



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 11 May 2017

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 11 May 2017

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

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Documents

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce the receipt of the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled "Mining Rehabilitation Security Deposits: Department of Environment and Planning", dated May 2017.

Bills

CROWN LAND LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017

Returned

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

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL 2017

UNIVERSITIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PLANNING AGREEMENTS) BILL 2017

Returned

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

Madam SPEAKER

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has considered the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2017 and has this day divided the bill into two bills:

- (1) "An Act to repeal certain Acts and to amend certain other Acts and instruments in various respects and for the purpose of effecting statute law revision; and to make certain savings". (Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2017)
- (2) "An Act to amend universities legislation with respect to planning agreements". (Universities Legislation Amendment (Planning Agreements) Bill 2017)

The Legislative Council returns the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2017, consisting of the original bill with the exception of schedules 1.4 [4], 1.12 [4], 1.17 [5], 1.25 [5], 1.26 [4], 1.27 [4], 1.28 [4], 1.29 [4], 1.30 [7] and 1.33 [5].

The Universities Legislation Amendment (Planning Agreements) Bill 2017, consisting of schedules 1.4 [4], 1.12 [4], 1.17 [5], 1.25 [5], 1.26 [4], 1.27 [4], 1.28 [4], 1.29 [4], 1.30 [7] and 1.33 [5] of the original bill is still receiving the consideration of the Legislative Council.

The Legislative Council requests the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly in the action taken by the Council.

Legislative Council
10 May 2017

JOHN AJAKA
President

I order that the Legislative Council message be considered at a later hour.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the Parliament our registered nurses who are in the gallery.

Bills

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

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 10 May 2017.

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (10:14): I speak in debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Closure of Railway Line Between Rosewood and Tumbarumba) Bill 2017 and support the contribution of the member for Albury. Mr Deputy Speaker and I have a mutual friend living in Ballina by the name of Pat Grier, AM. Pat, who has been an avid supporter of rail trails for at least six or seven years, recognises that turning old rail lines into walking and riding trails for mountain bikes and so on will provide opportunities, such as an increase in tourist numbers, and bring economic benefits. The member for Albury and other members in this House have spoken about those opportunities.

Many years ago, the rail line between Glenreagh and Dorrigo was closed. It was anticipated that the line would be utilised for rail services but, unfortunately, that never eventuated. Mr Keith Jones, of the Dorrigo Steam Railway and Museum, is a collector but does not operate trains. The Glenreagh Mountain Railway group, at the lower end of the line, wants to operate trains on the line but bridges on the line have fallen. These people have seen the benefit of a rail line being used as a tourist railway but to be able to do so the line must be closed.

The members opposite in their contributions to debate yesterday pointed to the word "sell" in the bill. As I understand the bill and as the Minister clearly indicated in his second reading speech, only land that is excess to the needs of the rail trail can be sold. It is not a matter of selling off land holus-bolus. The original surveys that were done may not have been accurate and there may be excess land. I seek further clarification from the Minister in that regard but my understanding is that this legislation is purely to create a tourism opportunity for the Tumbarumba area. As a matter of interest, there is a fantastic pipes and drums band at Tumbarumba. One of the reasons it is fantastic is that the members wear the Fraser tartan, as does the Bellingen band in the Coffs Harbour electorate.

The people of Tumbarumba are keen for the rail trail to be in operation. I understand the concerns of the 23 farmers along the route that the trail may impinge upon their privacy. A guarantee has been given that the rail trail will be fenced. Secondly, the trail follows a disused rail line that runs through their property. The rail line is not their land. It is State-owned land on which there is a rail line running between two or more centres. It is not farmland; it is State rail land. Guarantees have been given that the land will be fenced and it will be used for recreational purposes. This is not a backdoor way to get onto properties. If that were the case, I suggest the rail line would have already been used for that purpose. I understand that some neighbouring landowners have utilised the old tracks, probably as fence posts on their properties. From personal experience, I know that a piece of rail line makes the best cattle guard you have ever seen. That is what I have at home. They do not rust, or if they do it will take a long time.

I commend the establishment of rail trails across New South Wales. I spoke about Pat Grier in the Northern Rivers who pushes the establishment of a rail trail up there, and I commend him for his work. The rail trails will bring opportunities for tourism. In Coffs Harbour, in the State forests especially and on the road on which I live pushbikes are fast becoming the norm. There are competitive mountain bike tracks and mountain bike trails within the State forests and they are supported by people from all over the region. On the weekend hundreds of mountain bike riders utilise the trail on Mt Coramba just behind my house. The majority of them come from out of town. They spend money in town and book accommodation, adding to the tourism and economic benefits in the Coffs Harbour region.

I ask the Minister, in his speech in reply, to clarify that the word "sell" relates to selling only land that is not needed for the rail trail. As I understand, if the rail trail concept fails, the land will be returned to the State government. I seek clarification from the Minister. Opposition members who spoke in this debate referred to the word "sell". The member for Orange strongly supported the farmers, but I reiterate that the land is public land and previously had rail stock moving along it. It is not land that is owned or in the custody of any farmers. Its fencing and delineation as a rail trail will not bring danger to stock or property by way of untoward action by members of the public. I once again ask the Minister to address my concerns relating to the word "sell" in the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (10:21): It is with pleasure that I speak to the Transport Administration Amendment (Closure of Railway Line Between Rosewood and Tumbarumba) Bill 2017. I echo the comments of the member for Coffs Harbour. This bill has been brought forward by the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. The Minister is doing a fine job in relation to not only rail trails but also projects across the State. I recently was fortunate to have a discussion with the Minister about railway station upgrades throughout the electorate of Seven Hills, including at Wentworthville, Pendle Hill, and Toongabbie. It is reassuring for my electorate to have the Minister in charge of such an important portfolio. I commend the Minister's staff for their work on this bill.

The bill will bring tourism and recreational opportunities not only for Tumbarumba and surrounding areas but for people across the State. This State encompasses beautiful environmental areas. This particular area at Tumbarumba on the slopes of the Snowy Mountains is a classic example of the pristine environments in this

State. Mt Kosciusko is visible from several places in the area. The North Coast, South Coast, Central Coast and western New South Wales contain many areas of beauty. I spent time working in western New South Wales prior to coming into this place.

The purpose of the Transport Administration Amendment (Closure of Railway Line Between Rosewood and Tumbarumba) Bill 2017 is to authorise the closure of all or sections of the non-operational line between Rosewood and Tumbarumba in accordance with section 99A of the Transport Administration Act to enable the development of a rail trail. Rail trails are recognised as an alternative adaptive use of the redundant non-operational rail corridors. Enabling the development of rail trails in regional New South Wales will allow more people to enjoy the natural beauty of our regions and strengthen regional communities by building their potential as attractive tourism destinations. Tumbarumba is a classic example of a tourism destination.

Members may know that Tumbarumba was established as a gold town and as a productive timber industry. It has been transformed by tourism around fine wine and food, attracting people from across the State to the town. There is no doubt that the establishment of a rail trail will provide an opportunity for people to take advantage of the local area and engage in recreation that will add to tourism. The member for Albury has explained that initiatives such as this provide economic benefit to those in the town. When there is economic benefit in the form of tourism, jobs are generated that provide a future for young people in those towns. It is important to provide services such as catering and hospitality and the various jobs that go with tourism. Generating future jobs is what this Government does.

There are also health benefits associated with outdoor recreation. In Seven Hills we spend an extraordinary amount of time and effort improving our sporting facilities for the young and elderly so that every citizen can participate in organised sport or passive recreation. These facilities drive health benefits that flow through the community, and the use of rail trails in the outdoors is an excellent example. Australian and international case studies confirm that communities with rail trails experience an increase in economic stability through tourism, additional employment, investment, urban redevelopment, greater consumer spending, physical health benefits and increased community pride.

South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and Victoria all have operational rail trails. The Victorian rail trail program comprises more than 25 active trails across that State. In January 2015 the New South Wales Government invited expressions of interest as part of the \$110 million Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund to pilot a rail trail from Rosewood to Tumbarumba. After competitive assessment, overseen by Infrastructure NSW, the Rosewood to Tumbarumba rail trail was chosen and announced as the first pilot rail trail under the initiative, and a \$4.8 million grant from Restart NSW got this off the ground. An initiative such as this will impact on a wide variety of organisations, agencies and parts of the community.

To correctly manage this initiative a steering committee was established, chaired by the Snowy Valleys Council. The committee looked into the development and preparations for the rail trail and involved in that was Transport for NSW, the NSW Department of Industry, and importantly, the Department of Primary Industries and Destination NSW. The member for Coffs Harbour raised the issue of this rail trail passing through or by a number of farming locations. As has been said previously, a risk assessment was undertaken by the Murray Local Land Services which focused on biosecurity issues. It is understandable that with this rail trail passing through or near farming properties biosecurity is an issue. Biosecurity is important to this Government. There were intensive risk analyses undertaken and the issue of biosecurity has been addressed and thoroughly examined through that process.

Prior to my involvement in this House I was chair of Hawkesbury River County Council. That council and a number of councils in Western Sydney implemented a government initiative to eradicate weeds and reduce their impact across the State. As biosecurity measures are important to farming and agricultural communities, consumers and those who participate in recreational pursuits, I am glad that this legislation focuses on biosecurity measures. Planning for the Rosewood to Tumbarumba rail line project is well advanced and construction is estimated to take about 18 months. I am told that this proposal has significant community support due to economic, business and development opportunities in the area and the potential social benefits that can be derived. The area is developing as a popular tourism region in New South Wales and has a growing reputation for premium cool climate food and wine growing. *[Extension of time]*

Section 99A of the Transport Administration Act requires that before a rail infrastructure owner can close a railway line outside the greater metropolitan area that closure must be authorised by an Act of Parliament. A railway line is closed if the land concerned is sold or otherwise disposed of, or the railway tracks or other works concerned are removed. Transport for NSW and the Department of Industry—Lands are currently finalising land transfer arrangements. However it is envisaged that the land forming the railway corridor will be vested from Transport for NSW to the Department of Industry—Lands and then declared Crown reserve, and the Snowy

Valleys Council will be appointed as trustee. The railway corridor will remain the property of the New South Wales Government.

Vesting arrangements will ensure that the corridor can be transferred back to Transport for NSW at no cost in the unlikely event that it is required for future freight or passenger rail services. It is reassuring to know that that provision has been included in the legislation. The Rosewood to Tumbarumba rail trail, which is a pilot project, will inform other rail trail proposals in New South Wales, including many rail trail submissions that have been received recently under the aegis of the Regional Growth—Environment and Tourism Fund—a great initiative. Approximately 3,100 kilometres of railway lines across New South Wales are non-operational—they are idle, unused and neglected. This bill will ensure that they are reinvigorated and enlivened and used for healthy recreational pursuits and also to generate tourism and economic opportunities. Rail trails create much-needed stimulus in some areas and are strongly supported by local communities because they know they will benefit from them. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): I welcome to the gallery nurses and midwives who are here to listen to debate on the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016.

Mr THOMAS GEORGE (Lismore) (10:33): I speak in debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (Closure of Railway Line Between Rosewood and Tumbarumba) Bill 2017 and congratulate the member for Albury on his contribution to debate. I am envious that the Rosewood to Tumbarumba rail trail is being established in his electorate. Over a number of years the Hon. Don Page, a former member for Ballina, the member for Clarence, the member for Tweed and I lobbied hard to establish a rail trail on the Casino to Murwillumbah rail line—a proposal that received support from government. However, not all shire councils agreed to the proposal which was then abandoned.

