on with the job.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (12:41): The member for Bathurst spoke about a number of road upgrades that are happening across his electorate. That investment is an example of the strong commitment this Government has to improving transport right across the State, whether that relates to integrated transport here in metropolitan Sydney or to the Government's very clear understanding of the importance of the road network to regional New South Wales, particularly for the community the member for Bathurst represents, and of the economic and social impacts of having a high-quality road network.

I also refer to the work the member for Bathurst spoke about that is taking place on Bells Line of Road with the seven overtaking sections. The improvements are about linking the Central West and the community of the member for Bathurst with the strong markets that exist across Western Sydney. As can be seen by this investment, this Government has had Bells Line of Road very much in its focus—a focus that was sorely lacking under the former Labor Government.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (12:42): Every time a politician comes up with a new buzzword or theory in education, a fairy dies and we can hear millions of students and teachers across the nation groaning. It is like teenagers watching me text on a mobile phone with one finger or my daughter watching me with only one screen open on a personal computer and groaning involuntarily at the clunkiness and lack of comfort with changing technology and skills. That, to me, is what it is like listening to politicians talking about education: It is reductive, framed through the political hoo-ha of polling, number crunching and messaging. How can that deliver actual change that is grounded in qualitative research and deep reasoning? It is by letting experts take a lot of time to research and discover, to engage broadly, and to make recommendations.

That is exactly what happened with the Review of Funding for Schooling in December 2011, which became the Gonski model. The Gonski review, as it became known, comprised an expert panel of the country's leading educational minds that worked for nearly a year, received more than 7,000 submissions and met with hundreds of professionals and stakeholders in education. I participated in that process as a high school teacher at the time. The report card into Australian standards was disturbing; the performance gap was far greater in Australia than in other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development—OECD—countries; students were not meeting minimum standards; and there was an unacceptable link between low levels of achievement and educational disadvantage, particularly among students from low socio-economic and Indigenous backgrounds.

The panel concluded that to attain quality and equity in funding for Australian schools, funding needed to prioritise support for the lowest performing students; that children, regardless of where they live and regardless of their socio-economic or cultural background, should have the same access to quality education; and that no student in Australia should leave school without the basic skills and competencies needed to participate fully in society. The needs-based funding model that the Gonski review developed resonated with stakeholders across the divide. For education communities across Australia there was a unique moment in time. I acknowledge the work of former a Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, because this was a moment in which the planets aligned and the funding wars of public schools versus private schools and Commonwealth responsibilities versus State and Territory responsibilities reached a ceasefire. The reforms saw a needs-based funding model that provided resources based on actual need, would see an end to duplication and would improve resourcing for those schools that have students with higher needs. It provided a school resourcing standard that took account of students' socio-economic background, indigeneity and English language proficiency. Out of the funding wars came a vision of fair and equitable distribution based on supporting those students and schools with the biggest job to do.

It sounds too good to be true and, unfortunately, it was. Those school sectors that saw they would lose money under Gonski started to make a lot of political noise, deals were done to quell them, and the unique moment in time was lost. But that has not stopped millions of people from across the nation campaigning for the Gonski reforms. The Gonski campaign has been one of the most effective we have ever seen in education. Everyone knows who Gonski is and what the broad aims of the reforms are—unless they live under a rock. Do not fall for statements such as, "We cannot afford to invest like this in education," or the blackmail threats of certain school sectors who will be funded based on need and not desire under the Gonski model.

We spend \$26 billion dollars a year on defence, which is the thirteenth highest in the world, despite the fact that we are only the fifty-second biggest country by population in the world. It costs \$12.5 billion to design, build and maintain one submarine over 30 years and we are buying 11 of them. One fewer submarine could fund the original Gonski funding reforms for the nation and the Commonwealth's share out to 2020, bringing all public schools up to the minimum resource standard. If we built nine submarines instead of 11, we could afford both Gonski and "Denticare"—a fully-funded basic dental care for all Australians. It comes down to our priorities. When we look at Japan or Scandinavia, we think of how much they spend and how much debt they are willing to carry to support their citizens to have world-class transport, world-class health and world-class education. They

prioritise education above all. Without prioritising the quality of education that we require for the future, unfortunately we will continue to fall further and further behind.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (12:47): In response to the member for Ballina's private member's statement on education, it is worth acknowledging that, in the immediate aftermath of the delivery of the Gonski funding agreements presented to State governments, it was the New South Wales Government led by then Premier Barry O'Farrell that was the first State to sign up to Gonski. It is also worth noting that prior to Gonski becoming a formal national policy the New South Wales Government had already progressed towards and developed a needs-based funding model. There is no doubt that the money that came through the Gonski reforms allowed for additional funding to be increased in schools across New South Wales, but that money was also matched by government investment that came from making tough decisions around that priority. This Government prioritised investment in schools. It is possible to make those tough decisions—but a State has to have a strong economy to be able to do that—and that is exactly what this Government has been able to do over the past six years.

ORAN PARK ANGLICAN COLLEGE

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (12:48): On Saturday I was at one of the wonderful schools in my electorate, the Oran Park Anglican College, and had the privilege of opening the senior learning centre with the college council chair, the venerable Dr Geoff Huard. It was a tremendous honour to do so. Before I get onto the actual opening, I reflect on being at the sod-turning ceremony in around 2010 with our mayor, Lara Symkowiak; Dr Huard, the founding principal; Ross Whelan, the current principal of the Thomas Hassall Anglican College, who was also principal at that time; and Mark Perich.

Since 2010 the school has grown tremendously. I remember when it started with 43 students in 2012. As a member of Parliament, I have attended hundreds of presentation nights but I will always remember the one at the Camden Valley Lakeside where 43 children took part in a nativity scene. I think the school must have purchased every cottonwool ball on sale in the local Coles, Woolies and at the chemist, because the children were dressed up as sheep and cottonwool balls ended up all over the floor. It is a lasting memory. We opened the Senior Learning Centre, which is situated in the first permanent, purpose-built facility for the Oran Park Anglican senior school students. The program for the opening describes the building, and states:

It has been designed to accommodate 21st century learning practices. 21st century education addresses the rapidly changing world we are living in, by being flexible, creative, challenging and complex. This building is made up of six classrooms, breakout spaces, science laboratories, a library, and practical learning spaces for food technology, visual arts, 3D printing and wood technology.

The Senior Learning Centre represents our commitment to provide excellent facilities which support our vision of growing and nurturing excellence, wisdom and service. It has a deliberative focus on collaboration and use of technology and flexibility within the learning spaces which promotes student learning engagement. Teachers were involved in the design process and can see their ideas incorporated into the learning spaces.

Oran Park Anglican College values community and seeks to unify a diverse student body and engage with our neighbours in a supportive and respectful way. The coloured glass panels on the Senior Learning Centre are a reflection of the tower at NewLife Anglican Church and show our connectedness to our Christian neighbours. The appearance of the light through the glass changes during the day due to the weather and the angle of the sun. These different visual effects remind us that each of our students is a unique individual. No panel of glass refracts the light in the same way and no two students will have the same experience at the College.

It was an outstanding day, and I acknowledge the school's principal, Naomi Wilkins, who does a fantastic job. Ms Wilkins has been mentored by founding principal Ross Whelan, who is now the Principal of the Thomas Hassall Anglican College. Together, they have grown the school from 43 to 480 students. The school has classes from prep to year 10 and over the next two years will extend to year 12 and have capacity for 1,000 children. It was a privilege to open the school, together with the Venerable Dr Geoffrey Huard and principal Mrs Naomi Wilkins. It was a lovely morning.

I acknowledge, as the school did, the following organisations and individuals: Camden Council, represented by Mayor Lara Symkowiak; Anglican Schools Corporation, represented by Tony Willis, chair, and Ross Smith, chief executive officer; Bruce Litchfield, Kyle Watson and Michelle Green, capital works; Rick Butler and Warren Fletcher from Butler and Co Architects Pty Limited; Paul Boyd, Warren Stephens, David Borg and Rhys Perry from Momentum Built; and Ross Whelan, Warren Murray, Rebecca Clarke and Christine Klomp from the Thomas Hassall Anglican College. I note that Ross has been an integral part of the school. The Oran Park Anglican College is a fantastic school with a wonderful principal and staff. I am extremely proud to have the school in my electorate.

WILLIAMTOWN LAND CONTAMINATION

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:53): At just three minutes old, baby Audrey Grant was recording levels of a toxic firefighting chemical at above the national average for children aged up to four

years. Baby Audrey's story, and that of her parents, Mark and Karen, featured recently on the front page of the *Newcastle Herald*. The Grants are yet another family who have abandoned their home within the RAAF Base Williamstown contamination zone. They have decided to remove their young children from a toxic life, just as the Kelly family did late last year with baby William.

A parent's role is to protect their children. These families have sacrificed their financial stability to get their children out of harm's way. They have not been able to sell their home in the red zone, and now face the financial burden of paying rent and a mortgage. What is so hard to stomach is that all this pain and heartache has been caused by the Department of Defence, under the authority of our Federal Government. Too many families and residents are stuck living a toxic life. They cannot move, they cannot sell their property; they are fearful of the future, and they are constantly asking themselves what the chemicals are doing to them and their children. They do not want to look back, wishing they had done more to remove themselves from harm's way.

Fullerton Cove resident Sue Walker lives only 40 metres outside the red zone. The level of perfluorooctane sulfonate [PFOS] in her blood is more than double that of her husband. Sue's general practitioner has advised that while she stays in Fullerton Cove she will always have elevated levels because she will be continually exposed to the chemicals. Sue cannot explain her PFOS blood levels because she and husband, Stephen, have followed the precautionary advice provided by the NSW Environment Protection Authority. Located outside the red zone, Sue has fought tooth and nail to get her property connected to mains water, only to be turned away by Hunter Water and the Government because presumably the Department of Defence will not pay for it.

It has been 18 long months since residents living in and around the Williamstown RAAF Base were informed of possible contamination affecting their properties. Yet they have not reached day one of removing the contamination from their bodies, their properties, or the environment. The PFOS contaminants are leaching from the RAAF base daily via groundwater and surface water, and possibly also via dust in the air. Wayne and Mary Sampson, long-time residents of Williamstown, thought their exposure had been limited, but their blood results indicate a different picture. They have recorded some of the highest PFOS blood levels in the area despite the fact that they live outside the area identified as affected—that is, outside the red zone.

A worrying trend is developing in blood results. People who work the land or who live near contaminated waterways are returning high levels of PFOS. Those results indicate an exposure pathway that is continually being ignored and rejected by the NSW Environment Protection Authority, NSW Health and the Federal Department of Health. It is a pathway that warrants further investigation. These people have not drunk bore water, nor have they eaten cattle or produce from the land, but they are recording high levels of blood contamination. That is hard to explain and the community deserves answers. The Government must address the community's concerns about the air quality. It is time to investigate this exposure pathway more fully, and hopefully alleviate the community's fears.

While families in and around the red zone are struggling with this daily nightmare, it is unbelievable that a development application for a major extraction project has been lodged with the Department of Planning for assessment. The proposed sand mine is located smack bang in the middle of the red zone. It is opposite the Sampson's home and is surrounded by families who are already living with higher than average PFOS blood levels and who are already stressed and fearful. From the outset, the sand mine development application was smelly, and it continues to stink. How this proposal has not already been called in is beyond belief for this already struggling community. Residents close to the proposed sand mine have been advised by the Port Stephens Council that they cannot remove any soil from their properties or drains because they are located in the red zone.

Despite that, this project will result in 3.6 million tonnes of sand extracted from the site and distributed throughout New South Wales. The project is located on top of the Tomago sand beds, which is a unique groundwater-dependent ecosystem, and includes the habitat of the critically listed Port Stephens koala and the newly discovered Mahoney's toadlet. I urge Minister Roberts to review this project and to put the health and wellbeing of my community first. The Government needs to call in this project. I have said it before and I will say it again: The Government should place a moratorium on any major extraction project in the area until we know and fully understand the impacts of the RAAF base contamination on all affected residents.

DYSLEXIA SUPPORT GROUP

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:58): I draw to the attention of the House an important issue that has been raised with me by parents and advocates in my local community. Representatives from the relatively newly formed Dyslexia Support Mid North Coast group have met with me on several occasions to discuss their concerns about dyslexia and what we can do as a community to tackle the challenges of those with this learning disability. The co-convener of Dyslexia Support Mid North Coast, Kelly King, has provided me with a suite of information on this issue. I will take this opportunity to share some of this with the House today. Kelly

references dyslexia as the forgotten learning disability, despite its inclusion in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education 2005. As she explained to me, dyslexia is on a continuum from mild to severe and is far more prevalent than many of us realise. According to the Australian Dyslexia Association, the occurrence of dyslexia is widespread with 10 per cent of the population directly affected and up to 20 per cent of the population on the dyslexia continuum.

This means that in every classroom there are between three to five students with dyslexia who will struggle to access the curriculum and participate on the same basis as their peers. As Kelly explains, these are bright and capable children who are not able to access the curriculum or demonstrate their knowledge and ability due to their barrier with the written language, combined with varied and often limited support within their classroom. Most students with dyslexia are currently unidentified and therefore not provided with additional support in our schools. Those students who have been formally identified can benefit from focused support such as differentiated instruction, reasonable adjustments and tiered intervention.

Kelly reports that many parents have expressed concern about the support provided to individual students with dyslexia due to limited teacher knowledge and inadequate teacher training. As a parent Kelly feels that she and others in her position have to advocate continuously for recognition and support for their children. One of the impacts of having a child or children with dyslexia is that families can experience financial hardship as they outlay substantial amounts of money for diagnostic assessments and for external specialist intervention. Kelly expressed that the level of private specialist teaching required to support students with dyslexia is beyond the means of many families and the current high demand for services exceeds the existing supply, with services in regional locations either scarce or non-existent.

Dyslexia Support Mid North Coast is focused on raising the awareness and increasing the understanding of the needs of students with dyslexia and other related learning differences, and providing initiatives, particularly for teachers in our schools, that will support these students. Kelly highlighted to me the detrimental impact on the quality of education and emotional wellbeing of children with dyslexia when they are not adequately supported and that this may extend to limiting their opportunities in the future. She believes that to achieve an improvement in literacy results for these students, dyslexia must be put on the agenda and she is hopeful that by highlighting the issue the sector will investigate initiatives that will target early learning. A number of approaches have been highlighted by the Dyslexia Support Mid North Coast group and I look forward to further discussions with the Minister for Education, as well as my local school principals and teachers, to assist Kelly and other parents with their advocacy.

These approaches and initiatives include: building awareness and understanding, and the ability to identify children at risk by ensuring all teachers have attended adequate training on dyslexia, dyscalculia and specific learning difficulties; screening students at risk for reading difficulties in kindergarten or year one and utilising learning tools that successfully support students with dyslexia; building the capability of teachers through training, or retraining, in teaching methods and explicit instruction founded on evidence-based methods; reading intervention programs and methodologies with a structured literacy approach delivered by specialist teachers in a tiered model of intervention that is responsive to student needs based on evidence-based interventions; and reviewing current literacy teaching practices and programs with a focus on the needs of children with dyslexia.

I was pleased to have the opportunity to present Minister Rob Stokes with a copy of the book *Make it a Red Letter Day*, which focuses on the need to raise awareness of dyslexia. I congratulate Kelly King and her committee on their ongoing work, bringing their concerns to my attention and, importantly, providing a forum to support each other as parents as they address the challenges of caring for children with dyslexia.

FORESTRY INDUSTRIES TASKFORCE

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (13:03): I inform the House of an important meeting on 18 April in the Wagga Wagga electorate in the beautiful town of Tumut. The Government's Forestry Industries Taskforce was convened by a member in the other House, the Hon. Rick Colless, who is also the chair of the task force. It brought together industry representatives from across New South Wales who are involved in the production, manufacturing, processing and distributing of timber. We had the pleasure of welcoming Paul Toole, the Minister for Lands and Forestry, to that area to meet with the group.

This industry task force is very important because our region, which includes Tumut, Tumbarumba, Batlow, Gundagai and surrounding areas, is one of the big producers of timber products that is supported by plantations. The Australian economy currently imports approximately \$2 billion worth of timber, which is more than we export. We have a working group that is paid for, in part, by the Softwoods Working Group and industry contribution. The Softwoods Working Group has been working hard under the chairmanship of Peter Crowe, who is well known in the timber industry. The working group has identified the need for further investment in pine plantations to support the current industry in Tumut and its region, which is growing. Peter Crowe says that

preliminary work shows that around 50 per cent of jobs, direct and indirect, in Tumut and Tumbarumba, rely on forestry industries. He said:

Fifty per cent. That means one in every two people in Tumut—or members of the workforce at least—have their job because of forestry.

Current demand is for three million tonnes. Locally we supply two million tonnes, so plantings must increase. The value of industry output is approximately \$1.08 billion per annum. An initial 68,000 hectares net over 15 years is needed to address this shortfall of a million tonnes, which will establish 4,500 hectares of plantation each year. Approximately 75 per cent of that area will be able to be planted because of water run-off, contours, et cetera. The annual cost involved in the establishment of land preparation would be \$12 million per annum in purchase plus \$6.75 million per annum in land preparation, or \$18.75 million per annum, which is a total cost of \$280 million over 15 years. At the moment product is brought in from other areas. If those other areas have industry that is willing to invest, it means that the supply of fibre to Tumut and current factories will be reduced. Demand will increase. The industry is talking about further investment in the Tumut area, which will increase demand by another 750,000 tonnes per annum.

Indeed, if the other mills in our region increase their capacity, that will be another 410,000 per annum. That means that total fibre demand would increase by a further 1.6 million tonnes per annum. This level of production would add another \$443 million to the regional economy, requiring a further 70,000 hectares of plantation that costs about \$290 million. The point I make is that further investment is required. We need to find an innovative way for private industry investment and for the Government to co-partner with the industry so plantings take place. It is important that we replace the plantations that are lost to fire in summer. We must look at low productivity land so those areas that are not prime agricultural land can be explored. The Government recently bought 7,000 hectares to support the industry, which is already planted. The timber industry needs further investment. As I have demonstrated, an enormous economic benefit will flow from it, which will result in jobs and more investment in our region.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (13:08): This afternoon I bring to the attention of the Premier, and to the Minister for Skills, in particular, the concerns of Samantha Ruddiman from my electorate. Today I wish to tell her story of how she has almost lost everything due to the failed Smart and Skilled policy of this Government. I acknowledge that Samantha is with us in the gallery. Through no fault of her own, Samantha and her companies, Tag Training and Trainer Assessor Group, have been left in what can only be described as an impossible situation. They have lost every opportunity to provide training with TAFE and are owed hundreds of thousands of dollars because of a dodgy training provider that took Smart and Skilled and the New South Wales taxpayers—the people we are here to represent—for a ride. Samantha agreed to subcontract with a company known as the National Training Group [NTG], which has links to disgraced union official Derrick Belan. This company received \$1.2 million—not a small amount—of Smart and Skilled money to provide training for warehouse operations in Western Sydney. Samantha agreed to partner with the National Training Group to deliver this training. State Training Services provided her with a confirmation that the delivery of the training was consistent with best practice.

Despite receiving this \$1.2 million of Smart and Skilled money, NTG has not paid Tag Training and has lined its own pockets through a dodgy subcontracting arrangement that left Samantha and her companies near destitute. When Samantha raised concerns with the department about NTG she was assured the department had done its due diligence. The former chief executive officer of NTG, Chris Zorzo, is being pursued for fraud relating to misuse of Smart and Skilled money. It is not good enough that the crooks and the shonks are given millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to run bogus courses while hurting innocent people and small businesses on the way. It is not good enough that honest subcontractors have no rights under this program and that the New South Wales Government cannot do anything to rein in the sham training providers. It is not good enough that in this State dodgy training providers are rewarded yet TAFE teachers are punished—something I am constantly talking about in this Chamber.

Samantha is now left in a position where she is unable to secure any training arrangements with TAFE NSW, or any other registered training organisation for that matter, because of a prohibition put in place by State Training Services. I fear Samantha is the human face of the failure of Smart and Skilled—an honest businesswoman who thought she was doing her best as a skills trainer only to be taken for granted by a dodgy crook and left stranded by this Government. Unfortunately, time does not permit me to go into the full extent of this situation—this is only the tip of the iceberg. I have been assisting Samantha with many issues for more than 12 months. It is important to bring this to the attention of the House and to the Minister in particular. It is important to put on the record how badly this policy has failed and how it is affecting small businesses in places like Western Sydney.

Because of Smart and Skilled, a small business owner in Western Sydney has been completely duded, and the crooks and the shonks have had their payday. If subcontracting work is done by Smart and Skilled, there needs to be better practices to ensure those subcontractors are protected and the money is properly accounted for. There needs to be a comprehensive review. I am pleading with the Minister to review all elements of Samantha's case. She must be paid for the work she has done. Anything less is a gross injustice, and it is on this Minister's watch. We cannot allow people to run riot with New South Wales taxpayers' money and leave hardworking, honest people with nothing.

EPHING BULLS JUNIOR CRICKET CLUB

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (13:13): I am always pleased to see the wealth of talent in my electorate of Epping. Last Sunday I was invited to the Epping Bulls Junior Cricket Club presentation day to look back on the season and celebrate the successes and achievements of the boys and girls of the club. I am a passionate advocate of local sports programs in my electorate as they provide an excellent avenue for our children to learn the foundational values of our Australian culture: mateship, hard work and, most of all, the confidence to give it a go. I was delighted to discover that the Epping Bulls had an outstanding year, with every team making the semifinals in their respective competitions. Three teams went on to win their respective premierships. It has been a year of impressive performances from the boys and girls at Epping Bulls Junior Cricket Club. I am pleased to report that in the light of these milestones, the Epping Bulls are setting their expectations even higher, and I am especially happy to hear that they will be focusing their efforts on raising an all-girls team. This is an initiative I wholeheartedly support, and I look forward to seeing our girls on the cricket field next season.

Of course, clubs such as the Epping Bulls can only enjoy their achievements if they receive support and backing from their local communities. It is fair to say that the successes of these clubs are driven by the collective enthusiasm of community members who are passionate to invest in future generations of Australian cricketers. Figures on paper do not always tell the full story; it is only when members of Parliament go into their respective communities—as a local, for the locals—that they can appreciate the real value of these community activities. It is not about whether any trophies are won—though, of course, these are always welcome additions to any club cabinet—but what truly makes a season of hard work worthwhile are the parents, friends and families, coaches, small business sponsors and volunteers, cementing together to bring out the best in our children. Without people like these, our children would not have a sport to play, or a club to support.

Of commensurate importance is the support that the Government provides for the healthy continuation of community hubs, such as the Epping Bulls Junior Cricket Club. In March the cricket net upgrade at Ron Payne Park was completed thanks to a local sports grant of \$16,000, which we were successful in obtaining some years ago. Projects such as these ensure that our local communities are equipped with the best facilities for our local cricketers and aspiring talent. Many of our children involved in clubs such as the Epping Bulls will go on to represent Australia at all levels of competitive cricket. Of course, while the cricket community in my electorate of Epping invests significant amounts of time, effort, and finances into our local cricket clubs, I am equally thrilled to find that the New South Wales Government is working hard to ensure that these achievements come to fruition. In particular I take the time to congratulate the junior, intermediate, and senior cricketers of the year—Thomas Bryant from the under-11 Blues; Sam Collins from the under-14 Reds; and Billy McCarthy from the under-15/16 Chappell team. Their discipline, persistence and love for the sport paid great dividends and they are all well-deserved recipients of these awards.

I also thank Derek McCarthy, club president, for his enthusiasm, passion and commitment to cricket, and for all that he does in the club. The Epping Bulls Junior Cricket Club is what it is today thanks to his tireless efforts. I encourage parents to consider registering their children for a season with the Epping Bulls, as it is a fantastic opportunity for them and their children to engage with the community and to enjoy some good local sport. I especially encourage those parents with children between five and eight years of age to take part in the Milo in2Cricket initiative through the Epping Bulls Junior Cricket Club website. Go the mighty Epping Bulls!

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (13:17): On 28 April people on the Central Coast assembled at the memorial wall located at Ourimbah in The Entrance electorate to commemorate Workers Memorial Day. Memorial Day was first declared by the North American trade union movement in 1970 to honour the thousands of workers killed and injured on the job every year. In 1991 the Canadian Parliament officially recognised the day in that country. Since then Workers Memorial Day has grown into an international event and on 28 April each year countries pause to remember workers who have died as a result of their work. This is the eleventh year the service has been held at Ourimbah after the memorial wall was established in 2006 by Central Coast unions. The wall contains the names of workers who have passed away as a result of their work. Central Coast unions have undertaken to record the name of any worker who has passed away as a service to the community and as an important part of the commemoration of Workers Memorial Day.

I acknowledge the service provided by Central Coast unions over all those years—the maintenance of the wall. I particularly mention the current secretary, Debbie Westacott, who does a lot of work organising the memorial service. I also acknowledge the support received by Central Coast unions from the Central Coast Community Union Alliance, which also participates in the event. We estimate that one worker dies every 15 seconds internationally. We know that more people die at work than are killed fighting wars or as a result of wars. According to SafeWork Australia, as at 26 April 2017, 51 Australian workers have been killed at work. To put that into context, that is more than the total number of Australian Defence Force personnel killed over the whole period of the Afghan war operations in the 13 years from 2001, during which time 41 ADF personnel lost their lives.

SafeWork Australia reports preliminary estimates that 178 workers were killed at work in Australia in 2016. The reality is somewhat worse. Because of limitations on the collection of data, the statistics I have quoted do not include all work-related deaths. There are separate statistics that increase the total number to count bystanders killed as a result of work-related deaths, usually deaths associated with the road transport industry. However, work-related diseases such as mesothelioma are under-represented, as are deaths of the self-employed. Deaths that arise from travelling to and from work are likewise not counted by SafeWork Australia. The sharing economy is creating large numbers of workers who are engaged in such a way that they work outside the traditional protections of workplace safety and often outside the traditional mechanisms for counting workplace accidents and injury. That is why the service on 28 April and the memorial on the Central Coast are so important.

We established this memorial in 2006 for two reasons: to allow Central Coast people who have lost a friend or family member an opportunity to remember that person who was often taken from them in tragic circumstances and with little or no warning, and to remind ourselves, as a community, that we must continue to work towards a world where workplaces are safe. Each year family members return to the wall to remember those who have been taken. I finish by quoting the slogan of Workers Memorial Day. We must continue to "Remember the dead—Fight for the living".

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:19): I was pleased to welcome the Hon. Pru Goward, the Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, to the Holsworthy electorate for an important full-day visit. On Wednesday 12 April we were able to announce that the Safer Pathway program will be coming to the Liverpool and Green Valley local area commands [LACs] as part of this Government's community response to tackling domestic violence. This will enable domestic violence victims across the Liverpool region to receive an effective and consistent response.

The rollout of the program means that all suburbs in the Holsworthy electorate will now have access to this service from September, as the Safer Pathway program was rolled out to the Sutherland LAC last year. As the Minister said during her visit, "This strategy will help courageous victims who have been left traumatised and terrified to have easier access to the services they need. They will no longer have to re-tell their story to a multitude of government agencies." This is an enormous achievement in combating domestic violence. The Government has committed \$53 million over four years to expand Safer Pathway statewide. I am proud that this Government has assisted in streamlining the domestic violence services across Liverpool, Sutherland and New South Wales. The program works by bringing together the police, Health, Corrections, Family and Community Services, and Education to form an integrated pathway to make it safer and easier for victims, whose life or health are "at threat", to seek assistance and get help.

This is a giant step in the right direction for domestic violence victims. The strategy will assist in giving victims a chance by providing them with the help they need to move forward with their lives. I am committed to breaking the vicious cycle of domestic violence and I know that the Safer Pathway strategy will be an integral part of our community response to this horrible problem. Domestic violence is an issue that plagues every suburb, indeed probably every street, across the State. However, the Western Sydney Women organisation has highlighted it as a particular concern for women from Western Sydney and I am thankful to the Minister for Women for rolling out this program and providing another support system for those in need. The Minister and I had a very big day when she visited Liverpool. We also announced the Premier's Youth Initiative. This initiative is an important boost for youth homelessness services in our area, providing personal advisers, education and employment mentoring. The initiative will enable young people to receive support as they leave out-of-home care and it will help youth who are transitioning from care to independence.

The Minister and I had the opportunity to announce the launch of the Premier's Youth Initiative at Anglicare Liverpool with some very dedicated youth workers and two young women who are taking part in the program. The New South Wales Government has contributed \$1.8 million over four years to support the initiative across the south-western Sydney Family and Community Services district. This is an important move to combat

youth homelessness and improve youth education. This significant initiative will contribute to meeting the Premier's priority target of increasing the number of young people moving from specialist homelessness services to long-term accommodation. As a result of the initiative young people will receive support to grow networks and engage in further study and employment. Up to 40 young people who leave out-of-home care will be linked with support services to help them find long-term accommodation and employment. This is an important initiative for young people in my local area. I hope it helps them in reducing youth homelessness and assists them to get the care and support they need.

The Minister visited also the Liverpool Housing NSW office and the Liverpool Community Services Centre—it was a huge day. At both locations I was amazed at the work those men and women do to help those less fortunate in the community and those who do not have a strong voice, our children in particular. The Minister sat with the staff at both sites and asked really important questions, such as how they think the Government is going and what the Government needs to change to do a better job. There was frank and in-depth discussion and I know the Minister took all that on board as it will help the Government to offer better services.

Housing NSW and Family and Community Services staff often do not receive sufficient recognition for the work they do in assisting the community. At times it must be both a very hard and very emotional job and I take this opportunity to thank them all, especially those in my local area, for everything they do to help those in need and children who need protection. I thank everyone we met on the day. I thank also Minister Goward for visiting my local area and providing these new and important programs and initiatives for the region. I cannot wait to see the positive changes they will make.

AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY DANCE FESTIVAL

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (13:27): Tamworth has just experienced a massive party and celebration of dance, the Australian Country Dance Festival, commonly called Mayworth 2017. It is Australia's largest line dancing festival, with dancers from six States and Territories, with eight different countries represented, including Singapore, Malaysia, the United States of America, Spain, New Zealand, Taiwan and the United Kingdom. It was a huge weekend with an action-packed program filled with workshops, social events, choreography, demonstrations and amazing competitions. The competitors worked hard for months to bring their best routines to Tamworth and it showed. They entertained to the highest level. They competed against some of the best dancers from across Australia. I urge those members who think that line dancing is a tradition of days gone by to attend Mayworth 2018 to witness how line dancing has progressed. It is absolutely fantastic.

An event of this scale does not just happen; it takes 14 months of hard work to organise each event, so planning for next year's event has already started. Many people behind the scenes supported event directors Chris Watson and his lovely wife, Gemma, who gave their blood, sweat and tears to bring the event to Tamworth. Volunteers like Liz Barned, Kristen Flood and Angela Thurlow and the Dare 2 Dance team gave so much of their time to make sure the event was a success. Destination Tamworth and the board managers of Wests Entertainment Group were major sponsors. An amazing line-up of instructors, judges, scorers and volunteers put in many hours to make the weekend successful. The dates have already been set for Mayworth 2018. I know that members are getting out their diaries and noting the date. We invite them to come to Tamworth; I know that event director Chris Watson, who is watching this afternoon, will roll out the red carpet.