The Northern Rivers Rail Trail Association Inc, chaired by Pat Grier and the former Mayor of Tweed, Barry Longland, together with members of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail committee, continue to work together to establish a rail trail in the Northern Rivers region. David Oxenham and Troy Green, General Manager of Tweed Shire Council, are working with the member for Tweed and with me to make this a reality. A rail trail will be established from Murwillumbah to Crabbes Creek in the Tweed shire. We will continue to make representations for the rail trail and hopefully in the future it will come to fruition. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and the Deputy Premier have received representations and met with a number of deputations.

Richmond Valley Council and Lismore City Council have put forward a proposal for a rail trail from Casino to Lismore. The establishment of the rail trail has received tremendous support, in particular from Regional Development Australia. Opposition members are supportive of rail trails but they will be voting against this bill. No rail trail can be created without supporting legislation. The Minister has worked diligently with all those who made representations concerning the Rosewood to Tumbarumba rail trail. I spoke to the Northern Rivers Rail Trail group which put this proposal together. The patron of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail is the Rt Hon. J. D. Anthony, ACCH, who created history when he rode a bicycle from his home in Hughes to his office in Parliament House. It was reported that he:

...first established his reputation as a bike rider of note in Canberra when as the new young Minister of the Interior he commuted on his folding Moulton bicycle from his home in Hughes to his office in Parliament House.

As a bike enthusiast he did not hesitate in accepting his position as patron of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail. I have given the history of the Northern Rivers rail trail which we hope will be established in the Tweed electorate. The rail trail study final report that was released in June 2015 was presented to the Department of Premier and Cabinet. It referred also to the Casino to Murwillumbah rail link and reported that that rail trail would encourage an additional 88,000 visitors to the area every year. I am sure that every member in this Chamber would like to see that number of visitors to their electorates. We would be thrilled if this rail trail encourages many more people to visit the Northern Rivers region. The report noted also that the capital cost for the whole line would be in excess of \$75 million. The economic analysis indicated that the rail trail would be financially viable at the base scenario and have a payback period within five years.

The Tweed stage of the Northern Rivers rail trail business case covers only the Tweed stage of the Casino to Murwillumbah rail trail—the Northern Rivers rail trail. An independent economic assessment including a cost-benefit analysis has been undertaken with all economic impacts modelled as per NSW Treasury guidelines. The Murwillumbah to Crabbes Creek stage of the Northern Rivers rail trail is 24 kilometres long, occupies a corridor that is 40 metres wide and covers 88 hectares. Commencing at Murwillumbah railway station, cyclists and pedestrians will be able to traverse rolling farmland along the easy graded journey and take in spectacular hinterland and mountain views along the way.

Murwillumbah railway station will be used as the rail trail base from which cyclists and hikers can plan a day trip to surrounding attractions such as the Tweed Regional Gallery where the Margaret Olley Art Centre is

located, and national parks which take in fantastic panoramic hinterland views. The Tweed stage rail trail will also link the historic rural villages of Stokers Siding, Burringbar, Mooball and Crabbes Creek. The trail will link magnificent natural features such as Mooball National Park, Mount Jerusalem National Park and Wollumbin, Mount Warning, making the famous Mount Warning accessible to tourists. It will also connect the region's art galleries and creative industries. This is the initial stage of the regional Northern Rivers rail trail project. The ultimate plan is to establish a 130 kilometre trail all the way from Murwillumbah to Casino. Tweed Shire Council, together with the Northern Rivers Rail Trail Association Inc., headed by Pat Grier and former mayor Barry Longland, have had discussions with most of the people along the route to ensure that landowners are also on side.

The council and the relevant departments will communicate further as the plan unfolds. I remind members that The Nationals were asked by the Hon. Walt Secord, a former shadow Minister for the North Coast, to support the Northern Rivers rail trail plan. Justine Elliot, the Federal Labor member for Richmond, also supports the project. I do not understand the negative comments that have been made about the establishment of these rail trails as those rail lines are not being used. Anyone who thinks that a government of any political persuasion is likely to re-establish the Casino to Murwillumbah rail service is deluded. Government studies have shown that the rail line did not service the main centres of Ballina, Byron and Tweed Heads which is why we have to find another tourism project to use the rail corridor. [*Extension of time*]

Rail trails support tourism and businesses in local areas. I believe that this trail should eventually extend to Mullumbimby, regardless of what Byron shire thinks of rail trails. The success of this proposal would be enhanced if there was a major town at each end of the line. The trail from Murwillumbah to Mullumbimby is the most attractive part of Australia. [*Time expired.*]

Debate interrupted.

Business of the House

POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS

Mr NICK LALICH: On behalf of Mr Luke Foley: In accordance with Standing Order 101, I postpone General Business Order of the Day (for Bills) No. 1 [Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2017].

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): I fix the resumption of the mover's second reading speech as an order of the day for a future day.

Mr NICK LALICH: On behalf of Mr Ryan Park: In accordance with Standing Order 101, I postpone General Business Order of the Day (for Bills) No. 2 [Securing NSW Steel Industry Bill 2017].

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Bruce Notley-Smith): I fix the resumption of the mover's second reading speech as an order of the day for a future day.

Bills

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

Second Reading

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (10:46): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016. As tomorrow is International Nurses Day this bill has special significance. It has special significance for every person across New South Wales who has an elderly grandparent, mother, father, brother, sister or friend living in a nursing home. If Government members were not directed as to how to vote today, I am sure this bill would receive the unanimous support it enjoyed in the other place just one week ago. I acknowledge in the public gallery today all the nurses, doctors, and allied health staff who took time from their busy lives to watch the passage of this bill today. Included among them are members of the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association, the Country Women's Association, the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of New South Wales, the New South Wales Cancer Council, the Quality Aged Care Action Group, the Council on the Ageing, healthcare academics, and many others. They know what impact this bill will have. I thank them for their support.

Since the drafting of section 2 paragraph (m) of the Private Hospitals (Amendment) Act 1971, it has been a requirement to keep at least one registered nurse in a nursing home in New South Wales. This requirement was included in the Private Health Establishments Act 1982, the Nursing Homes Act 1988, the Public Health Act 1991, and the Public Health Act 2010. I could have gone back further, but I did not believe we would have to trawl ancient history to convince members of Parliament to care for our elderly. How wrong we were, given what

we have heard in the media from some Government members. I do not understand why any government would want New South Wales not to be leading the way in aged care. I note that this Coalition Government first came to power with the slogan "Let's make New South Wales number one again". The Premier also says in question time most days that New South Wales is the number one State in Australia. Let us restore that provision and make New South Wales number one in aged-care standards.

The requirement in this bill is not new, nor does it have the potential to close nursing home facilities. Under that flawed logic we would not have had aged-care facilities for the past 50 years. Indeed, the Commonwealth Government already provides additional funding for smaller facilities. This bill proposes to reintroduce minimum staffing in nursing homes covering high-care needs only. Previous requirements covered in legislation were a blanket measure across all nursing homes. Unfortunately, with Federal amendments to the Commonwealth Aged Care Act 1997 and a small change to the definition of the word "nursing home" this requirement was made defunct. It would appear that this Government believed at the time that we need registered nurses in nursing homes at all times. Former Minister for Health Jillian Skinner grandfathered this provision to all nursing homes that were in operation before 1 July 2014. This came in the Public Health Amendment (Nursing Homes) Regulation 2014. Therefore, only nursing homes that commenced operation after 1 July 2014 do not have to legally keep registered nurses on shift. This bill only affects new facilities providing a high level of residential care.

I thank members who have indicated to me that they support this bill. Media reports also note that two members of The Nationals have thrown their weight behind it. Member for Myall Lakes Stephen Bromhead informed the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association over the past week that he supports the bill. Member for Tweed Geoff Provest was shown in the *Tweed Daily News* on 8 September 2015 supporting the bill as well. He was presented with a 5,000 signature petition on this issue by nurses in his electorate. I trust these members will join me in voting for this bill and not resort to the tactics of not entering the Chamber or hiding behind the Speaker's chair during the final vote as others have done in the past. The terrible story of Shirley Carter, who was recently found in a nursing home in Raymond Terrace with maggots in her mouth, highlights that the quality of nursing home care is all the more important. I wish to address some of the scaremongering by other members of The Nationals in the wake of this important bill. When considering how they intend to vote, members of The Nationals should remember that more than 12,000 people in their electorates rely on nursing home care across some 235 facilities.

First, member for Upper Hunter Michael Johnsen, who is in the Chamber, said on Facebook on 4 May 2017 that this bill will "kill off smaller nursing homes". That is simply not true, as I have outlined. The member for Upper Hunter referred to Merton Court, a nursing home in Denman, as an example of a facility that would close. The member is mistaken. My office has spoken with nurses working at that facility. They inform me that the nursing home has fewer than 30 residents, has no palliative care services and only houses low-care residents. If the member for Upper Hunter had read the bill he would clearly have seen that line 13 refers specifically to "a facility at which a high level of residential care ... is provided". I note as well that current nursing home bonds are in excess of \$350,000 before a resident walks in the door and pays weekly care fees and medical expenses.

Second, we heard from my colleague the Hon. Robert Borsak in the other place about the member for Northern Tablelands marshalling a fear campaign against this bill. An email was leaked by a whistleblower that showed Ms Sue Thomson of McLean Care detailing this conspiracy. After inquiries by 2GB's Ray Hadley yesterday, however, it now appears that Ms Thomson has declared her unwavering praise for this bill. I thank her for her support. The Government has had plenty of time to offer amendments to this bill. The Hon. Robert Brown met with the office of former Minister Jillian Skinner in 2015 and early in 2016 to offer it a chance to work together. This was ignored. The current Minister for Health was given the same courtesy earlier this year, but instead wanted to delay the passage of this bill.

Registered nurses are needed in nursing homes to provide a high level of care for three reasons: they can administer pain relief stronger than a Panadol tablet; they can respond early to critical incidents and can often prevent unnecessary hospital admissions; and they know when to and when not to administer medications such as withholding a blood pressure lowering medicine when a patient's blood pressure is already low. Staff with a lower level of training may just blindly follow a medication order because they lack the clinical judgement to detect deterioration.

Under the current Federal ageing in place provisions that removed high-care and low-care distinctions from facilities this requirement for registered nurses is now more important than ever. That is because those facilities that previously only serviced low-care needs residents can now house high-care residents. Without minimum staffing rules, they may not have appropriate nurses to care for residents. In my electorate of Orange I came across the case of an elderly nursing home resident who was dependent on feeding through a gastrostomy tube every three hours. This can only be performed by a registered nurse; however, none were working during the

nights so the woman was not being fed. Appropriate staffing could have prevented this. Finally, since every year there are more graduate nurses than there are jobs for them, there are adequate nurses available to fulfil the aims of this bill.

I am advised that there is only one hour for debate today and many members wish to speak. Given the overwhelming support in the public gallery, and given that tomorrow is International Nurses Day, I urge members to keep their contributions brief. Whether the Government supports or opposes this bill, I believe there should be a vote on this bill today. Thousands of seniors and their families will be watching this debate and they will all have a vote in 2019. Seniors deserve better. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (10:56): The Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016 would have some major implications if it were agreed to. The bill was discussed in the upper House only a couple of days ago. That consideration of the bill has been misrepresented, perhaps unintentionally, by the member for Orange, who is speaking on behalf of his party. He said that there was support for the bill from the Coalition in the upper House. Actually, the bill was not opposed.

I indicated publicly that as the relatively new Minister for Health I wanted to look at issues surrounding the bill and not rush it. Of course, that is exactly what the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party members are doing—rushing it for their own political benefit. I indicated I would have liked to have considered some issues to see whether this approach was viable and workable in the broader context of residential care facilities across New South Wales. Since this bill was debated in the upper House I have had an opportunity to talk to some residential care providers and look at the broader issues.