Importantly, Mayworth 2017 brought more than 800 people to the country music capital from the six States and Territories and eight countries I mentioned. The Saturday line dance ball and the awards event sold out at Wests, and Mayworth brought international Dove Award winner and Grammy-nominated Nashville-based country artist, Ty Herndon, to Tamworth. In addition, an average stay of five nights per guest brought almost \$1 million to the local economy and the event increased tourism, enhanced our sister city relationships and promoted the branding of Tamworth as our country music capital. Mayworth is in its fourteenth year and will continue to grow. Organiser Chris Watson does so much for our region, including taking line dancing tours to Las Vegas and other parts of the United States and doing a magnificent job in the promotion and branding of Tamworth. I thank him and Gemma Watson, the organising committee and the volunteers for their outstanding efforts. I encourage all members to put 3 May to 6 May 2018 into their diaries and come to Tamworth for Mayworth 2018.

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

*Visitors***VISITORS**

The SPEAKER: I welcome all guests in the gallery this afternoon to question time. In particular, I extend a warm welcome to the students and teachers from the Lismore High School, guests of the Deputy Speaker, and member for Lismore.

*Announcements***MEMBER FOR KEIRA**

The SPEAKER: I draw to the attention of the House that today is the member for Keira's birthday. I will not say how old he is, but it is an important birthday. Happy birthday.

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

The SPEAKER (14:17): Between 1916 and 1918 some 3,853 Australians were taken prisoner by the Germans on the Western Front. One-third of them were captured in the First Battle of Bullecourt in northern France in April 1917. Transported to Germany, those men arrived in specially constructed camps a century ago this month. Prior to the First World War, few Australians knew what it meant to be a prisoner of war. A few dozen Australian troops had been captured during the Boer War but they had been released after only a short period of incarceration. The soldiers taken prisoner in France were detained for the remainder of the war and endured extremely harsh conditions. The German prison camps were crowded—more than five million Allied servicemen were held as prisoners of war during the conflict.

Food was often short, especially during the Allied blockade of 1917-18, and many prisoners were forced to work for the Germans on war-related projects. Crucial relief in the form of food parcels and clothing packages were provided by a special section of the Australian Red Cross established in 1916—we all support the work of the Red Cross in our electorates—specifically to care for imprisoned servicemen. The majority of the Australians held as prisoners during the First World War were in captivity for more than 12 months, and approximately 9 per cent of them did not survive to the end of the war. A total of 395 Australian troops died as prisoners of war. Lest we forget.

*Question Time***CATHOLIC SCHOOL FUNDING**

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:23): My question is directed to the Premier. In the light of Archbishop Anthony Fisher's comments that the Turnbull Government's changes to school funding "will force fee rises of over \$1,000 for a very significant number"—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Education will come to order. The question is directed to the Premier.

Mr LUKE FOLEY: In the light of Archbishop Anthony Fisher's comments that the Turnbull Government's changes to school funding "will force fee rises of over \$1,000 for a very significant number—at least 78—of the Catholic primary schools in Sydney", will the Premier stand with the Archbishop, families who send their children to Catholic schools, and me in opposing Prime Minister Turnbull's funding plan for Catholic schools?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:23): As we all know, the Federal budget is being handed down tonight, and all of us will look very closely at the detail in that budget. But we place on the record our absolute pride that the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals have invested more in education than any government in the history of this State. We were the first government to sign up to Gonski. One thing I am extremely proud of is that the national Government, with the support of Mr Gonski, is now adopting a needs-based approach to education, which started here in New South Wales. We pay tribute to the former Minister for Education and the current Minister for Education and the entire team for the needs-based funding approach we have adopted in education.

We are extremely proud of our record in this area. Not only are we investing record amounts in schools on a daily basis but we are also investing record amounts in infrastructure. Those opposite have a lot to say about education but, unfortunately, their actions do not match their words. In fact, in the dying days of the former Labor Government in March 2011, an interesting report came out about Labor's secret plan.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Irrespective of what those opposite say in this place, their word cannot be trusted because a report came out on 19 March 2011 which stated:

More than \$1 billion in cuts has been targeted in a secret NSW Education Department blueprint that proposes closing more than 100 schools, axing 7500 teachers, selling surplus land and slashing the costs of government programs for disadvantaged students.

Those opposite will always say one thing and do another.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The question relates to whether the Premier supports Archbishop Fisher or Malcolm Turnbull.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Those opposite can say and do all they like, but the public knows we have a commitment to education. The public and all school communities, irrespective of where the schools are located and who the providers of those education services are, know that we are the protectors of education and that we always will be. When those opposite were in government they left this State in an absolute mess.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled on relevance. The Premier will resume her seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am talking about education, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier remains relevant to the question, but the member for Strathfield is entitled to take a point of order.

Ms Jodi McKay: The question is about taking a stand against Malcolm Turnbull and his targeting of Catholic schools. If the Premier could answer that question, that would be great.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled on that point of order. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. If she takes another point of order on relevance I will direct the Clerk to stop the clock.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The budget is tonight. Has the Opposition run out of questions today? This is a serious issue because had those opposite been successful at the 2011 election and had the Gonski agreement come about, they would not have been able to afford to sign up to it.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lakemba is entitled to take a point of order. I have ruled on the point of relevance. The Premier has been relevant to the question.

Mr Jihad Dib: My point of order is about relevance.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lakemba will resume his seat. I have ruled on relevance. There is no point of order. The Premier remains relevant to the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Those opposite did not have the money to sign up to Gonski and they did not have the political will to pursue a needs-based funding agenda. They had 16 years to get that right. We are the party of education, we are the Government of education; those opposite are the wreckers.

SYDNEY METRO NORTHWEST

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (14:28): My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the New South Wales Government delivering on its election commitment to build a Metro rail link to north-west Sydney?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:29): I thank the member for Riverstone for his question. Whether it is in education or infrastructure, the Government delivers on what it says it will do. Yesterday I was pleased to join the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure to get an update and to provide the community with an update on the great progress we are making on the Metro Northwest. Again, this was a project which Labor promised for decades and never delivered. Despite many forests being cut down for their glossy brochures on project after project, those opposite failed to deliver any project of significance. Whether it was the North West Rail Link or the South West Rail Link, Labor talked about projects for decades but failed to deliver. The priority of those opposite was the CBD to Rozelle Metro but we know what happened to that.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: So Labor members went from talking about projects for decades, promising the CBD to Rozelle metro and then abandoning the project at a cost of half a billion dollars to the great

taxpayers of this State. It is very encouraging that we have other States asking us how to build infrastructure. We have Australian firms in New South Wales getting on with the job of providing this wonderful infrastructure. We have global governments and companies in New South Wales working alongside Australian companies and providing this infrastructure. Everybody is envious of the projects we have and the number of cranes in the sky. The New South Wales Labor Party cannot even say it supports a single infrastructure project. I cannot find anything on the record, not a single statement Labor has made, which supports any infrastructure project. As I was standing for the first time on the deck of a skytrain yesterday, looking out across the north-west at the houses and schools being built and the health facilities and roads being upgraded, I thought: What does the New South Wales Labor Party have against infrastructure? Why cannot they support these projects?

We are the party of infrastructure and of projects but we are also the Government and party of the worker. I am pleased to say that just on the skytrain part of the project there are 4,500 people employed to build it. Those are jobs not only for the community of the north-west and Greater Sydney but that have a positive impact on small businesses and suppliers in the region. Whether it is providing that infrastructure to meet the needs of our growing communities, creating the jobs that provide that infrastructure or supporting the private investment that comes off the back of that infrastructure, that is how you build an economy and deliver projects. I am pleased to say that, to date, we have been in awe of all the work happening underground with that project. The tunnel boring has finished. We have been observing all the great feats undertaken and now we are able to see the great feats from the seven-metre high skytrain bridge. Engineers do not often get congratulated but I take this opportunity to thank the engineers and contractors on the project, and the people from our project team because it is the first ever cable-stayed railway bridge in Australia to be built on a curve. From an engineering perspective—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Has the member for Strathfield worked out how to use Google yet? Last week was not a good week for her. Whilst on the topic, have you corrected the Pecuniary Interest Register yet?

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order: The Premier should address her comments through the Chair and not across the table.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am sure it was a momentary lapse.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I apologise—it is a great thing to talk about but I got distracted. I apologise for getting distracted and will get on with the job of talking about this great project. The skytrain is an engineering feat and the 4-kilometre-long skytrain will run from Bella Vista to Rouse Hill. The great thing about the skytrain is that those involved in its building managed to do so without disrupting the community. [*Extension of time*]

The community was able to continue on the ground without disruption. That lends itself to the important design of the skytrain. In another major update I am pleased that work has begun on all eight stations on the new Metro and workers are continuing to build the 4,000 commuter car parks.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: What has the member for Strathfield got against projects and public transport?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I take the opportunity to thank the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and his team for building a world-class facility that will make a big difference to the people of north-west Sydney. We know that it will continue all the way underneath the harbour and out to Bankstown. I know the member for Bankstown is very pleased with that because it will transform her community.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We know from experience what those opposite did not do for 16 years. In contrast, in just six years the Government has made enormous progress on this very significant project.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL FUNDING

Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (14:35): My question is directed to the Premier. Given the existing schools overcrowding crisis, does the Government share the concerns expressed by Dr Dan White, the Executive Director of Sydney Catholic Schools, who has said the Turnbull Government's funding changes will "force some families to seek enrolment in the already overcrowded State education sector"?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:36): I refer the member to my previous answer. However, it is very curious that those opposite do not support the New South Wales Government's agenda in education. They managed to underinvest whilst in government. Labor managed to not invest in public education. We came to government and what did we find?

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

Mr Ryan Park: Smaller class sizes and more teachers.

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

Mr Ryan Park: Bring the debate on.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is clear that nobody out there believes a word those opposite say because their underinvestment in education meant that when we came to government there were capacity challenges, and there still are in many parts of New South Wales. I and many of my colleagues know from our own communities what that has meant.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. The question was about the Catholic education system and enrolments in the State system.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I think the suggestion in the member's question was the capacity constraints on the public education system and that is exactly what I am answering. I am addressing that question because many of us know from our own communities the capacity challenges we inherited when we came to government. Not only were there not enough teachers or classrooms, but there was a billion dollar infrastructure backlog in education. If those opposite cared about education they would have managed the budget to ensure they could afford to invest in education. They not only failed to invest in education but also failed to make decisions, such as ensuring that funding actually followed the student, needed to ensure we had a needs-based approach to education.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This policy not only proved successful in New South Wales but also is being adopted across the nation.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Last week I had the opportunity to go through the list of 2,100 schools that will receive maintenance funding.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: We went through the list of all the schools that will be built or will receive extra funding, and the list goes on.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This Government has always said to the community, "Do not judge us by what we say, judge us by what we do". All that comes from those opposite is hot air. This is a government for education, and it always will be.

REGIONAL GROWTH AND MARKETING FUND

Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (14:39): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier inform the House on the Regional Growth and Marketing Fund and the benefits it will provide to regional New South Wales?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:40): I thank the member for Lismore for his question in relation to the growth of regional New South Wales. Both interstate and overseas migration is important to regional centres. This Government encourages people from overseas to go to the regions and become part of the community.

Mr Thomas George: That is how I ended up there.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: That is how the member for Lismore ended up in Lismore. It was the member for Lismore who championed the work of Julia Harpham, the Regional Woman of the Year, to save the town of

Mingoola. Ms Harpham brought refugee farmers to her town in order to save it. That is an example of how important migration and immigration are to regional centres in New South Wales. A key priority for the Liberal-Nationals Government has been to grow regional New South Wales. The Government has invested in roads, schools, rail and hospitals to ensure that the amenities are in place for our communities to be able to thrive and grow. Small business is crucial to the local economy of regional towns. Those towns must attract families. The children will become part of the school population and will join the footy teams. The nurses, teachers and police serving the community add to the diversity of an ageing community. They help to secure government services in health facilities and schools in order to meet future population demands.

This side of the House knows this because we live, work and play in regional New South Wales. The members of the Liberal-Nationals Government understand the issues facing regional communities and the importance of policies that showcase opportunities in regional New South Wales. The Government does not shy away from attracting people to become part of growing our communities. In my electorate, the Snowy Hydro scheme was built by people of many nationalities working shoulder to shoulder. It is now one of the greatest assets of this country. We might get Snowy Hydro 2.0, which will create more jobs for the region. Those members opposite are like their Federal leader and his recent racist advertisement about jobs. With my name and complexion, I would not have been cast in that ad. If it were not for immigration, the Snowy Hydro would not have been built.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I probably was not even tall enough to be cast in that ad. If it were not for the migrants who went to the Snowy Mountains, we would not have had the skills to build that important piece of electricity infrastructure. Migration is as relevant today as it was back then. The Liberal-Nationals know the importance of regional areas to New South Wales. We may not sell that message often enough. That is why we are announcing today the Regional Growth and Marketing Fund.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Funding of \$1 million will be provided to promote the regions as a place to live, a place to do business and a place to work and raise one's family. This Government understands the importance of regional communities and the opportunities that exist in the regions. The seven Evocities will be able to apply for funding from the Regional Growth and Marketing Fund, which will provide them with the opportunity to promote their regions. Councils and other organisations will also have the opportunity to promote their regional cities. The issue of housing affordability may be answered by people making a bush change to the regions. We must showcase the opportunities in the regions for people to work and raise a family or to become part of the small businesses that underpin local communities. Local councils, regional development organisations, the local chamber of commerce, and industry organisations and associations will be able to apply to the marketing fund. It will provide them with an opportunity to showcase the regions, which we represent on this side of the House. I look forward to working with those organisations to build on the investment made by this Government in regional New South Wales. [*Extension of time*]

I go back to the example I gave of Mingoola. It is a great story. Ms Harpham said:

At the end of last year, it was announced that the school was going to be in recess and it was just like a death knell of our community.

We ran out of children for the school.

The Mingoola community felt very strongly that we had welcomed people before... and most people were really happy at the idea of welcoming people again.

It was a little like *Field of Dreams*: If you build it, they will come. And that is what happened. In Sydney, refugee advocate Emmanuel Musoni, representing African refugees in the city, met with Mingoola residents and agreed to try relocation to this dying town. He said:

... even before one week, I had more than 50 people, more than families registered, ready to go and live in Mingoola.

Julia Harpham said:

I don't think we ever really in our wildest dreams expected these people would really want to come so much and want to come so quickly, to get out of the city. Emmanuel came back with his first two families who put their names down. They arrived a day before Anzac Day.

The school was saved, the refugees now have homes and jobs, the farmers have the workers they need, and a strong community has been re-established. The Government is building the amenities and the people of regional New South Wales are welcoming those who travel across the globe or from other States. They want to see regional New South Wales grow and thrive. They welcome anyone who will contribute to the community and become part

of the leadership and workforce. This Government is pleased to showcase this positive diversity which will help to grow regional New South Wales.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL FUNDING

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (14:47): I direct my question to the Premier. Given the commitments of additional funding to non-government schools for Syrian and Iraqi refugees that were clearly given in November—

[*Interruption*]

Mr GUY ZANGARI: It is in my electorate, bozo.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting. I call the member for Kiama to order for the second time. The behaviour of Government members is reprehensible. Government members will cease interjecting.

Mr GUY ZANGARI: My question is directed to the Premier. Given that commitments to additional funding for non-government schools for Syrian and Iraqi refugees were clearly given in November 2016 at meetings chaired by the Coordinator General for Refugee Settlement, Professor Peter Shergold, why has the Government now advised the Catholic Education Commission that there is no additional funding?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:49): The issues the member raises about supporting those communities are important to him and they are important to me. A few weeks ago I met with Professor Shergold to discuss our plans in relation to supporting those communities. As far as I know, the Government has maintained its commitments to support those communities in every way. I look forward to receiving further updates from Professor Shergold. We are a government that acts; what we say we do. We are a government that will support those most vulnerable because we are in a position to do so.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM REFORM

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (14:49): My question is addressed to the Attorney General. How is the Government reforming the criminal justice system to improve outcomes for victims and community safety?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (14:49): I thank the member for Epping for his question and continuing interest in matters of criminal justice. Today, with my colleagues the Minister for Police and the Minister for Corrections, I announced a series of sweeping reforms to the criminal justice system that are tough and smart and will make our community safer. The four key areas to these reforms are: encouraging early guilty pleas; stronger sentencing; stronger and better management of parole; and better management of high-risk sex and violent offenders. Today's announcement reflects the Government's ongoing commitment to reducing by five percentage points the proportion of domestic violence perpetrators who reoffend within 12 months, and by five percentage points the proportion of adults who reoffend within two years. We are putting our money where our mouth is with a \$200 million package of investment in tough and smart justice to deliver these reforms for safer communities.

The first area is encouraging appropriate early guilty pleas. These reforms will apply to indictable offences that are heard in the District Court and the Supreme Court. As we know, there are extensive delays in the District Court. Typically, it takes 369 days to get from committal to trial in the District Court. The Government already is tackling the extensive backlog of cases in the District Court by having appointed five additional District Court judges. We have established rolling lists and special call-overs and have increased sitting weeks in regional courthouses. But to remove entrenched delay, we need systematic reform of our criminal justice system. In relation to serious criminal cases, 73 per cent end with guilty pleas. However, 23 per cent of guilty pleas are not entered until the day of trial or later. That creates unimaginable stress for victims and is a waste of police, court and defence resources and taxpayers' money.

Presently, defendants who intend to plead guilty may delay their guilty pleas for a number of tactical reasons. Our reforms will discourage late guilty pleas. We will institute early disclosure evidence. Police will be required to deliver a brief of evidence to prosecution and defence counsel early in the process, which will allow decisions to be made about charges and pleas to be made without delay. A senior prosecutor will review the brief of evidence and confirm that the charges will proceed as soon as possible. That will prevent charges being withdrawn or changed late in the process, often as late as the first day of trial. Cases will be better managed because senior lawyers from the prosecution and defence will be responsible for matters from start to finish. That means victims will have a senior prosecutor as their key point of contact throughout the whole process.

The Government will introduce mandatory case conferencing to maximise the opportunities for appropriate early guilty pleas and narrow the issues in dispute early in the proceedings. Committal hearings will be abolished. Instead, senior prosecutors will screen cases through charge certification. The existing sentencing discounts for guilty pleas—which can see 22 per cent of guilty pleas as late as the day of trial or later—will be changed by a tight prescription by legislation so that large discounts cannot be granted late in the process. Together with early certainty about the charge, this will discourage late guilty pleas. Judges will retain a discretion to provide no sentencing discount or a lesser discount in the case of extreme culpability, and there will be safeguards in place to ensure that guilty pleas are only entered by defendants where appropriate.

The second head is stronger sentencing. The Government will make the community safer by holding offenders to account and reducing reoffending. In particular, we will strengthen intensive corrections orders. They will consist of one compulsory condition, submission to supervision, and a commitment not to reoffend, plus at least one other condition which may be a curfew, electronic monitoring, home detention or submission to an intensive drug and alcohol program. Intensive Correction Orders [ICOs] will not be available for murder, manslaughter, sexual assault, any sexual offence against a child, discharge of a firearm, terrorism offences or organised crime. Suspended sentences—a slap on the wrist—will be abolished. Currently, suspended sentences do not automatically require offenders to be supervised or to engage in rehabilitation.

I thank the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault for her advocacy on behalf of victims of domestic violence. To better protect victims, there will be a presumption that domestic violence offenders will be subject to active supervision in the community if they are not sentenced to imprisonment. They will not be eligible for an ICO with a home detention condition that involves residing with the victim, and a domestic violence offender will only be sentenced to an ICO if the court is satisfied that the victim can be adequately protected. [*Extension of time*]

The Government will resource this with 200 additional Community Corrections Officers on the ground supervising offenders, who previously were without any kind of management in the community. The third area of reform is changes to parole. I acknowledge the leadership of the Minister for Corrections in ensuring stronger decision-making and smarter management of parolees to make our community safer and to reduce reoffending. As with all the reforms I am announcing today, community safety is the paramount consideration. The final area of reform will be high-risk sex and violent offenders, where again community safety will become the explicit paramount consideration. More offenders will be eligible for the high-risk offenders scheme because the court will be required to consider an offender's criminal history and future risk of serious sex and violence offences, rather than just one or the other.

The Government looks forward to working with a wide range of stakeholders, legal stakeholders, victims' groups and law enforcement groups to get the legislation up and running. I note some have already spoken favourably about the reforms. The chief executive officer of Domestic Violence New South Wales, Moo Baulch, has welcomed the reforms. She notes that early guilty pleas will help victims rebuild their lives after domestic and family violence. She said, "We want women and their families to feel supported and to know the system will give them consistency and prioritise their safety", and, "It's about building a criminal justice system that listens and responds to what victim survivors need."

Pieta Thornton, OAM, Director, Victims and Witnesses of Crime Court Support Services, said in relation to sentencing reforms, "We are very pleased the Government is looking to really address the underlying causes of an offender's behaviour to reduce reoffending." The Chief Executive Officer of the Victims of Crime Assistance League, Robyn Cotterell-Jones, OAM, said, "The NSW Victims of Crime Assistance League welcomes these positive justice reforms and looks forward to working closely with victims to make the changes more readily understood and accessible to them." The Government looks forward to working with all stakeholders to improve community safety and outcomes for all victims.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL FUNDING

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (14:57): My question is directed to the Premier. Given that Sydney Catholic schools have now enrolled over 200 Syrian and Iraqi refugees, who need intensive English programs, and that the Executive Director of Sydney Catholic Schools, Dr Dan White, has stated, "the Government has failed to honour a clear promise with regard to funding", will the Premier now reconsider and provide additional funding as originally promised?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:57): I wish those opposite would do their homework in relation to the actions of this side of the House.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The Minister for Education has provided me with an update that the Catholic schools are, of course, eligible to receive funding for refugee children through existing funding arrangements.

The SPEAKER: Order! If members continue to interject I will have no hesitation in removing them from the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I place on the record my gratitude to all sectors of the community, government, non-government and Catholic, who support the needs of refugee children from Syria and Iraq. Again I make the point that we are very proud of the Government's record in supporting those vulnerable communities. In fact, whilst many others stood silent, the Government took a position on supporting those communities. We took a stand.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In particular, I pay tribute to the former Premier, who took a stand when others did not.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Bankstown to order for the third time. This is her final warning.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As I said to those opposite, and I know they do not like to hear it, I have a particular interest in these matters.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I have been briefed by Professor Shergold and I look forward to future updates. I conclude my answer.

Mr Michael Daley: A woman of bravery, you are, Gladys.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. His behaviour is out of order.

REGIONAL COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:59): My question is addressed to the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services . What is the Government doing to improve community safety in our regional communities?

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (15:00): I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question. The Government understands the unique challenges that crime poses across all our very diverse regional communities. We understand that 10 break and enters in a regional community such as Laurieton, in the electorate of the member for Port Macquarie, or in the small community of Abermain near Gunnedah, in the electorate of the member for Tamworth, can have a fundamentally different impact than 10 break and enters at Surry Hills. The impacts on individuals can be the same but it is the broader impact on the community that is different. The vulnerability in those communities is felt more starkly. Even in my electorate at Wellington, for example, the impact can be very different.

In relation to police response to those incidents in regional areas, in the majority of cases police officers live in their small community where the crime takes place so the crime impacts on them. It is where they work and where their families live. They are ingrained in the community and it is in their interests to prevent and combat crime. They know that crimes damage the pride of the community and the personal impact on victims. This Government also understands that policing in the city is very different to policing in the bush where there are issues of isolation and the need to cover great distances. We cannot assume that one model of policing will work for the whole of the State. That is why the Government has taken a different approach to the policing and community safety needs of regional communities.

Last year I was proud to announce as part of the re-engineering of the NSW Police Force a dedicated Deputy Commissioner for Regional New South Wales. I look forward to the commissioner making announcements imminently. For the first time we have a deputy commissioner who knows firsthand and will represent at the executive level the very different resourcing and decision-making needs of the NSW Police Force, specifically in regional areas. This is the first formal representation of regional areas at the highest level of the Police Force. The task is to ensure that community safety goes beyond the work of our police. While we recognise the critical role that police play in keeping our communities safe, it is also about how the police will work with all government agencies in delivering the community safety outcome. In some regional areas, government agencies are centralised in the larger centres or are absent from communities. We need to frame policing responses

in the country in a unique way, and the best person to do that is the Deputy Commissioner for Regional New South Wales.

I was pleased to be with the Attorney General today when he announced that more than \$200 million will be invested in tough and smart justice reforms to deliver safer communities. In the view of police, the changes that will be made to the justice system will make it stronger and more effective by reducing court delays and reoffending and delivering faster, more certain justice. That is crucial to country areas and country courts because the additional burden on police in country areas is the transporting of people to and from court. They often have to travel massive distances to give evidence at court, which means they are removed from frontline duties in their communities. The Government has a strong record of criminal justice reform and a clear focus on community safety throughout the State.

Another example of the Government working with the police and other government agencies and the community as a whole is the \$10 million Community Safety Fund. The Government established this fund to support local initiatives in the non-government sector, local councils and others to do all they can to prevent crime. Importantly, this funding is targeted at Indigenous communities, disadvantaged communities and isolated regional and remote communities. In the very near future, I look forward to announcing, together with the Attorney General, the recipients of this funding. [*Extension of time*]

In the electorate of the member for Port Macquarie, the Government provided funding for a Disadvantaged Drivers Licensing Support Project to educate young people about safe driving and to help them obtain a licence. How will that contribute to community safety? In the Western region alone, something like 80 per cent of the first interactions that young people have with the justice system relate to not having a driver licence. They are then set on the wrong path and the wrong train into the criminal justice system. They are the types of initiatives—thinking outside the square—that can have the greatest impact on those who enter our criminal justice system and then reoffend, sending them on a downward spiral. With technology advancements and investment in closed-circuit television, this deterrent collects evidence so that offenders can be held to account for the crimes they commit in communities.

Recently, funding for this project has gone to Tamworth, Walgett in the electorate of the member for Barwon, and Kempsey in the electorate of the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, the member for Oxley. Funding can be used also to engage the community. For example, to promote social inclusion and engage young people, funding went towards a midnight basketball program in Grafton in the electorate of the member for Clarence, in Griffith in the electorate of the member for Murray, and in Forster in the electorate of the member for Myall Lakes. Anglicare received funding for its domestic violence program in the electorate of the member for Parramatta and the program has been rolled out also, through Anglicare, in the electorate of Madam Speaker. The Government hopes that that will make a significant improvement to community safety. We face many different challenges, and it will take many different approaches to address those challenges. The Government is committed to investing, making decisions and giving support in order to achieve safe and secure communities into the future.

NORTH COAST FLOODS RELIEF ASSISTANCE

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (14:50): My question is directed to the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services. Will the Minister urge his Federal counterpart to declare flood-affected areas of my electorate, such as Billinudgel, Ocean Shores, New Brighton and Mullumbimby, eligible for the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment and Disaster Recovery Allowance and the Australian Government Category C Disaster Relief and Recovery for affected business?

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (15:07): The short answer to the question is yes, I have. As I have done publicly, I thank the member for Ballina for the work she has been doing on the ground to support her community as they rebuild following the destruction that occurred in the Northern Rivers area. I know about the unique difficulties members of her community face because they do not fall clearly into the eligibility criteria for disaster relief. Very early on 21 April, I visited her electorate and met with Mayor Simon Richardson, general manager Ken Gainger and director Mark Arnold. I spent two hours discussing the issues and inspecting the damage and impacts unique to the Byron shire.

That was extremely helpful. I am thankful to the council staff for providing me with such detailed information about the localised impacts and some of the gaps that appeared. I know the importance of seeing damage firsthand to gain a proper understanding and to hear examples from locals who have been affected but not assisted under the arrangements. At 7.30 a.m., after hearing those concerns, I immediately got on the phone to Minister Keenan and raised the issues directly with him. I did not wait. As the question asked, I strongly encouraged him to look at the arrangements for the shire.

It has been proven to me on multiple occasions that the Northern Rivers community are a resilient bunch. Despite their resilience, they still need our help. As a Government, we will be there to continue supporting that community as we try to overcome some of the gaps. I have been assisted by Parliamentary Secretary Ben Franklin, who has done a mighty job to ensure that information additional to what we heard in the meeting continues to flow in. I have asked Minister Keenan to consider once again extending the Australian Government national disaster funding payments to more areas. For the member for Ballina, I have specifically asked him to include the Byron shire. Members know that the Commonwealth has a specific and rather rigid set of requirements regarding declaring natural disaster relief and recovery arrangements. It sets the thresholds that need to be met but, as they say in the country, there is more than one way to cook the goose. We need to think outside the square.

From a State Government perspective, I could not be more grateful to all agencies, including those of the Minister for Family and Community Services that are providing welfare. I have heard how terrific, available and accessible they have been. The Minister for Mental Health and her department and agencies have done a wonderful job. The Department of Primary Industries, Local Land Services, Roads and Maritime Services and every government department that has been part of the recovery effort has also done wonderful work. To give comfort to the member for Ballina, I have supported, and I will continue to support, her community to make that consideration more tangible as quickly as possible.

RECIDIVISM RATES

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (15:11): My question is addressed to the Minister for Corrections. What is the New South Wales Government doing to reduce reoffending and to strengthen the parole system?

[Interruption]

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (15:12): I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Bankstown. I know why her electorate loves sitting weeks—because she vacates her electorate. I thank the member for his question, his devotion to his electorate and his representation of the Riverina. He is a fantastic Parliamentary Secretary who takes a great deal of interest in all things to do with Corrections. Today is an exciting day for the New South Wales Government. This afternoon the Attorney General, the Minister for Police and I announced a \$200 million major reform package for the justice system to better protect our community. Members have heard from the Attorney General about the sweeping changes that we are making.

As part of the overall package, the Government is changing the parole system to enable stronger decision-making, smarter management and greater supervision of parolees to better protect community safety and reduce reoffending. I have spoken about the Berejiklian Government's holistic approach to recidivism by keeping our community safe while remaining tough on crime. The Government makes no apologies for being tough on crime, but I remind members opposite that the exponential growth in reoffending rates began under the Keneally, Rees and Iemma governments.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: You're about to go home.

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: I acknowledge the interjection. From Labor governments, Eddie Obeid, Phuong Ngo and Milton Orkopoulos ended up in jail. It looks like Ian Macdonald is going to join them. One more and they will have a quorum. They will be able to hold a branch meeting right there at Long Bay. It falls to this Government to curb the trend.

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: The Premier has made reducing reoffending a top priority. This Government is serious about keeping our communities safe. The answer to long-term safety is reducing reoffending, meaning fewer victims. Thanks to the mess members opposite left us, that requires strong short-term powers. We have only to look across the border to Victoria to understand that this is good policy. Members may have read that crime rates in New South Wales are at a 20-year low. Unlike members opposite who oversaw upward trends across multiple crime categories during their time in government, we remain tough on crime and we are seeing the benefits. In my electorate crime rates for this quarter have fallen across the board in 16 out of the 17 major crime categories. I give credit to Local Area Commander Rob Critchlow for that result. The policies that the Attorney General, the Minister for Police and I announced today will complement the downward trend.