Obviously, registered nurses, nurses and others working in our hospitals or residential care facilities deserve our absolute admiration. They are amazing people and without them we would all have a far worse quality of life. Let me make it clear that I do not make my comments with anything less than the greatest admiration for nurses. As the member for Orange pointed out, tomorrow is the day we recognise nurses. I think they should be recognised 365 days a year, particularly registered nurses whose level of training and expertise are of great merit in looking after patients in hospitals and, where appropriate, residential aged-care facilities.

Before addressing the substance of the bill, I will make a few general remarks. Yesterday I was told by Ray Hadley of 2GB radio that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party had approached me with amendments to the bill that were open for discussion. Between yesterday, when Ray Hadley was effectively misled by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, and today, when the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has made arrangements with other political parties to try to jump the gun, no-one from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has made contact with my office. Two other bills were supposed to have priority in the House this morning. As a matter of professional courtesy, and from my experience as a former Leader of this House, if the Labor Party or other political parties wish to introduce a bill they should advise the Government in sufficient time.

I came to this Chamber this morning prepared to speak to the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2017 because the Leader of the Opposition failed to advise the Government that he had decided not to bring on that debate today—in fact, he had led us to believe he would do so. A further bill was then called on and adjourned. I was advised of the change only a matter of minutes before those bills were to be debated. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party is following a consistent pattern. Contrary to what its members have been saying publicly, they have made no effort to talk to me as the Minister for Health. I have rechecked with my staff in case I missed something, and they have confirmed that Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party members have not been knocking on my door.

Mr Michael Johnsen: They have led Rad Hadley down the garden path.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: They have misled Rad Hadley, and the community. They are playing political games. I now turn to the bill. In an ideal world, it would be great to have a registered nurse in many areas in our community where they are not currently employed. I am looking at a range of such opportunities. Specifically in residential care facilities, all things being equal, if we had large care facilities such as we have in some parts of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong, it may well be something that I, as Minister for Health, would like to occur. As those of us who have travelled the State well know—and in my time I have travelled to many remote parts of New South Wales and Australia—it is not always easy to get a range of appropriate staff, including registered nurses and other ancillary medical staff, in those areas.

Residential aged-care facilities are managed through the regulatory domain of the Federal Government; they are not managed individually by each State or Territory. Until the Federal Government made some amendments to the legislation, there was a distinction between high and low care. The Federal Government also gives funding to every State and Territory to provide appropriate staffing levels at residential care facilities. I am

an avid listener to Rad Hadley's morning program. This morning he said that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party was talking about line 13 of the bill—talk about political opportunism; the bill is less than a full page in length—so I consulted the bill. Line 13 states:

- (a) a facility at which a high level of residential care ... described under or in accordance with that Act) is provided ...

That is the Federal legislation. Although the bill is confusing, and it has an inappropriate context, I understand the aim of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. The Government does not necessarily disagree. Many things happen in residential care facilities at various times of the day and if we had the resources, as provided by the Federal Government, it could be a benefit to have a registered nurse in situ. On the other hand, in some remote parts of the State where no registered nurses are available or a particular facility cannot afford to engage registered nurses, it would be up to the community to decide whether to have that facility.

General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3 conducted an inquiry into nurses in aged-care facilities and, to some extent, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has ignored the submissions made by a range of very well-credentialed people and non-government organisations. For example, Wesley Mission advised that the threat to the operational viability of facilities would be particularly acute in rural and regional areas, where resident needs may not be sufficient to attract higher funding under the Federal funding model or the built environment is not suitable for complex clinical care needs. Leading Age Services Australia NSW-ACT gave evidence to similar effect: that the disturbance to the viability of service providers would predominately affect the smaller rural and regional and more remote services.

Mrs Roberta Thompson, the assistant manager of Sunhaven Hostel in the Northern Tablelands, was a witness before the committee. She stated that both Sunhaven and other small, rural facilities would "close their doors" as they did not need, and could not fund, a registered nurse 24 hours a day. McLean Care noted that its Beresford Coward and Arrawatta centres in north-west New South Wales would, if this approach were adopted, have to close. It clearly spelt out the implications of this for the local community—with 63 residents having to be rehoused. In the view of McLean Care, it would create: ... a chasm between supply and demand for residential aged care with local hospitals having to provide additional aged care services, where supply cannot meet demand. I note that even some witnesses before the General Purpose Standing Committee who supported retaining a New South Wales legislative requirement for 24-hour registered nurses, seven days per week, recognised the particular difficulties for facilities in rural and remote areas of this State. Dr Janice Herbert, gerontologist from the New South Wales Policy Advisory Group of National Seniors Australia, acknowledged that smaller facilities in rural and remote areas "would be crippled" if they had to provide a registered nurse at all times. In her evidence, Dr Herbert indicated that there was no question it would cause financial stress to smaller providers in rural areas. She went on to say:

I am thinking of a small number of small homes with 20 or even fewer residents that are providing a wonderful service. Under the current arrangements they would be crippled if they had to provide RN care around the clock.

There was other evidence to the committee to that effect. Supporters of the bill have missed, or failed to comprehend, the broader impacts on the aged-care community in rural areas if these facilities are forced to close. I stress again that supporters of the bill are well intentioned but they do not necessarily understand its full consequences. It is extremely disturbing to think residents who have lived all their lives in a remote area might be forced to move away from their community and their families when they are aged, vulnerable and in need of support. But that is the effect of this legislation.

If an area does not have facilities that give people the option to move into residential care it can have a profound effect on their quality of life. My family comes from the Mallee country in north-west Victoria and I think of my aged aunt, who, sadly, passed away last year at the age of 92. For some years we as her family had talked to her about how she should perhaps move into residential care. But there were no facilities in her area and she would have had to move an hour's drive away. That was a very big issue for her and discouraged her from moving into the residential care she needed. I have seen this sort of situation up close and personal. I do not know what members of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party have experienced, but I can tell them that in a perfect world—in a perfect environment—by all means have registered nurses in all nursing homes. But currently, as the evidence given by a whole range of groups to the Legislative Committee inquiry made very clear, that would mean the closure of many residential aged-care facilities.

Ms Thompson, whose evidence I referred to earlier, described how close-knit the community of Ashford is and how valuable it is for older people to age in place. The committee report notes that she "insisted" that if her residents were to be moved, there "would be a drastic deterioration in their condition". From personal knowledge, I confirm that that would often be the case. Ms Thompson said in her evidence:

... out where we are the community is very close and people have their families, their friends ... all within this area. Now you take them 60, 80, 100, 200 kilometres away and I can assure you that their overall holistic care will deteriorate drastically, not because of the physical care that they are given but by the emotional upheaval that they will experience.

Mr Phillip Carter from St Andrew's Village, Ballina, also questioned the 24/7 registered nurse requirement if it means residents will be displaced because of facility closures. He said to the committee:

Should facilities close in small communities, people will have to find accommodation in larger towns. Being displaced from their loved ones is not what I call quality of care or thinking of your fellow human beings.

A number of inquiry participants noted that currently residents and their families have a choice to stay in their communities because there are local facilities available to provide the care they need. They said that those facilities may not always include continuous, on-site registered nursing care, but that people have a choice: They know they can stay there if they do not need full registered nursing care. But this bill will, in effect, shut down the right for people to have that option. It must be accepted that residential care choices in rural and remote areas are already limited. However, the terms of this bill will ensure that there are even fewer choices. I will leave it to my colleagues from The Nationals to read more evidence onto the record. I do not want to take up too much of the House's time this morning.

[Interruption]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I know that this is an emotional subject, but the Minister will be heard in silence. Members will come to order and show the Minister some respect.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I respect everybody in the gallery and I am entitled to speak as the health Minister in the State without admonishments from those opposite. I also point out that the people in the gallery were generously given the opportunity by a political party—presumably the Labor Party—to attend Parliament this morning but that the Coalition was not advised until two minutes before this debate was called on. If all those folks in the gallery were given the opportunity to be here, those opposite could have given us the courtesy of prior notice. My position is not based on self-interest; I am looking at the broader issues that a health Minister should consider. With the greatest respect, I am entitled to make those points.

As I said, I have received two letters—one from a representative group of Aged and Community Services Australia and one from Leading Age Services Australia—both of which express the same concerns that I have raised in my address to the House. We must recognise that most legislation in the health and aged-care areas should be nuanced and all opportunities should be considered carefully; it should not be brought in like a sledge hammer. This legislation takes the sledge-hammer approach; it is a very simplistic approach that does not take into account the nuances and the differences across New South Wales. Coalition members who will speak in this debate will address their concerns. I note that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has made no effort to come to my door as the health Minister and sit down with me and talk about any changes. We will absolutely oppose the bill.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (11:17): As the representative in this place of the shadow Minister for Health, the Hon. Walt Secord, I am honoured to lead the debate today for Labor on the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016. I thank the Hon. Robert Brown from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party for introducing the bill in the other place last year on 12 May—International Nurses Day. It is fitting that we are debating the bill today in this place, one year down the track, on the eve of International Nurses Day—a day when we recognise nurses' service to and care of communities across the world.

The Labor Opposition supports the bill because it is good, responsible health policy and because it embodies the policy that Labor took to the 2015 election, which was to mandate the requirement for a registered nurse to be in aged-care facilities 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I note the bill also has the support of The Greens, the Christian Democratic Party and the Animal Justice Party. The only remaining question mark is the Government's support of the bill—although I suspect the Minister has just answered that questions for us. I acknowledge the many people in the gallery today. I can see nurses and representatives of the Nurses and Midwives' Association, the Country Women's Association and allied health professionals. All those people in the gallery care.

Before I go into the reasons that the bill represents good, responsible health policy, I will first give a potted history of why we are here today trying to claw back some morality regarding protections for some of the most vulnerable people in our community. Almost 30 years ago legislation was passed in this place that required nursing homes to employ registered nurses. That law was later embodied in section 104 of the New South Wales Public Health Act 2010. On 1 July 2014, the Commonwealth Government repealed the distinction between high- and low-level residential aged care. Because the New South Wales legislation was founded on the definition of a "nursing home" as providing a "high level of residential care", section 104 of the State Act became unworkable. So, yes, we are here today because of a legal technicality—a drafting choice made by someone 30 years ago, who could not have anticipated the Commonwealth's change, nor the heartlessness of a future State Government.

Following the Commonwealth's change, the New South Wales Government had a choice: Would it retain the requirement for registered nurses in aged care or would it not? If there is one thing about this Government that is guaranteed, it is that it will take the low road. Handed an opportunity to go low, the Government did just that by gazetting a regulation—the Public Health Amendment (Nursing Homes) Regulation 2014—that watered down the requirement for registered nurses in aged care. The regulation dropped the requirement to have registered nurses on site all day, every day, for services that commenced later than 1 July 2014. So the Government, in its wisdom, created an uneven playing field in the aged-care sector, where services established before 2014 must have registered nurses on site 24/7 but newer services do not need to. Not only is that unfair for operators within the sector, but also it is far from clear for people who are trying to find services for themselves or for their loved ones.

In 2015 an upper House committee was formed to investigate the issue. I thank the Hon. Walt Secord and the Hon. Courtney Houssos for representing Labor on the committee. The committee released its report in October 2015. In the report the committee clearly recommends that the Government retain the requirement for registered nurses to be on duty in nursing homes at all times. In 2016 the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party introduced this bill into the upper House—that is one year ago. It was passed by the upper House last week because Government members did not know what to do. They did not support the bill but did not oppose it either. Well D-day is here, folks; it is time to make a decision. The member for Orange spoke today about the reasons the bill is important and why all aged-care services should have a registered nurse on site 24/7. But I will touch briefly on some scenarios that further illustrate why the bill must be passed today.