There are three core sections to this parole reform. The first is ensuring stronger decision-making for our key agency, the State Parole Authority. Under these Justice reforms, the State Parole Authority will consider a broader range of factors when deciding whether an offender can be released. These factors will include disclosure of a victim's remains under the 'no body, no parole' initiative for those who have committed murder or

manslaughter. The chance of parole will be greatly reduced if an offender fails to disclose the location of a victim's remains. Members opposite might like interrupting but murder victims and their families deserve more respect than their cheap and nasty interjections.

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

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT: Other factors will be whether there is intelligence on an offender's links to or support for terrorist acts or violent extremism, even if they have not been sentenced for a terrorism offence. Above all else, community safety will replace the public interest test. By including terrorism and intelligence as a mandatory consideration, the parole decision-making process will be strengthened and ensure that the State Parole Authority turns its mind to these issues in every case. It will give the police and Corrective Services a clear mandate to bring relevant information to the attention of the authority. Most importantly, we are relying on contributions from victims in the decision-making for any offender being considered for parole. The Corrective Services Victims Register will notify victims or families of victims when an offender is up for parole. Victims will have the opportunity to submit a statement to be considered during the State Parole Authority decision-making process. [*Extension of time*]

The second key change in parole reform is better management of parole breaches. Swift and certain sanctions are the most effective way of managing an offender's risk. Under these reforms, Community Corrections officers will have clearer authority to enforce and escalate sanctions for minor breaches of parole, instead of taking no action or sending the parolee straight back to prison. Make no mistake, serious breaches will still be reported to the State Parole Authority. The authority will have the power to revoke parole immediately when it has concerns about community safety. This can occur even when there is no breach.

Finally, the third section of this major parole reform package is increased supervision of parolees. Supervision is the best way of reducing reoffending. A reduction in reoffending means a further reduction in crime and a safer community for all. Less crime means fewer victims. We are doing this by expanding the capability of Corrective Services through the addition of around 200 extra frontline Community Corrections staff, who are specially trained in using new techniques that build on the one-on-one work that officers do with offenders, plus other support staff. While most parolees are currently supervised by Corrective Services, supervision will now be an automatic requirement for all offenders on parole.

These reforms will give greater flexibility for the authority to reconsider parole for suitable candidates. More offenders will receive supervised reintegration, which we believe will be effective in reducing reoffending. The State Parole Authority will also have new options to transition a small number of low-risk offenders to electronically monitored home detention before the end of their non-parole period. These offenders will be under strict supervision and be accountable to exterior rehabilitation programs. By upping supervision the Government is remaining vigilant in its commitment and priority to put downward pressure on reoffending. This Government puts safety first, and this reform package will continue the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government's trend of reducing crime. Unlike members opposite, this Government has remained tough on crime and successfully put community safety at the forefront of our agenda. With these tougher and smarter reforms, we are ensuring that the State will be safer for years to come.

Documents

OMBUDSMAN

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 31AA of the Ombudsman Act 1974, I table the report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled, "Operation Prospect: A report on developments", dated May 2017. I order that the report be printed.

NSW STATE CORONER

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 37 of the Coroners Act 2009, I announce receipt of the report by the NSW State Coroner into deaths in custody/police operations for 2016, received out of session on 8 May 2017 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE****Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 36/56**

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled "Legislation Review Digest No. 36/56", dated 9 May 2017. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN: I also table minutes of the committee meeting regarding Legislation Review Digest No. 35/56, dated 2 May 2017.

*Business of the House***INAUGURAL SPEECHES**

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That the business before the House be interrupted on:

- (1) Wednesday 10 May 2017 at 5.20 p.m. to permit the presentation of an inaugural speech by the member for North Shore.
- (2) Thursday 11 May 2017 at 4.50 p.m. to permit the presentation of an inaugural speech by the member for Gosford.

Motion agreed to.*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

Pet Shops

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

Powerhouse Museum Ultimo

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

Ferry Services

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

Elizabeth Bay Marina Ferry Services

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

Surry Hills Light Rail Station

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

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

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

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

WestConnex

Petition requesting that the proposed WestConnex mid-point tunnelling site adjacent to Sydney Secondary College, Leichhardt, and the previously proposed Darley Road site, be cancelled, received from **Mr Jamie Parker**.

Business of the House

BUSINESS LAPSED

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3) General Business Notices of Motion (General Notices) Nos 1541 to 1555 have lapsed.

Motions Accorded Priority

RACISM

Consideration

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (15:23): My motion should be accorded priority because every member in this place should reject racism and embrace inclusiveness and diversity.

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

Ms ELENi PETINOS: This is a grey area for those opposite. Yesterday Federal Labor's "Australia First" campaign featured almost all white individuals with the Federal Leader of the Opposition. As the daughter of a Greek migrant and someone who is reflective of the current composition of the Australian population—around 50 per cent of Australians were either born overseas or have at least one parent who was born overseas—I say that the advertisement is unacceptable. My family members came to this country, with only a suitcase each, seeking new opportunities and a place to call home. They came to a country that values hard work and does not judge you on your background, race or religion—unless, of course, you are trying to appear in Bill Shorten's advertisement.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Miranda will direct her comments through the Chair.

Ms ELENi PETINOS: That advertisement does not represent my family, my constituents or my Australia.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bankstown will come to order. I remind her that she is on three calls to order.

Ms ELENi PETINOS: Those opposite will not take my authority on this matter, so I will quote some remarks of Anthony Albanese. He said that the advertisement was "not the sort of ad" that he wants his party to be promoting. Where was the New South Wales Leader of the Opposition on this issue? We have heard nothing but deafening silence. If those opposite really cared about this issue they would be listening to me in silence. To highlight that embracing multiculturalism and social cohesion is per se a no-brainer, The Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young said that the advertisement was "as subtle as a sledgehammer". She also tweeted, "Honestly, what are Labor thinking? This is awful, just awful." We on this side of the House agree with her. What is wrong with the advertisement? I have focused on the multicultural elements but I have not heard any of those opposite crying about the lack of disability representation or the lack of age diversity. Where is the diversity in the advertisement? Based on that advertisement, none of those opposite—including members representing the electorates of Canterbury and Fairfield—would make the cut. [*Time expired.*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Those members who have been called to order are deemed to be on three calls to order. That includes the member for Kiama.

LIBERAL PARTY ONE NATION PREFERENCES

Consideration

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (15:28:2): Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr John Robertson: Dingo.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Blacktown will come to order. That language is unparliamentary.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: What confected outrage from the member for Miranda! Her contribution had all the sincerity of a children's pantomime. Are members of that once-great political party on the side of the racists or on the side of the ethnic communities of New South Wales? They cannot be on both. I do not think the Premier is a racist; she is an opportunist. She will do anything she can to keep control of power, including refusing to

repudiate Pauline Hanson and her bigoted rhetoric. When ethnic communities were under attack in this State, who did Gladys send in? Ray Williams. Those opposite are clearly out of control.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. Opposition members interjected just as much during the contribution of the member for Miranda.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I doubt that very much. Government members are holding up signs. I do not think the Premier is a racist; I think she is an opportunist. I think the Premier will do anything she can to keep control of power in this State. If she wants to show leadership she should put Pauline Hanson last on how-to-vote cards. But that will not happen because the next election is coming up.

Ms Gladys Berejiklian: There's no election.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Make a stand now and put One Nation last. Mike Baird would have given us leadership on this issue. As soon as he was out the door, the State's moral leadership hit the road as well. He had true moral leadership, but the new Premier of this State has none. The stupidity of the Liberal Party's position is that it keeps growing the One Nation party, but One Nation is taking seats from the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party is feeding this noxious weed to its own detriment. In 1996 a member of this House said:

Some in the community have chosen, in their extreme language, racist comments and behaviour, to excite a level of debate in the community that can only seriously damage, haemorrhage and impair a tolerant Australia.

We must take a stand in the Parliament and demonstrate comprehensive and bipartisan leadership.

Who said that? It was Michael Photios. The true leader of the Liberal Party has given those opposite permission to stand up for One Nation—the predecessor of the member for Hornsby as the leader of the Left. The Liberal Party should do the right thing and put One Nation last. *[Time expired.]*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. No further interjections will be tolerated.

Mr Michael Daley: About three minutes too late, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Maroubra to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of 30 minutes.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Maroubra left the Chamber at 15:30.]

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

The House divided

Ayes47
Noes37
Majority..... 10

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Brookes, Mr G
Crouch, Mr A
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Davies, Ms T
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Pavey, Mrs M
Provest, Mr G
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

Ayes, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V
Fraser, Mr A
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Roberts, Mr A
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Car, Ms P
 Cotsis, Ms S
 Donato, Mr P
 Foley, Mr L
 Haylen, Ms J
 Kamper, Mr S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Mehan, Mr D
 Park, Mr R
 Robertson, Mr J
 Tesch, Ms L
 Zangari, Mr G

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

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

PAIRS

Rowell, Mr J

Watson, Ms A

Motion agreed to.**RACISM****Priority****Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (15:38):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Condemns advertisements based on racist, dog-whistle politics.
- (2) Calls on all members of the New South Wales Parliament to reject racism and embrace inclusiveness and diversity

I say to those opposite who want to make comments about Government members being opportunistic that the priority motion of the member for Kogarah is political opportunism at its finest. This motion about multiculturalism and inclusiveness is something about which Government members are serious. Instead of supporting this motion Opposition members are focusing on fringe elements and minor parties. New South Wales is one of the most multicultural States in the world. People in New South Wales have descended from 245 ancestries, observe 125 religions and speak 215 languages. According to projections, Sydney's population will hit eight million by 2025 and our diversity will only continue to increase. Promoting multiculturalism is essential to embrace our diversity and to ensure long-term social cohesion.

The 2016 Scanlon Foundation Mapping Social Cohesion national survey shows that the vast majority of Australians support multiculturalism with 85 per cent of Australians agreeing it has been good for Australia. I am so confident in this Government's belief in and advancement of multiculturalism that I will highlight some of its achievements in its current term in office. The Government established and implemented a new Regional Advisory Council structure after extensive consultation. It revised the multicultural policies and services program framework to support and implement multicultural policies in the public sector.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will come to order. She has been called to order at least five times.

Ms ELENi PETINOS: In collaboration with other governments it has supported the delivery of an unprecedented package for refugees and humanitarian entrants settling in New South Wales, and it has established and enhanced a settlement portal to help new arrivals. It has implemented a series of reforms to language services to improve the delivery of translation and interpreting services across the State in partnership with Service NSW, and it has developed an online community profiles tool that assists decision-makers with access to diversity information. Opposition members are whingeing a lot but Government members are serious about multiculturalism. Before becoming a member of Parliament I worked as a Federal multicultural adviser. My family migrated to this country. Most Opposition members cannot even form an opinion on the matter. They are so narrow-minded that they cannot relate to this issue. They are pulling faces when they should be speaking with authority and credibility in the interests of all Australians.

I return to my introductory remarks. When forced to remove this inappropriate advertisement, Mr Shorten defended himself by saying he was not in the business of making advertisements and that he would speak to the Labor Party about it. I say to those opposite: What are their views on this matter? Why have they not spoken to the Labor Party or to their constituents about it? Why are they not standing up for diversity in this State? Why do they pay only lip-service to multiculturalism? This is their opportunity to join Government members in rejecting racism and embracing inclusiveness and diversity in the interests of the people of New South Wales. Shame on those opposite if they oppose this motion.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (15:43): I move:

That the motion be amended by adding the following paragraph:

"(3) Calls on all leaders of all political parties represented in the New South Wales Parliament to put One Nation last on how-to-vote cards."

We should all assume that our elected representatives share certain values. Foremost among them is an understanding that every citizen deserves respect, no matter their differences. There is no place for racism in our society or in our politics.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 76. I ask you to rule on the fact that One Nation is not a registered political party in New South Wales. I am not sure how you can have a motion—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kiama will resume his seat. I will seek advice on the amendment. The member for Summer Hill may continue until I receive that advice.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I am proud to represent an electorate that embodies Australian multiculturalism. We share a common belief that diversity makes us stronger. We celebrate many cultures, customs, religions and languages. We acknowledge the ancient culture of Indigenous Australians and the land on which we stand is and always will be Aboriginal land. We come together to show respect for one another and to acknowledge the vibrancy that every culture brings to Australian life. In Sydney's inner west we share a belief that each of us has a right to live and let live, without fear of intimidation, insult, offence or humiliation. We know that racism and bigotry of any kind have no place in a modern Australia.

Like most Australians, I was horrified to see the rise of Pauline Hanson and One Nation. I have said before that Ms Hanson has never understood the importance of multiculturalism or the many beliefs it brings to our country. When she was first elected to Parliament in 1998 I remember the electric shock it sent through every aspect of Australian political life. I remember the sense of anger and the deep sadness that her divisive and ugly politics evoked in people of Asian descent. That fight reinforced my part in the Australian Labor Party. When we talk about equality, fairness and opportunity, Opposition members understand that that applies to everybody. Pauline Hanson continues to play on people's fears and to take advantage of a deep-seated sense of uncertainty. Always within her sights are the vulnerable, those who struggle to be part of our society, often sacrificing everything that is important to them—their homes, families and friends—to migrate to our country. According to Hanson, we were first in danger of being swamped by Asians and then by Muslims. We have seen the disastrous and dangerous effects of this kind of politics in the United States and it has been brutal. We know there is no place for this in a modern society or in modern politics.

When a leader of a political party spruiks her own brand of racism and makes ridiculous and offensive claims, including warning parents against vaccinating their children or aligning themselves with Vladimir Putin of all people, one would think this Government would have the backbone to strongly reject it. The Leader of the Opposition and NSW Labor have had the backbone to rule out One Nation preferences in New South Wales but the Premier and those opposite have refused to do the same. NSW Labor is taking a stand against racism and the rank opportunism of One Nation. When will this Government do the same? When will the Premier take a stand against racism? I appreciate that people on both sides of the House are appalled by Hanson and believe that this attack on multiculturalism defines their electorates as much as it defines ours. But why will they not take a stand against racism? Surely it is time for those opposite to take a principled stand and rule out One Nation preferences.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. This is my final warning. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I cannot hear the member with the call. Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber, regardless of whether they are on three calls to order. I rule the amendment moved by the member for Summer Hill out of order. I suggest that she seek advice about it.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (15:49): The New South Wales Government is proud of its leadership in multiculturalism. I am proud that New South Wales is one of the first States in the world to embed its respect for culture and religious differences into law. This great country was built by migrants from all cultures and all faiths coming from every corner of the world. Most members were born overseas or have at least one

parent who was born overseas. I am disgusted by the Labor Party's advertisement that is dividing the nation. It is a disgrace. It is despicable that Labor has resorted to racist dog-whistle politics that do not recognise the great diversity in our nation. It calls on businesses to employ Australians first. Do members of the Labor Party have a diverse number of constituents in their electorates? Auburn, the electorate of the Leader of the Opposition, has 19.7 per cent Chinese and 11.1 per cent Lebanese constituents. Where are they in the Labor Party advertisement? In Maroubra there are 10.9 per cent Chinese and 6.3 per cent Greek constituents. Where are they in the Labor Party advertisement? In Strathfield there are—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: Opposition members have been patient with the use of props today but I ask that the member be directed to cease using props.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Drummoyne was not using a prop; he was looking at a photograph and asking a question. There is no point of order.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: In Strathfield there are 21.8 per cent Chinese, 6.9 per cent Indian and 6.5 per cent Korean constituents. Where are they in the advertisement? I ask the Leader of the Opposition: Why does Labor's advertisement not reflect this diversity in his electorate and in other electorates in this State? Community leaders play an important role in helping to promote the message of inclusion that we are a united community that is committed to a harmonious way of life. Does the Opposition accept the responsibility to work together to promote respect and unity across diverse communities? The Government calls on the Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, and NSW Labor to condemn their Federal counterparts for this despicable stunt.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Canterbury to remove herself from the Chamber. The member may return to the Chamber at the conclusion of debate on the motion accorded priority.

[The member for Canterbury left the Chamber at 15.52.]

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (15:52): I move:

That the motion be amended by adding the following after "diversity" in paragraph (2):

"by rejecting the policies of One Nation."

Fancy this mob, members of the Liberal Party, insinuating that Labor is racist. Multiculturalism is in the Labor Party's DNA. That is why I joined the Labor Party. Unlike the member for Miranda, I remember growing up in the sixties and seventies when I was openly called a "wog" everywhere I went. I was embarrassed about my name and I was embarrassed when my mum spoke Greek when she came to my school. I know what racism is. It is not about an oversight in an advertisement; it is hypocrisy on the part of this Government. Those members who want to know what racism is need only look at the 2007 advertising campaign for the Federal Liberal seat of Lindsay.

Government members are hypocrites. We have only to look at parliamentary representation in the State and Federal parliaments to see the cultural diversity in the Labor Party. I am proud of my colleagues: Edmond Atalla from the Egyptian Coptic community; Anoulack Chanthivong from the Laotian community; Sophie Cotsis and me from the Greek community; Jihad Dib and Shaoquett Moselmane from the Lebanese community; Ron Hoenig from the Jewish community; Nick Lalich from the Serbian community; Tania Mihailuk from the Russian community; Daniel Mookhey from the subcontinental community; Guy Zangari from the Italian community; Ernest Wong from the Chinese community; and Clayton Barr from the Scottish community. What is it that Government members do not understand? Labor does not talk about it. *[Time expired.]*

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (15:55): By leave: As the Minister for Multiculturalism I am proud that Australia is the most culturally diverse and socially cohesive country in the world. The standards that are being observed are the standards that we accept. Sadly, today we have seen the standard set by the Labor Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten, in promoting his perspective of Australia.

Mr Chris Minns: Point of order: I am reluctant to take up the time of the Minister but this is a wonderful opportunity to repudiate Pauline Hanson and to stand up for ethnic communities.

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

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: It is an ideal opportunity to repudiate racism. The advertisement promoting the perspective of the Labor Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten, would preclude any members of this Parliament being included.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Kogarah to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of two hours.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Kogarah left the Chamber at 15.57.]

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I have often said that much more in this country unites us than that which divides us. Sadly, if we use Bill Shorten's advertisement as a standard, the Deputy Speaker, the member for Miranda, and the member for Campbelltown, for whom I have a great deal of respect, would not be included in it. Let me give an example of the Liberal-Nationals Government's support for diversity. Gladys Berejiklian, a lady of Armenian background who struggled with the English language when she commenced school in this country, achieved the highest office in the State—that of Premier. There is no prouder member in this place than our Premier and no greater example of government support for cultural diversity than the election of Ms Berejiklian as the Premier of New South Wales. The Deputy Premier would be precluded from appearing in the advertisement if we accepted the standards set by the Federal Leader of the Opposition. The standards that are observed are the standards that we accept. Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek an extension of time.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: Standing orders do not permit an extension of time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Standing orders permit members to seek an extension of time. The member for Castle Hill is granted an extension.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Australia's population comprises people from every nationality. People from 245 nationalities practising no fewer than 125 different religions live in New South Wales—an expression of cultural diversity that is seen nowhere else in the world. We live in one of the most socially cohesive countries in the world but, sadly, some people choose to overlook that cultural diversity. New South Wales was the first State in this country to acknowledge that cultural and linguistic diversity benefits us economically and socially. The values that we hold so dear to us are enshrined in the Multiculturalism Act 2000, which was amended in 2014 by this Government, and in the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. Our laws and our values are enshrined in legislation. We will never discriminate against persons because of their race or religion or because of the colour of their skin. All those who choose to call this country home, regardless of their background and who work hard and make a positive contribution to this State are valued by me and by the Liberal-Nationals Government.

I call out this advertisement for what it is: It discriminates against our cultural diversity. The photograph promoted by the Federal Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten, is something that we will not accept as it discriminates against our cultural diversity. It discriminates against people of every nationality who choose to call Australia home. Australia is the most culturally diverse and socially cohesive country in the world. Australians are envied by all because we live in peace and harmony. Ninety-nine per cent of the people who come to this country make a positive contribution and should be valued and respected. Sadly, that respect is not reflected in the advertisement promoted by the Federal Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten. We do not accept that standard and we call it out for what it is: It is racism and it discriminates against our cultural diversity.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:02): By leave: I speak in debate on this motion, which sickens me. Once again multiculturalism is being used by members of Parliament as a political football. The Labor advertisement that was covered by the media recently contains a number of controversial issues, not just a lack of diversity. The advertisement refers specifically to employing Australians first. Members may be aware of the Australia First Party—a dangerous minority party in this country—which does not believe in cultural diversity. I am fearful of the Australia First Party, which referred to me on its website in the following terms:

There's this foreign ex-Amnesty International do-gooder called Jenny Leong ...She could be straight off the boat and we don't believe Jenny is her real name. Probably Vin Drin Wop or Mop.

The language used in Labor's advertisement is echoed in the sentiments expressed by the Australia First Party. It does not believe in cultural diversity but the bigger issue is that dangerous extremists are infiltrating our political process. As a politician I can face the kinds of attacks that are being perpetrated every day on Chinese Australians and on people from diverse cultural communities. In 2017 a Chinese-Australian woman in Burwood who was waiting at the lights to cross the road was told, "Get out of my country." When she walked away to try to de-escalate the confrontation, she was punched in the face.

On 25 September 2015 a racist tirade occurred on a bus when someone yelled out to a 29-year-old Chinese-Australian woman, "You effing ugly, effing Chink. We all know what you are, you China. Take your effing language and piss off you effing Chink." This is what happens when we fail to show leadership in this country. Members used debate on this motion as an opportunity to whack the Labor Party as it stuffed up. Noah Carroll, who is the National Secretary of the Australian Labor Party, authorised a stupid advertisement that was designed to target marginal seats. All members need to do more to address the underlying issue of racism and not just use debate on this motion as an opportunity to whack each other over the head.

Dr Geoff Lee: I seek leave to speak to the motion.

Leave not granted.

*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ADDITIONAL SPEAKERS**

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to permit up to an additional 10 members to speak on the motion accorded priority, for a period of up to five minutes each.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (16:07:0): The Opposition will agree to the motion if the Government allows the amendment moved by the member for Summer Hill that has been ruled to be out of order. If it does not allow that amendment we will call this for what it is: an opportunistic stunt by the Government which has been shutting down the Parliament at 4 o'clock every afternoon for the past three weeks. Obviously no urgent government business is available to be transacted. If there was, the Government would not be shutting down the Parliament. If the Premier had an ounce of bravery she would have come into the Chamber and rejected everything for which Pauline Hanson stands.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I inform the member for Maroubra that, while I ruled the amendment out of order and asked the member for Summer Hill to seek advice about it, I have since accepted an amendment moved by the member for Rockdale. Is the member for Maroubra seeking the withdrawal of that amendment?

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: For the sake of clarity, if the Leader of the House sits down with me and reorders the motion before the House to incorporate the amendment moved by the member for Summer Hill that was ruled out of order, we will happily support the suspension of standing and sessional orders to allow another 10, 20 or 50 members to speak in debate on this motion. However, if he does not, we will vote against the motion to suspend standing and sessional orders.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I asked the member for Summer Hill to seek advice. The member for Rockdale then moved another amendment.

Mr Troy Grant: Point of order: Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for Summer Hill is canvassing your ruling. You are explaining why you made that ruling. The member for Summer Hill cannot canvass your ruling; she should listen to it and accept it, or not accept it and vote against it.

Mr Andrew Fraser: To the point of order: Members on the other side cannot set conditions to support a motion moved by the Leader of the House. They can vote against the motion, amend the motion according to the standing orders, or vote for the motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. As the member for Coff's Harbour said, members cannot place conditions on their support of a motion. I point out that another Opposition member also moved an amendment to the motion. The question is that the motion as moved by the member for Lane Cove be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes51
Noes30
Majority.....21

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Johnsen, Mr M
Leong, Ms J
O'Dea, Mr J
Pavey, Mrs M
Piper, Mr G
Sidoti, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D

Aplin, Mr G
Brookes, Mr G
Crouch, Mr A
Donato, Mr P
Fraser, Mr A
Grant, Mr T
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Kean, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
Parker, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G
Smith, Ms T F
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G

Ayres, Mr S
Conolly, Mr K
Davies, Ms T
Elliott, Mr D
Gibbons, Ms M
Greenwich, Mr A
Hazzard, Mr B
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Roberts, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G

AYES

Williams, Mr R

Williams, Mrs L

Wilson, Ms F

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Car, Ms P
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Doyle, Ms T
 Harrison, Ms J
 Hornery, Ms S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Mehan, Mr D
 Robertson, Mr J
 Warren, Mr G

Atalla, Mr E (teller)
 Catley, Ms Y
 Daley, Mr M
 Finn, Ms J
 Haylen, Ms J
 Kamper, Mr S
 McDermott, Dr H
 Mihailuk, Ms T
 Scully, Mr P
 Washington, Ms K

Barr, Mr C
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Dib, Mr J
 Harris, Mr D
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Lalich, Mr N (teller)
 McKay, Ms J
 Park, Mr R
 Tesch, Ms L
 Zangari, Mr G

PAIRS

Berejiklian, Ms G
 Rowell, Mr J

Foley, Mr L
 Watson, Ms A

Motion agreed to.*Motions Accorded Priority***RACISM****Priority**

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (16:16): I support the motion accorded priority, as moved by the member for Miranda. I acknowledge that most Opposition members are not racist and are embarrassed about the advertisement in question. Just about every member in this House recognises that Australia is a multicultural, multi-faith country. To the world, Australia is the best example of a diverse and harmonious community. In describing Labor's advertisement, it is best to say it is extremely disappointing and it sends the wrong message. It shows what Labor is thinking. The advertisement is divisive and xenophobic. It appeals to the lowest common denominator of fear. It is about fearmongering. Most worrying of all, it perpetuates a myth about who qualifies to be an Australian. We all do ourselves a disservice when we fail to recognise and acknowledge our heritage.

Whether one is a descendant of generations born in Australia or became a citizen yesterday, Australians should stand united together. We are that exemplar of a harmonious and united society. No-one could deny the importance of providing jobs to Australians. No-one denies the importance of jobs to families—to pay the mortgage; to pay for their children's school transport; to help their children realise their dreams. In fact, Australia was built upon waves of migration. Migration is the building block of our country and our society. Those who came before us have built our society into the peaceful, harmonious and very successful society that we enjoy today. Those who will follow us will continue to do so.

In my electorate, more than 50 per cent of the population were born overseas and have chosen to become Australian citizens. We thank them because they will contribute to the future prosperity of our country. My great-grandfather arrived from China early last century. Following his arrival, he ran a grocery store in Haymarket and his family ran a market garden on the banks of Duck Creek at Guildford. It was the days of the White Australia Policy, a policy that denied my grandfather becoming an Australian naturalised citizen for 40 years. In fact, in the days of the White Australia policy many Chinese who died requested their cremated ashes be sent back to China because they did not feel welcome in Australia. We have come a long way since then. That is why I support this important motion that stands up to racism and seeks to stop the perpetuation of an unrealistic myth of who qualifies as Australian. Jobs are important for Australia, but seeking to propagate fear is not right.

I have the honour and privilege of attending many events with people who were not born in Australia but have chosen to become Australians. They are actively contributing to this country. They are raising families, going to work, starting businesses, sending their kids to school, volunteering and building our community into the successful and harmonious society we enjoy. They all celebrate being Australian. We can celebrate our diverse culture. We can be proud of being Australian but also of our heritage. I am proud to represent the diverse,

harmonious, multicultural and multi-faith community of Parramatta. We must stand up against those who want to destroy the harmony among all Australians of all backgrounds including Indian, Korean, Chinese, Lebanese and many others. Creating division through fear and scaremongering is not right. I commend the motion to the House.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:21): This motion concerns an important issue. Under this Government multicultural communities are suffering through cuts to English as a second language courses and broken promises to organisations that open their hearts and offer their hands to provide services to refugees, as we heard in question time. Cuts have been made to multicultural organisations across the board, yet Government members talk about one advertisement as if it outlines an entire policy perspective. We need to look at their response. I am glad to support the amendment that was moved calling on the Government to refute the Hanson agenda.

I was in Federal Parliament in 1997 following the election of Pauline Hanson in 1996. The Labor member I worked for was the first person to hold a roundtable with his community to fight against the racism and deep hatred that Pauline Hanson had sewn in our community. We called together members of all the faiths, including Baha'is, Jews, Muslims and Christians as well as Aboriginals and people from other multicultural backgrounds, at the Federal Parliament to make a commitment to a harmonious and diverse community. The Queensland National Party would never speak out against Pauline Hanson. In this place, members of the party who courted her into politics, who shake in their boots and welcome her bringing racism and division to our community, are pointing to one picture and saying it speaks a thousand words. If they want a picture that speaks a thousand words they should look at their front bench and compare their diversity to ours.

The Labor Party stands for multiculturalism and works for multiculturalism with genuineness and authenticity. Look at the people in this place who stand up for their communities and listen to them and do everything they can. In my portfolio of domestic violence, who is funding the translating and interpreting services for women who cannot leave abusive and violent relationships because they cannot tell their story? This Government is not funding services for those people. Government members are dog whistling and being divisive and obscene. They should hang their heads in shame.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:24): Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who is the fairest one of all? It seems to be the 13 people in Bill Shorten's poster. This poster goes to judgement. I hear the chortles from Opposition members. In this poster we have the ghost of Arthur Calwell running through Labor's election campaign. If Opposition members want to lecture me on race, I know who implemented the White Australia policy and who took it out. It was the party of members on my side of the House who took it out. I am proud to be part of that. I am also proud to be the son of someone who migrated to this great country to seek better opportunities.

It is a shame there has not been a greater sense of bipartisanship on this motion or the same level of optimism and unity that we have seen when similar motions have been debated. Yesterday marked 60 years since the Treaty of Rome when the European community came together. Europeans and all ethnic groups that comprise the wonderful tapestry of this State have made a considerable contribution. As I say, it is a great shame there has not been the same level of bipartisanship on this motion as there has been in the past. I would not accuse any member of being racist. I regard myself as having good relations with just about all members of this wonderful Chamber. But there are some people in head offices who are not above the politics of race. As I said, I would never accuse any Opposition member of being racist, but this campaign was a mistake and the Labor Party should own up to that. Just as the union movement made a mistake by running a despicable and inappropriate campaign about the Chinese during the poles and wires transaction, this also was a mistake.

In response to the comments about One Nation, I make the legal point that the party is not registered in New South Wales. Having said that, no matter who makes inappropriate or racist comments, those people should be called out. We should speak out against them and tell them what we consider to be inclusive and appropriate in this State. Members would recall some of the appalling remarks about the Jewish community in the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions [BDS] campaign. In that disgraceful situation certain people were saying it was okay to engage in boycotts, divestments and sanctions against the State of Israel. I am proud to have visited both Israel and Palestine. I do not believe that Jewish people should have to suffer the indignity of local governments resolving to boycott those products and materials. I hope no-one in this House would accept that sort of behaviour.