In my former life as a health lawyer I saw cases of terrible neglect in aged-care settings. A woman who had once been a dancer had a pressure ulcer so large on her buttock that you could fit a fist in it. An Aboriginal man's dementia was mismanaged, his pain left untreated and his so-called "antisocial behaviours" punished, until he ultimately died of malnutrition and dehydration. Just this week I spoke with Jane Carter, a woman from my electorate, who was given the horrific news by her mother's aged-care service in Raymond Terrace that her mother had maggots in her mouth. Her mother died the following day. For eight days prior I am told that she was given no nutrition or hydration, her leg was frozen at an awkward angle and she had numerous pressure sores. These are not a dignified end-of-life experiences. When such things are happening now in aged-care services do we seriously want to have an argument about reducing standards, reducing expertise on site and reducing quality of care?

We need registered nurses in services to provide the necessary expertise, to assist and supervise other care workers, to give medication that is stronger than a Panadol and to undertake procedures that would otherwise have to be done in a hospital. Without a registered nurse on site 24/7, someone who is already vulnerable either waits for adequate pain medication or is taken by ambulance to hospital. Realistically, what do members think will happen? Those people will wait, in pain, particularly in areas like the one I represent where the hospital is some distance away and ambulance resources are thin on the ground? We know that will happen. Other members in this place who represent regional communities should support the bill for that reason alone. Without a registered nurse on site, the frail and aged will wait longer to receive pain medication or for the low-level medical procedures that can mean the difference between life and death, such as the placement of a urinary catheter.

The Country Women's Association—which represents almost half of The Nationals' constituents—supports the bill. How can Government members not support it? Under the direction of the former Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, this Government has already taken the low road. The new Minister for Health and all Government members now have an opportunity to redeem themselves—although it seems clear that that will not happen today. I thank the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association for its untiring advocacy on this issue. I acknowledge the presence in the gallery today of the General Secretary of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, Brett Holmes. The Country Women's Association, the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW and the Council on the Ageing NSW have all taken a stand on this issue. They do not want to see a reduction in the quality of care in aged care services. This is not a hard decision. The Government has a choice: Does it back the community and its clearly stated desire to see some of our most vulnerable people receive quality care; or does it back the big players—its friends and Liberal Party donors—and erode standards, protections and quality of care so that its mates can operate more profitably?

The Government's decision whether to support the bill should not be founded on the likely impact on hospital beds or our overworked paramedics—although these factors are most important. The decision of Government members today should be founded on whether they want to see the aged and the frail afforded dignity and respect. Government members can crow about infrastructure all they like, but if they have not got a heart then people will not like them. It is like the schoolyard bully: He can dole out lollies but all the other kids know that when they are down they will still get kicked. The decision of Government members in this place today will reveal to everyone whether this Government has a heart, although I suspect strongly we will see—the Minister has already led the way—adopt a strategy that ensures no decision is taken today. The Labor Opposition wholeheartedly supports the bill. I commend it to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (11:26): I speak against the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016. At the outset I must declare, in a sense, a conflict of interest in that I am a third generation registered nurse. I have worked in public hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, nursing homes and community centres. I believe the party that introduced the bill has got it wrong and is misleading the public. It has certainly misled a radio personality. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party told that radio personality that I had spoken to the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association in support of the bill. I have never spoken to the association about this bill. On radio today it was said that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party had spoken to me about the bill. It has never spoken to me about the bill. Yesterday or the day before a staff member from that party said to me in the lift, "I am pleased you are supporting the bill" and then got out of the lift. I did not make any response to him. So perhaps the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party interpreted that as my supporting the bill.

I spoke to a motion on this issue last year. It is fearmongering. Under the old definition, a nurse was required 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in a high-needs nursing home, and that remains the case today. Under the old definition, a registered nurse was not needed in low-care facilities. That is the issue we are discussing today. The New South Wales Government supports having an appropriate level of nursing care in residential aged-care facilities but nursing care is only one aspect of the care provided in those facilities. The bill fails to recognise the complexity of providing care and supporting the wellbeing of older people in aged-care facilities. As a member representing a regional area, I have had staff from aged-care facilities in my electorate come to see me about this issue. They said that in a low-care facility there is no need to have a registered nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They said that this would have implications for the care of residents in that low-care facilities could not afford to pay for a registered nurse 24/7 and they would have difficulty even finding staff to do that. This Government has increased the number of nurses in the public health sector. Nurses do an outstanding job in our hospitals and in health care in New South Wales. Nurses are the foundation of health care in New South Wales, particularly in public hospitals.

Ms Trish Doyle: Support them.

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD: I do support nurses, 100 per cent. They do a fantastic job. This bill is not about supporting nurses. It is about whether they are needed in low-care facilities. We should take a national approach. If this bill is implemented, New South Wales would be the only State that requires the employment of nurses in low-care facilities. We should take a holistic approach in accordance with the Council of Australian Governments. I refer to correspondence from Sunhaven Hostel, Ashford, in the Northern Tablelands, addressed to the Hon. Robert Brown, MLC. It states:

We are part of the Management team of Ashford Ageing Care Facility trading as Sunhaven Hostel. Sunhaven is a small regional rural remote, and community owned aged care facility in Ashford, NSW. We take great pride in providing exceptional standard of care to our 18 residents.

Sunhaven is the second largest employer of the district, and provides employment for 26 staff members. This has a positive flow on effect for the local economy, rental market and most importantly, the local central school.

Sunhaven has an unblemished record with consistently meeting all 44 standards of the accreditation process since opening in 1993. We take great pride in the care that is given to our residents, and keep all family representatives informed by three monthly newsletters ...

The major danger around 24/7 registered nurses in aged care is that if the NSW Government extend the need to have RNs in every facility, it is estimated that as many as 60 facilities across NSW will close. These services are neither designed, nor funded, to meet the care needs of residents with complex clinical needs and yet they are currently providing valuable support to people in their community and are often the major employer and purchaser of local goods and services. NSW would need an extra 2000 RNs who are willing to work in aged care.

Further, it states:

Please do not make a blanket decision without coming out and seeing for yourself the consequences that will occur if 24/7 registered nurses go ahead. We invite you to come and share a cup of tea and chat with our residents and staff and to make an informed decision, not one based on the recommendations by the ANMF. We ask you to please look at all sides of the debate regarding 24/7 RNs in aged care. The future of regional rural and remote aged care facilities is in your hands, a huge responsibility to take on when so many of your members come from regions just like Ashford.

This aged-care facility does not look after high-care patients but those at the lower end. It will be impacted if this legislation is passed. I raise a number of issues in relation to this bill. The title of the bill includes the words "nursing homes". That term is no longer used. For some time, the term "residential care facilities" has been used, recognising the holistic support that these facilities provide. Much of the debate in support of the bill has been about making sure that our elderly are safe by having a registered nurse on site at all times. Registered nurses do a fantastic job but they are not needed in certain facilities for the safe care of residents.

Our elderly are entitled to quality of life supported by a facility that provides not only for nursing care for those residents who need it but also for social and personal care that promotes their wellbeing. These facilities

are home for the elderly in our community who are no longer able to reside independently in the community. As such, the facilities should be home-like and not a replication of a hospital. The Commonwealth Government is currently moving towards consumer-directed care in the aged-care sector. Consumer-directed care empowers consumers and their carers by increasing choice and flexibility about the care and services they receive, how they are delivered and by whom.

The advice from peak bodies for aged care, such as Aged and Community Services Australia and Leading Age Services Australia, is that the bill, if passed, will directly compromise a facility's ability to provide a broader spectrum of services. To provide a registered nurse on site at all times, these facilities would need to cut back in other areas that promote the wellbeing of elderly—and that is if the facility does not shut down as a result of the added costs involved in complying with this bill. This is a matter of great concern to people across regional New South Wales. Aged and Community Services Australia and Leading Age Services Australia have advised that this is a real risk, particularly for smaller facilities located in rural and regional areas.

The New South Wales Government recognises the importance of providing nursing care in residential aged-care facilities. It strongly supports the need for nursing care in residential aged-care facilities for residents who require it and at the time they require it. The Government recognises that care provided in aged-care facilities is complex and cannot be achieved by a blunt instrument such as this bill, which has a narrow focus of care. For those reasons, I do not support the bill.

[Business interrupted.]

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS

Order of Business

Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (11:35): On behalf the leader of the House, I will be moving a suspension of standing and sessional orders. The people in the gallery hold a passionate view about the issue we are debating. Regardless of the outcome, they should be present for the full debate and the vote. The motion I will move will allow for Opposition members to contribute to the debate and for the vote to proceed today, as sought by the member for Orange who moved the second reading in this House. To allow that to happen, the motion suspends standing and sessional orders to permit the debate to continue past 11.40 a.m. until 1.30 p.m. I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the second reading debate on the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill to continue until 1.30 p.m.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bills

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

Second Reading

[Business resumed.]

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (11:37): I make a contribution to debate on the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016. Since I was elected, I have spoken on numerous occasions on this issue in this place. It was one of the first matters I spoke about. I am pleased to do so on behalf of the Labor Opposition and my community. Friday 12 May is International Nurses Day and it is fitting that today we are debating this bill. This bill is about the minimum standards of care afforded to our elderly citizens in aged-care facilities or nursing homes. For the benefit of members in this place, I remind the House of the key recommendations of the upper House inquiry. Recommendation 7 states: That the New South Wales Government retain the requirement in section 104 (1) (a) of the Public Health Act 2010 for registered nurses to be on duty in nursing homes at all times and to amend the definition of "nursing home" under the Act. For nearly 30 years, in the interest of patient safety, a regulation has been in place to ensure adequate coverage of nursing homes by registered nurses. However, the Minister has chosen to put the interests of business and profit ahead of patients and their families. In spite of the Government's own parliamentary inquiry recommending retention of registered nurses at all times, the Minister chose to ignore that recommendation. A change to the definition of "nursing home" is needed in order to harmonise legislation in this State with Commonwealth legislation in this area. Sadly, the Government has been completely inactive and unresponsive to the calls from aged-care residents, activists and the nursing profession for legislative action in this space. It is now time to put this right. The commercial interests

of for-profit aged-care providers cannot be placed above safety and care simply because a reduction in nursing standards will reduce their wages costs.

Hardworking, dedicated nurses deserve the security and assurance that only the Minister can provide with the legislative change proposed by this bill. Moreover, the residents and patients of aged-care facilities and nursing homes deserve that protection and assurance too. Having a registered nurse on duty at all times reduces the likelihood of an unwell elderly resident ending up in the emergency department of the local hospital. I am told this again and again. This causes unnecessary trauma for the patient as well as placing further strain on our already overburdened emergency departments. It forces residents to be admitted unnecessarily, further adding to bed block in our emergency departments and hospital wards.

Registered nurses are aged-care specialists. They provide supervision and training to junior and lesser qualified staff. I hear from enrolled nurses and assistants in nursing, who do a remarkable job and are part of the team that ensures quality care to nursing home residents, that they are also concerned about the professional implications of current requirements. Without registered nurses rostered on at all times they will be forced to take on duties for which they are not qualified nor trained to do. There are many duties and procedures which only registered nurses are able to perform in the nursing home environment. Without registered nurses 24/7, who will undertake these specialised procedures?

It is not just aged-care nurses who are concerned about the downgrading of nursing care standards. I have heard from doctors, various medical associations and others who are opposed to the reduction in nursing care. It is absolutely imperative that this Government finally acts on the recommendations of its own upper House inquiry and supports this legislation. We have a responsibility to ensure the needs of residents and patients are not lost in the race towards profitability, as we know what will happen if private operators are not compelled by legislation to provide the highest level of care through the rostering of permanent, around-the-clock registered nurses.

In calling for action from the Government I place on the record my gratitude and deepest respect to the activists here today, such as Jocelyn Hoffman, Shirley Ross-Shuley, Annette Peters, Louise Stammers, Peter Buckney, and Peter Lammiman. These Blue Mountains nursing warriors are incredible. They do tough, physical work and they have medical and professional expertise that is among the very best in the industry. In their spare time, they fight, through their union, for better conditions at work for their patients and colleagues.