We should all stand united against racism. There have been great movements in this State in relation to discrimination of all forms. I would like that to continue. All members have diverse communities in their electorates. I do not know about others, but some of my most enjoyable moments come from attending citizenship ceremonies and meeting people who have often come from the most extraordinary places and suffered travesties but have a sense of optimism about what they can achieve.

Mr Troy Grant: Gratitude and pride.

Mr GARETH WARD: I acknowledge the comment of the Minister. With gratitude and pride they come to share in our values and cherish what is so special about this country. I hope we all remember that in spite of our debates and the sometimes cleverness of the language used by either side, our actions, comments and views about race are important because they affect people's lives. They affect the way people think about all of us and about governments. I am proud to stand behind Gladys Berejiklian and John Barilaro. I am so proud of our Premier. Like me, she went to a local public school. Unlike me, she had to grapple with not being able to speak English. She overcame that, as so many people from ethnically diverse backgrounds must do in order to participate in Australian society. They bring their cultures with them but they also need to tackle some obstacles. Gladys Berejiklian has demonstrated she can do that, as have some members on the other side of the House. I remember the outstanding inaugural speech by the member for Mount Druitt in which he talked about the obstacles he and his family had to surmount in order for him to be where he is today. While I appreciate some of the comments that have been made, I remind members that our actions have consequences and that racism has no place in politics yesterday, today or tomorrow.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:29): This is a very important motion, but actions speak louder than words. Since it became obvious that Pauline Hanson was to be re-elected to the Senate, this Government has failed to emphatically reject Hanson-ism and it has been silent about doing preference deals with One Nation, when that party is registered in New South Wales

Mr Andrew Fraser: They are not registered.

Ms JULIA FINN: They intend to register.

Mr Andrew Fraser: How do you know? Have you been talking to Pauline?

Ms JULIA FINN: They have announced it multiple times. She has said it in the media over and again. Every time the issue is raised those opposite shut it down. Those opposite do not have the guts to back up their support for multiculturalism—support that is shared by every member of this House—with an emphatic rejection of the divisive policies of the One Nation party. I represent one of the most diverse electorates in this State. A lot of my constituents are the sort of people who are repeatedly attacked by Pauline Hanson, particularly the Islamic community, and they are not receiving the level of support they deserve. I was the first member in this place to condemn what Pauline Hanson said about the Islamic community in her inaugural speech last year. The very next day I gave a private member's statement denouncing the ridiculous things she had said about halal certification. Those comments were offensive and any restrictions on halal certification would be an attack on Australian farmers, who would have enormous difficulty in exporting food products to our nearest neighbour.

Mr Troy Grant: The point-score may be to denounce Hanson but to also denounce Bill Shorten for what he has done.

Ms JULIA FINN: One mistake, which has been emphatically rejected, is nothing compared to a year of silence and a refusal to do anything about Hanson-ism. We live in a fantastic multicultural society, something of which we can all be proud, but to ensure that our society remains harmonious we must defend multiculturalism at every opportunity. For example, we have to stop those who reject the Asian and Muslim communities and those who say ridiculous things about them. I was not happy to witness the political football that has taken place in this Chamber today, nor am I happy that some are concerned that they may lose votes if they reject what Pauline Hanson says. When the Western Australians did a preference deal with Pauline Hanson's One Nation party, there was deafening silence. That was disgraceful. Thankfully that backfired on both parties, but it was indicative of the level to which politics has sunk.

Even in John Howard's time, when a fair bit of dog-whistling politics was going on, people still had the guts to reject what Pauline Hanson was saying. These days people are more gutless; they do deals with the One Nation party because they think they have enough influence in their electorates to shore up the failing support for the Western Australian Government. I am glad they lost the election. I say that not only because I am a member of the Labor Party but also because they tried to win an election by courting the support of One Nation. I hope that any party that tries to court the support of One Nation in this or in any other State suffers the same electoral consequences. The results of the French election last weekend, where racism was overwhelmingly rejected by the majority of French people, were incredibly pleasing. We can continue to do that in this place but not by partaking in the ridiculous football game that has been played in this Chamber this afternoon. We must consistently reject Pauline Hanson and her ridiculous policies that undermine multiculturalism. [*Time expired.*]

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (16:34): I agree with the member for Kiama that this motion, which condemns advertisements based on racist dog-whistle politics, is based on a 457 visa advertisement. In the early days of this century Labor had a White Australia policy.

Mr Clayton Barr: This century or the last century?

Mr ANDREW FRASER: Last century, 1890s and early 1900s. At that time the Labor movement, the unions personified in this advertisement, did not want anyone coming into this country to destroy their standard of living. My best friend is a Hindu Indian, married to a white Scot, who grew up in Durban, South Africa. The racism and discrimination that he and his wife suffered was second to none. Those opposite have sought to amend the motion by adding the following paragraph:

- (3) Calls on all leaders of all political parties represented in the New South Wales Parliament to put One Nation last on how-to-vote cards.

That advertisement takes us back more than 100 years and to a White Australia policy. In my electorate currently one of the major industries, if not the major horticultural industry, is blueberries, which are predominantly farmed by Sikh Australians. The people who pick those berries and get them to the plates of those in Sydney, to a large extent, are Sudanese refugees, Indian families and backpackers from across the world. They would all be affected by a 457 visa. Last week I was talking to Gurmeh Singh from Oz Berries. He told me that they have spent more than \$10,000 trying to buy expertise to help them expand the factory in Coffs Harbour that packs the blueberries. They cannot find that expertise in Australia, but here we have an advertisement by the Labor Party showing white Australians. It is a non-diverse advertisement excluding the very people we need to keep that industry at a worldwide standard.

The member for Granville spoke about the Coalition not rejecting One Nation's policies. She should take a look at what former Senator Ron Boswell did in Queensland. He was the first person to pull Pauline Hanson and One Nation apart. The member for Granville has suggested that we should reject giving preferences to a party that is not even registered in this State. That is bizarre politics. Those opposite are trying to defend an advertisement put forward by Labor unions that works against the diversity of my constituents. All electorates have diverse communities and we rely on those people for a number of skills. Perhaps those opposite should talk to those in the Scottish community, my heritage, who were engineers and coalminers, who assisted this country to get on its feet.

One of my great-grandfathers was a blacksmith and another was a farmer. They both came from Scotland, one via America and Canada and the other directly to Australia. In those days, because of the White Australia policy, they were the only ones allowed to come in. I put it to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and to members of this House that this is back to the future. This advertisement from the Labor unions and Bill Shorten, who starred in the advertisement, does nothing more than take us back more than 100 years to a policy of discriminating on the basis of ethnicity in this country. I cannot stand for it, and the people in my electorate will not stand for it.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:39): There is absolutely no doubt about the intent of this motion: It is to wedge the Labor Party on the issue of racism as a mechanism for political opportunism. This House should frown on that mentality. When it comes to Australia's multicultural society, members of this and the other place and all political leaders have a responsibility not to be tempted to try to gain some political benefit from wedging the other side on a sensitive issue.

Mr Troy Grant: It's not wedging; it's holding you to account.

Mr RON HOENIG: The Minister for Police interjects. I draw his attention to John Howard's autobiography *Lazarus Rising* in which he says that his biggest mistake was to make an observation in 1988 about Asian immigration. But it was not just a political mistake by John Howard; it was a fundamental shift in the way in which the political leadership in this country approached multiculturalism. It took from 1949 to 1973 to remove the last vestiges of the White Australia policy in this country. For 15 years there was a bipartisan approach to Australia's multicultural society. That multicultural society does not exist by accident; it exists because the political leadership of both major political parties—Federal and State—knew they had a responsibility to ensure that this nation was a cohesive society.

Mr Troy Grant: Hear, hear! So why is your leader making these ads?

Mr RON HOENIG: I wish the Minister for Police would listen—he might learn something. Many of us have family members who were exterminated based upon either race or religion. However, our generation has rarely experienced that in this country because of Australia's success in harmonising a variety of cultures—we are the most successful nation in the world at doing that. However, probably since 1988, politicians have seen from time to time that there is some benefit to them politically by appealing to the lowest common denominator. While this may be a nation of free speech, where everybody is entitled to their views, there is a greater responsibility on those of us who are elected community representatives to be careful and to think before we open our mouths. It is not about political correctness; it is about having a responsibility to ensure that our society is harmonious.

Every time nonsense such as this motion appears, there is a risk that it will interfere with our harmonious society. My colleague the member for Kogarah wrote an op-ed recently for a metropolitan newspaper saying that

we all have a responsibility to call out racism whenever we see it and to not take political advantage as a result of it. I remind members that from the time this nation was seized from its original owners in 1788, Australia has been taking in migrants and has grown because of it. Australia is a land that was built by migrants and their children. Australia is a land that denies no opportunity to anybody. Former Premier of New South Wales the Hon. Morris Iemma has an Italian background and the current Premier has an Armenian background. Nothing is denied to anybody, irrespective of their background. But for that to continue we must resist what is happening all around the Western World. We must resist the temptation to win a vote. In case anyone needs reminding what this country is about, I leave the House with these words from the national anthem:

For those who've come across the seas
We've boundless plains to share,
With courage let us all combine
To advance Australia Fair.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:44): I am very happy to speak to this motion as a person who, like 57 per cent of those in my electorate, has a parent who was born overseas. I am very happy to speak to this motion as a person whose father never lived in an English-speaking country until the age of 25. I am very happy to denounce the deflection tactics of the Labor Party that suggest this motion is about Pauline Hanson. I want to focus on the picture that has been circulated around the House taken from the advertisement by Bill Shorten and the Australian Labor Party [ALP] that is pitched to country Queensland. The people we see depicted in that photograph who are standing behind Bill Shorten do not reflect the diversity of our country. If I may borrow a phrase associated with Oscar Wilde, "Diversity is a word whose name Labor dares not speak", because the photograph is full of people with white skin and blonde hair. It is an Australia that does not reflect even the childhood of the member for Heffron or my own.

When I went to school there were many Greek, Italian, Yugoslav, Asian, Jewish and Lebanese students. Yet this photograph depicts none of the diversity of Australia even 40 years ago, let alone the greater diversity of today. This morning I had the privilege of addressing a group of students from Normanhurst Boys High School in this very Chamber before today's sitting began. None of the diversity of that group of students from a selective high school—the future lawyers and doctors; the future professionals of our country—is reflected in this ALP advertisement. What does it say to our future leaders about the Australia they are going to lead? Unfortunately, this is not an isolated example. Earlier this year the Treasurer spoke with great passion about Labor members of this Parliament attending an anti-Israel hate rally. During the 2015 election the union movement ran a dishonest anti-Chinese scare campaign on the lease of the poles and wires.

We should never forget that in 1947 the then leader of the Federal Australian Labor Party stood up in our national Parliament and said, in favour of the White Australia policy, "Two Wongs don't make a white". It was a terrible, disgraceful, racist jibe made in our national Parliament. It is most unfortunate that in 2017 Bill Shorten wants to take our country back to 1947—the Federal Labor leader is jumping back to 1947. It is important for all of us to stand up and say that that is not the Australia we want. Labor members cannot deflect by talking about preference deals with One Nation and the like. We should be talking about what Australia we are proud of in 2017. This Labor advertisement is a disgraceful dog whistle to a bygone era and the White Australia policy.

We should never forget that it was the Liberal Party that abolished the White Australia policy under the Holt Government in 1965. It is the Liberal Party that has consistently stood up for freedom. Liberals tolerate diversity of opinion and diversity of people, and we will not stand up and take it when Bill Shorten says one thing to one group of people in the inner city and the western suburbs of Sydney and something completely different to those in country Queensland. It is hypocritical, dishonest, it is disingenuous, and we should not allow it. The member for Blacktown, instead of shouting at me across the Chamber, should stand up and call it out, just as Mr Albanese has done. He should call out the hypocrisy of his Federal Labor leader because it is a disgrace. It is a good example of why Labor members can never be trusted to run this State because only the Liberal Party believes in true freedom, diversity and democracy.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (16:50): I am very saddened to stand here and speak to this motion. It is not a subject that I am comfortable speaking about. Those opposite talk about racism but the majority of them have never experienced it. Let me tell them about the racism that I experienced growing up in the late 1960s and 1970s. As an eight-year-old new migrant, I questioned whether I was really Australian. I asked that question for some years. I would often come home from school without my schoolbag because other kids had taken it and thrown it on the roof. I would often be standing in the canteen line and feel a cold draft on my back because somebody had spat on it. When my family was driving down Parramatta Road returning from church often a car would pull up next to us and its occupants would call out obscenities—call us "wogs"—spit on our window and move on. That is the racism that many migrants experienced growing up in the 1970s.

It was not until a Labor Prime Minister introduced antidiscrimination laws that we started to see a decline of racism in this country. It was not until I reached senior school, at the age of 17, that I started to feel I was an Australian and had the respect of my colleagues. Members opposite should not talk in this Parliament about racism when they do not know what racism is. The Government has introduced this motion today because it has a policy vacuum; there is no other business to legislate so it wants to take up the time of the House debating this issue. My colleague the member for Rockdale spoke about his experiences growing up. He had to shorten his surname because of the racism he experienced. Look at the membership of the Labor Party and see the diversity of its members. When I was growing up and experiencing different types of racism I never envisaged that I would one day be standing here as a member of Parliament. I never thought I would be given that opportunity. But the Labor Party gave me that opportunity.

There are two politicians of Egyptian background in Australia: one in the Federal Parliament and me in this place. That would never have happened under the Liberals. I know from experience that the Liberal Party approaches members of my church to stand for election, but where does it put them? It tries to get the Coptic vote by putting those candidates in unwinnable seats. The Liberal Party will never put multicultural people in winnable seats and have the diversity the Labor Party has. Only the Labor Party supports diversity. So members opposite should not hold up a picture and attempt to interpret it as racism when they have never experienced racism and when they know that their party is not a party of diversity. [*Time expired*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I assure the community that racism is not confined to members on one side of the House. I assure the member for Mount Druitt that I had exactly the same experiences as he did.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: The Government called on this motion so its members should not complain about the content of the debate. Those opposite went into the gutter today; it is their debate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I assure the community that members on both sides of the House understand the experiences of the member for Mount Druitt. The Labor Party believes it alone has done everything for migrants, but it is not just the Labor Party. I experienced racism well before the 1970s. I could tell members who are not as old as I am many more stories today. There is no point of order.

Dr Hugh McDermott: We will give you leave to get up and speak.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am sure that the member for Prospect, who has many medals, understands everything.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (16:57): I have absolute sympathy for those who have told stories in this place about racism and bullying on the basis of their culture. That is all the more reason this debate should have been truncated by Opposition members agreeing to the motion and having the intestinal fortitude to say that there is no place in the Labor Party for this advertisement. That would have given every member opposite the opportunity to disassociate themselves from the advertisement that has been broadcast in parts of Queensland in an attempt to win the votes of One Nation supporters in that State. The facts in relation to this advertisement are as follows. The Leader of the Opposition's office approved of the advertisement before it was broadcast. The Leader of the Opposition had an opportunity to look at the advertisement, approve it and then agree to its transmission in Queensland to attract the One Nation vote. The upshot is that the Leader of the Opposition saw the advertisement and approved its content.

Why did he approve of its content? It is because he agreed with it. He agreed with the political message that it was bound to send to those members of the Queensland voting public whom he wanted to attract. Those opposite had an opportunity to disassociate themselves from the advertisement and agree to the motion. They had an opportunity to say to the leader of the Labor Party that they want no part of a campaign that uses only white tradesmen—probably unionists who put their hand up. For the past 10 days I have had staying with me a very attractive Filipino.

Ms Jodi McKay: "Very attractive!" Are you serious?

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Very attractive. She was attractive because of her sparking personality.

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

Ms Jenny Leong: How old was she?

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: She was in year 10 and on an exchange program to Australia. We took her to Sydney to see the delights of Darling Harbour, Sydney Tower and Bondi Beach. She came home that evening and made the observation that the remarkable thing about Australia was that when you walked down the street you saw people from every nationality; never in the Philippines would you see such a remarkable diversity of people. It struck her immediately that this was the difference between Australia and the Philippines. So why

did the Leader of the Opposition not see the problem when he viewed the advertisement? As soon as other members of his party saw it, including Anthony Albanese, they were shocked that it was approved by the Leader of the Opposition and broadcast in Queensland. Mainstream Australia looks different now from how it once did. Our multicultural communities are very much part of our view of Australia. In my electorate I represent a large diversity of people who have aspirational values. Only the Coalition can represent the diverse and multicultural communities of mainstream Australia. [*Time expired.*]

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (17:02): I have listened to contributions from members on both sides of the Chamber. Those opposite want to talk about a photograph published by the Australian Labor Party, but I will show members a different picture—it is members on the Opposition side of the House. That is diversity—it is me, the member for Bankstown and others. When it comes to diversity, NSW Labor has the runs on the board. Labor members are proud to represent the diverse communities in our electorates. In Macquarie Fields I represent a number of community groups, including Bengalis, Filipinos and Samoans. Every race is represented in my electorate, and I am proud of that fact. I am proud to be a New South Wales Labor member of Parliament from a diverse community to whom Labor has given the opportunity to represent his electorate and the values that our nation holds in great stead.

This is what NSW Labor offers the community: Labor will actively promote the right of everybody, regardless of their origin or religion, to seek any office—public or professional. That is the record of the Labor Party. Gesture politics in this Chamber is just as dangerous as race politics because it legitimises people's fears and anxieties and exaggerates their insecurity. Australia has a proud record stretching back to the 1940s and 1950s when the White Australia policy was still in play. The Australian Government launched the Good Neighbour Council in the 1950s to win public acceptance for mass immigration to Australia. That is a proud achievement. Our record on cultural and social harmony is second to none.

In 1973 Prime Minister Whitlam took three steps to take race out of Australian politics and government. He legislated that migrants to Australia would not be judged on their race and could become residents after three years, that race would not be a factor in selecting migrants to come to our nation, and that Australia would ratify all international treaties with regard to immigration and race. That is our proud record. Gesture politics such as the motion before the House, which accuses the Labor Party of racism, supports race politics and dog-whistle politics. The Labor Party has a proud record of social cohesion and diversity. The Scanlon Foundation measures annually the level of social cohesion in the community and how Australians feel about social and cultural diversity. There are three statistics that I, and I am sure other Australians, find encouraging: 83 per cent of Australians believe diversity is a positive for the nation; 91 per cent of newly arrived Australians feel a sense of belonging in Australia; and 89 per cent of those born in Australia and 92 per cent of those newly arrived in Australia are happy about their life.

Those results are achieved not by accident but because civic and political institutions take a concerted effort to ensure that all people in the community are made to feel welcome and that every opportunity is afforded to them. Labor has a proud record in that regard. It was Labor that allowed a skinny kid with two long, funny names to put his name on a ballot paper to seek election to represent his community in Parliament. If those opposite want to talk about diversity, bring it on.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown) (17:07): By leave: I thank the Leader of the House for his indulgence.

Mr Anthony Roberts: We will see.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: Too late. The real tragedy today is the nature of this debate. The tragedy is that an advertisement such as was produced has attracted attention. In reality, this Parliament celebrates diversity. Instead of petty pointscoring and political opportunism on both sides, members should have come together as a Parliament and talked about the strength of our diversity. The reason I sought leave to make a contribution was to introduce some semblance of sanity into the debate. There is diversity on both sides of the House. The Assistant Speaker and I attended a function last week celebrating the contribution of the Sikh community. This Parliament regularly celebrates the contribution of many people from many different nationalities. Members on both sides of this Chamber go to ethnic community events and talk about the success of our multiculturalism.

Every member in this place has spoken at some point about Australia being a beacon of successful multiculturalism while the rest of the world seeks to tear itself apart over the issue—what it means and whether it is a success or a failure. Australia takes great pride in the fact that we have done so much as a nation. The Federal Opposition leader has admitted that the advertisement was a mistake. That should have been sufficient. Yet we are having this debate today. What troubles me is that instead of being positive about multiculturalism, everybody is seeking to score political points instead of saying that multiculturalism in this State is successful. In my electorate 169 different nationalities live together harmoniously—and the census figures confirm that. My family

is a good example of multiculturalism. My son-in-law is from India and my stepmother was born in Broome. Her parents were Japanese and Filipino. Most members share some elements of multiculturalism, either through family representation or through different cultures.

It troubles me that this debate has descended to this level. We are all attempting to score points about being better than someone else rather than standing together regardless of our political persuasions. Some people want to destroy multiculturalism. They say that it is a failure and they refer to a few people in the community who have done the wrong thing. Today is a sad day because this debate is a mistake.

Mr Alister Henskens: It is a sad advertisement that does not reflect success; that is the problem.

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Ku-ring-gai. I just said it is a sad day as this debate is a huge mistake. We ought to be talking about the success of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is reflected in the representation of this Chamber. It is our job as leaders in our communities to lead—to argue and to talk about the success of multiculturalism—rather than trying to score cheap political points by referring to who said what and who made a mistake. That is what it has come to today, which is a sad indictment on us all. We should be leaders and make positive statements about multiculturalism. Government members said that a mistake was made but they all had an opportunity to talk about the success of multiculturalism. I am saddened that the debate has descended to this level. People from every culture have made positive contributions to this State.

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (17:12): In reply: I acknowledge the contributions made by the members representing the electorates of Summer Hill, Drummoyne, Rockdale, Hawkesbury, Newtown, Parramatta, Maitland, Kiama, Granville, Coffs Harbour, Heffron, Ku-ring-gai, Mount Druitt, Epping, Macquarie Fields and Blacktown. Members are ultimately here to represent their communities and to work towards achieving positive outcomes. As I said earlier, I am proud of my family's cultural background. I am proud that my family took a risk in coming to this country. I am proud that this country embraced my family and provided me with an opportunity to grow up in a community where I have always been treated as an Australian. I am fortunate that I can speak Greek and partake in Greek dancing. I celebrate my cultural identity whilst being Australian. No-one thinks anything of that because we live in a country that celebrates social cohesion and diversity. It is disappointing that many members did not speak about the advertisement that is referred to in my motion. That is not the Australia that I know or the Australia to which I belong—the Australia that is reflective of my family, my constituency, this State and the nation.

My electorate has people from Coptic, Greek, Italian, Chinese, Lebanese and other cultural backgrounds. All members would have in their electorates people from different cultural backgrounds. If members do not vote in support of this motion they will be supporting Pauline Hanson's vision of Australia. Members need to support this motion if they are serious about multiculturalism. They should jump on board and embrace the inclusiveness and diversity that Government members are talking about. The Premier and Deputy Premier are from diverse cultural backgrounds, as is our Deputy Speaker and many of our Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries. We have pointed out to Opposition members that many of them would not be included in the Labor Party advertisement. Those members representing the electorates of Canterbury, Mount Druitt, Fairfield, Rockdale, Heffron, Cabramatta, Macquarie Fields and Bankstown would not be included in that advertisement. Opposition members said that it was an oversight but I quote from what Rose Jackson had to say after the election. She said that head office was, "sexist, homophobic, too white, undemocratic and highly factionalised". She also said, "New South Wales Labor is still way too white." I ask all members to support this motion.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes34
Noes46
Majority..... 12

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Car, Ms P
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McDermott, Dr H

Atalla, Mr E (teller)
Catley, Ms Y
Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Dib, Mr J
Greenwich, Mr A
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
Mehan, Mr D

AYES

Mihailuk, Ms T
Robertson, Mr J
Tesch, Ms L
Zangari, Mr G

Park, Mr R
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G

Parker, Mr J
Smith, Ms T F
Washington, Ms K

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V
Evans, Mr L
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Pavey, Mrs M
Piper, Mr G
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

Aplin, Mr G
Brookes, Mr G
Crouch, Mr A
Donato, Mr P
George, Mr T
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Roberts, Mr A
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

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

PAIRS

Foley, Mr L
Watson, Ms A

Berejiklian, Ms G
Coure, Mr M

Amendment negatived.

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

Motion agreed to.*Bills***CIVIL LIABILITY (THIRD PARTY CLAIMS AGAINST INSURERS) BILL 2017****First Reading**

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

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

CROWN LAND LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017**Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 2 May 2017.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:23): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Crown Lands Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. If we are to understand the context of this bill we must refer to what the Minister for Finance and Services, the Hon. Greg Pearce, said in the Legislative Council. On 14 October 2016 at page 11 of the supplementary budget estimates hearing he referred to Crown lands and said:

If you can get that business cleaned up and sorted out, it might well be something that we can add to our asset recycling scheme and sell.

The Hon. Greg Pearce said that to Mr Smith, Secretary of the New South Wales Department of Industry. No matter what Government members might say in their contributions to debates or to media outlets, six months ago

Minister Pearce belled the cat. He referred to the restructure of Crown lands as a sell-off of assets that belong to the people of this State. Sometimes we mock the Government for selling everything that is not nailed down. But we never imagined that Crown land would be on the chopping block. In his second reading speech the Minister spoke at length about the bill improving and streamlining an old process. He used the same old spin that has become an anchor for this Government and in which no-one believes.

It is unparliamentary to say that the Government lied so I will not use that term. Instead I will refer to "mistruths", "misleading" and "deliberate deception". When the Minister said that this legislation would streamline an old process he really meant that Crown land would be sold off faster. The Minister referred to double handling but he really meant removing the checks and balances and public scrutiny before selling off Crown land. This bill is an example of this Government's arrogance. It thinks it is much more clever than any other government, which is conceited and egotistical. This Government lacks any humility or modesty and its arrogance is evident in the bill before the House.

When the Crown Lands Management Bill 2016 was rushed through the Parliament, Opposition members, crossbench members and many and varied stakeholders warned the Government that it was full of flaws and errors and that there would be unforeseeable outcomes. In November 2016 this arrogant Government pushed through the legislation and told everyone that they were wrong. In spite of the Government's arrogance and the errors in this legislation it is being debated today. The Crown Lands Management Bill 2016 contained the same errors and flaws and resulted in unforeseeable outcomes. It was ultimately passed by the upper House because of the enormous trust placed in the Hon. Niall Blair, the then Minister for Lands, by a number of crossbench members.

Less than six months later we are debating this bill. Clearly the Hon. Niall Blair is trusted and held in high esteem by members in the upper House. Last year I sat in the upper House and listened to debate until about 2.00 a.m. I am not sure whether the current Minister, a member of the lower House who disastrously rolled out forced council amalgamations, will be held in that same high esteem by Legislative Council members. It is worth reminding members that the Crown Lands Management Bill 2016 attracted notoriety as it sought to streamline the processes traditionally used by governments to manage Crown land. The concerns that were expressed last year, which are growing day by day, stem from the fact that Crown land in essence is public land and the community has a right to say how it is managed. Under this Government Crown land has been gutted, an issue referred to last year in the Auditor-General's scathing report.

After slashing jobs and expertise the Government is now looking at deleting the Crown land estate—a fire sale, if you like, of Crown land that belongs to us all. Crown land will be given away to councils and valuable assets will be transferred to other government agencies such as Property NSW, which is in essence the real estate agent of the Government. This bill sought to do away with a number of other important public land categories, including the commons system that has operated in New South Wales since the earliest times of white settlement. There was no real reason to repeal the Commons Management Act other than so the Government could claim it had done it. We could imagine some type of *Monty Python* or *Yes Minister* skit. An inquiring person would ask, "Why did we do that?" The ministerial response would be, "It's obvious: So we can say that we have done it." The person would then ask, "What does it achieve?" The Minister's response would be, "It achieves nothing at all." The person would say again, "Why did we do it?" Of course there would be no answer.

We know that the Minister last year, the Hon. Niall Blair, and the Minister this year, the Hon. Paul Toole, both sought to proceed with removing commons from Crown lands. However, it has undoubtedly been the action of those interested in commons land, particularly around St Albans in the electorate of the Treasurer, that has led to commons being removed from this bill. That makes one wonder who is driving the agenda. Who is in control? We would like to think the Minister is in control of his own department, but from what we have seen with council amalgamations, commons land and Treasury pressure to sell off Crown land we could be forgiven for wondering if he is a Minister in anything other than title.

The supercilious logic that the Government proclaims as streamlining was completely dismantled and critiqued by the Auditor-General in the report last year. This bill does to public roads what it did to the rest of the Crown land estate in New South Wales. It opens up possibilities and conjures consequences that the community—particularly future generations—might regret. It removes critical parts of the long-established processes in closing a road and then selling it off if it is on Crown land. This is purely driven by Treasury. The Opposition is concerned that the broader public interest will be sacrificed in the process.

I turn now to the detail of the bill. Much of it tidies up matters stemming from the rushed passage of the Crown Land Management Bill 2016, as I noted. It is a sad indictment on this Government that it repeatedly brings bills to Parliament with errors and inconsistencies that later have to be tidied up. Regardless of their sloppiness, these minor amendments to fix the rushed, error-riddled previous bill, along with the statute law revision amendments, are parts of the bill that can be supported. Schedule 1 to the bill deals with the Public Reserves Management Fund Act 1987, which was a visionary piece of legislation conceived by the Wran Government and

implemented by the Unsworth Government shortly thereafter. For the past 30 years it has underpinned substantial improvements to many Crown reserves including showgrounds, parks, community halls and sporting clubs.

This bill, however, repeals the Public Reserves Management Fund Act and establishes essentially the same funding mechanism within the Crown Lands Management Act 2016 but renames it the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund. Quite simply, it is a name change. For what sake it is hard to tell, but certainly the Minister can claim to have done something. It is nothing more than part of the spin machine that controls this Government and as a result of which passengers are called customers, citizens are called clients and the dreaded word "privatisation" is called—that is right—asset recycling. The name change will probably create more confusion, so it is questionable why we would bother doing it, but the Opposition is not opposed to that particular part of the bill because it seems to be part of the Government's obsession with change for change's sake. However, in his response the Minister might clarify the projected value of the savings that will be made as a result of the change.

In his second reading speech the Minister went to great lengths to claim that changing the name would remove red tape. It is impossible for members on my side to imagine how that could happen. But the Government has made the claim and now it can stump up the evidence and the alleged facts and figures. If it cannot do that we will know it is nothing more than hot air. Labor is always concerned when this Government talks about red tape savings because in his report last year the Auditor-General dismantled the inflated costs the Government uses to make those claims.

Another point needing clarification is whether freehold showgrounds will be able to receive funding under the newly named fund as they were under the old fund. I seek clarification from the Minister in his reply because there is grave concern over the future of freehold showgrounds in New South Wales under this Government as reflected in recent public comments from the Agricultural Show Society, who referred to last year's Act as "lousy laws". Those are their words, not mine. But I seek clarification on whether, given that they are freehold and not Crown land, showgrounds like those at Cessnock, Maitland, Muswellbrook, Singleton, Wyong, Taree, Bulli, Dapto, Wagga Wagga and Broken Hill will be able to access the newly titled Crown Reserves Improvement Fund in the same way that they previously accessed the Public Reserves Management Fund.

The bill also amends and updates numerous pieces of legislation that refer to the Crown Lands Act 1989, which will be repealed on the enactment of this bill, and the Crown Lands Management Act 2016. Schedule 4 to the bill makes amendments to 112 pieces of New South Wales legislation that essentially should have been dealt with in the bill last year but were not because of the rush. The bill's effect ranges from the Constitution Act 1972 and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 through to the Fire and Emergency Services Levy Act 2017 and the Local Land Services Act 2013. While simply administrative, these changes reflect how entrenched Crown lands is within the New South Wales legislative framework.