The NSW Liberals enjoy union bashing and undermining the good work of collective action. The next time they decide to attack unions and workers, they should remember the faces of the people seated in the public gallery watching this debate. I say to them, comrades, you are the faces and voices of modern trade unionism. We will not let the Liberal and National parties get away with attacking you in this place or in the media. You should never be made to feel guilty about standing up for yourselves and the people in your care. I congratulate our nurses and I congratulate Brett Holmes, Rita Martin and Jon Farry, each of whom has been doing excellent advocacy work at the Nurses and Midwives Association [NMA]. But they are being stonewalled by this Government at every turn.

For some years, the NMA and other stakeholders have met regularly to explore the issue around the future of registered nurses and aged-care nursing homes in relation to changes to the Public Health Act. This meeting was known as the Aged Care Steering Committee and in 2016 put forward a report that contained a number of recommendations regarding the future role of registered nurses. The NMA and its members have attempted to gain access to the final report of the Aged Care Steering Committee; however, their efforts have been blocked at every turn by this Government. The Minister for Health has cited Cabinet in confidence. I ask if the Minister for Health takes seriously the concerns of nursing home residents and their families as well as those of the staff intimately responsible for their care. Why the secrecy and the obstruction?

The Government should stop playing games on this issue. Let us support registered nurses in our aged-care facilities 24/7 for the sake of safety and quality of care for our teams of healthcare workers. It is the right thing to do. Let us do it today. As the President of the Country Women's Association stated in the op-ed published by *The Land* today, "We're not reaching a crisis in aged care, we're in the middle of it." It is high time the Berejiklian Government accepted this reality and began to do something about it today.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (11:44): I oppose the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016, which has been introduced by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. I acknowledge the people in the gallery and thank them for taking the time to come and listen to this debate. I am sure they hold strong opinions and have done their homework in developing those opinions. So have I. Much of my homework and opinions have been developed from ongoing, lengthy discussions with residents of aged-care facilities, operators of not-for-profit aged-care facilities, and others. For a number of years, I was chair of the Strathearn aged-care facility and I understand the workings and requirements of quality health care in aged-care

facilities. I have managed and spent a lot of time in the aged-care sector. I have formed my opinion based on my experiences and on discussions, in particular with residents and their families.

The member for Orange, in his second reading speech, referred to Merton Court. Merton aged care is a wonderful facility in Denman, in my electorate. The member could have shown some degree of respect by at least pronouncing the name properly. It is Merton aged care, not Meriton. The member said also that his staff had spoken to staff at Merton aged care. I have an email from the manager of Merton aged care confirming that her staff had informed her that they have not spoken to anyone about the registered nurse issue. Merton aged care is a not-for-profit small provider of 17 beds in Denman. Has the member for Orange misled the House on this issue? Did he and/or his staff have any discussions or is he making it up? He also said that Sue Thomson from McLean Care had written to radio personality Ray Hadley in support of this bill. I have that letter from Sue Thomson to Ray Hadley. It contains a number of aspects. The letter states, in part: To be clear, passing of such a bill that replaces the Public Health Act, will have no impact on McLean Care, given we already provide 24/7 RN coverage.

The real issue is about the impact on small rural and remote organisations across NSW...

There would be significant unintended consequences for small regional, rural and remote facilities if the legislation were to be passed that meant all aged care facilities (nursing homes and hostels) were required to have a registered nurse on duty 24 hours per day, regardless of whether services are providing clinical care or not ...

Legislation of this nature would deny these smaller providers the flexibility required to appropriately respond to the changing mix of care needs within their service, where at times it may be that more RN hours are needed, and at other times the limited care funding might be more productively spent on additional allied health services or care staff numbers to support their residents.

The cost of employing a RN 24 hours a day (3 x 8 hour shifts) for a 12 months period, under the current ACS NSW & ACT Enterprise agreement, inclusive of all on costs is around \$628,271.00.

Merton Court Hostel, a not-for-profit organisation at Denman, has provided information to members of Parliament that if this requirement were placed on them they would suffer a loss of \$389,543.00. I ask that the House take note of the misleading comments of the member for Orange in relation to her correspondence with Mr Ray Hadley. The overview of this bill states:

At present under section 104 of the *Public Health Act 2010*, a registered nurse is required to be on duty in a nursing home at all times. The object of this Bill is to ensure that this requirement is continued ...

Page 2 of this voluminous bill states:

- (a) a facility at which a high level of resident care (however described under or in accordance with that Act) is provided, or
- (b) a facility of a class prescribed by the regulations.

Note. The definition of "residential care" in the *Aged Care Act 1997* of the Commonwealth is as follows:

- (1) **Residential care** is personal care or nursing care, or both personal care and nursing care, that:
 - (a) is provided to a person in a residential facility in which the person is also provided with accommodation that includes:
 - (i) appropriate staff to meet the nursing and personal care needs of the person; and
 - (ii) meals and cleaning services; and
 - (iii) furnishings, furniture and equipment for the provision of that care and accommodation ...

The bill has not delineated between high-care and low-care levels. The effect is that registered nurses 24/7 will be required across all facilities. That intent is clearly shown in the bill and contradicts the purpose of care. The Facebook site of the Nurses and Midwives Association quite rightly called for people to listen to this debate today. Reverend Steven Harris, who lives in my electorate in Stroud, wrote a post:

The concept promulgated these days is client focused care. 24/7 RN coverage directly contradicts that in rural areas.

Under 24/7 small rural facilities have 2 choices—slash care in other ways to pay the RN coverage, or residents simply are isolated from family and friends in their end days by being 100 kms or more away from their family and friends.

These residents currently have family and friends nearby dropping in on them, and RN coverage that involves hands on RN care 5 days a week, with out of hours on call availability, thereby meaning that the RN coverage observes their needs first hand.

[*Extension of time*]

A post directly under that of Reverend Harris is from Fiona Newell, who states:

I work in a small rural aged care facility which is non profit run by our rural community for our elderly citizens. RNs don't work 24hours/7 we are on call if needed, if forced to work 24hrs there is a high chance the facility could close. As one of the leading employers of our community, many jobs would be in jeopardy not to mention displacement of our residents, who would have to be placed in care facility kilometres away from their families. There is always two sides of a story. What might be needed in the city for extremely large nursing homes isn't right for the country.

That information comes from people who live in small rural communities who care for the elderly. They are very concerned that the requirements of this legislation will put their aged care facilities at risk. Last year Debbie Bruns from Denman wrote to me, stating:

I am also very alarmed that is a NSW Government requirement—

I understand why she says that because everyone thinks all policy comes from the Government— for all nursing homes to have a Registered Nurse [RN] on duty 24 hours a day seven days a week. I find this quite ludicrous. I note that no other State has this requirement. I question why a facility like Merton Court needs RNs on duty 24 hours a day. I also question where the Government think we, along with all the other aged care providers in NSW, might find enough RNS to provide this service especially when our hospitals are struggling for staff. As a member of the Denman branch of the United Hospitals Auxiliary, I know first-hand that attracting RNs to rural areas is near impossible. I also know of the exorbitant cost involved in employing Agency RNS. I have gathered a lot of evidence that supports the defeat of this bill. We must support our small rural communities. As a member of The Nationals in the Upper Hunter, I assure my constituents that my focus is wholly and solely on protecting our vulnerable people who require aged care, ideally in their community. I am fortunate to have wonderful facilities in my electorate. I have been contacted by people from Quirindi, Denman and Stroud and none of them supports this bill. They support genuine, quality care, which does not need to be mandated in terms of minimum staffing numbers. They all agree that aged care facilities should have the ability to provide appropriate care for residents and that families should be able to visit. Residents should be able to participate as much as they can in community activities and, importantly, receive the care they require. Another email from Shani Mitchell, the manager at Merton Living in Denman, says in part:

Quotes from our residents and doctors:

During our recent re-accreditation audit, one of our doctors spoke to the assessors. 'Tick all the boxes, they are wonderful here, they do a great job'. We have great doctor coverage in Denman at the moment and they all visit Merton Court to see their patients. They also facilitate their RN's to visit Merton Court to give B12 injections, flu vaccines, INR's, etc. Merton Court is on Hunter New England Health land and an MPS adjoins Merton Court. The MPS has 24 hour emergency service, i.e. there is a registered nurse on duty 24/7, which Merton Court could access.

The multipurpose service is within 10 metres of that facility. They are able to have access to registered nurses 24/7 without it being mandated. [*Time expired.*]

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery student leaders from New South Wales high schools who are attending the Secondary Student Leadership Program conducted by the Parliamentary Education team.

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (12:00): I acknowledge the student leaders who have joined us in the gallery. It is fabulous to see them here as part of the Secondary Student Leadership Program. I also acknowledge members of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association and allied organisations who are here to support the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016 that the member for Orange has introduced on behalf of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. I acknowledge the Government for suspending standing and sessional orders to allow more members to speak on this important bill. I thank the Minister for Health for that; it is greatly appreciated. This matter is at the heart of many people's concerns and it has been debated for some time.

I note that having a Shooters, Fishers and Farmer Party member in the House has been quite disruptive already. I acknowledge the member for introducing a bill that has recently been debated and passed in the upper House. Whilst I am not making any claims of being contemporary, I worked as a nurse until 2004 having spent 26 years at Morisset Hospital as a psychiatric nurse working in developmental disability and in aged care for a period. My wife is a registered nurse and has worked at Wyong Hospital. She is now back at Morisset. Apart from my personal experience, I am exposed to these issues in other ways. Many of my friends work in the sector. In addition, over the years many constituents have made representations to me about the care of their elderly mums, dads, aunts, uncles or friends. Most of us will move into aged care at some stage.

I will make my contribution short because there is limited time for everyone to speak. Although the Minister extended this debate, there will still not be enough time for everybody to say what they want to say. I will be supporting this bill. I trust that it will be put to a vote today. This is an extremely important matter. I am concerned that the standards we expect in aged care in New South Wales are being lessened. I have heard Government members speak about their concerns over the impact this bill would have on the number of registered nurses available to staff these facilities and the cost it might impose on small facilities. I would say that is an irrelevant and inaccurate representation of what the bill is trying to achieve. It is certainly not seeking to impose a requirement that registered nurses be on duty 24/7 at smaller, not-for-profit facilities.

Mr Kevin Humphries: It is.

Mr GREG PIPER: It is certainly not doing that. It is about providing registered nurses in places that have patients with high-care needs. People in aged-care facilities who might not immediately be recognised as having high-care needs will probably drift into needing that level of care at some stage. A whole host of things happen in our final days. It is a complex time of life. A registered nurse has the skills, qualifications and necessary experience to recognise many of the subtle signs that need to be picked up early if they are to be addressed. I am not diminishing the role of assistants in nursing or enrolled nurses; however, we expect there to be a person with a much greater understanding and higher ability to detect serious symptoms at an early stage. Once the signs are detected, registered nurses can engage with appropriate medical staff and administer care as needed.

Additionally, having a registered nurse on duty along with assistants in nursing and enrolled nurses as mandated by this legislation will raise the standards and skill sets of everyone working in a facility. The fact is without a registered nurse in place the skill set of staff can sometimes flatten or decrease, which means everybody misses out. There is great benefit in having a registered nurse on duty not only to meet the specific needs of an aged-care client but also to raise standards and skills across the board. I believe this bill is sensible and supportable. If the Government had concerns it would have been appropriate that it intervened earlier.

While Government members decry the fact that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party did not knock on their door to discuss this with them, the fact is this bill was introduced into the other place nearly a year ago and was debated just last week. This is not a new bill. The Government has many more resources than minor parties to do things like this bill, which came about following recommendations by a parliamentary committee. Finally, for the Government to criticise the simplicity of any bill is outrageous. This is a simple bill because it deals with a simple concept. If the Government thinks that a bill is made better by its complexity and number of pages that is a sad outcome. Let us focus on the issue, which is people's concern for their loved ones, and provide a registered nurse 24/7 at those times when a higher level of care is needed. I support the bill.

Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES (Barwon) (12:08): I acknowledge the people in the gallery who are involved in the aged-care industry from a clinical, administrative or care perspective. As a former aged-care operator of a not-for-profit facility in my hometown of Moree for five years some 15 years ago, I come with a little bit of prejudice to debate the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016. I will refer to that again later. In the upper level of the gallery we have a number of student leaders from areas I represent including Cobar, Lake Cargelligo, Tullibigeal, Lightning Ridge, Walgett, Coonabarabran and Warren.

All of those places have a mixture of community-based aged-care facilities that are run by not-for-profit or church-based organisations. My electorate covers almost half the State—it extends west of the Great Dividing Range from Narrabri to Broken Hill. There are no for-profit organisations in my electorate. Our largest not-for-profit providers are Southern Cross Care in Broken Hill and the Whiddon masonic group in Narrabri. This bill will have no impact on larger facilities in larger regional centres because registered nurses are on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As the member for Upper Hunter said, it is the unintended consequences of what this blanket legislation will mean for many of our smaller facilities.

In the gallery today we have school leaders from many small communities across western New South Wales. Indeed, in my electorate more than 70 communities have schools. Health care and aged care are all about bringing care closer to home. If we make it too hard for the community-based groups and the not-for-profit organisations to do that we are doing a disservice to those we are meant to be helping—the residents of aged-care facilities. At Fairview Village, the residential aged-care facility that I operated on behalf of the community for five years, we had a saying: "Do you come to work in your workplace or do you come to work in someone's home?" Over the past decade, as aged care and resident care has become more complex, there has been a shift. As I said, blanket approaches such as this do not support small communities. That is why none of my communities support this bill. The larger providers are accredited by the Federal Government. It would not be in their interests to diminish their level and quality of care largely because over time they would become deregistered and lose their funding.

What is the difference between low and high care? Fairview Village had two sections of care. It had to have registered nurses in the high-care component of the previous aged-care model, but not in the hostel or low care component. Fairview Village was co-located next to Moree hospital. When we could not get registered nurses in the aged-care facility we had an agreement with the area health service to support those facilities. Many of the not-for-profit and community-based organisations, whether deemed to be the old low care or high care, are co-located and have access to a higher standard of clinical care if and when needed. Some years ago it was difficult to get registered nurses in some regional areas. In that regard the Government backed two important programs. We gave the endorsed, enrolled nurse more responsibility in dispensing medication. It worked well. It was also a good thing for the industry because it gave many enrolled nurses a career path. I know many who have since become registered nurses. Moree also piloted the extended aged-care outreach program. That program was based

around good care workers; not always an endorsed nurse—it depended on the requirements of the care package negotiated by the residents and their families. In country areas it is not a one-size-fits-all situation.

Catholic Healthcare is one of the largest care providers in regional areas. There are three Catholic Healthcare facilities in Forbes and Bathurst, in the electorate of the member for Orange—Jemalong Residential Village and Mater Aged Care, Forbes; and Macquarie Care Centre, Bathurst. Collectively those groups do not support this bill. In a letter written to the Government last week they said that they do not believe maintaining State regulation of staffing structures in residential aged care is warranted, given aged care is a Commonwealth responsibility. They said further that an alarmist campaign has been waged which asserts that without the safety net of such a legislative requirement aged-care providers would remove registered nurses from their services. This is not the case and, as was discussed earlier this morning with the first tranche of student leaders from high schools in New South Wales in the gallery today, sometimes to solve a certain issue one wants to hit it with a sledgehammer.

This bill demonstrates a poor understanding of the context of providing residential aged care in regional, rural and remote areas. Two weeks ago my mother went into supported accommodation at Tamworth. Some people thought it was an aged-care facility but it is not. Aged-care facilities are now described in the Commonwealth Act only for funding purposes. Supported accommodation is largely pay-as-you-go for individuals; it is not funded by the Commonwealth even though some might be able to access rent subsidies and the like. Aged care and supported accommodation is a lot more complex than what it used to be. Our population is ageing and there are more of us. That is why in the 16 years those opposite were in government four health facilities were built in regional and rural New South Wales. We have been in office for almost seven years and we have 70 facilities in regional and rural New South Wales. Most of them are multipurpose service centres [MPS] and in many of our communities those centres have taken on the role of the old high-care facilities. For example, Walgett now has a mixture of MPS high-care beds and a low-care facility across the road. If that facility, which at times has between eight and 10 residents, is required to staff a registered nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week it will close. Where will those people go? They will not qualify for the MPS. The story at Wee Waa is the same.

The Condobolin facility, which is community-run, is large. If that provider is required to adopt these changes the 60 to 80 residents in that facility will have nowhere to go. Members from rural areas know that financially some of these places run thinly because most of the money goes back into supporting care. As I said, it is not a one-size-fits-all situation. It is more than registered nurses and clinical care; it is about diversion therapy and occupational therapists. It is also about having speech pathologists for stroke victims who are recovering in those facilities. That is why not one facility in my electorate supports this bill, and that is why people in the electorate of Orange do not support it. I encourage those opposite to take a broader view of this legislation. The member for Lake Macquarie said the bill is about high-care facilities; they no longer exist. This is blanket legislation to be wrapped right across the industry and it is not appropriate for aged-care or residential facilities in rural and remote areas. I do not support the bill.

[Business interrupted.]

Visitors

VISITORS

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I welcome the second tranche of student leaders from high schools in New South Wales who are attending the Secondary Schools Leadership Program to the oldest Parliament in Australia.

Bills

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

Second Reading

[Business resumed.]

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (12:18): Aged care in our electorate of Wallsend is an issue close to our hearts. People in Wallsend care about the wellbeing and treatment of the elderly in our community. Wallsend residents are keen to support the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016. In 2009 an attempt was made to privatise the Wallsend Aged Care Facility and the entire community rallied against it. I thank those people in the gallery today who supported the community in the need to keep the aged-care facility in public hands. It was a big fight but we won. Under the weight of their support and intense community pressure, the Government changed its mind on the sell-off and the Wallsend Aged Care Facility remains in public hands.

Our community's reaction to the decision to scrap the rule requiring registered nurses to be present at aged-care facilities around the clock has been anger, disgust and frustration. Community members are saying, "Oh no, we have to go through all of this again on behalf of our elderly." New South Wales was once envied for its gold-standard protections for aged-care residents. It was the only State in the country to mandate the employment of on-site registered nurses, of which New South Wales can be proud. The Minister's decision removed protective legislation that had been in place for more than 25 years in New South Wales.

The only benefit of removing the 24/7 registered nurse requirement was to increase profits for nursing homes, but it came at a high price for elderly residents and their families. In 2015, eight of the top 10 locations calling for an emergency ambulance were nursing homes. Without an on-site registered nurse, elderly residents have been sent to already overcrowded emergency departments to access nursing care. We cannot afford to increase this figure by referring tasks that could be carried out by registered nurses in aged-care facilities. The removal of registered nurses has resulted in delayed treatment and additional strain on our hospitals, which hospitals cannot absorb—and that is certainly the case at John Hunter Hospital in the Wallsend electorate.

Patients in New South Wales hospitals are facing long waiting times in emergency departments, with data from the Bureau of Health Information listing John Hunter Hospital as one of the worst performers. In October to December last year, 35 per cent of patients at John Hunter Hospital waited for more than four hours—well above the State average. Statewide, 25.7 per cent of patients waited longer than four hours in emergency departments. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics data, almost 20 per cent of Wallsend residents are aged over 65, compared with a State average of 14 per cent.

As our population ages in Wallsend and across New South Wales, it is imperative that we cement protections for elderly people, including the requirement for aged-care facilities to employ registered nurses at all times. Elderly members of the Wallsend community have contributed to New South Wales all their lives at all levels. We owe them much more than we can repay. Having registered nurses in our aged-care facilities is a matter of decency and a basic human right. At an average age of 83½, Australians entering aged-care facilities are older and frailer than ever before, many with chronic and complex care needs that require the skills of a registered nurse. Registered nurses provide higher levels of pain relief, dispense medications and undertake procedures that other aged-care workers are not permitted to do.

Registered nurses are a fundamental part of the structure that supports an efficient and fair staffing model. By removing registered nurses, that staffing structure has fractured, effectively putting an end to the requirement to have a director of nursing to oversee care, and preventing enrolled nurses from operating within their professional scope of practice. Registered nurses are vital in aged-care facilities; they oversee medications, including assessing side-effects; they undertake nursing procedures, including urinary catheters, naso-gastric tubes and wound care; they minimise unnecessary transfers to emergency departments; they provide palliative care at the nursing home; and they provide support and supervision to enrolled nurses and assistants in nursing. Residents in aged-care facilities are someone's loved one. They have contributed to our society, they all have interesting life stories and they all deserve safe, quality care. The decision to employ a registered nurse should be based solely on the care needs of residents.

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:24): I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak in debate on the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016. Before doing so, I acknowledge in the gallery the school leaders who are part of the school leadership program, particularly those from Port Macquarie. It is great to see them here and I hope they enjoy their day. I also take the opportunity to thank the nurses and midwives, if there are any in the gallery. I was hopeful that later today—on the eve of International Nurses Day—I would be able to acknowledge the wonderful work that they do, but because this debate has now taken precedence I thank them now most sincerely.

I, like a number of other members in this place, speak in debate today from experience as a registered nurse. I have worked in acute care facilities at a large regional hospital—Port Macquarie Base Hospital—and I have also worked in what were formerly called high-care and low-care facilities. The message I deliver today is from that perspective and experience. I loved my job as a registered nurse and, no doubt like all the registered nurses who are in the gallery today, I was proud of the role that I played in people's lives, often when they were at their most vulnerable. I am therefore somewhat hurt that there is an implication that because I am opposing the bill I somehow do not care about those people. Nothing could be further from the truth. I would never advocate for lessening standards of care, particularly in our aged-care facilities and nor will I support a blunt and a blatant blanket approach.

I am opposing the bill because it is not appropriate and, as previous speakers in this debate have said, it threatens the viability of many of our aged-care facilities, particularly in regional communities. That has been highlighted by a number of my colleagues this morning and I will not go further into it. However, I will clarify some of the points that have been made by those opposite. The member for Port Stephens and other members

opposite referred to the Legislative Council's inquiry into registered nurses in New South Wales nursing homes and to the committee's report. What they did not mention was that a dissenting statement was made in that report. The dissenting statement was by the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones from the Liberal Party and the Hon. Sarah Mitchell and the Hon. Bronnie Taylor from The Nationals. Two of the three who wrote and signed-off on that dissenting report are registered nurses. I note a couple of comments made in the dissenting report: According to evidence received by the inquiry, Commonwealth legislation requires aged-care facilities to have sufficient numbers of appropriately skilled and qualified staff, including instances where a registered nurse is required, and this is monitored by the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency. We support the position that it is the responsibility of individual aged care facilities to determine the number and staff skill set they require to ensure that individuals receive quality care. Each individual facility should retain the flexibility to adjust their staffing profile to best suit the needs of their residents. For example, particular residents with greater needs might require more of a staff member's time. In this way, the number of staff in relation to the number of residents will vary between facilities. I will comment briefly about my experience in what was previously called a low care facility. It is in my electorate of Port Macquarie, within the St Agnes Parish, and is known as St Agnes Hostel. The fact that it has the word "hostel" in its name indicates that the residents of that facility did not have the same care requirements as those in a nursing home nearby. I spoke this morning with Adam Spencer, the Chief Executive of St Agnes Parish. He confirmed that this legislation would have a detrimental effect and would jeopardise the viability of the hostel and the wonderful service that it provides to our community. So while I worked in that facility as a registered nurse during the day, performing the duties of a registered nurse—such as wound care, vaccinations, assessments and so on—there was certainly no need for me, or any other registered nurse, to be in that facility 24/7.