Around one-third of all New South Wales land is Crown land. That is why the Government rushes through radical legislation that changes the way in which it is managed. Parliament and the broader community is right to be concerned. At times the arrogance of this dictatorial Government prevents it from hearing the message. Sometimes the Opposition is doing nothing more than trying to save the Government from itself. It is time for the Minister to click on his listening ears. One of the most symbolic parts of the Crown Land Management Act 2016 was the removal of a concept of a trust in the Crown lands legislation. It reflects the sentiment of the changes and why the community is so concerned with what the Government is up to here. Labor sought to retain the trust concept in Crown land management, yet our amendments in November 2016 were not accepted. Now we see that under this bill the trust concept is to be removed from other pieces of legislation that use the trust model. These are not insignificant pieces of public land. They include all Crown land cemeteries such as Rookwood, a sportsground that many people might have heard of called the Sydney Cricket Ground, and a little piece of Crown land on the northern side of the harbour that we know as Luna Park.

These are significant and some might say sacred parcels of public land that have historically been referred to as trusts and been managed by trusts. To remove the trust concept is alarming in the extreme. Despite being repeatedly asked, the Government could not and would not explain why it was determined to do that in 2016. Again Government members have offered no explanation as to why they are trying to do it in 2017. I ask the Minister to explain in his reply why the removal of the trust concept is so important to this amendment to Crown lands. Labor will not be opposing this part of the bill but we would like to understand the logic behind it. For example, most in our community would recognise and acknowledge the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust. Going forward, it is uncertain what that group will be called. Will it be treated like cemetery trusts and simply be known as the Sydney Cricket Ground operators? If a trust concept is retained for the Sydney Cricket Ground, why is it not retained for other Crown land managers? Is it simply a matter that no-one in this Government wanted to ring former Premier O'Farrell and tell him that he was no longer a trustee of the Sydney Cricket Ground?

I turn now to what we consider to be of most serious concern in this bill, namely, the closure and fire sale of Crown roads and public reserves. The Government's 2014 discussion paper shows that 6 per cent, or two million hectares of the 33 million hectares of Crown land, is valued at \$7.5 billion of this \$10 billion Crown land asset. To paraphrase the Hon. Greg Pearce, whom I quoted earlier, "If we can sort out the business of Crown lands, we can sell it off." No matter what those opposite may say, that is what this bill is about. This Government does not like publicly owned assets. That is why Crown land is under threat, and the community is concerned about the real plans of this Government. Public roads form a significant part of the 6 per cent, or \$7.5 billion value, of Crown lands. Currently, a council undertakes broad community consultation and then publicly resolves to close a road. Under the Roads Act 1993, it must then seek the consent of the Minister for Lands for the closure. This forms a check and balance to ensure that public roads are closed transparently, and for good reason.

This bill will remove that ministerial oversight. One wonders why we would have a Minister responsible for Crown lands if the Minister is so determined to absolve himself of that responsibility. Perhaps he should take his name off the door, hand in his resignation, turn the lights out and leave. I note that there are a number of veto roles in the bill for a number of alternatives but the veto does not involve the Minister. The bill also has appeal rights to the Land and Environment Court for a select few who are entitled to exercise that right but that does not include interested third parties like fossickers, fishers or the community at large. This bill is not simply about access to land and Crown land; we are talking about the value of billions of dollars that may be accessed for the sake of developer profits. For example, let us take two blocks of land separated by a public road somewhere in Sydney. If the landholders hold both blocks of land on either side of the road there is a clear pecuniary gain. They could seek to make an approach to council to have that road on Crown land closed off and sold to them.

That is happening across New South Wales right now, particularly in Sydney. A closed public road can turn into tens of millions of dollars for a developer and the financial incentives for councils to go along with the closure and development are ever present. That is why we need the current two-step process. We must maintain the State-based ministerial oversight as a check and balance. For example, imagine the trouble-plagued Auburn council, with its deeply embedded developer mentality, having the ability to sign off a public road on Crown land without it coming before the Minister. No doubt the Minister, having taken action in the case of Auburn council, would be deeply concerned about that possibility. Under this legislation, that possibility can be a reality.

New section 38A sets out fairly limited reasons why a public road may be closed: if it is not required for public use; if it is not required to provide for continuity of an existing road; or it provides vehicular access to particular land. Returning to my earlier example of the two blocks of land, these conditions may be met but it may not be in the broader public interest. Labor is concerned that the veto powers will not be exercised and the Minister will be able to wash his or her hands of the problem. We oppose this part of the bill. I foreshadow that Labor will be moving amendments in the Legislative Council to division 3 of the bill. In his second reading speech, the Minister said that the removal of his or a future Minister's oversight was simply about streamlining the process, which means speeding up the sale. It is the complete opposite of the Robin Hood effect. Perhaps this Government should be referred to as Hood Robin—they are literally robbing from the poor, the masses of our society, and providing an opportunity for the rich. I turn now to Crown road sales. On page 47 of the 2014 review undertaken by this Government appears the heading, "Unformed Crown roads stay with the Crown Land Division". In his second reading speech, the Minister referred to them as "paper roads" and a bit of an extravagant legacy, as though they may not be needed in the future. At page 47 of that report it states:

The requirements for selling access reserves together with the appropriate powers needed to manage the remaining reserves should be included in the new legislation rather than in the Roads Act.

That suggests unformed Crown lands, or "paper roads" as the Minister refers to them, should stay in the hands of the Crown Lands Division. We cannot imagine what the future holds for some of these areas, in particular regional areas. Most of the Crown land in the Sydney Basin has been developed to make Sydney the incredible city it is today. But if we were to go back 100 years, no-one could have foreseen the future use or purpose of the masses of Crown land that were sitting idle. Fast forward 100 years from now and think what areas in Tamworth, Cessnock or Dubbo might look like, particularly if the inland rail gets up and running—we will find out in tonight's Federal budget. We cannot begin to imagine what those Crown lands might be used for in the future. Some of the things currently referred to as "paper roads" might be incredibly important for providing access and opportunity for development of those communities in the future.

The Opposition is concerned about the sale of Crown roads. These networks of roads were laid out a century or more ago to facilitate the settlement of the colony. It is acknowledged that some are formed, some are not. This rich tapestry or mosaic of public land corridors still may have a public function and value or may have a future public function or value that we yet cannot imagine. The Treasury clearly wrote this part of the bill because it wants to extract its pound of flesh in the disposal of Crown lands. In short, it wants the cash. This Government has been trying for the past six years to flog off as many Crown roads as it can in as quick a time

frame as possible. It was once practice that if Crown land was to be sold off there would be an on-site inspection by Crown land officers. However, having gutted Crown land staffing, the review now takes place as a desktop review and is simply published and, in the absence of any objections, goes ahead without a single officer having visited the site. With this bill, the Minister was obviously already in the bad books with the Treasurer over St Albans Common and has now allowed him access to selling off the entire section of Crown roads that are covered by the legislation. It seems an awkward and unintelligent transaction of faith between two Ministers.

Section 152B states explicitly that "the roads authority (Lands) may sell or otherwise dispose of a Crown road or part of a Crown road without first closing it". In essence, what that means is that the road is sold and then declared closed—the complete opposite of the current practice. The current practice, which is incredibly sensible, requires a Crown road to be closed first by way of publication and community consultation, and only if the closure is agreed to does it go to sale. This Government wants to overturn the process, take the money and run. I ask the Minister to advise the House of the additional costs of the current two-step process because I do not believe any savings can be made by removing one important step in the process. It is all about time and money. This is mainly about getting money to the Treasurer and the broader public interest implications are secondary. My fear is that those public interests can be easily sidelined in the interests of the money.

Labor opposes these provisions and will be moving amendments in the other place to maintain the status quo. Labor wants to work with all stakeholders to ensure we rationalise the Crown road network in a sensible and strategic manner, as was our intention when we introduced this initiative more than a decade ago. The Minister referred to the fact that some Crown land roads had been sold since 2004 and that that has been based on a strategic review in a slow and sensible manner. Labor fears that under this Government prudent policy and proper planning will be thrown out the window in a mad dash for cash, with future generations the greatest losers. We need to ensure that local authorities have the opportunity to undertake strategic planning for these Crown road corridors. Crown road corridors provide public access to rivers and other public land that are important to a wide range of groups in the community—for example, fishers, fossickers, horseriders and bushwalkers.

One wonders if the Minister had a conversation with the Minister responsible for fisheries, for example, about closing off access to some of those areas. One wonders if the Minister had a conversation with the Minister for Tourism and Major Events about regions that rely heavily on access to these Crown lands and to our rivers and waterways for kayaking, which drives the tourism economy. We need to plan not just for current use but for future unforeseeable uses. It would be tragic to close a road only to find a few years down the track that it was a critical component of a regional bushwalk network, or that it may be part of or connect to a travelling stock reserve—the great long paddock that is a critical part of Australia's natural, agricultural and social heritage. I ask the Minister to advise the House whether a Crown road that forms part of or adjoins a travelling stock reserve will be sold. This bill overturns long-established processes that deal with Crown roads. It has not been adequately tested with the public and cannot be supported.

The bill provides for the Department of Industry—Lands to direct a person who uses a Crown road to undertake repairs and maintenance of that road. Section 108 also provides for penalties to be issued where directed persons do not comply. I inform the Minister that across the Cessnock electorate there a number of instances where, for some reason unknown and unfathomable, a small parcel of land within a Crown reserve has been issued to a landholder for the purpose of building a home and the road that leads to that parcel of land is entirely a Crown land road. The owner of the home has no interest in the road, only in their home. Following recent changes to budgets for Crown roads, less and less repair maintenance is being done on those roads.

I know of one family in particular who has absolutely no financial capacity to undertake any repairs or to make any improvements to what has historically been a Crown road. With this legislation, the Minister is seeking to impose and force responsibility for the condition of the road onto this family. That is the same for multiple families I can think of in my electorate who live at the end of Crown roads for some unfathomable reason and whose families have lived there over the decades before we all stood in this place. To now force that cost onto them is beyond logic.

The issue of Crown roads forming access to a property is a wicked policy issue, which most country members will be all too familiar with. There is often a roundabout, a buck shift and a blame game between landholders, councils and the Lands department. But the buck has to stop somewhere and there needs to be a high degree of understanding and cooperation to resolve these matters, which all too often is absent. While the Opposition does not oppose these new provisions in the bill, we give notice that we will be watching carefully to ensure that landholders are not unfairly targeted by these new powers. I will be the first to hear from the landowners and homeowners if they are suddenly forced to fund the road network that leads to and from their house.

This bill and the Crown Lands Management Act 2016 is classic modern Liberal Party policy. It stems from the belief that there is less or even no value in publicly owned goods and services. Most of the bills we see

passing through this House week after week have the modern Liberal seal of approval—ideologically obsessed with flogging off public assets and completely contrary to the future prosperity of our regions. One wonders where the National Party is when these issues are being considered, contemplated, moved and agreed to, and I use as examples the electricity network, our ports and the carve-up of the Sydney rail network. The modern Liberal, shaped by the ideological extremes of the public policy vandalism of the Howard years, has a blinkered world view that is unable to look beyond the short term and to the long-term interests of the broader citizenry. Crown lands are and always have been for the 228 years that Crown land has been imposed in this State for the longer term view.

We are seeing a government increasingly composed of members and staffers with no real world experience and just getting their daily orders from the likes of IPA or the HR Nicholls Society. Yet the problem is that this bill is the product of the National Party by name in the House but of the Liberal Party by nature in the party room. The National Party should hang its head in shame. It was once a great and truly identifiable country party that would never have allowed Crown lands, stock routes and the like to be sold off in this fashion. The Nationals are now almost indistinguishable from their Liberal masters, apart from the fact that they will wear the odd pair of tan pants. They collectively have a type of political Stockholm syndrome: for so long have they been held captive that they start sympathising with their captors and identifying with their causes.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 73. I ask that the member for Cessnock be brought back to the leave of the bill. The member's comments are irrelevant.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: That relates to Standing Order 76.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Order! The manner in which any member in this or another place dresses is not relevant to the debate. Under Standing Order 73, imputations, improper motives and personal reflections on members of either House are disorderly. Even though the member for Cessnock said he would not use the word "lie", earlier in his speech he was rather disparaging of a member in the other place. I remind the member for Cessnock of the standing orders of the House.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: Banning greyhounds, dismantling TAFE, slashing school maintenance budgets and smashing democracy and local government are all disgraceful actions of the once great National Party in this modern era. That is the modern National Party, looking like the modern Liberal Party. Same background, same aspirations, same modus operandi. Labor and Country Labor oppose the bill, primarily because of the provisions relating to the closure and sale of Crown roads and public roads. The community is once again being caught on the hop by this bill. More work is required and adequate justification and explanation need to be provided to the Parliament. Labor raises significant concerns about transparency and the broader public good.

I ask the Minister in his speech in reply to reaffirm and commit to the position given by the then Minister in the other place in November 2016 in his second reading speech and speech in reply and at the Committee stage of the bill. The then Minister made a number of significant commitments about the implementation of the Crown Lands Management Bill 2016. Given that the second reading speech and other comments made by the Minister during the second reading debate form an important part of any future legal interpretation of this bill—and there no doubt will be legal precedents in the future—I ask that the Minister clearly articulate and affirm his commitment to all comments made by the then Minister in the November 2016 second reading debate in the upper House. I do not commend the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 to the House.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (18:01): I support the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I note that the Minister is present in the House this evening. Crown reserves are an essential part of the social, economic and environmental fabric of communities across the State. They provide the parks, beaches and gathering spaces for communities. Crown reserves provide significant benefits and services to every community in New South Wales. The approximately 34,000 Crown reserves across New South Wales are managed by a range of different organisations, including local councils, community organisations, volunteer and professional trust managers and New South Wales government agencies. I commend the volunteers who do such great work on those Crown reserves across the State. There are many such volunteers in the Tamworth electorate.

In particular, I mention Peter who volunteers his time at Chaffey Dam. When I was camping at Chaffey Dam in the week just after Easter, I met Peter who volunteers every day. He ensures that someone is at Chaffey Dam to clean the toilets and to make sure the area is clean of rubbish and appropriately presented for tourists and visitors to the dam. Peter, who lives at Nundle, is an outstanding volunteer. Every council in New South Wales manages the Crown Land reserves in its local government area. In addition, more than 700 community volunteer reserve managers, run by more than 3,000 dedicated volunteers such as Peter, look after individual Crown reserves that contain showgrounds, racecourses, local parks, dams and other important community facilities. It is important that these organisations have the resources to effectively manage and improve Crown reserves.

The Public Reserves Management Fund is an important mechanism that provides much-needed support and financial assistance to maintain and improve our Crown reserves. Chaffey Dam has been a recipient of funding from the Public Reserves Management Fund. The funds have been used to upgrade the toilets and to ensure that the roads are in good order so that boats and caravans can be towed across the dirt roads. Volunteers are constantly working to make sure that Chaffey Dam is presented in the best light possible. The Bowling Alley Point Recreation Reserve management takes care of that, and we thank them for it. Since the late 1980s the Public Reserves Management Fund has provided hundreds of millions of dollars to support the maintenance, protection and improvement of Crown lands across the State.

Over the past 10 years, the New South Wales Government has allocated more than \$140 million to communities and reserve managers through the Public Reserves Management Fund. Local parks and reserves, community halls, war memorials, showgrounds and caravan parks have all benefited from funding from the fund. I draw the attention of the House to some of the impressive and worthy projects this fund has supported. In 2016-17 the New South Wales Government allocated \$17.8 million through the Public Reserves Management Fund to support a range of projects across the State, including in the Tamworth electorate. In 2016-17, the fund provided over \$3 million for projects to improve showgrounds across New South Wales. This included \$10,000 to replace the arena fence at the Bredbo Showground; \$91,000 for the construction of a multipurpose shed at Cootamundra Showground; \$450,000 to replace the Condobolin Showground exhibition hall; and \$600,000 to the Young Showground Trust to revitalise the historic showground and the grandstand.

A number of other showgrounds across this great State have benefited from the Public Reserves Management Fund, including the showgrounds in the Tamworth electorate. I know that the money is gratefully received whenever it is allocated. The managers and volunteers who look after those reserves do a magnificent job. Over \$4 million in grants has been provided to help improve local parks and reserves. This includes \$1,600 to erect a fence to keep cattle out of the rainforest remnant at the Booyong Recreation Reserve and the Booyong Flora Reserve, and \$330,000 for the development of a new skate park facility at Banna Park in Griffith. Nearly \$6 million has been allocated from the fund for projects to improve caravan parks and State parks, including Lake Keepit at Tamworth. In addition to all of these worthy projects, this financial year the Government has allocated \$1.8 million for 151 feral pest and weed control projects and \$1 million for 48 bushfire protection projects. That is a lot of money for so many important projects.

This fund is the backbone of many Crown reserves and the Government is committed to ensuring it continues to provide significant benefits. The bill before the House maintains the fund. I note the contribution from the member for Cessnock and his concern about funding and supporting those great organisations that look after the many areas that I have spoken about. If the member had taken the time to talk to the Minister he would have been enlightened and would have received answers to the questions that he has raised this afternoon in the House. The Minister, who was present in the Chamber during the member's speech, will no doubt respond to the concerns of the member for Cessnock. To reduce legislative complexity, this bill incorporates the fund into the Crown Land Management Act 2016. This means that all of the relevant provisions about Crown land and improvements to Crown reserves can be found in one location, the Crown Land Management Act 2016.

The bill renames the Public Reserves Management Fund as the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund to more accurately and simply describe the purpose of the fund. This name better reflects what the fund seeks to achieve. The bill also includes broader and more flexible provisions around when grants and loans can be made to ensure that the full range of costs relating to the management and operation of Crown reserves are covered. Funds will now be able to be allocated to cover a broad range of administrative costs in connection with the management of a reserve, including costs associated with developing policy, procedures and guidelines. This will make Crown reserves more sustainable into the future.

I note that the member for Cessnock was critical of the bill. I suspect that, like every other member in this Chamber, he will put up his hand and ask for funds. This fund provides critical resources to ensure the ongoing success of many reserves supporting regional economic growth, strengthening local communities and helping to protect the natural environment. It is a common-sense approach to the long-term sustainability and funding of those particular areas. The Government is committed to ensuring that the fund continues to invest in and improve Crown reserves for the benefit of the community under its new name, the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund. I congratulate the Minister, the member for Bathurst, and his staff on bringing this legislation together. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (18:11): I speak in debate on the Crown Lands Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I recognise the Hon. Mick Veitch, the shadow Minister for Lands in the other place, who visited my electorate the week before last. Like all Labor members, he recognises the importance of Crown land—and not just as a valuable asset to the State. People's memories and experiences on Crown land makes it important to the community. Crown land accounts for close to half of all land in New South Wales. Our parks, beaches,

State forests and other tourism sites are on Crown land. I note that the member for Cessnock spoke about showgrounds that are on Crown land. Maitland showground is majority owned by the trust, but there is a small portion of Crown land.

State-owned and managed land is essential to maintaining our environment. It is a paramount tool for ensuring that communities have recreation space. In my previous life, as owner and manager of a tourism company, I came to appreciate the importance of Crown land and the manifest opportunities it provides for recreation in our State. Crown roads allow access to tourism sites. The impact of tourism on the regional economies of places that do not attract big business or factories and on workplaces is significant. Tourism drives regional employment in those areas and it is important to maintain access to Crown lands. Without Crown land we would be unable to showcase and maintain some of New South Wales' important tourism and recreation icons.

However, the Government appears not to share Labor's appreciation of Crown lands. As it did with NSW Land and Property Information, the Government is continuing its six-year-long fire sale of the State's assets. It sees only dollars generated by disposing of assets rather than the merit in keeping areas of New South Wales for recreational purposes in order to foster good community spirit and allow citizens to explore this magnificent State. This bill is the second instalment in the Government's changes to the management of Crown land. The first was the Crown Land Management Act 2016, which was sloppy and hastily drafted. As with that Act, the bill reveals careless drafting and a lack of forethought on the part of Government. The Government is not learning from its mistakes.

The bill will allow the Government to deviate from decades of tradition regarding the sale of Crown land—land that is owned by every person in this State. It has been custom and practice to close Crown roads prior to sale to enable adjacent landowners and the wider community to be notified of the intended sale. This allows affected parties to make alternative access arrangements. It means that businesses can make changes to their operations, farmers can find other access points and people who need general access to particular areas via those roads can make other arrangements. But the Government wishes to sell off the roads without closing them. Why would the Government want to break with decades of practice and provide less transparency when selling Crown lands? The answer to that question is obvious: it is arrogance.

The Government's arrogance knows no bounds. It does not consult and does not care about the views of the people in this State. Those opposite want to sell assets quickly in order to get the cash in their pockets—cash that they spend in their electorates rather than for the good of the entire community. If the Government does not consult with adjacent landowners and the community it can sell off roads quickly and quietly. That is unacceptable. The Government is comfortable with reducing the amount of transparency surrounding these transactions, but Labor is not. Labor will fight tooth and nail to stop the clearance sale that this Government has been holding in this State since 2011. Our Crown roads are used by bushwalkers, horseriders and others for recreation. Favourite pastimes and the livelihood of communities are at risk. Will bushwalkers and horseriders take second place to big business and property developers? Under this Government the answer is, "Yes, definitely".

The treatment of Crown roads in the bill has raised alarm. Currently, the lands Minister must approve any Crown road closure. The bill will allow councils to close roads without approval from the Minister. The change will surely be marketed by those opposite as reducing bureaucracy or red tape. That is the Government's favourite phrase when it comes to reducing the rights of communities. It will make it harder for people to appeal a road closure and remove the ability for affected third parties to protest against road closures. Local community groups concerned about overdevelopment in our metropolitan areas will be denied a voice to protest Crown road closures.

In my electorate of Maitland people are familiar with the danger of rushed road closures that do not allow for appeals. In 2016, Maitland suffered a massive storm. I have spoken previously about the April 2015 super storms in my electorate. In January 2016 another massive storm closed many local roads. Residents of Oakhampton Heights were isolated by floodwaters as the council had closed the Walka Water Works Road. In the wake of the April 2015 super storm the council had conducted a study and determined that the Walka Water Works Road, a Crown land site, was no longer viable. The council perceived there had been damage to another property that was not council or Crown land and expressed concerns about the safety of a bridge over a rail track owned by the Australian Rail Track Corporation.

Having those risks in mind, the council decided to block access. It took a week for the floodwaters in that area to subside. For that week people living with disabilities—both those living independently with family members and those in group homes and Ageing, Disability and Home Care properties—could not access care or treatment. Doctors, anaesthetists and specialists could not reach their patients. A young man undergoing treatment for leukaemia had to walk through floodwaters to return to his home—a very dangerous thing to do for anyone but particularly for someone with a compromised immune system. Someone was holding a twenty-first birthday party but the guests could not get there. Students could not go to school.

I was at least able to negotiate with the State Emergency Service to provide a flood boat. But it shows the difficulties caused when an agency of a government of any persuasion has the right or the ability to close a road without first consulting the community—particularly Oakhampton Heights residents in this case. They were very clear that they should have retained the access they had had during many previous floods. It was shown as an access road on the development control plans. The flood management plan said that residents could use the road. But during an emergency the residents were told they could not use it because the council decided to close the Crown land that provided access to the road. That is of grave concern. Under the bill, that situation will not be an anomaly or something to work on after the event; it will be the norm. [*Extension of time*]

What is in store in future for New South Wales residents who rely on Crown roads to do their business or pursue recreational activities? There will be rushed road closures and residents will be powerless to stop them. The only avenue of appeal is the Land and Environment Court. The Minister for Lands and Forestry is squibbing his role as a democratically elected Minister of the Crown. These are Crown lands and he is a Minister of the Crown. Currently, affected parties who seek to challenge a road closure may appeal to the Minister. They may write to the Minister or call his office so that he can hear their case against the closure. The Minister is seeking to reduce his workload and hand over responsibility to the Land and Environment Court.

What costs will be associated with making appeals to the court? It costs nearly nothing for residents to pick up the phone and call their local member, who can put them through to the Minister or make representations on their behalf. Our courts are struggling with massive workloads yet the Minister has decided that they can take the hit on this; they can do the work. Matters will be tied up in our courts and not resolved for many months, if not years. We have to wonder why the Government is seeking to add to the increasingly enormous workload of our courts. Will the people of this State be expected to incur legal costs simply in order to appeal the closure of a Crown road? That is unacceptable and the bill should be amended to retain the current two-tier approvals process. That process ensures councils must do their homework—they have to dot their i's and cross their t's. It allows the Minister for Lands and Forestry to hold councils to account and to act as a second level of review, just like our bicameral Parliament. We have two levels of review, and two levels are better than one.

While I am on the subject of roads, I take this opportunity to push home the importance of roads in communities such as mine. I have made representations to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight about a number of State roads that provide important access in my electorate. It is not just Crown roads; it is State roads across Maitland. The Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight has allocated only \$2 million to the upgrade of Testers Hollow when the Federal Government kicked in \$15 million. We really must question why Nationals Ministers do not seem to understand the importance of road access for country people and those in regional areas. They are happy to give away the power to close Crown roads and not to upgrade State roads that are not in their electorate.

Like me, the people of Maitland have given up expecting transparency from this Government. We know the Government's true colours. It is Sydney-centric; a far right mob who do not care what the community thinks. I call on the Government to reconsider some aspects of the bill. I ask the Minister, who is in the Chamber, to think about what he is doing and to suspend for once his obsession with selling off our assets quickly. I ask him to ensure that due process is followed. Our communities must be consulted adequately and allowed to make alternative arrangements before Crown lands are sold off. The Minister for Lands and Forestry must retain the two-tier approvals system. The system works; it has two levels of checks and balances. It saves the community and the Government money, and it ensures that our courts are not clogged with cases that should be decided on the Minister's watch.

Forcing New South Wales citizens to go to the Land and Environment Court instead of to their ministerial representatives is an abrogation of the Minister's duty to the people of this State. It is essential that councils are not allowed to ride roughshod over the people in favour of the developers. The many and manifest shortcomings of the bill mean that I cannot possibly support its passage through the House. I urge the Minister to reconsider the matters raised by the Opposition, which will be discussed further in debate, and to amend the bill so that we get something a little better than this rubbish.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (18:26): I contribute to debate on the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I note that Labor will be seeking to amend the bill, which in its current form seeks to roll back protections for publicly owned Crown land and erode protections for the users of Crown land. Crown land makes up a vital part of the land we use across our State. Crown land includes a range of land types from stock routes, to stadiums, to cemeteries. Each of those land uses provides a vital service to the people of New South Wales. Across the Hunter region parks, stock routes, showgrounds and even tourist attractions, such as the Bogey Hole in Newcastle, are situated on Crown land. The bill continues this Government's assault on Crown land and seeks to wind back protections and make it easier to close Crown land and sell it.

The bill builds on the Government's previous efforts to make it easier to transfer Crown land to other agencies and remove any protections preventing its sale. There are already several instances of Crown roads in my electorate being mismanaged, and the bill will do nothing to ensure that residents' best interests are protected during their interactions with Crown Lands. I was contacted recently by a constituent whose property is accessed via a Crown road that has a timber bridge. The road and the bridge are the only way that my constituents can access their property, aside from going off road and four-wheel driving through a neighbouring property via a number of gates. Council engineers recently determined that the timber bridge on the Crown land was unsafe for cars and erected barricades to prevent its use. The family who use the bridge to access their property were prevented from doing so. This is particularly concerning for those residents, who now face the task of walking from the bridge to their house up a difficult road, or undertaking a tough drive through neighbouring land.

My constituents have done their very best to engage with council and NSW Crown Lands but have not been able to reach a resolution. NSW Crown Lands flatly refused to fix the bridge. Meanwhile, the council is unable to restore access to a bridge that engineers have deemed to be unfit. It has been over a month now and the family continue to have no access to their property. It is utterly irresponsible that NSW Crown Lands is leaving residents stranded rather than managing and repairing its own asset. Solutions are needed, but are they offered under this bill? I have real concerns that under this bill NSW Crown Lands will be empowered to order a person who uses a Crown road to undertake repairs and maintenance, despite their not being the owner of that road or asset. That is the equivalent of a council insisting that residents in a cul-de-sac pay to fix any potholes and repair the gutter since they are the only users of the road. It is not logical and it certainly does not meet community expectations.

The alternative to people undertaking repairs and maintenance on an asset that is not theirs is to purchase the land from Crown Lands. But under this bill the requirement to close the Crown land before it is sold will go out the window. That means there is no opportunity for anyone who may have an interest in the road remaining open to have a voice. A deal will be done behind closed doors. Aside from that, pressure will possibly be applied to families to purchase roads so that they can access their property. That is a very real scenario we face under this bill. Either people pay for maintenance on a bridge that is not their asset or they purchase the Crown road and then pay for a bridge to be rebuilt and maintained. The owners of the properties did not know that at the time of purchase; it could not have been contemplated under existing legislation and it should not be contemplated under this bill. It is not in the interests of my constituents and so many other families, including those referred to by my colleague the member for Cessnock during his contribution to the debate.

Doing deals behind closed doors is not in the interests of any community, but we have seen it happen a fair few times in Port Stephens. When our sandmining mayor needed a new access road to his sand mine he originally planned to enter into an agreement to gain access via a road on neighbouring land. But then he had a better idea; there was a gazetted paper road nearby. It had been on the books for more than a century, but Port Stephens Council decided to open the road so the mayor could access his sand mine. The council then compulsorily acquired part of a neighbour's property. Thankfully, this dodgy deal was overturned by the Minister because checks and balances were in place—the same checks and balances that this bill will remove. Under this bill we will see more such debacles.

People who have interests in paper roads and public roads should have a say in what happens to them. That will not happen if public land can just be sold without scrutiny. Instead of ensuring that there are protections in place to protect the public from dodgy deals, the Government is thinking with its wallet and seeking to speed up the sell-off of public land. This is not in the interests of communities that currently enjoy public land—the communities we all represent in this place—nor is it in the interests of future generations. No Crown land is safe from those opposite. I never thought we would see the day when The Nationals want less oversight of the sale of stock routes, showgrounds and other Crown land that forms the backbone of many rural communities. But that is exactly what we are seeing today.

This bill, together with other changes to Crown land management, will see the deterioration of protections for Crown land across New South Wales. Those changes will have a particularly negative impact on regional and rural communities. The management of Crown land in New South Wales has reached a farcical state. We recently witnessed the absurd spectacle of Government members going to their communities and congratulating the Government on killing off the Government's own ideas. The finance Minister and member for Hawkesbury took to social media to announce, "Today we announce a huge victory for the Hawkesbury community: St Albans Common will remain in the care of the local members of the St Albans Common Trust." Whom was it a victory over? It was a victory over the Minister's Cabinet colleagues who sought to abolish the trusts that operate these important community assets. It is alarming to think that if there were fewer commons in the electorate of Liberal factional powerbrokers then they may have been abolished altogether. What an absurd, ad hoc, approach to public policy.

Looking across the Port Stephens electorate, I think about what this Government will seek to sell off next. My community is on high alert because it has seen it happen too many times already. We have already suffered from this Government's sell-off of part of a wetland that is critical habitat for Port Stephens' terminally declining koala population. We know that this Government does not care about the environment. It does not like public assets or public services. It has already sold off Home Care, the Land and Property Information and our poles and wires. Make no mistake, this bill is about making it easier to sell off public spaces—selling off Crown land. It seems to be the job of a number of Ministers to do themselves out of a job. Just as the Minister for Disability Services will soon have no job after the Government washes its hands of all responsibility for people with disabilities, the Minister for Lands will soon have no job if the Government pursues its agenda to sell off Crown land.

Mr Matt Kean: It's your plan; it is Labor's business model. It is called the NDIS.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: The Minister can believe that if he likes, but it is not the truth. Fundamentally, this legislation seeks to wind back the checks and balances that have protected Crown land and Crown roads for more than a century. As a result, public spaces are up for sale. Once this land is gone it cannot come back again. In my community we have seen too often the impact on people's lives when there are inadequate protections in place. Closing public roads and selling of Crown land is fraught with the potential for wrongdoing. I urge the Government to support Labor's amendments in the upper House and to ensure that Crown land continues to be utilised as intended, for public purpose, so that this generation and generations to follow may enjoy its benefits. If there is to be any sensible closures or sale of roads, then they must proceed with adequate checks and balances to ensure that any interested parties have a voice in the process. I do not commend the bill to the House.

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (18:35): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I listened with great interest to the contributions of Opposition members who referred to travelling stock reserves and Crown roads. The North Coast has a number of Crown roads, paper roads, on private property and the property owners have to pay rent for land that is no longer required or utilised. In fact, some Crown roads on private property are isolated at either end because the neighbours have either purchased them or the roads have been closed. Those people are paying for land that they must maintain and look after and they get no sympathy from the Crown.

When we were last in government we said that we would get rid of the paper roads, and this bill is a first step in the right direction. Recently I spoke to members of the State Emergency Service and the Rural Fire Service at Quirindi who are co-located on one block. In between them and the neighbours is a Crown road that goes nowhere. The council owns the land. I spoke to the general manager of council at a function and told him that I would like to see the road closed and then handed over to the Rural Fire Service and the State Emergency Service so that volunteers may park their vehicles on land that no-one accesses. He said that it is all too hard. I asked him for his support if I wrote to the lands department about the matter. He said that it will take two years to happen. This legislation presents an opportunity to convert that land and hand it over to the two organisations to provide parking for their volunteers and to improve the facility that they provide to the public free of charge.

It is amazing to hear the bleating from Opposition members. I remind members opposite that the Coffs Harbour Showground was managed by a private trust but the previous Labor Government handed it over to a private administrator. I believe that administrator bled it for every cent they could. It was not until we regained government that I had the showground trust restored. I must say that I was immensely disappointed when then Minister and Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner handed the caravan park that provided an income to the showground to the North Coast caravan parks trust or board—whatever it is. The funding that supported the showground before the administrator was appointed now goes straight back to the Government. I have asked, and I will continue to ask, the current Minister to look into the matter.

I am also extremely disappointed with the attitude of Coffs Harbour City Council about managing and being trustee of Crown land across the Coffs Harbour local government area. An example I have given in this House previously is Dolphin Marine Magic, previously the Pet Porpoise Pool. It wished to buy some Crown land managed by the council. The land was zoned as public open space. As soon as the council learned that the business wished to provide parking and utilise the land to meet Department of Primary Industries regulations in relation to the keeping of seals, the council hurriedly rezoned the land to the same zoning as that of the Pet Porpoise Pool or Dolphin Marine Magic. That then put a commercial value on that land of \$540,000, which was obscene. It was a case of the council utilising that Crown land of which it was trustee to fix up the bottom line on the council books.

When the Labor Government was in power it put forward a proposal that would have commercialised the Coffs Harbour Showground, which is some 50 or 60 acres of land in a prime position. I want that kept in perpetuity as a showground recreation reserve, which it is gazetted as. I would like an assurance from the Minister that showgrounds across the State will not be adversely affected by this legislation. I do not want them taken over by councils and sold off. Unfortunately, I am of the opinion that Coffs Harbour City Council has, as I have said

before, viewed its trustee status as an opportunity to sell off Crown land. Sawtell Beach Holiday Park, which is on a reserve, has a common that the croquet club uses. It also has a public hall and the area is used for a festival on Australia Day. However, a number of years ago the council wanted to usurp all of the land and put cabins on it. That would have returned an income to the caravan park, which goes straight into the council's back pocket. I do have concerns and they mainly relate to councils grabbing this land.

We have a number of travelling stock reserves on the North Coast that circle towns. They are not used and will never be used again; they were put there centuries ago. I have seen Crown roads that go straight up the face of cliffs because they were gazetted in the early 1900s. Those roads need to be closed to give people peace of mind and stop landowners having to pay rent for land that serves no purpose now and served no purpose then. Some Crown roads were only 66 feet long and ran from the main road down to a watering hole because there was a travelling stock reserve there. Those pieces of land, many of which are on farmland, will never be utilised. They need to be turned over to property owners.

My main concern is that councils across the State will take the opportunity to turn Crown reserves that may be under or may come under their management into cash cows for their debt-ridden council. I appeal to the Minister for an assurance that this will not happen and that showgrounds will be protected. Secondly, I again make the appeal to take the trustee status away from the council on the Crown reserve in the Coffs Harbour local government area because I do not believe it is being managed in the best interests of the Crown, the general public or the people and ratepayers of Coffs Harbour. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (18:42): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. Opposition members have covered most of the important facts. I concur with the final comments of the member for Coffs Harbour about the management of some important Crown lands. I seek an answer from the Minister and his staff in relation to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. When we look to amend laws around government management of Crown land it is vital that we understand the implications of removing any regulation, accountability or check and balance on Aboriginal land rights claims.

Schedule 3, clause 152B will allow the Government to sell Crown roads before closing the road, thus extinguishing public access. However, it is not explained and the Opposition seeks to understand how expediting the process under which Crown roads can be sold will affect Aboriginal land rights claims. Conventional understanding would be that this would extinguish any claim to native title over this land as the road would cease to be Crown land. Has the Government considered this when writing the legislation? Is invalidating or further delaying Aboriginal land rights claims a potential unintended consequence of this amendment to Crown lands legislation or is it something more sinister? It might be what the Government is actively seeking to do.

More than 40,000 land rights claims have been made in New South Wales since the Act was introduced in 1983. As of mid 2016, around 29,000 of those remained undetermined. Considering that this process is already fraught with delays due to the nature of assessing claims, does the Government recognise that allowing fast-tracked sales of Crown roads will further complicate and delay many existing claims? Could this result in further increasing the backlog of undetermined claims, and how will this impact on the outcome of the so far wildly successful Aboriginal Land Rights Act, which aims to compensate Aboriginal peoples in New South Wales for the dispossession of their land? I hope the Minister will address these specific questions in his reply.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (18:45:2): I make a contribution to debate on the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. Crown land is owned and managed by the State but it is land for the people and is fundamental to our way of life. Crown land is one of our State's most valuable assets and covers 42 per cent of New South Wales. Crown reserves are land set aside on behalf of the community for a wide range of public purposes including environmental and heritage protection, recreation and sport, open space, community halls, special events and government services. This results in a diversity of reserve types including State parks, beaches and national surfing reserves, caravan and camping grounds, community halls, sporting fields and parks, walking tracks, and canoe and kayak trails. Members have already spoken about a number of those things in this debate.

Throughout our lives we all benefit from Crown land. That is why it is such an important part of public policy and why the community is rightly vocal and passionate about any proposed changes to the way it is managed. Many competing interests are brought to bear in the use of public land and it is the Government's job to manage these social, environmental and economic interests. Crown land needs to be protected and managed effectively so that it continues to allow communities to prosper and to improve benefits for current and future generations. It is for these reasons that members on this side of the House oppose the bill in its current form and will be proposing amendments in the other place.

The Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill is the second bill in less than a year that will implement changes to the management of Crown land in New South Wales. Last year when I spoke on the Crown Lands Management Bill 2016 I expressed concerns that I and my constituents shared about the insufficient time provided

to allow for full consultation on the bill. That considerable piece of legislation was introduced into Parliament only three weeks prior to the debate. I note that in his second reading speech for this bill the Minister repeatedly discussed extensive community consultation during its development. Consultation is pointless if those who are consulted are not listened to and the commitments made are not upheld.

The submissions from local government have not been listened to. Although in correspondence dated 13 April this year the Minister stated that the Government supported or supported in principle all of the recommendations of General Purpose Standing Committee No. 6 in its inquiry into Crown lands, recommendations Nos 4 and 15 and the commitment made in the Government's response are certainly not properly reflected in this bill. Recommendation No. 4 of the committee states: The NSW Government develop a proposal to be included in new Crown land legislation that will recompense local councils for owning and managing Crown land as local land, including transferring to local government equitable access to funds from any money generating capabilities on the land such as telecommunications towers. In my reading, that recommendation is not reflected in the bill. Recommendation 15 of the committee states:

The Minister for Lands and Water will ensure that Crown roads will only be transferred as local land on a voluntary basis to local government once the Department of Industry—Lands has reduced the current backlog of closure applications to a manageable level.

The Government's response to that recommendation was:

Local councils will continue to be consulted as part of the Crown road closure and disposal application process and transfers of Crown roads to local councils will be considered where the transfer is required for a public purpose.

This bill is silent on consultation with local council when a transfer is proposed. Even if council consent is not a requirement of this legislation, the Government still has the ability to transfer roads to a council without its consent. That clearly goes against the recommendations in the Crown land review, which this Government supported. My local council, Lake Macquarie City Council, has good reason to be concerned if council consent is not reflected in the bill. It has already been subject to a problem transfer.

In November 2015, while I was the mayor, Manhire Road, Wyee, which required repairs estimated at \$1 million, was transferred from the responsibility of the Crown to the council. When it was owned by the Crown there had been considerable concern and complaint from the users of the road as to its lack of maintenance. The community did not really care who maintained the road; they just wanted to be able to use it safely and without damaging their vehicles. Someone came up with a cunning plan for the Liberal Government to get rid of this problem road, to fob it off to the local council. There was no initial consultation and, despite council refusal to accept the road on a cost-burden basis, the road was transferred to it. An estimated \$1 million for repairs to improve the standard of a road is too heavy a burden to transfer to any council, and Crown Lands should not have the power to do so without council consent.

Other speakers have addressed the issue of the removal of the checks and balances presently in place, which is another fundamental problem with this bill. Currently, if a local council wants to close a public road the process is initiated by the council but the closure requires final approval by the Minister for Lands in accordance with the Roads Act 1993. The Government claims this process creates duplication, inefficiencies and time delays. It is proposed that local councils be allowed to close public roads, for which they are the roads authority in their local area, without requiring the approval of the Minister for Lands. This bill removes a level of accountability and limits appeal rights to the Land and Environment Court, which is available only for selected parties and excludes third parties that may have concerns over broader implications of public road closure such as overdevelopment. Labor will seek to amend this provision.

Currently, there are two sources of appeal for those opposing and challenging a road closure. This acts as a check and balance to ensure councils undertake assessments and community consultation in the first place. This important process needs to be maintained. It is a safeguard against roads being closed and people being denied practicable access to a property or to an existing road network. Labor contends that these existing provisions, requiring final approval from the Minister to close a public road, should remain. This bill is another attempt by this Government to sell off more valuable New South Wales assets. The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government has a strong track record in flogging off valuable assets.

Under the current road disposal framework, Crown roads must first be closed and converted into Crown land before being sold or disposed of. This bill will allow the Government to sell the road without first closing it. Selling Crown roads prior to closure undermines longstanding processes that require roads to be closed prior to sale. These processes, which include community consultation on closure, are an important check and balance to ensure the public interest is served. In his second reading speech the Minister tried to justify the abandonment of these longstanding processes. He claimed that the current process had resulted in a large backlog of road closures and sale applications. But, as always with this Government, it comes back to the bottom line and to heck with the

impact on society. This move is about speeding up sales of Crown land in order to meet Treasury targets. How can that be in the public interest?

Making it easier to close roads may remove access for a wide range of user groups, as well as undermine the integrity of broader public land networks like travelling stock reserves. Bushwalkers, anglers, fossickers, and horseriders are a few of the groups of people concerned about the reduced protection of Crown roads. This bill broadens the impact of the rushed 2016 Crown Land Management Bill. In time, if this legislation is passed unchanged, the negative consequences of its weakened protections will be brought to light. For those reasons I oppose the bill in its current form.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (18:55): I make a contribution to debate on the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. At the outset I commend all my colleagues for their contributions to this debate, in particular the member for Cessnock who represents the shadow Minister for Lands in this place. The member for Cessnock has thoroughly outlined Labor's concerns about this legislation. This is the second bill in a matter of months to be introduced by this Government to significantly vary long-established processes around the ownership, use and management of Crown land in New South Wales. The Government's agenda is clear: anything that can be sold, will be sold—whether it is electricity, ports, Land and Property Information, or the social housing worth \$650 million that has been sold in the past two years. But none of that has been enough; it is now Crown land. The importance of Crown land should be a matter of concern to everyone in this State. The public's land is sacrosanct. Indeed, dedicated Crown land should always be afforded the highest protections in this State. Sadly, those two bills, introduced in the past six months, make it clear that no asset in this State is either safe or secure.

Some of my colleagues have raised issues concerning regional and rural areas where the management of Crown land is significant; it is also significant in many parts of Sydney. Earlier today I looked at an online register and I noted that a Crown road is for sale in Lakemba Street, Lakemba, part of the newly formed Canterbury-Bankstown local government area. When I was mayor we had many issues concerning the need to protect Crown land from developers. They will do whatever they can to add to their landholdings—for example, they offer arrangements so they can buy public land. Currently in this State we have a system with appropriate checks and balances in place. I find it absurd that a Minister would introduce legislation to water down his responsibilities. When these matters come before the Minister for Lands, he is responsible for making a decision. But such decisions are difficult, particularly when the Government is being lobbied by developers. Indeed, that is what this legislation is about. The Government has a different agenda.

It does not like the fact that there has to be a transparent and accountable process where the community has to be consulted and they do not like to wait for those decisions to be made. That is why the idea that the Act would be amended to allow for selected parties to appeal to the Land and Environment Court, and not all parties, is so concerning. For example, any neighbouring organisation or group that was opposing a particular road closure would not have the right to appeal, but an adjoining landowner who may have a certain interest, under this bill potentially will have a right to appeal. The potential ramifications should be a concern to everybody in this Chamber and in the State should part 38F of this bill be enacted. The member for Cessnock and many members on this side of the House have made it clear that it is one area that must be amended. The current processes provide those checks and balances and those safeguards to ensure that the process is thorough and transparent. When appeal rights are introduced in the manner proposed by the Government one has to question the real agenda here. Why would the Government want adjoining landowners to have the right to appeal a decision that ultimately should be in the best interests of the community?

Significant changes are happening in my local area as a result of planning changes made by the Government and there are streets that potentially could be sold off to developers in the local central business district. Hypothetically, this legislation could enable all sorts of closures around the velodrome and at The Crest. I note that the Government's initial legislation, the Crown Lands Management Act, is yet to be gazetted. I understand that is because there are some legal loopholes and issues surrounding that legislation. That is what happens when legislation is rammed through this place without the proper checks. We have seen that happen with legislation around the Independent Commission Against Corruption and in other decisions that this Government has made in the middle of the night without any thorough processes put in place to ensure that the legislation is sound. I would have thought the Government would have waited for that original legislation to be gazetted before it introduced this bill, but clearly there is some sort of an agenda to speed up this process—for whom I do not know; it has not been called for by any councils and no stakeholders that I am aware of are asking for this legislation to be rammed through this Parliament. I would love the Minister to make clear why this process needs to be hurried through when the Government has not even gazetted its original legislation from last year.

I concur with my colleagues on this side of the House. I note that the Opposition will not support this legislation and will be putting forward a series of amendments in the upper House that I hope this Government has a long, hard think about. Last year, similar amendments were put forward for the first piece of legislation and

they were ignored. I suggest the Government does not ignore the amendments put forward for this legislation because the Government might find that some of the amendments will assist it in understanding what changes it is making to what I think are some of the most vital pieces of legislation in this State. Crown land and roads and the manner in which they are administered are critical to government; it is one of the most critical areas of day-to-day government and an area that the Government cannot get wrong. The public would expect nothing less than proper scrutiny of this legislation. I hope the amendments that the Opposition put forward are genuinely considered. At this stage we oppose the bill.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (19:04): I make a contribution to debate on the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I begin by acknowledging the methodical work of the shadow Minister in scrutinising this bill. The Hon. Mick Veitch has been formidable in his role as shadow Minister for Lands and, given the size and scope of the amendments we have been presented with today, I commend him for providing Opposition members with such a detailed analysis of the effects this legislation will have on Crown land in New South Wales. As we have heard today, the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 is the final series of reforms stemming from the Government's Crown Land white paper.

It follows on from last year's Crown Land Management Bill 2016, which represented the greatest change to Crown land management in more than 120 years. It was a bill shrouded in secrecy that only escaped the white-knuckled grip of this paranoid Government some two weeks before the bill came into this Parliament. The approach to reforming the management of our Crown lands was met with strong criticism. I refer in particular to an article by Jacquie Svenson in the *Newcastle Herald*. Ms Svenson is a solicitor and clinical teacher at the Newcastle Law School and a lawyer for the community group in the infamous 2014 Newcastle Bowling Club case. She was very pointed in her criticism of this Government's approach, writing a scathing piece contending that:

The objects of the bill expressly reflect this move towards use and sale rather than "management" for the benefit of the people of NSW: gone is governance under stated Crown land management principles over choices about suitable and preferred uses, the granting of leases, licences, easements, permits or rights of way, adoptions of Plans of Management over Crown land, or the authorisation of additional purposes on Crown land. These appropriately stirring ideals of protection and conservation of the natural resources of Crown land, public use and enjoyment, sustenance of resources in perpetuity, and dealing with land in the best interests of the State are replaced by limp reference to undefined "environmental, social, cultural, heritage and economic considerations", to be applied only in decision making generally.

And this approach, Ms Svenson contends, has been loaded with malicious intent from day one of these so-called reforms and that intent is this, she went on to say:

Behind this approach lies the full spectre of the Government's privatisation agenda: the bill turns the NSW Crown Lands Division into a Public Trading Enterprise, with "economic objectives" and goals for how much Crown land is to be disposed of each year. If all of the measures in the White Paper are implemented, the Division will need to be "budget neutral", and any shortfall in expenses for its use and management met by a "Community Service Obligation" imposed on users for any difference between "market rent" and actual rent paid. Crown land will be priced according to its commercial freehold value, and any shortfall between that and the income it generates noted as an "opportunity cost".

The whole Crown estate is being converted into a balance sheet.

And yet again we see another bill before the House that continues with this very agenda: Privatised the assets of this State until there is nothing left. It is as though the Institute of Public Affairs has infiltrated the Lands Minister's office with the intent of removing the responsibility of all of the State's Crown land away from the Government that is charged with protecting it for the public good. I am genuinely fearful for the future of this State in the hands of this current administration. This bill simply continues to facilitate the Government's abrogation of responsibility for looking after our State's Crown land. It truly is extraordinary.

I turn now to the aim of the bill. As the member for Cessnock pointed out in his very fine speech, this bill does to public roads what the Government did to the rest of the Crown land estate in New South Wales: it removes critical parts of the long-established processes, in this case for enclosing a road and selling a road. This is an exercise driven by Treasury and the Opposition is concerned that the broader public interest will be sacrificed in the process. I can think of a number of situations in the Swansea electorate where this legislation may have a detrimental effect. For example, one of the more troubling aspects of the bill, one about which the Opposition has grave concerns, is the sale of Crown roads. Crown roads are networks that were laid out a century or more ago to facilitate the settlement of the colony. Some are formed while others are not. Many Crown roads in the Swansea electorate are integral to allowing my constituents access to the beachfronts along the entirety of the Swansea electorate, to the majesty of Lake Macquarie or to much of the national parkland peppering large geographical stretches of the electorate.

Crown road sales could have a profound effect on many of my constituents simply going about their daily business or partaking in the recreational activities that so many people in the Swansea electorate enjoy. Crown road sales might affect local recreational fishers gaining access to some of the best fishing spots in the electorate,

none of which I can reveal, of course, but many of which are currently only accessible by Crown roads. In fact, I have residents who currently reside on Crown roads, often in less built-up sections of the electorate on underdeveloped or undeveloped stretches of road between the Pacific Highway and Lake Macquarie. What does the ability to now sell those Crown roads as part of the Government's foreshadowed fire sale mean for those constituents? Will they be forced to access their property by boat?

Perhaps one of the greatest concerns in the southern Central Coast section of the Swansea electorate that arises from the selling-off of Crown roads is providing a solution to safety concerns and traffic congestion on Carters Road in Lake Munmorah. With two primary schools, two high schools, an early childhood centre, a growing population and only one way in and out, a traffic solution is desperately needed for Carters Road. In the 2014 Transforming the NSW Central Coast report, the former Wyong Shire Council—great friends of this Coalition Government—identified Carters Road as a priority infrastructure project and called on the candidates at the 2015 State election to support those projects.

In fact, that former administration earmarked two projects on Carters Road in the top 10 infrastructure projects for the entire local government area. That demonstrates the importance of providing an adequate solution to problems experienced on Carters Road. As the member for Terrigal, you, Mr Temporary Speaker, would well know that the Central Coast is experiencing rapid population growth, particularly in the north. I have argued for a long time that it is imperative to have appropriate plans in place to address issues such as traffic congestion and accessibility on Carters Road.

I have met with each of the local schools, the local parents and citizens associations, the Parents and Friends Federation, the local progress association, Roads and Maritime Services, Ausgrid, Transport for NSW and many local parents to try to drive a solution to the issues on Carters Road. I have also written to the now Central Coast Council and current and former Ministers for Roads, Maritime and Freight calling on them to work together to provide a much-needed solution to this issue. [*Extension of time*]

This bill could have a dramatic effect on the provision of a solution to the congestion and safety issues at Carters Road. Both of the solutions earmarked by the former Wyong Shire Council involve developing Crown roads, specifically paper roads. Paper roads have long existed on maps and as utility access roads. They have great potential to be properly developed into alternative access points for the Lake Munmorah education precinct. Developing those Crown roads would go a long way to alleviating the morning traffic congestion that local commuters and parents experience along the Pacific Highway. It would go a long way to alleviating the frustration of local parents who can battle up to 45 minutes to get out of Carters Road and back on to the Pacific Highway after dropping their children at school. It is unfair. It is at times dangerous, and local parents are understandably fed up.

When this bill is enacted, we could see the Government move quickly to sell off these important Crown roads, destroying this Government's opportunity to work with the Central Coast Council to once and for all fix access to Carters Road. Labor has a number of other concerns about this bill. Labor remains worried that the bill will direct a person who uses a Crown road to undertake repairs and maintenance of that road. I have been working with my constituents regarding a number of problematic Crown roads that need to be properly maintained by the Government. We have been met with solid resistance and multiple barriers from the department.

I ask the Minister today: has he directed his department to "go slow" on the maintenance of Crown roads because he foreshadowed the Government's ability to sell off those roads, thereby removing them from the Government's books? As the member for Cessnock advised, Labor will maintain a watching brief on this aspect of the bill. In conclusion, I join with the member for Cessnock and my Labor colleagues to point out that this bill is yet another example of this administration's true ideology. It shines through. It is an ideologically driven administration hell-bent on privatisation for privatisation's sake. Whether it is the electricity network, ports, the carve up of the Sydney rail network or the privatisation of the entirety of Hunter public transport, this Government is determined to sell off everything. Labor opposes the bill in its current form. As with the Crown Lands Management Act, the Government has once again shanghaied the community, introducing this bill without properly consulting it. I do not commend this bill to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:17): Crown land is public land. It is the commons, the land not denied to the community by private ownership and control, but set aside to be managed on behalf of the community by the State for the benefit of the community. All members should be concerned with any scheme before the House that might reduce the Crown land holding and the community's access to Crown land. That is what this bill does. Labor is opposed to the bill. I oppose the bill and I acknowledge the work of the shadow Minister in the other place, Mick Veitch, to analyse the bill for the benefit of the Labor caucus.

The Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 seeks to amend the Crown Land Management Act 2016. Its aim is to consolidate into one Act the statutory provisions dealing with the ownership, use and

management of Crown land in New South Wales. I support the comments made by my colleagues. I draw to the attention of the House that today the thirty-sixth digest of the Legislation Review Committee was tabled in the House. That digest dealt with this bill. In the digest the committee commented on nine schedules of the bill. The comments were serious and they should be addressed by the Minister and by the House. It is partly for that reason that Labor will propose a number of amendments to the bill in the other place. It is also partly why Labor opposes the bill in its current form.

I want to highlight a number of comments that the Legislation Review Committee made on the bill because they deserve the close attention of the House. First, the committee commented on schedule 1 [20] and noted that it broadens the Minister's power of sale in relation to dedicated or reserved Crown land. Section 5.3 (5) of the principal Act explicitly states that section 5.3 does not outline a power to authorise the sale of dedicated or reserved Crown land. The amending bill seeks to amend that proviso so that it will read that this section does not outline a power to authorise the sale of Crown land that is dedicated or reserved for a public purpose. The committee noted:

... that the effect of amending subsection 5.3(5) of the principal Act as proposed is to provide the Minister with greater scope for the sale of Crown land which has not been dedicated or reserved for a "public purpose".

This would mean that there is less protection for Crown land and greater scope for the Minister on his own initiative to offload Crown land. The committee commented on schedule 1 [18] to the bill and noted that this schedule provides that the regulations may make provision for or with respect to the modification of the provisions of the bill in their application to land that is purchased or leased or over which an easement is acquired under proposed section 3.28A:

The Committee notes the administrative convenience of enabling the regulations to modify the provisions of the Bill in relation to land that is purchased or leased or over which an easement is acquired. The Committee also notes that such land may not necessarily be considered Crown land, and therefore not necessarily subject to the provisions of the Bill. However, the Committee has a preference against regulations that can modify the application of the provisions of the principal legislation—

and so should this House—

The Committee draws this to the attention of Parliament.

That is a high-level note of concern from the committee, drawing the attention of the House to a proposed section of the bill. In relation to schedule 1 [54], the committee noted:

Schedule 1[54] outlines the circumstances of the transfer of regulatory authorisations from an abolished body to a successor body. Schedule 1[54] outlines that the provisions of the relevant State legislation apply in relation to a successor body subject to any modifications prescribed by the regulations.

The Committee notes that empowering the regulations to modify the provisions of relevant State legislation as they relate to successor bodies has the effect of being a Henry VIII clause. The Committee refers this regulatory power to Parliament.

The committee made further comment:

Schedule 1[30] provides that the regulations may exempt any person, matter or thing from the operation of the principal Act or any specified provision of the principal Act, either unconditionally or subject to conditions.

The Committee notes that empowering the regulations to exempt any person, matter or thing from the operation of the principal Act prevents the Parliament from scrutinising what person, matter or thing is proposed to be exempted from the operation of the principal Act. The Committee refers this regulatory power to Parliament. I continue to quote from the digest: Schedule 1[42] outlines a special provision for conditional Crown land, including when conditional Crown land can become Crown land and when conditional Crown land can be sold. Schedule 1[42] also provides that the regulations may make provision for or with respect to the modification of the provisions of the principal Act in their application to conditional Crown land. Schedule 1 [42] also provides that the regulations may make provision for or with respect to the modification of the provisions of the principal Act in their application to conditional Crown land. Again the committee commented:

The Committee notes that empowering the regulations to modify the provisions of the principal Act in their application to conditional Crown land may enable the Minister to make regulations that are contrary to the principal legislation. The Committee refers this regulatory power to Parliament.

Finally, in relation to schedule 1 [43] the committee made the following comments:

12. Schedule 1[43] provides that a repealed function may continue to be exercised if the uncompleted function would not have required the granting of authorisation by the Minister.
13. Schedule 1[43] also provides that a repealed function may continue to be exercised even if that uncompleted function would have required the granting of authorisation by the Minister in circumstances where the Minister provide such authorisation.

The committee further commented:

The Committee notes that Parliament has a reasonable expectation that, when it repeals a statutory function, that such a function will no longer be exercised. Parliament does not consider it appropriate for a Minister to authorise the completion of a function that is no longer a statutory function. The Committee refers to Parliament Schedule 1[43] which would empower the exercise of

functions that Parliament has repealed, and which also provides the Minister with the power to authorise the completion of a function which has been repealed.

That is a remarkable provision to include in the bill and a remarkable power to give to the Minister. It should be considered seriously by the Minister when he gives his speech in reply. It should also be considered seriously by this House and the other place before the bill passes through the Parliament. It is a remarkable provision to include in a bill in this day and age. *[Extension of time]*

Crown land is a public asset. We all benefit from access to Crown land; it creates a sense of equality. Crown land is very important, and any legislation before this House and the Parliament that seeks to change its purpose should be considered seriously. The Legislation Review Committee, a committee with a Government majority, has today endorsed a report with serious commentary on this bill. It would be remiss of this House to not consider the Legislation Review Committee's digest and commentary on the amendments in this bill. It is for this reason as well as for the fact that Labor opposes the bill that I oppose the bill. I trust that this House and the other place will give serious consideration to my comments and to those of the Legislation Review Committee. This bill needs amendments. It is not fit to be passed by the House in its current form.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (19:28): On behalf of The Greens, I make a brief contribution to the second reading debate on the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I indicate that The Greens will be moving amendments in the other place. Until those amendments have been considered, we cannot support the bill. In the past few years, there has been much review of Crown land: a white paper, a very detailed Auditor-General's report and a parliamentary inquiry report with 20 recommendations. We are confident that the Minister is moving towards those improvements. We are concerned overall to get the balance right for communities in terms of the environment and the social, if you like, entitlement. As a previous member mentioned, this is about public land. Whether or not it is accurate there is a real perception in the community that public land is disappearing. When Crown land becomes available and is being sold or leased the community does not feel that it is being adequately consulted. We saw that in the legislation that went through this place last year and now with this amending bill and that is of primary concern to The Greens. I will not go through the substance of the bill, as a number of speakers have done that already.

This bill changes the Public Reserves Management Fund and repeals the 1987 Act. The bill makes changes that mean public reserves will be now considered Crown managed land, and managed under the Crown Lands Act. This bill changes the Public Reserves Management Fund and establishes a Crown Reserves Improvement Fund, which has primarily the same funding stream and expenditure. As a consequence of this the Public Reserves Management Fund Act 1987 is repealed in its entirety and those provisions setting out the new Crown Reserves Improvement Fund are detailed in the Crown Lands Act. Overall 42 per cent of New South Wales is Crown land, which amounts to 33 million hectares. Stewardship of such land in the public interest is therefore a hugely important task. Who else would defend public land if not us?