I highlight the fact that this blunt legislation—as so many members in the House have referred to it—will have a detrimental effect on our regional communities. I was told recently, "If you think it is a concern not having registered nurses 24/7 in some of our aged-care facilities, I urge you to be concerned about the fact that you may end up not having aged-care facilities in our regions." Imagine the impact that will have on our elderly residents. In conclusion, we must understand that care outcomes in nursing homes and aged-care facilities have to be needs focused. We must understand that the healthcare requirements of those in aged-care facilities are complex and that Macquarie Street cannot assess adequately residents' physical, mental and emotional needs. That must be done by the professionals who care for them. There is a range of professionals and we must acknowledge the role that allied healthcare professionals play.

If a loved one requires physiotherapy, occupational therapy and so on not then it is detrimental not to take a flexible approach. Without a doubt, aged care is a big challenge for our society but we must get it right. We need a multidisciplinary approach and flexibility to ensure that our patients—our residents—get the very best outcomes. Mandating ratios, as this bill seeks to do, simply will not deliver the best outcomes. The community expects patient-centred care and we cannot achieve it with such inflexible legislation. That is why I strongly oppose the bill.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:32): I speak on behalf of The Greens in support of the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016. Members on both sides of the House have made some heartfelt contributions to this debate, but when there is such impassioned debate on an issue about which everybody has strong feelings it is crucial that we forget those emotions and listen to the experts who are qualified to tell us what is needed. I acknowledge the members and activists of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association who are in the gallery. While we may have personal feelings and stories that capture the attention of the media, it should be the health professionals—those who work in our health facilities, caring for the aged, the frail and the vulnerable—who advise us what to do. They tell us that they support the bill and that registered nurses should be available 24/7 in our aged-care facilities. That has been The Greens' policy from the beginning, and will continue to be so.

I never thought I would find myself speaking in support of the first bill introduced by the member for Orange in this place, but one should never say never. I note that the Minister for Health has entered the Chamber. I look forward to his trying to divert us from the issue at hand. We are talking about the need for registered nurses in nursing homes. I remind members of the history of The Greens' commitment to this bill. Dr John Kaye, the late Greens member of the Legislative Council, was a great supporter of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association. He met with nurses on many occasions and understood the need for ratios for registered nurses in residential aged care. The Greens upper House member Jan Barham chaired the committee that made the recommendation enshrined in this bill. She felt passionately about employing registered nurses 24/7 in nursing homes. She had heard many stories and knew the personal impact that the loss of the service had had on so many people's lives.

The Nurses and Midwives' Association is supportive of the bill. Recent media coverage has revealed that the NSW Country Women's Association also supports it, as does the NSW Cancer Council and many other organisations and groups that have contacted The Greens. A petition presented by the member for Blue Mountains gathered tens of thousands of signatures from people who support having registered nurses in nursing homes.

During the discussion on that petition my Greens colleague Jamie Parker made it clear that The Greens have always supported the need for registered nurses in nursing homes 24/7, and we are happy to restate that commitment today. I remind the House that the petition stated:

The Legislative Assembly should ensure a permanent legislation is in place requiring a registered nurse on duty at all times and the appointment of a Director of Nursing in New South Wales nursing homes.

Many thousands of people signed the petition. Many of them signed it because they had a personal story as to why they believed their support was crucial. However, the debate should refer not just to personal stories and heartfelt emotions; we should be listening to the experts—the registered nurses and the health professionals who say that this service is essential. On 11 May 2017 the Country Women's Association wrote the following in *The Land*:

Surely, if there is a problem with getting registered nurses into country aged care facilities, we should be looking at that issue as a priority, rather than risk the quality of health care of older people?

This is what this debate is about: priorities. We know that if this Government really wanted to it could find funding in the budget to ensure that there is a registered nurse in all aged-care facilities and nursing homes. But the Government does not want to make that a priority because it has other priorities that are about delivering for the big interests on the big end of town. The Government's priorities are to deliver for the big banks, the developers and people who donate to the Liberal Party. The Government's interests are much less focused on people's individual needs. The priority of The Greens is to ensure the best health care and personal care for the elderly and frail and aged in our nursing homes.

The Minister for Health could say, "I do not like this bill, but I really want to make sure this happens because it should be a priority". He does not have to support this bill if he does not want to, but he should make that announcement today. He could do it but he chooses not to, because this Government prioritises other things. It prioritises the privatisation of our public services, for example. Those opposite are interested in making profits. They are not interested in the people who use those services. If they were, they would keep the services in public hands.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 76, relevance. I ask that the member for Newtown be brought back to the leave of the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): Order! The member for Newtown will return to the leave of the bill.

Ms JENNY LEONG: On 11 May 2017 in *The Land* the Country Women's Association backed calls for registered nurses in aged-care facilities. It says that Parliament should make this a priority. The Government could do that if it chose to, but it does not. The Greens stand with the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, with activists who have been pushing for this change, and with the families who understand the impact and benefits of the bill. The Greens support the bill 100 per cent.

Mr Andrew Fraser: Come to regional New South Wales and have a look at what you will be destroying.

Mrs Leslie Williams: Say you stand with the Shooters and Fishers.

Ms JENNY LEONG: I note the heckling by members opposite. As I said at the beginning of my contribution, I never thought I would find myself, as the member for Newtown, supporting the member for Orange in this place. As was identified in the upper House, this is a joint initiative from members who support this important change. The Minister and Government members choose to make it about internal politics rather than the important issue of registered nurses in aged-care facilities. Those members should recognise that they could make the change and ensure the protection of the aged and the elderly. The Greens support the bill and urge all members to do likewise.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): Order! I remind members—including the Minister for Health and the member for Coffs Harbour—that under Standing Order 52 the member with the call will be heard in silence.

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (12:41): I strongly support the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016 as I believe it is absolutely critical that aged-care residents get the best and most highly qualified assistance available. This is not the way a Government should treat the most vulnerable and infirm in our community. It is not the way that good citizens who have worked hard and done the right thing all their lives should be treated in the twilight stages of their lives. They deserve the best care available, but unfortunately this Berejiklian Government is repaying them with a lower standard of care. Society has a responsibility to ensure that, in their time of need, people receive the best-quality care and are looked after with dignity and respect. That is why I support this bill and why I supported the petition presented by my colleague the

member for Blue Mountains backing the legal requirement to have a registered nurse on duty 24/7 at all aged-care facilities.

The evidence speaks for itself. The upper House committee that looked into this issue found that shifts led by a registered nurse often reduced unnecessary hospitalisations and increased the quality of clinical care at residential aged-care facilities. Let us hear that again: It reduced unnecessary hospitalisations. At a time when our emergency departments are overflowing, it is important to avoid unnecessary hospitalisations. But this Government and health Minister are only interested in one thing: the bottom line of commercial, for-profit aged-care providers. They want to pay less and give a lower standard of care. As legislators, members should do all we can to support our hardworking nurses, doctors and other staff. Having a registered nurse at aged-care facilities has the double benefit of giving our elderly Australians the best care possible and reducing the pressure on our hospital system.

Important day-to-day responsibilities such as administering medication should be left to a trained nurse. Administering incorrect dosages or wrong medicine could prove lethal, especially for people in this age group. Also, a nurse can spot or diagnose much sooner the subtle signs that a person is unwell, and treat them on the spot. Many nursing home residents have dementia and are unable to communicate how they are feeling. A registered nurse is well trained to look for signs of ill health. I have spoken previously in the House about Des Hartree and his late wife, Irene, from Bonnyrigg Heights in my electorate. Des is in the gallery today, along with a number of nurses and midwives. I acknowledge them and thank them for their presence. The importance of this issue, and the experiences of Des and Irene, compel me to put their story on the public record again.

Des and Irene were married for 55 years and raised their family of two children. Sadly, Irene was diagnosed with dementia. Des cared for her around the clock, doing everything he could for her until it became clear that she needed the care available in a nursing home. Although heartbreaking for Des, he put his wife's needs first. He has firsthand experience of the importance of having registered nurses in nursing homes. Des said that on two occasions Irene would have died if not for the registered nurse on duty. Once she had a bladder infection that was not picked up by other staff. Within 30 seconds of seeing Irene's condition, the registered nurse diagnosed a urinary tract infection and sent her straight to hospital. Irene was in a coma for 14 hours before she began to recover. On another occasion Irene had a fall that resulted in trauma to her head. Des said that ambulance paramedics were too busy to attend to Irene's bleeding head and the registered nurse was told to manage the problem, which she did. Paramedics arrived three hours later to transport Irene to hospital, where she received seven stitches.

Des believes the actions of the registered nurse saved his wife's life on both occasions. Irene has sadly passed, but Des continues to advocate the need for registered nurses to be available 24/7 at nursing homes because he does not want others to suffer. I applaud Des' efforts and the important contribution that he is making on this issue. The evidence is there for the Berejiklian Government to see. Do not put the lives and safety of our most vulnerable at risk. Think of the patients, think of their families. This issue is of the utmost importance, with 880 Commonwealth-accredited aged-care facilities currently operating in New South Wales. I hope that the Government reinstates the need for registered nurses at all New South Wales nursing homes at all times. Tomorrow, 12 May, is International Nurses Day so I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all the nurses and midwives who have made their way to Parliament today. This is an important issue. I thank all nurses, midwives and caregivers for their compassion, strength and kindness in looking after our most vulnerable in what at times are the most devastating situations.

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (12:46): I will speak briefly to the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Home) Bill 2016. I reiterate what previous Government members have said: Aged care in regional New South Wales is provided by groups such as Legacy, Catholic Aged Care, the Royal Freemasons Benevolent Institution and The Whiddon Group. They would all be affected by this bill. They have told me that the extra expense—considering the dementia care that is needed—would put some of them out of business. There needs to be proper aged care in regional New South Wales, and that care is provided by not-for-profit organisations. Those opposite say that the bill will not affect aged-care facilities, yet it will impose enormous additional costs on them. The Government and the Parliament cannot afford to put an impost on those institutions. It would force them out of business and current regional services would cease to exist.

I commend nurses for the great work they do. Members of my family have been hospitalised on occasion. My wife had cancer and was treated for several months by specialist registered nurses. The level of care that nurses provide in aged-care facilities in my electorate is second to none. I urge the Parliament not to support this flawed bill that will see services diminish in my electorate and across regional New South Wales. I support the contributions of other members of The Nationals in this Chamber today. Members must not play politics with this issue. This is not about the nurses' union; it is about proper care for aged people in regional New South Wales. I oppose the bill.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (12:49): I support the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2106. The bill at its core is about how we treat our aged people. The object of the bill is to retain registered nurses in New South Wales nursing homes, at all times—24 hours, seven days a week. The legal requirement to have a registered nurse in an aged-care facility at all times has been standard practice in New South Wales for almost 30 years. In 2014 changes to the Commonwealth Aged Care Act altered the definition of a nursing home and potentially eradicated the requirement to have a registered nurse in such facilities at all times. After lobbying and an excellent campaign by the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, the then Minister for Health announced an amendment to the Act that enabled the status quo to continue until the end of 2015. In June 2015 the inquiry into registered nurses in New South Wales nursing homes was established. Recommendation 7 of the final report of that inquiry stated:

That the NSW Government retain the requirement in section 104(1)(a) of the Public Health Act 2010 for registered nurses to be on duty in nursing homes at all times.