The parliamentary inquiry into Crown land handed down 20 recommendations and said clearly that environmental biodiversity and social fabric values were paramount. The Auditor-General's 2016 report also noted that public parks, reserves and foreshore lands are being sold and leased at alarming rates with little transparency or oversight. At the outset I indicate that The Greens want the Government to address its real concerns about this bill before we support it. We will be moving amendments in the other place to the proposed scheme to ensure the public interest and environmental values are protected and notification periods extended, before we support the changes to the local road sale process.

I was fascinated by the contribution of the member for Swansea because regional local members of Parliament can live in a little bit of a bubble. I do not hear about the day-to-day matters that other members experience. One of my constituents has a horseriding business and crosses Crown land to access the beach in Tyagarah. I found it difficult to get my head around how I could help this person have a temporary licence because of a change to the use of the land. In the meantime, she is losing her business. The recommendations of the Auditor-General around the interface with the public is vital. The department's business plan, as noted by the Auditor-General, has clearer measures for the achievement of economic outcomes than it does for social or environmental outcomes. This creates stronger incentives for staff to focus on economic benefits compared to other outcomes when making decisions about the best use of Crown land.

The recommendation of the Auditor-General was that clear targets such as increasing the amount of land available for public recreation, improving the quality of public recreational facilities on Crown land, or promoting innovative environmental sustainability initiatives on Crown land would increase the incentives for staff to consider those other outcomes. The department manages some Crown land in a way that has direct benefits for the community. For example, it leases land with minimal rent to support the work of a range of important community organisations. Including clearer measures in its planning to capture this type of benefit would allow the department to track and report publicly on its positive work.

As a division of the Department of Industry, the Lands division's performance indicators were recommended to align with the broader department strategy. The strategic priorities of the Department of Industry are primarily focused on economic growth, job creation, and establishing a positive business environment. While the Lands division's business plan should contribute to the Department of Industry's overall economic priorities, it should not override the consideration of social and environmental outcomes required by the Crown Lands Act. With this legislation The Greens note that the Government has indicated that the new Crown Reserves Improvement Fund will have more options for expenditure of funds than currently apply to the Public Reserves Management Fund.

There is a real risk that these already tight funds, which stakeholders agree should be prioritised for maintenance and urgent works related to these reserve lands, could instead be sunk into administrative costs or research and policy development. The Greens urge against that. The changes proposed in this bill are administrative, although they will have real impacts. The Greens, like the Opposition, will be closely monitoring the operation of the scheme. While it is acknowledged that for the past few years there has been annual reporting of Reserve Fund Trust guidelines and expenditure, there is no statutory requirement underpinning that reporting. The Greens believe this is an area that should be addressed, and we will be moving amendments to achieve that in the upper House. We will also move amendments to provide for transparency and accountability in the distribution of money from those funds. [*Quorum called for.*]

[*The bells having been rung and a quorum having formed, business resumed.*]

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (19:37):

In reply: It gives me great pleasure to speak in reply on the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. I thank all members for their contributions to the debate; in particular, the members representing the electorates of Cessnock, Tamworth, Maitland, Port Stephens, Coffs Harbour, Wyong, Charlestown, Bankstown, Swansea, the Entrance, and Ballina. Management of the State's vast Crown land and Crown road estate has been an important New South Wales Government responsibility since the earliest days of the colony. However, we have been managing this important asset under an outdated legislative system that no longer meets the needs of the community. To address this, last year the House passed a comprehensive package of reforms in the Crown Land Management Bill 2016.

The Government spent more than four years thoroughly consulting with the community on what it wanted for Crown land and what it wanted in the new Crown land legislation. We heard that the existing system created inefficiencies and delays, that it did not meet the community's needs, and that there was not enough community involvement in decision-making about Crown land. To address this, the Crown Land Management Act 2016 created a single modern legislative framework for Crown land that is easier to understand and increases community involvement in major decisions about Crown land. Importantly, it requires environmental, social, cultural, heritage and economic considerations to be taken into account in decision-making about Crown land.

Today the House has been considering the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. This bill continues the journey that began four years ago. It amends a number of Acts and instruments that are required as a consequence of the passage of the Crown Land Management Act 2016. The bill streamlines Crown road closure provisions to strike the right balance between removing red tape and ensuring adequate consultation about potential decisions to sell Crown roads. The bill incorporates the Public Reserves Management Fund Act 1997 into the Crown Land Management Act 2016 and renames the fund as the Crown Reserve Improvement Fund with the same functionality and additional flexibility. Making these amendments is the final parliamentary step to implementing the most significant improvements to the management of Crown land in a generation.\

The Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 together with the Crown Land Management Act 2016 will fundamentally improve the management of Crown land and help to ensure the Crown estate continues to provide significant social, economic, environmental and cultural heritage benefits to the people of this State. I will now address a number of matters that members raised in the debate. I begin with the member for Cessnock. It amazes me that Opposition members have not read the bill. They have been given a speech directly from Sussex Street that shows they have not spent the time needed to understand the detail and purpose of this bill. It is clear they did not even listen to the speech I gave only a week ago because they have asked questions about things I spoke about at that time.

Mr Troy Grant: A clear demonstration they are not fit to govern.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The way they performed tonight shows they won't be fit for a long time. The member for Cessnock claimed that the Crown Land Management Act was rushed through and we are now fixing errors as a result. That is absolutely and entirely incorrect. During debate on the Crown Land Management Act 2016 the former Minister for Crown Lands, the Hon. Niall Blair, made it clear in the other place that we would be returning with a consequential bill. That is exactly what we are doing. Not wanting to listen to that shows the

ignorance of Opposition members, who are now making out that this bill is being rushed through. That is misinformation.

Mr Damien Tudehope: Fake news.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: It is fake news. This is the consequential bill that makes consequential amendments to ensure that New South Wales legislation correctly references the new Crown land legislation. The member for Cessnock also claimed that the Crown land reforms are about a sell-off of Crown land. I point out that Crown land legislation is not and has never been about selling off of Crown land. It is about developing a framework that allows effective management of Crown land now and into the future. In fact, the Crown Land Management Act introduced in 2016 provided a new robust and transparent way of engaging with the community. I welcome the member for Cessnock to the Chamber. He should come in and sit down; he might learn something.

Mr Clayton Barr: Me?

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Yes. The member for Cessnock clearly missed the point. He gave the speech but he did not know what he was talking about.

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

Mr PAUL TOOLE: The new community engagement strategy is a cornerstone of the new legislation and provides for more meaningful engagement with the public where proposals will impact on the community's use and enjoyment of a parcel of Crown land. In relation to the point raised by the member for Cessnock about the Public Reserves Management Fund, I confirm that freehold showgrounds will continue to be able to access the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund. This fund provides critical resources to ensure the ongoing success of many reserves supporting regional economic growth, strengthening local communities and helping to protect the natural environment. We are committed to maintaining this important fund. I am proud of this fund that supports volunteers across this State who give up their time to ensure that they can improve the facilities and assets that they look after. It may be improving fencing or weed spraying at showgrounds, reserves, or sporting fields.

Mr Troy Grant: Could be an arboretum.

Mr PAUL TOOLE: Absolutely. Those important pieces of land are critical. The bill consolidates the Public Reserves Management Fund Act 1987 with the Crown Land Management Act 2016. With respect to the comments by the member for Cessnock about Crown roads, I point out that the member for Cessnock again stated incorrect information. That is what happens when members read their speeches without looking first at what they are reading. The member for Cessnock stated that public roads are Crown roads. This is incorrect. Public roads are not Crown roads. In addition, the member for Maitland incorrectly asserted that councils can close Crown roads. The Minister remains responsible for Crown roads. This bill does not change that. Nothing in this bill allows councils to close Crown roads. Councils can only close council public roads subject to a robust process.

A number of members, including the member for Charlestown, raised concerns about council road closures, including a lack of safeguards. The bill introduces strong protections that ensure that councils do not close roads that are required for access to a property. The only circumstances in which a council can close a public road is when the road is not or will not be required as a road for public use; the road is not required to connect an existing road network; or if the road allows vehicles to access particular land, the road can only be closed if there is an alternative public road that can provide lawful and reasonable practical vehicular access to that land. In addition, councils must consult thoroughly before making a decision to close a public road. This includes notifying landholders whose properties adjoin the road and advertising the proposed closure for a minimum of 28 days. These protections allow the community to provide advice on whether the road is needed for access to a property.

The bill also allows owners and occupiers of land whose access is materially affected, and certain authorities, the right to appeal to the Land and Environment Court against a council road closure decision. This is a new and important protection. The bill does not remove the public notification process for the sale of Crown roads. I wish to correct the misconception that all Crown roads are required for public access. The fact is that the majority of Crown roads are paper roads that were drawn with good intentions by surveyors more than 100 years ago, but in reality they provide no public access. They are generally enclosed within freehold properties or adjoining freehold properties and provide no public access. The member for Maitland would know, after hearing concerns from her rural constituents, that they would like to see a more transparent and robust process that will streamline it.

For a long time now communities have been calling for this. Those opposite have also talked about red tape reduction. This bill will make it easier for those communities. The Crown roads program is designed to provide an opportunity for landholders to purchase these roads in cases where public access is not required, with

appropriate safeguards. If there is no public access, a Crown road can be sold—this will account for the majority of sales through this process. This program will include, and it will continue to include, an extensive notification and consultation process such as referrals to government authorities like the Department of Primary Industries—Fisheries, and a website to notify interested members of the public so that they can make submissions prior to decisions being made. The bill will also increase public consultation rights. For the first time the legislation will provide that if a Crown road is proposed to be sold, the owner of each property that adjoins that road or relies on it for access to their property must be notified.

In response to the concerns raised by the member for Port Stephens, the road maintenance provisions of the bill will only be used in certain defined circumstances in line with strict policy principles, and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. In addition, the new powers will only be used when there are legitimate health and safety or environmental concerns—not to guarantee that the roads are of a certain quality or class. At an operational level, anyone asked to maintain a road or to make a contribution to a road will have the opportunity to make a submission on the appropriateness of that course of action. This will allow the users to outline whether they have the financial or other capacity and capability to contribute to or undertake the work. This will provide an equitable process for funding the costs of road maintenance.

In response to concerns raised by the member for Wyong, there is no existing right for Aboriginal land councils to claim Crown roads under Aboriginal land rights legislation. I can also confirm that nothing in this bill affects the Aboriginal Land Rights Act or the Native Title Act. A number of members have raised concerns about travelling stock reserves. The Government is conducting a review to determine the use and value of all travelling stock reserves across this State. We are seeking community views on where travelling stock routes are located and who is using them. We are committed to ensuring a viable travelling stock reserve network, both now and in the future. Nothing in this bill, or the Crown Land Management Act, will change this or remove the protections for travelling stock reserves. Contrary to what the member for Port Stephens said, if a Crown road is required to provide public access to a travelling stock reserve then it will not be sold. I assure the House that the Government is committed to a smooth transition to the new legislation, including ongoing public engagement as to the regulations and the new community engagement strategy.

In response to the member for Cessnock's concerns about the Sydney Cricket Ground and Luna Park, these important trusts operate under their own legislation. The bill does not exempt this land from the general provisions in the Crown Land Management Act 2016. However, it does provide some minor modifications to ensure that the Crown land managers or trusts for this land can continue to operate effectively and address the special needs of the particular reserves they manage.

I also thank the member for Coffs Harbour for raising points about showgrounds. The New South Wales Government acknowledges that Crown land is of State significance. Showgrounds play an integral role in regional communities across New South Wales, and I greatly value the commitment of the community volunteers who manage these pieces of Crown land. The New South Wales Government remains committed to ensuring showgrounds continue to be properly managed for regional communities to enjoy. It is members of the Opposition who need to apologise to the people of New South Wales because over the past few weeks they have been telling communities that the Government is going to sell the showgrounds. Last week I met with the Agricultural Societies Council of NSW to explain to them the content of this bill. An Opposition member in the other House is telling mistruths and lies about this matter.

Mr Troy Grant: What is his name again?

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I ask the Hon. Mick Veitch to admit that he is clearly wrong and that he is making mischief with communities out there. The member for Cabramatta is sitting on this side of the Chamber—I am glad; he has joined the right side. It is typical of Labor members that if they have nothing to say they make things up. When I met with members of the Royal Agricultural Society they gave me a list of all the shows that happen in the State of New South Wales. I point out to the Opposition that I go to the Bathurst show, the Oberon show, the Rylstone-Kandos show, the Lithgow show and the Blayney show. I do not see any members of the Opposition at any of these shows. If they want to know when these shows are held, they should come to my office; I am happy to provide a booklet to them which lists these wonderful community events.

This bill consolidates legislation, reduces red tape and streamlines administrative processes in relation to Crown roads. It will continue to support funding for Crown reserves by providing critical resources through the Crown Reserve Improvement Fund. This new framework ensures the Crown land estate can continue to support and generate significant social, environmental and cultural benefits to every community in New South Wales. Finally, it ensures that our Crown land can be managed effectively for the future of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes43
 Noes35
 Majority.....8

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
 Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
 Coure, Mr M
 Elliott, Mr D
 Gibbons, Ms M
 Griffin, Mr J
 Henskens, Mr A
 Johnsen, Mr M
 Maguire, Mr D
 Patterson, Mr C (teller)
 Provest, Mr G
 Speakman, Mr M
 Toole, Mr P
 Ward, Mr G
 Wilson, Ms F

Aplin, Mr G
 Conolly, Mr K
 Davies, Ms T
 Fraser, Mr A
 Goward, Ms P
 Gulaptis, Mr C
 Hodgkinson, Ms K
 Kean, Mr M
 Marshall, Mr A
 Pavey, Mrs M
 Roberts, Mr A
 Stokes, Mr R
 Tudehope, Mr D
 Williams, Mr R

Ayres, Mr S
 Constance, Mr A
 Dominello, Mr V
 George, Mr T
 Grant, Mr T
 Hazzard, Mr B
 Humphries, Mr K
 Lee, Dr G
 O'Dea, Mr J
 Petinos, Ms E
 Sidoti, Mr J
 Taylor, Mr M
 Upton, Ms G
 Williams, Mrs L

NOES

Aitchison, Ms J
 Car, Ms P
 Cotsis, Ms S
 Donato, Mr P
 Greenwich, Mr A
 Haylen, Ms J
 Lalich, Mr N (teller)
 McDermott, Dr H
 Mihailuk, Ms T
 Parker, Mr J
 Smith, Ms T F
 Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E (teller)
 Catley, Ms Y
 Crakanthorp, Mr T
 Doyle, Ms T
 Harris, Mr D
 Hornery, Ms S
 Leong, Ms J
 McKay, Ms J
 Minns, Mr C
 Robertson, Mr J
 Tesch, Ms L
 Zangari, Mr G

Barr, Mr C
 Chanthivong, Mr A
 Daley, Mr M
 Finn, Ms J
 Harrison, Ms J
 Kamper, Mr S
 Lynch, Mr P
 Mehan, Mr D
 Park, Mr R
 Scully, Mr P
 Warren, Mr G

PAIRS

Barilaro, Mr J
 Berejiklian, Ms G
 Perrottet, Mr D
 Rowell, Mr J

Dib, Mr J
 Foley, Mr L
 Hoenig, Mr R
 Watson, Ms A

Motion agreed to.**Third Reading**

Mr PAUL TOOLE: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.*Private Members' Statements***BLUE MOUNTAINS ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE**

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (20:05): This evening I update the Parliament on the status of our pristine natural environment in the Blue Mountains and the Greater Blue Mountains region, including the Gardens of Stone National Park which needs protection. The Gardens of Stone National Park lies to the north-

west of my electorate and shares a boundary with the World Heritage-listed Blue Mountains National Park. Among others, both the Blue Mountains Conservation Society and the Colong Foundation for Wilderness are active in advocacy and policy development, as well as physical remediation and protection of wilderness areas.

Presently there are a number of threats to the health of our wilderness areas and attempts are afoot to weaken protections afforded by national park status. The Springvale and Clarence collieries, both operated by Centennial Coal, are at the edges of our national parks. In separate incidents, the mining company has caused considerable damage to our pristine wilderness areas. At Clarence Colliery, a coal fines spill in July 2015 saw dozens of kilometres of the Wollangambe River polluted with fine coal dust fibres after the collapse of a mining wastewater dam. The collapse of the dam, located just 400 metres from the border of the World Heritage-listed national park, was described at the Land and Environment court yesterday as a "disaster waiting to happen". Those are the words of Stephen Rushton, SC, appearing for the Environmental Protection Agency, which is seeking a \$2 million fine against Centennial Coal.

Centennial Coal is in court this week facing up to its role in an environmental disaster which should never have been allowed to happen. The management of the mining operator has been described in the Land and Environment court as incompetent. Evidence is being given in that court that not only were their environmental and safety controls inadequate, but they were informal, verbal arrangements. This is not just incompetence, it is negligence. When I asked questions on notice of the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy in November 2015 about what emergency response plans were in place at Clarence Colliery before the disaster, the Government could not say because it did not know. It is unacceptable to me that this Government sees fit to stand back and let mining operators rip, without adequate oversight.

The New South Wales Government has also not done enough to rein in the environmental damage being done by the same operator at its Springvale mine, where it discharges highly saline effluent water into the waterways that run through the Blue Mountains National Park and then feed into Sydney's drinking water supply at Lake Burragorang. The mining operator was licking its lips when the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian reshuffled the ministerial decks. In the chaos of Mike Baird's premature retirement, the mining industry saw an opportunity to improve its bottom line at the expense of the environment and at the expense of Sydney's drinking water catchment.

They boasted of lobbying the now Minister for the Environment, Gabrielle Upton, to dilute environmental restrictions on their operation at Springvale mine. As a result of this boast I wrote to the Minister for the Environment and asked her to put in writing a commitment to ensure Springvale mine was held to its earlier commitments and that the salinity of its effluent discharge was reduced rather than permitted to worsen. Minister Upton declined to reply to my correspondence and referred it to a bureaucrat for a reply. That is the level of interest from the Liberal Government about the environment; it has no environmental credentials.

I also wonder if the refusal by the Minister to sign off on that correspondence is a strategic decision to avoid making a written commitment to environmental protections for the Blue Mountains National Park. The threats to our national parks come not just from incompetent mining company managers or Minister Upton's lack of interest in her ministerial responsibilities. I note that a draft destination management plan commissioned by the Blue Mountains City Council has recommended converting visitor facilities into premium guest chalets. Neither the Blue Mountains Conservation Society nor the Colong Foundation for Wilderness, key stakeholders in our region, was consulted in the drafting of this plan. Had they been they would have loudly and thoroughly condemned such a proposal as being a reckless and unprecedented move away from conservation principles being at the forefront of National Parks and Wildlife's purpose and activities. That is what we must focus on. Government should be committing to acts of preservation, especially around Gardens of Stone.

REGIONAL SPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (20:10):

As the member for Dubbo I pay tribute to the Mid Western Regional Council representing Mudgee, Gulgong, Rylstone and Kandos and congratulate the council on successfully hosting the final Country versus City Rugby League match held last Sunday at Glen Willow Regional Sports Stadium. Country people in their thousands always flock to good events to show community support and to embrace what may be limited opportunities for such entertainment.

It was a very special occasion indeed to have 34 very classy players from the National Rugby League selected in the city and country sides, with many wearing their representative jerseys for the first time. Mudgee has an outstanding record, having hosted the event in 2012, with the Parramatta Eels versus the Gold Coast Titans following a year later. The result has been a resounding vote of confidence in the quality of the Glen Willow Regional Sports Stadium, rated in the top five in Australia. This debunks the perception that country areas do not have sufficient quality infrastructure to attract the requisite crowds to make such events viable. Indeed, this event

sends a clear message to all sporting bodies in this State and country that we are ready, willing and able to host successful sporting events. I challenge all codes to tear down the barriers of discrimination with respect to bringing these events to regional areas. They should allow their sports to be showcased in our towns so that the communities that support these sports can be shown the respect they are due.

I refer to the Football Federation Australia, which has denied Dubbo an A-league match for a number of years, National Rugby League clubs specifically, which have tried to price gouge our councils by charging exorbitant fees for the privilege of hosting them, and sports administrators whose tunnel vision view is that these games are not worth the investment. I was supported by the 9,000-odd people who attended the event when I made very public comments to the Chairman of the National Rugby League Commission, John Grant, and the Chief Executive Officer of National Rugby League, Todd Greenberg, expressing extreme disappointment in their lack of support for country rugby league in denying that more than 50 per cent of players in the 16 clubs come from country New South Wales.

If they continue to strangle the life out of the grassroots of the sport the only thing that will happen is a decrease in participation and a decrease in the quality of each of those sports. I was slightly encouraged that they say they have plans for other investment in country rugby league in the future. I will hold them to account on that promise as I held Des Hasler, coach of the NRL Canterbury Bulldogs, to account for his disrespectful decision not to allow Josh Jackson—a star of Gulgong who would have captained the country team on Sunday—to play. Josh lost the opportunity to play before family and friends on a very special occasion and a milestone in his playing career. Josh himself, being loyal to his coach and club, did not openly criticise the coach's decision but did express the sentiment that it would have been a great thing to do and he was sad he did not have the opportunity.

It is time for the National Rugby League to walk the walk rather than talking the talk about investment in the country. I will hold them to account on the commitments given at Mudgee last Sunday. I acknowledge the work they are doing for the code and the investments in certain areas. It is a great game. I am a passionate supporter. I was previously an administrator of country rugby league in the Barwon-Darling area and a referee for 20 years across many of the groups in country rugby league. This is the time for action, not words, about what the investment will look like and how it will continue to support rugby league into the future. If members need a venue for events Mudgee has my highest recommendation. I congratulate them on their excellent event management and the sensational outcome achieved for Mudgee and the mid-western region.

PENRITH ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (20:16): I acknowledge the member for Dubbo and his support of country rugby league and the city versus country match that this year the city won. There were five Penrith players involved in that game. It was a fantastic result for Penrith. Not only is Penrith seeing success on the sporting field but it is seeing success in investments in infrastructure. My community is growing with lots of people moving in to the area with young families. There will be long-term growth. I love that Penrith has a strong community spirit. As the city grows we want to ensure we are capable of maintaining that community spirit.

To ensure people can move around in a growing city it is important to invest in infrastructure. Two of the most important pieces of infrastructure that allow the broader Penrith region to function are The Northern Road and Mulgoa Road. Both of these roads are the subject of significant investment on behalf of the New South Wales Government and the Commonwealth Government. Tonight the Commonwealth Government has announced further contributions to investment in infrastructure in Western Sydney. It is fantastic to know that the Commonwealth and State governments have Penrith's back when it comes to investing in The Northern and Mulgoa roads. To date, over \$170 million has been invested along the Mulgoa Road corridor with the James Street upgrade widening at the Mulgoa Road and Castlereagh Road intersection underneath the rail line. It is one of the most congested bottlenecks between the rail line and the High Street intersection.

That intersection will be widened and the right-turn lanes on to the Great Western Highway will be lengthened, allowing people to move freely towards Emu Plains. That will improve the flow of traffic through the James Street and High Street intersections as part of the Mulgoa Road widening. Funding of \$100 million will widen Mulgoa Road towards Glenmore Park at Glenmore Parkway and towards Blaikie Road. That is the first stage of the Mulgoa Road widening. Almost 4,000 cars an hour use Mulgoa Road in the peak periods. It is as congested as some of the well-known congested roads around Sydney such as Parramatta Road at its worst.

People travelling north-south through Penrith know that Mulgoa Road is simply not able to sustain the current volume of traffic. That is why the New South Wales Government is committed to widening the entire length of the Northern and Castlereagh road corridors, from Glenmore Park right through to Andrews Road on the northern side of the city. On the eastern side of Penrith it is also important that we continue to upgrade

infrastructure. Northern Road is the lifeblood of that outer Western Sydney arc. As part of a multibillion dollar package, \$1.6 billion has been allocated to widening Northern Road from Narellan through to Penrith.

This year construction on that section of Northern Road will start. It will be a significant engineering feat, particularly when it comes to constructing a new road bridge over the M4. This new road bridge will be constructed alongside the Northern Road bridge and the Northern Road will be realigned. This will get additional capacity on the bridge so that traffic can more easily leave the M4 and access the city, as there is already significant congestion on the ramps exiting and entering the M4 across that section of Northern Road. In 2010, the community elected me to do exactly these kinds of projects. Then the widening of Mulgoa Road was not on the plan and the widening of the Northern Road was so far out of sight that it had not even been imagined.

Significant population growth in the Penrith community meant that infrastructure was not keeping up with the increased demand. That is changing under this Government with almost \$2 billion being invested into these two roads, Mulgoa Road and Northern Road. These are vital arterial roads that make Penrith work. These roads are used by every mum and dad, every tradie, every brickie, every person moving around this city, including those travelling to a sporting venue. They know they have to travel on these roads, and it is the Liberal-Nationals Government that is making sure that Mulgoa Road and Northern Road will be widened. That is what we were elected to do and that is what we are delivering for Penrith.

CAMPBELLTOWN ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (20:21): As we approach the delivery of the 2017-18 New South Wales budget, I urge the Government to not again overlook Campbelltown and to finally deliver our fair share of investment in services and infrastructure. As members know, Campbelltown was declared a city in May 1968, and in 2015 we were rightfully appointed a regional city. Yet it appears from the actions of this Government that it is yet to realise what the great city of Campbelltown has to offer and what we can achieve by working together. For too long, the people of Campbelltown have been neglected by this Government. Since 2011 we have been deprived of the infrastructure and services that a regional city needs and deserves.

Campbelltown is undeniably the Macarthur region's city. It is experiencing near unprecedented population growth, which means exciting yet challenging times ahead. However, like all periods of growth, it comes with its fair share of growing pains. The city requires significant government investment to overcome these challenges. In the lead-up to the 2015 election, the Government outlined to communities across the State how it would build all the infrastructure one could possibly dream of in exchange for selling off our electricity network. While I disagreed with that privatisation at the time, and I still do, the reality is that our electricity assets are gone. But the people of Campbelltown are not seeing the infrastructure upgrades that were promised at the time of the election.

For example, the Menangle-Spring Farm Parkway with a connection through to Appin Road is perhaps the single most important infrastructure project in the Macarthur region at the moment. It will provide huge benefits in terms of connectivity and alleviating congestion on the notorious Narellan Road and Appin Road, two of our biggest bottlenecks and worst danger zones. This essential road project would support the housing developments in Appin and other southern areas of Campbelltown. Yet, as we get closer to the construction of more than 30,000 new homes south of Campbelltown, we are left with no solid commitment from the Government to build the Menangle-Spring Farm Parkway.

At the same time, Premier Berejiklian promised that Campbelltown station would receive an additional 450 car parking spaces within this Government's next term, that is, from 2015. We are now more than halfway through the term and Campbelltown station and its commuters are still facing severe parking shortages. If the Government wants people to use public transport, it is very clear that it must provide the services and infrastructure that enables them to do so. It is that simple; it is not a groundbreaking concept. This is also apparent with the ongoing issues with the 887 bus service between Campbelltown and Wollongong, which my colleague the member for Wollongong and I have been working on to ensure our students have a safe journey to and from university. I have spoken extensively about this issue in the Parliament, to the media and in representations directly to the Minister for Transport. Time goes on and we have yet to see any action taken. However, for the hundreds of students, pensioners and other users of this service, delays and inaction are luxuries they cannot afford.

By the same token, Campbelltown's schools are not receiving the investment that they desperately need. Our schools face a \$10 million maintenance backlog, yet they received a mere \$822,000 to deal with it. What sort of government would allow public schools to deteriorate to the point where parents and carers must chip in to fix the air conditioning in their children's classrooms? It is not acceptable for this Government to have allowed this backlog to balloon to such drastic levels. Likewise, Campbelltown Hospital, with all its wonderful staff, has the fifth-longest emergency wait time of any hospital in the State, as well as severe staffing and resource shortages.

The hospital is a premier medical facility for thousands of people from all over the Macarthur area and surrounding regions, yet it remains underfunded and understaffed.

I have nothing but high praise and respect for the hardworking staff at Campbelltown Hospital, who do the best they can in an environment where there appears to be little support and funding from this Government. With our growing population, the Government must invest significantly in our hospital to ensure the health needs of the people in Macarthur are adequately looked after. These are some of the pressing issues facing Campbelltown. As we head towards the budget, I call upon the Government to reconsider its previous position, put the funding in place, allocate the resources where they are required and build the infrastructure that Macarthur needs. It is important that the Government fulfil the basic fundamentals of the promise it made in 2015. [*Time expired.*]

MILLERS POINT SOCIAL HOUSING

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (20:26): Millers Point is known as one of Sydney's oldest and strongest communities. It has long housed a tight-knit community of public housing tenants, private tenants, home owners and service providers, who give each other support and companionship. The strong social cohesion and living heritage were recognised through its State heritage listing. Sadly, successive governments have sought to dismantle this community, beginning with the former Labor Government's 99-year leases of 32 heritage terraces and ending with this Government's forced relocation and eviction of almost all tenants to allow the sale of most social housing homes in the precinct.

The community's resilience was shown in the strong community campaign that arose to oppose the sales and support vulnerable tenants who were anxious about their future. People from the area joined forces to save the community and their campaign got the support of unions, the City of Sydney, the Redfern Legal Centre, State and Federal members of Parliament and the wider Sydney community. The community working party of tenants, home owners and business operators worked to retain properties with low ongoing maintenance costs and the right size and accessibility for the most vulnerable tenants. Their proposal recognised the devastating physical and mental health outcomes of moving the most vulnerable tenants, as identified in the Government's social impact assessment, while allowing the Government to sell properties.

The community working party met with the former Minister for Social Housing, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, who took the time to listen and to understand the concerns. In response to the group's hard work and advocacy, the Government agreed to retain 28 properties on Kent and Argyle streets for the most vulnerable remaining tenants who had compelling reasons to stay. This showed compassion in an otherwise heartless process. The quarantined properties included 24 one-bedroom, one two-bedroom and three three-bedroom apartments. As the overwhelming majority of properties are one-bedroom they are not suitable for many vulnerable tenants, who need a second room for a carer. In response, the Government modified a number of properties to meet needs, but this has not been possible for all apartments. Had a compassionate approach been taken from the beginning, more appropriate properties may have been able to be identified.

I am working with the community to fill the last retained properties. However, many do not meet the needs of tenants who have not yet relocated and need to stay in Millers Point for health and family reasons. I will now give details of four tenants for whom relocation would be disastrous. Myra is 90 years old, blind, has low mobility and has lived in Millers Point for almost 60 years. She has a strong network of neighbours who provide support to her including driving her to medical appointments. Myra moved to Millers Point before she was blind and her familiarity with the neighbourhood allows her to get around on her own. She needs a two-bedroom home and if she moves from this community, she will lose her independence. Chris and Christina are long-term Millers Point residents. Chris cares for Christina, who has a severe health problem that causes confusion, memory loss and an inability to form new memories. Her condition is deteriorating and she needs to remain in the home she is familiar with, where she has lived since 1954. It is likely that moving Christina to a new environment would induce a state of delirium involving hallucinations. I understand Chris is willing to relocate once Christina is no longer able to live at home.

Ian has ongoing complex health problems including a heart condition, and prostate and lung issues. He is undergoing a series of tests at a Sydney hospital. He relies heavily on his neighbours for support and he will struggle without them. Ian wants to remain in his home until his health is stabilised, diagnosed and treatment in place, before dealing with the stress of a move. Barbara is over 80 years old and has lived in the area all her life—in her current home for nearly 30 years. She is frail and relies on local networks for help. She needs a two-bedroom accessible home so that her children can stay and provide support. There are retained properties in Millers Point that would suit her needs, which I urge the Government to consider.

The community will continue to work with the Government for a win-win situation. It is in the Government's best interest to stagger the sale of properties. I call on the Government to use this opportunity to let

the small remaining cohort of tenants who will suffer significant impacts from a move to age in place while the large number of already vacant properties is sold. In a very sad footnote, some former homes that have been sold are being occupied by short-term holiday rentals—indeed the local community has nicknamed Kent Street "Rent Street". It is a massive shame that the Government dismantled such a rich, diverse, historic and cohesive community for short-term rentals that make a limited few a quick buck.

SCHOOL MAINTENANCE FUNDING

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (20:31): If we want a child to have a twenty-first century education, the schools facilities in which they learn should reflect the twenty-first century. Too many of our schools are not in that category, and education outcomes are suffering as a consequence. Too many schools across New South Wales face years and years of waiting before basic maintenance can be done. In the Wollongong electorate alone at least two generations of the one family will finish their school education before the maintenance on their school is completed, given the current level of funding provided by the Government. Towradgi Public School, Warrawong Public School and Farmborough Road Public School face long waits of 22, 21 and 20 years before the current maintenance tasks at each of the those schools are ticked off. Nineteen other schools in my electorate face similar circumstances including Smiths Hill High School, which has a \$1.8 million maintenance backlog, and is looking at an 18-year wait before today's to-do list is tackled.

The maintenance required in local schools ranges from blocked toilets, to replacing carpets, fixing damaged roofs, and repairing broken windows. Last week under much hype, the Government announced an extra \$60 million towards maintenance targeting, what the Minister has claimed in his press release, more than 2,100 schools across New South Wales. Despite the hype and fanfare, I bet not many members know which schools in their electorate will get a share of that extra funding. The maintenance backlog in our schools is a victim of this Government's inability to deliver infrastructure projects on budget.

Mr Alister Henskens: You haven't been here long, have you?

Mr PAUL SCULLY: But I have watched enough to know that you guys are blowing the budget here, there and everywhere. A billion here, a billion there is real money that could go to schools. More than \$13 billion has been blown in Sydney-based infrastructure projects. WestConnex, Parramatta Light Rail, Sydney CBD light rail, and the Intercity train fleet have all blown out by billions of dollars. And, as any economist will say, "You can only spend a dollar from a budget once", not many times, as some within the Government seem to believe. Last week the Auditor-General released an utterly damning report into school infrastructure planning. There was once a time when reports from the Auditor-General would send a shiver up the spine of a department and the relevant Minister responsible.

If the report was as damning as the one delivered last week, the Minister would resign his or her commission by the end of the day. Unfortunately, Auditor-General's reports hardly raise a whimper now, but they should because if we take the time to read them, they confirm a litany of incompetence and mismanagement by the Government. The Premier boasts in social media memes that under her Government every corner of New South Wales will share in the funding bonanza that is essentially coming from stamp duty revenue. This is structurally shaky ground upon which to base a budget strategy. And until the billions of dollars in infrastructure cost blowouts are also addressed by competent Ministers, very few corners of New South Wales, particularly the Illawarra, will share in anything.

As I said, we can spend a budget dollar only once, not many times. Billion-dollar blowouts mean that other projects miss out. Those projects are generally in the Illawarra. This Government places more store on spending scarce public funds on billion-dollar blowouts than on the schools necessary for the delivery of a twenty-first century education. Once again, with this Government we must look beyond the headlines and realise that this is all part of a long-term plan to allow larger class sizes to creep back in to our public schools. Increasing class sizes has been presented as a way of dealing with the pressures of student growth, but it is not one that any student, parent or teacher wants to see. The Labor Party has a proud record of reducing the size of classes because it benefits students, teachers and parents. As Professor Bob Meyenn said in his review of Labor's class size reduction program in 2008:

... the Class Size Reduction Program has been a welcome and worthwhile intervention for the early years of schooling in New South Wales.

The softening-up exercise for increased class sizes by this Government has begun. However, I am willing to pit New South Wales Labor's record on class size reductions against this Government's plans any day of the week. I am happy to have a debate with the Minister about school maintenance. Can he tell Illawarra schools whether they are bad enough or not quite bad enough to share in the extra \$60 million? When speaking about schools I cannot conclude without wishing all students doing NAPLAN tests this week all the very best. They should

remember that, no matter the results, they should never be discouraged from pursuing a good education because it is the best asset they will ever have.

ANZAC COMMEMORATIONS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:36): I draw the attention of the House to the many Anzac events recently held across my electorate of Terrigal. There were 10 services held in the Terrigal electorate at Avoca Beach, Copacabana, Davistown, Empire Bay, Hardys Bay, Macmasters Beach, Matcham, Pine Needles, Tarragal Glen, and Terrigal. It was a privilege to attend four of the services on the day. All of these services were an opportunity for us to reacquaint ourselves with the past and to reflect upon the sacrifice of our service men and women. I acknowledge the incredible work of the Terrigal Wamberal RSL Sub Branch for holding a truly breathtaking dawn service at Terrigal Beach.

More than 5,000 people packed the Terrigal foreshore at 5.00 a.m. to watch the service. Without being biased, I think it is one of the best and most beautiful Anzac services in the nation. It has become so popular that there is literally standing room only, with people occupying every vantage point available, on the beach, along The Esplanade, in front of shopfronts and from balconies of houses. Many thousands of people of all ages came to pay their respects and to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of their country. Given the significance of this event, I was incredibly humbled to be asked to speak at the service for the second consecutive year. It is honestly one of the proudest moments of my time as the member for Terrigal.

In my speech I reflected on the symbolic value of emu feathers, which have been worn in the slouch hats of our soldiers. In fact, I am the very proud great-grandson of Benjamin Crouch, who was a member of the 9th Light Horse Regiment. He wore one of those emu plumes with great pride. It is a distinctly Australian addition to the uniform, and it is worn as proudly today as it was more than 100 years ago. During the ceremony, it was stunning to watch surf boat teams representing local surf life saving clubs re-enact the Gallipoli landing on Terrigal Beach. Meanwhile, an Iroquois helicopter, donated free of charge to the RSL by National Helicopters from Cooranbong with pilot and owner Mr Peter Franks, with its distinctive sound flew across the foreshore. It hovered above the waters as a tribute to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. This all took place with a beautiful backdrop of the sun rising over the ocean, filling the sky with vibrant orange and yellow hues.

I am also very proud of local students in my electorate of Terrigal, with every public school well represented at the service. The Central Coast Primary Schools Choir sang *Lest We Forget* and *The Last Anzac*, which clearly demonstrates how the next generation of Australians are actively involved in keeping the Anzac spirit alive. It really is one of the greatest honours of my job to have the privilege of representing our community on Anzac Day. This Anzac Day certainly was very special indeed. I cannot help but feel how fitting it is that the day begins and ends with the sound of the surf. As I have already said, it commenced with the moving dawn service at Terrigal, and concluded with an equally poignant twilight service at Macmasters Beach. At the Macmasters Beach Surf Life Saving Club we sat on the edge of the beach as thunder and lightning rolled across the ocean. It was reminiscent of the gunfire that confronted our brave veterans and a sobering reminder of their tremendous sacrifice. Among the 275 people who attended the service, I met a young cadet named Alex McMartin, a Terrigal High School student who took part in the service. Once again that symbolised how our next generation of young Australians are active in keeping the Anzac tradition alive.

A large crowd of 750 locals attended the very popular Empire Bay Progress Association Anzac Day ceremony. I had the privilege to offer my thanks to veteran Ronald Fitzgerald for his service to our nation. Ronald is a sprightly 94-year-old digger who always attends the Empire Bay service. I thank Geoff Melville and the dedicated Anzac Day Committee for all their work to arrange the service. It was also a pleasure to attend a service at Pine Needles Village in Erina along with a group of elderly residents where it was my honour to deliver *The Ode*. I was proud that this was the third consecutive year I have taken part in the Pine Needles service, alongside Squadron Leader Mike Gane from the Royal Australian Air Force.

The Central Coast community respectfully presses pause on Anzac Day to reflect upon the sacrifice of our veterans to keep our country safe. To honour our veterans it was encouraging to see two additional services held this year at Avoca Beach and Copacabana. Considering Copacabana is a small suburb, it is remarkable that around 400 people attended the service. The Anzac spirit is well and truly embedded deep within the Central Coast community. A century ago thousands of locals physically enlisted for the Australian Imperial Forces at enlistment stations in Davistown, Terrigal, Matcham, Erina and Kincumber. As I spoke to many children and adults on Anzac Day, I heard story after story of relatives and friends who had enlisted to assist the war effort in any way they could. Anzac Day truly encourages us to show respect and dignity for the ultimate sacrifice of so many military personnel by laying down their lives to protect our society and our freedom. Lest we forget.

AUSTRALIAN CELTIC FESTIVAL

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (20:41): A magnificent festival recently took place in the heart of the Northern Tablelands electorate. Of course, I could only be speaking about the wonderful Australian Celtic Festival at Glen Innes. Last weekend, for the twenty-fifth festival the Glen Innes community of around 5,000 people was inundated by nearly 6,000 visitors taking in the delights of Celtic culture across four days. I commend the wonderful work of the community in hosting the event. This year the festival embraced the popular Irish theme, which was incredibly successful. After a couple of years celebrating the role of the smaller British Isles, it was great to see huge numbers of people celebrating the Irish connection to Glen Innes. Having attended on four previous occasions, I can attest to the fact that this year's festival was the biggest and best yet, as is fitting for the twenty-fifth anniversary.

Every year the Glen Innes community works harder to add more to the program, grow the number of visitors and increase the flow-on benefits to the local economy and community. *Australian Idol* winner Damien Leith took to the stage for a sellout concert. Hundreds crammed in amongst the town's iconic standing stones to watch the dog trials and strongman events, along with the authentic Celtic recreational activities of jousting, staff twirling, Irish dancing and, my favourite, the Kirkin' o' th' Tartans, which involves the raising of the tartan of each clan. There was no lifting of the kilts, but if Mr Temporary Speaker Provest visits Glen Innes next year who knows what he will experience.

Last year the festival organisers had to battle cold weather and drenching rain, which emulated the less favourable conditions the Celtic culture is renowned for. This year the organisers could not have picked it better. The clouds disappeared, the sky was blue and a light, warm breeze gently caressed the cheeks of visitors over the magnificent four days of the festival. Love was in the air as Melbourne couple Caitlin and Jason Nicholson officially tied the knot, marrying in traditional Irish dress in front of a crowd of hundreds of locals and visitors, most of whom they had never met in their lives. Local Glen Innes man Peter Martin presented the rings on a Celtic sword. It was a wonderful way to kick off the celebrations on Saturday.

As I said, for the first time the opening concert and Friday night's concert were sold out. Tickets to all events were up 200 per cent in the lead-up to the festival. Judy Toms said the showground and the caravan parks and all of the accommodation in Glen Innes was booked out months in advance. Indeed, such is the interest in the Glen Innes Highlands that communities such as Inverell, which is 70 kilometres away, are starting to benefit from this festival. I acknowledge Mayor Steve Toms and his wife, Judy, from the management board for their year-long work in making this tremendous festival happen, as well as general manager Hein Basson and director Graeme Price. The support of Glen Innes Severn Council for this event is critical to its success. This puts Glen Innes on the map, not only in New South Wales and Australia but also internationally.

I also acknowledge the festival entertainment committee, which was led by Tony Brown; site manager Neale Royale; and the events coordinator at the services club, Julie Clements. Those people are local icons. They do not do it for fame or money; they do it because they love Glen Innes and the fact that the whole community benefits from this festival. Visitor Information staff Peter Teschner and Mary Hollingworth do a mountain of work ensuring that everyone who visits Glen Innes enjoys their whole stay. The festival committee chair, Lara Gresham, has tremendous vision and passion and finds new events and international bands to draw in the crowds each year.

Liz Foster took a lead in judging the Celtic fashion show. Anna Watt from the council does a tremendous job in helping businesses gear up for the festival so that they can take maximum advantage of the influx of visitors to the community. Lastly, a special acknowledgement goes to Glen Innes woman Jan Sharman who celebrated her eightieth birthday at the festival. I congratulate Jan on being a new octogenarian and champion. Congratulations to the whole Glen Innes community. It was a wonderful twenty-fifth Australian Celtic Festival.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (20:46): I acknowledge the outstanding efforts of the Minister, and member for Northern Tablelands. Yet again our minds have been taken to the Northern Tablelands in a speech by the Minister. It was difficult not to think of Camelot when the Minister was describing the Glen Innes Celtic festival. He spoke of love, music, jousting and the Kirkin' o' th' Tartans. The passionate way in which the Minister serves his electorate is an inspiration to us all in this House.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (20:47): This week heralds National Volunteer Week, and this week we also celebrate Wear Orange Wednesday in support of our fabulous State Emergency Service [SES] volunteers. Wear Orange Wednesday is being celebrated as the Cootamundra electorate has welcomed a brand new emergency response vehicle for the SES Harden unit. The New South Wales Government has provided more than \$175,000 to purchase the emergency response Light Storm vehicle. Keeping on the topic

of emergency services, it was a pleasure to meet the inspiring group of young people at the 2017 Young People in Emergency Services awards last month. Award recipients included Alex Slade from Williamstown Rural Fire Service [RFS]; Yvette Amos from the Snowy River SES, Jindabyne; Javen Ricevuto from the Balranald RFS; Sasha Cox from the Broken Hill SES; and Elizabeth Butt from the Bendick Murrell RFS in my electorate.

Lizzie Butt is one of those young volunteers who throws herself into absolutely everything, learning new skills and demonstrating exceptional leadership and teamwork along the way. Another group Lizzie has been actively involved in is the Youth Advisory Council. I take this opportunity to recognise the other young people who have demonstrated civic pride and leadership by getting involved in their local youth council in the Cootamundra electorate. Together with Lizzie, the Youth Advisory Council representatives at Young include Nenad Jelinek, Austin McFeeters, Sam Cullen, Tim Maloney, Brianah Griffin, Cassie Boland, Jordan Waugh, Jess Lacy, Tash Harrison, William Ross and Isaac Northcott.

The Gundagai Youth Council is very active in the Gundagai township. Its members include Rory Anderson, Shae Anderson, Zac Anderson, Patrick Carberry, Lillian Crane, Dylan Doran, George Gradon, Samantha Gradon, Zac McDonald, Kathleen Makeham, Harry Ralph and Logan Wescombe. The Cowra Youth Council, which was established in 2011 and is one of the most active youth councils, promotes youth activities such as cinema and drama. Its members include Stassi Austin, Kitty Brooks, India Johnson, Georgia Lewis, Shiayn Newham-Craig, Olivia Perkins, Zachary Perkins, Christian Petty, Jemma Pokoney, Kate Price, Brayden Shaw and Lily Wright.

I have had the great pleasure of meeting the youth leadership team at Temora on several occasions. They work very closely with Temora Shire Council. Its members include Kaitlin Jones, Carly Turner, Mikayla McGuirk-Scolaro, Nick Rickets, Dom Drumore, Rommy Galvin, Shania Corby, Ashleigh Gersbach, Ben Rayner and Nixon Wallace. The Junee Youth Council is another exceptional group of young people. Its members include Bethannie Eastoe, Hunter White, Jackson White, Harry Guymer, Peter Guymer, Lachlan Muir, Charlie Blanchard and Eddie Blanchard. It is inspiring to learn about young people who are engaged, interested and active participants in their local communities. It is also very encouraging to learn that a number of other local councils are working toward establishing youth councils.

It is well known that growing up in a country town or village does present a unique set of challenges for young people—for example, entertainment and public transport options are limited compared to their city-based peers. Youth councils do a terrific job in organising local events such as movie nights and fun runs. I congratulate them all on their ongoing efforts. It is important for young people in regional areas to be supported, particularly as many undertake and complete their high school studies, with a quality school curriculum, a positive learning environment, and well-maintained school infrastructure.

I note the New South Wales Government's recent announcement of an additional \$60 million to clear school maintenance backlogs across the State. That will bring the total funding for school maintenance to \$390 million—the single biggest injection of maintenance backlog spending in the history of this State—and I thoroughly welcome it. Maintaining school facilities is essential to ensuring our students get the education they deserve. I commend the Minister for Education for ensuring that the school maintenance backlogs in my electorate, particularly those I have personally advised him about, will be provided for in the upcoming State budget.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (20:51): I take this opportunity to acknowledge the great contribution that the member for Cootamundra makes in this place. She is an outstanding leader amongst her colleagues and a wonderful role model for the youth in her electorate. The youth in Cootamundra are very fortunate to have her as their local member. It is clear that she extends a great deal of pastoral care to her communities. It is not easy for young people in country areas. I was interested to hear what the member is doing to support the youth in her electorate, and I commend her.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (20:52): This Friday will mark the first anniversary of the sacking of Parramatta and Holroyd councils, as well as dozens of other democratically elected councils across New South Wales, when this Government gazetted council amalgamations. It is the first anniversary of the death of local democracy in New South Wales. Without elected councillors to represent them, and no idea who or what a council administrator is, the community has been short-changed. They have no idea where to turn to make a complaint. I constantly hear that councils—usually Cumberland—do not answer their phones and people do not know who they can talk to.

I was one of the many councillors sacked in this process. Ironically, as a local member, my council workload has grown exponentially as a result of the amalgamations. And by far the most common requests for

assistance my office receives concern local government—from overgrown properties to filthy laneways and parks that need mowing and from inconsistent consideration of developments to parking issues. Every day people tell me that they have a problem with council but no-one is listening. The council amalgamations in my area have been among the most complex and messy in this State. The City of Parramatta incorporates parts of the former Parramatta, Holroyd, Auburn, Hills and Hornsby local government areas. Cumberland City Council incorporates parts of Parramatta, Holroyd and Auburn. No-one but the Liberal Party is really happy with the outcome—it thinks it will now hold the Parramatta lord mayoralty forever. They are in for a rude shock this September.

While the City of Parramatta has been gerrymandered to create a Liberal-controlled economic powerhouse, encompassing Parramatta central business district [CBD], the Westmead medical precinct—the largest in the Southern Hemisphere—and Sydney Olympic Park, Cumberland has been set up to fail. Alongside most of the former Holroyd City Council, it has incorporated the poorer southern residential precincts of Parramatta and Auburn—great neighbourhoods and fantastic, vibrant communities, but areas of very low income. Outside Wetherill Park, Cumberland has a very small industrial or commercial rate base. It has five swimming pools, including the only ones near Parramatta CBD after the closure of Parramatta pool. It has two public golf courses, and it has some of the lowest average household incomes in Sydney—those households cannot afford the high rates needed to compensate for the lack of an industrial or commercial rate base.

Cumberland is a community with strong needs and desires. It includes one of the youngest and most ethnically diverse communities in Sydney. It also has a large community of people from refugee backgrounds. This cultural richness is wonderful, but it also creates a need for additional services that the rate base will not be able to meet. As I said, Cumberland Council has been set up to fail. It is financially unsustainable and some of Sydney's most vulnerable communities are the ones that will suffer as a result. The City of Parramatta and Cumberland Council are two councils that are being changed drastically under administration. To be fair, some of their initiatives and decisions are good. I am glad that the City of Parramatta prevented developers from overshadowing Centenary Square at lunchtime. It is the heart of the city and it needs sunlight. The Cumberland Youth Strategy is fantastic. There was more consultation done for the youth strategy than the council has engaged in in any or all of its other activities combined over the past year. But this fantastic youth-driven youth strategy comes at the same time as council is dissolving all its park committees and heritage committees, telling tireless volunteers from our community, "We do not want you and we do not need you. Faceless bureaucrats know best. They know your community better than you do."

I turn now to waste services. There are many people who do not value some of the amazing things councils do to bring together and celebrate communities. They think a council is or should only be about roads, rates and rubbish. The administrator of Cumberland thinks rubbish should be beyond the realm of council activities too. He wants to totally outsource waste services even though most of the former council—the Holroyd and Auburn parts—still have their own in-house garbage pick-up. He wants Holroyd to have a separate green waste service too, which is also outsourced. I have no problem with having a separate green waste service but there is no reason why it cannot be done in-house, and the administrator has never said why it cannot be done in-house. Surely privatising waste services is something that an elected council should consider.

The question of the swimming pools is still up in the air. I am glad the administrator seems to have sniffed the wind and deferred making a decision to close the outdoor pools at Wentworthville and Guildford until after the election. It is hard not to when this Government is demolishing Parramatta pool, just a few kilometres away, where 170,000 people swam each year. Make no mistake: The flawed reports that recommend closure are still around, waiting for the dust to settle with respect to the decision about Parramatta pool. The council amalgamations have cost this Government thousands of votes in the last six by-elections. The Coalition lost Orange for the first time in 70 years, on the biggest by-election swing ever. I cannot believe that one year on the Government is still not listening. This policy is a mistake. The community is furious. They cannot wait to vote in this September's elections, to have representatives once again, and they will not be voting for the Liberal or National parties.

ANZAC COMMEMORATIONS

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (20:57): This evening I wish to speak about various Anzac Day commemorations in my electorate of Seven Hills. This year my electorate office conducted the inaugural Seven Hills Anzac Day Creative Writing competition. Dozens of local students entered the competition, and the pieces that were submitted were of outstanding quality for stage 2 and 3 students. The winner, Keely Gannon, wrote a poem for her entry. Keely's poem goes:

Down in the trenches, guns raged,
People's memories started to fade.
We wear poppies to remember the time,
When people died, not for a crime.
We all remember on the twenty-fifth of April,

On those years when everyone was very faithful.

People hated those memories at thought,

When young people died when they fought. This is indicative of the quality of writing shown by all of the entrants. There could be only one winner, and a poem seemed to be the most fitting form for the Anzac Day commemoration. Given the quality of the entries that I read, I believe it is important to acknowledge the huge role played by parents and grandparents in teaching young people about what it means to be Australian and about the values that were held by many thousands of brave Australians who made the ultimate sacrifice. This competition has reinforced my belief that the spirit of the Anzac lives on through our young people and it is not lost on me that one day they may be called upon to defend the way in which we live. Not only do families have a significant influence on cultural and historical reflection, but so too do the hardworking teachers in our schools.

The stories of the Anzacs remain in Australian history, geography, civics and citizenship subjects in primary schools across the State. It is incredibly important that our young people learn about this formative period of our nation's history. It is important at this point to recognise the work of Toongabbie Public School's principal, Mr Craig Brown, in his efforts to engage his school community in commemorating the Centenary of Anzac and keeping the Anzac spirit alive. The school's Anzac Day service was led by the school's student leaders against a backdrop of poppies drawn and coloured in by stage 1 students. The stage two students prepared an excellent photo story, which played out on the projector for all to see. Each member of 3/4K played their part in an impressive display. Stage 3 students read poems and letters to loved ones of people who were in the Great War, and the school's choir sang *The Call*.

The students showed great interest and were incredibly respectful throughout the entire commemoration. It was great to see the initiative of an engaging and passionate principal and staff bringing this wonderful event to fruition and to see our young people—the next generation—engaging with our history in a meaningful way at such a wonderful State school as Toongabbie Public School. I am sure the House will join me in congratulating Mr Brown and his team at Toongabbie Public School and in encouraging more schools to take such an initiative.

I was again privileged to attend the Seven Hills-Toongabbie RSL Sub-branch dawn service this Anzac Day. I joined hundreds of locals and veterans in the cold and dark, which of course would pale into insignificance when compared with what our soldiers faced on the beaches on that fateful day almost 102 years ago. It was fitting to reflect also on the freedoms that we enjoy today as individuals and in our communities. It is an easy life during peacetime and sometimes some of us take freedoms for granted, but we should never do so. The freedoms that we enjoy today are not automatic; they must be defended and sometimes fought for. Many people paid the ultimate price in fighting for what they believed to be right and true.

We are truly lucky to live in a country where men and women of all ages answered the call in defending those freedoms, if not for their own sake but so that we, their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, could enjoy them today. It was heartwarming to see many local families bring their children to the dawn service to instil in the next generation the message of sacrifice. Whilst we hope they will never experience the horrors of war, it is reassuring to know that they will know that those before them answered the call. Lest we forget.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (21:02): I acknowledge the unusually poetic but deep contribution of the member for Seven Hills. He has reported to the House the very important remembrance by the youth of Toongabbie and Seven Hills of the service men and women in our armed forces. It is not surprising that the member for Seven Hills was a little poetic and very deep in what he had to say because he has given many years of distinguished service to our community as a member of the Police Force. It is indeed a great privilege to have a man of his experience and depth in our Parliament.

ANZAC COMMEMORATIONS

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (21:03): Lest we forget. Australians have never stood much on formality and today even modern funerals and weddings are full of spontaneous laughter and occasionally tears. But that does not apply to Anzac Day, and our observance of this commemoration continues to be solemn and serious. Of course, in an electorate as large as mine there are dawn services, street marches and morning services in every town or village with either a war memorial or an RSL branch. I was honoured to be part of the Goulburn dawn service, run for many years by RSL President Gordon Wade and his wife, Linda. Over the years Linda has found beautiful poems written at the time and these have become part of the beauty of this service. We were also blessed with an account of the service of a much-loved grandfather by the Vice Captain of Mulwaree High School, Ollie Anable. Well done Ollie, Gordon Wade and Malcolm Ritchie, who also organise the cemetery service that follows the dawn service.

Then it was off to the Nashos of Sutton Forest, a wonderful service, with music provided by the local Christian band and presided over by the president, Robert Brown, with the usual excellent address on local servicemen given by our special historian, Linda Emery. The Nashos are very special to me—we are of a similar vintage—and I was honoured to dedicate a plaque to Ross Pearce, a former Nasho and patron of the Southern Highlands Branch, who died in 2016. His wife, Kath, and I shared a special hug as we remembered this lovely

man. It was not far then to Berrima, for another kind of service under the oak tree planted by Sir Henry Parkes in the 1860s. Again, local history was centre stage. Lynne Watson and Eric Savage ensured there was tradition and thoughtfulness in this service, which was also attended by the students and teachers of Berrima Public School. I was honoured to read the famous words of Atatürk, comforting the mothers of those who died at Gallipoli, and reassuring them that:

You, the mothers who sent their sons from faraway countries, wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.

Hundreds listened as the autumn leaves slowly drifted to the ground. Finally, to the stone village of Taralga, another hour away. Taralga has a small population but a huge heart. Each year the community gathers for lunch at the sports club and then in the main street, Orchard Street, where the veterans form up and march behind the Goulburn Pipes and Drums—which incidentally started out in Goulburn that day at dawn. After wreath-laying at the memorial—they come from local shopkeepers, the Pony Club, the Country Women's Association, the nursing home and the school—it is off to the memorial service at the memorial hall, so beautifully preserved by residents and community grants, and complete with music provided by a remarkable electric organ. Jim Beasley, Richard and Lorraine Davison and the entire community do a wonderful job on this special day.

It would not be Anzac Day without Mulwaree High School's special service. Mulwaree has a most remarkable war museum and each year some of the artefacts are part of this dignified school service. I also thank those who presented wreaths on my behalf—Judy McGuinness at Boorowa; Wentworth Hill at Crookwell's service, organised by Chris Fenton; and Nick Tyrell in Yass. I thank the RSL and John Heggart for organising the services and the famous Yass street parade. None of this means Australians do not retain some of the larrikinism for which they became so famous during the First World War. Duty done and services over, for many it was off to the pub for a decent game of two-up. Lest We forget.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (21:07): The Minister and member for Goulburn spoke beautifully and evocatively about autumn in the Southern Highlands and the remembrance of Anzac Day in her local community. We have some Nashos in Ku-ring-gai, so I knew exactly what she was talking about when she spoke of that special group in the Southern Highlands. It was important for the House to hear of how many different local country groups remember Anzac—such an important occasion for our nation. I thank the Minister for her report to the House.

DEMENTIA

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (21:08): There is no cure for Alzheimer's disease or dementia. However, research over the last decade gives hope for dementia prevention. In particular, a growing body of research suggests that a number of lifestyle and health factors may help to reduce one's risk of dementia. In addition to tackling risk before the development of dementia, there is also evidence that lifestyle factors such as physical activity, cognitive stimulation and nutrition can improve cognition, mood, behaviour and related outcomes for people living with dementia. Right now, there are approximately 413,000 Australians living with dementia and 291,000 people providing care, either in the community or in care accommodation.

In 2056 the number of Australians living with dementia is expected to be 1,100,000 and their carers could number 776,000. The numbers are staggering. In the Hunter alone more than 23,850 people are suffering and around 1,700 sufferers are in my electorate of Wallsend. In the absence of a significant medical breakthrough that number is expected to more than double to 3,500 in Wallsend by 2056. This year it is estimated that dementia will cost Australia more than \$14 billion. This is projected to be \$36.85 billion a year by 2056. Dementia will cost a massive \$1.033 trillion over the next 40 years.

Dementia is the second leading cause of death in Australians, contributing to 5.4 per cent of all deaths in males and 10.6 per cent of all deaths in females each year. Reducing the annual age-sex specific incidence rates for dementia in people aged 65 years and over by 5 per cent would lead to a 7 per cent reduction in the number of people with dementia in the population by 2025 and a 24 per cent reduction by 2056. As a result, there would be nearly 36,400 fewer people with dementia in 2025 and almost 261,000 fewer people by 2056 compared with the current projections of prevalence of dementia over the next 40 years. As a community we must continue to invest in dementia research and dementia risk reduction programs, as well as working to improve the lives of people living with dementia.

We cannot ignore the significant impact of this insidious disease on people living with dementia, their carers and families, the health and aged care systems and the Australian economy as a whole. Alzheimer's Australia does an incredible job in providing services to those affected by dementia, their families and carers. In the Wallsend electorate, the Hunter Medical Research Institute [HMRI] has been working to improve dementia care and outcomes. The experienced multidisciplinary team is looking at improving the health and quality of life

for people with dementia and their carers. I thank the institute for that. Laureate Professor Sanson-Fisher from the University of Newcastle, who is leading the team, said

Dementia is a disease with a huge social, economic and disability burden, with increasing prevalence as the Australian population ages. Unfortunately, many people with dementia have unmet needs relating to personal and home safety, medical care, and legal issues.

Their carers also have trouble with resources, mental and general health, and their own health care.

Professor Kichu Nair, Senior Staff Specialist of Geriatric Medicine and Director of Medical Professional Development at John Hunter Hospital, agrees and said:

Dementia is closer to all of us than we want to believe.

We must continue to look at ways to further fund dementia services and research in the Wallsend electorate. There is no time to waste; it is now time to take action.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 21:13 until
Wednesday 10 May 2017 at 10:00.**