But the Government ignored this key recommendation, bowing to pressure from commercial industry operators and choosing them over the elderly people of New South Wales. Commercial, for-profit aged-care providers want to reduce expenses and quality, professional medical care costs are an expense. For-profit operators determined that they wanted to reduce costs and thereby increase their profits by not having to provide registered nurses on site at all times. It is appalling that the Minister for Health has put the interests of commercial, for-profit aged-care providers ahead of the needs of the community and the elderly in this State. It is especially appalling considering doctors, nurses, various medical bodies and the parliamentary inquiry recommend that section 104 remain.

Mandating a minimum of one registered nurse on duty directly ensures that skilled staff are always present and that our aged people receive the quality of care they need at the end of their lives. Rostering a registered nurse should not be at the discretion of the provider who is influenced by profit. The rostering of appropriate medical staff should be based on the high-care needs of aged-care residents. We are seeing something quite remarkable with this legislation: Labor, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers, The Greens, the Christian Democratic Party and the Animal Justice Party are standing side by side in support of the bill. The only parties that do not support it are the Liberals and The Nationals. I wholeheartedly support the bill. I call on the Government to wake up to its serious error in judgement and support the bill.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (12:50): I make a contribution to debate on the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016. I congratulate the member for Orange on introducing the bill. I stand side-by-side with my colleagues in strongly supporting it. We on this side of the House support the bill because Labor is the party that protects workers' rights and looks after the health and safety of all citizens in New South Wales. In April 2016 the Baird Liberal Government used a New South Wales parliamentary inquiry into the requirement that nursing homes in New South Wales must have a registered nurse on duty around the clock to drop completely the law of the land and abandon that important rule. This was despite the parliamentary inquiry recommending that the Baird Government retain the regulation. Doctors, nurses and the Labor Opposition support that requirement and demand that it remain.

The meaning of the decision is clear: This Government is putting the commercial interests of nursing home operators ahead of patient safety and the livelihoods of our hardworking registered nurses and other health professionals. I put on record that the Labor Opposition stands completely united with the nurses on this measure. We all know that our population is ageing, particularly in the electorate that I represent. It is integral that we ensure that the elderly in our communities receive the care they deserve with dignity. In the face of facts concerning our growing ageing population, it is absolutely ludicrous that the Government now seeks to water down the longstanding protections for some of our society's most vulnerable people—the elderly in our nursing homes.

I am pleased that we are joined today by a large contingent from the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association. They are most welcome. Their organisation has run a formidable campaign, for which we applaud them. The conditions that the union has fought for over many years were not gained easily. But when its members are committed to something that is so important to the community they will always win, because they are on the right side of history. I also thank the Country Women's Association, whose representatives are also here today. They have been avid campaigners in the face of much opposition from their own members in their communities. I applaud them for their ongoing support for nurses in their communities. I say to members opposite: One day they may be in a nursing home and require the assistance of a registered nurse, one day their parents may be in a nursing home and need a registered nurse, or they may have a child in a nursing home who requires a registered nurse. When that day comes they should remember this debate, because they will be on the wrong side of history. I strongly commend the bill to the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:56): I support the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016, which will require the presence of a registered nurse in all New South Wales nursing homes whose residents have high care needs. I commend the member for Orange for introducing the bill. I understand that this was the situation for 40 years but, as a result of changes to Federal and State laws, the requirement now applies only to nursing homes that were operating before 1 July 2014. Nursing homes support people who are frail and have high care needs, often with complex comorbidities of both physical and mental health conditions; some also need palliative care. Elderly people are in these facilities generally because they are no longer able to live independently and their families are unable to give them the care they need.

We have all heard horror stories about nursing homes where vulnerable elderly people have suffered from neglect of their medical conditions, and many elderly people have a real fear of being "put in a nursing home". Families with loved ones in such facilities often worry about their welfare. We must provide a minimum standard that ensures nursing home residents get the level of care they need as soon as they need it, with sufficient medical oversight of their health situation. Having a registered nurse at facilities at all times will ensure this level of care, and give residents and their families peace of mind. Registered nurses can administer Schedule 8 drugs—which are vital for pain relief—and they understand the complex medication regimes that many older people must follow and the potential problems associated with taking other drugs.

Registered nurses know when a person requires further medical attention and understand the best path to take, including calling an ambulance or a general practitioner. Registered nurses can perform emergency procedures in life-or-death situations, including resuscitation. People who have given to the community over their lives should receive proper support and care when they are elderly and frail and unable to look after themselves. We must ensure that nursing homes are safe, comfortable and pleasant places for residents. I strongly support the bill as an important way to ensure the proper protection of residents of nursing homes across the State, and I congratulate the member for Orange on introducing it in this place. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (12:58): In reply: I thank all members who spoke both in favour and against the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016: members representing the electorates of Blue Mountains, Port Stephens, Central Coast, Wallsend, Newtown, Cabramatta, Sydney, Swansea and Charlestown. I note that the member for Maitland and the member for Canterbury also wished to speak in the debate but time constraints have prevented them from doing so. I thank the Minister for Health for his input and thank the members for Myall Lakes, for Upper Hunter, for Barwon and for Port Macquarie for their contributions. Fourteen members spoke in the debate. Four of them were members of The Nationals, which represents a quarter of The Nationals' representation in this place. Much has been said about this bill. As the Minister indicated in his contribution, this is a short, simple and succinct bill. During this debate, the waters have been muddied in relation to clause 3 (a), which states:

- (a) a facility at which a high level of resident care (however described under or in accordance with that Act) is provided ...

Clearly, the intention of this legislation is directed towards high-level care facilities and high-level care residents at those facilities. Those opposite have indulged in fearmongering and mistruths and have said that the legislation will apply to every nursing home in this State. The Minister for Health, who is present in the Chamber and is a far more experienced member than I am, said a number of things of which I question the accuracy. Much was made about the fact that this bill was an ambush and that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has conspired with Labor, The Greens and other Independents to catch the Government on the hop or by surprise.

The bill is listed in today's *Business Paper* as the fourth item of General Business Orders of the Day (for Bills). It has been on foot for more than 12 months in this House and went through the upper House last week. It is false to say that the Government has been ambushed or caught by surprise by this bill. The Minister also said that the bill was not supported in the upper House. In the upper House the vote was taken on the voices and not one Government member voted against the bill. I refer to *Hansard* dated 4 May 2017 where the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox said:

I note that this bill relates to high-care facilities. I do not know why we have an argument here or why this is contentious. This is fundamental stuff. Like many members, I have been through this experience with my parents, both of whom were in high-care facilities. They have now passed but they were well looked after. I cannot put into words how much I admire the noble work of the nurses and healthcare professionals in those places, particularly the palliative care nurses. This is a fundamental issue to me. I stand with the crossbench, the Labor Party and—I trust—the Government in ensuring that we deliver the best possible care for our aged community and stand by them in their hour of greatest need.

Clearly, members of the Government in the Legislative Council support this bill. Essentially the bill will not put at risk the closure of facilities throughout the State. As I said from the outset, this legislation is directed towards high-care facilities. Not every nursing home in this State is a high-care facility. I know I am preaching to the converted, as the people in the gallery are well aware of what I am saying. But I want to place on record that this

legislation does not apply to every single nursing home in New South Wales, especially smaller facilities in rural, remote and regional areas of this State to which this fearmongering tactic has been targeted by the Government.

I will refer to the members' contributions. The member for Myall Lakes expressed his opposition to the bill, which he clearly had not read because he talked about low-care facilities. He said that he had not spoken to anyone from the Aged and Community Services Australia, but my office was told by that organisation that he had. The member for Upper Hunter made aspersions in relation to facilities within his electorate. Once again I say that this bill is about protecting the most vulnerable people in our community who in the twilight of their lives deserve to have the best possible and available professional care in high-care facilities. The member for Upper Hunter said the Opposition was telling mistruths and misleading the House. I say once again that this bill relates to high-care facilities. My office made inquiries and spoke to those—

Mr Michael Johnsen: I got it directly from the person.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: Good on you. It is clear that the member for Upper Hunter has not investigated this matter and has not spoken to the relevant people. Of course the manager of a facility will not disclose the source of information that he or she has been given. The member for Barwon and the member for Upper Hunter noted that they had previous aged care experience. The member for Barwon referred to unintended consequences of the bill. What about the unintended consequences to residents who do not have the proper care and attention they deserve? The member for Barwon wants to jeopardise their care and welfare by not having a registered nurse in high-care facilities to provide treatment.

The member for Port Macquarie spoke of her experience as a registered nurse working both in high-care and low-care facilities. She said when she worked in a low-care facility there was no need to have a registered nurse 24/7, but that is not what this bill relates to. This bill specifically relates to high-care facilities. Once again, she is completely off the point. She said she will not support a blanket and blunt approach and that this bill will lead to the closure of rural facilities. If that is the case, the Government is putting dollars ahead of the lives of people in nursing homes and is looking after its corporate mates. The member for Port Macquarie referred to the upper House inquiry into this issue, where it was said:

I wish to briefly address the upper House Inquiry into Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes ... The dissenting statements by Government MPs on the Committee only relate to recommendation 4 and recommendation 15—not recommendation 7 which directly covers the reinstatement of section 104 of the Public Health Act 2010. That is precisely what this legislation attempts to remedy. The Government's response to this inquiry was that recommendation 7 was not supported and that it should be pursued through the Council of Australian Governments. This is just another way for this Government to attempt to delay the treatment of people in these facilities. It wants to leave it to someone else to make the decision. The Government does not want to focus on this matter now as it has other priorities to pursue, as the member for Newtown said. I thank the members who supported this legislation. It was interesting to hear the experiences of the member for Port Stephens who, as a lawyer, had prosecuted cases in this field. I also thank the members representing the electorates of Blue Mountains, Wallsend, Newtown, Cabramatta, Sydney, Swansea, Charlestown and Lake Macquarie for their support for the bill. Tomorrow is International Nurses Day and this bill deserves to be supported. I will finish with a quotation:

The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in shadows of life, the sick, the needy, and the handicapped.

Those words are contained in the last speech of former United States Vice President Senator Hubert H. Humphrey. His words were spoken at the dedication of a new building of the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare and are inscribed at the entrance to serve as a reminder of the duty we owe our most vulnerable citizens. Never have Humphrey's words been more relevant than they are today in relation to this bill. Registered nurses must remain in nursing homes, especially those that provide high-level care for high-level patients. I believe this is imperative. I ask Government members to think about the cases I referred to in my earlier speech when they decide how they will vote. I remind them of the terrible story of Shirley Carter, the unfortunate lady who was found at a Raymond Terrace nursing home with maggots in her mouth, and the lady in my electorate of Orange who was not being fed through her PEG tube every three hours during the night, as was required. I commend the bill to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes35
Noes45
Majority..... 10

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J
Car, Ms P

Atalla, Mr E (teller)
Catley, Ms Y

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A

AYES

Cotsis, Ms S
Donato, Mr P
Greenwich, Mr A
Haylen, Ms J
Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
Mihailuk, Ms T
Piper, Mr G
Smith, Ms T F
Washington, Ms K

Crakanthorp, Mr T
Doyle, Ms T
Harris, Mr D
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McDermott, Dr H
Minns, Mr C
Robertson, Mr J
Tesch, Ms L
Zangari, Mr G

Daley, Mr M
Finn, Ms J
Harrison, Ms J
Hornery, Ms S
Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Parker, Mr J
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G

NOES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Conolly, Mr K
Davies, Ms T
Evans, Mr L
Gibbons, Ms M
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
Pavey, Mrs M
Piccoli, Mr A
Speakman, Mr M
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

Aplin, Mr G
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V
Fraser, Mr A
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Kean, Mr M
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Roberts, Mr A
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Ayres, Mr S
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Elliott, Mr D
George, Mr T
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Sidoti, Mr J
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

PAIRS

Dib, Mr J
Foley, Mr L
Mehan, Mr D
Park, Mr R
Watson, Ms A

Berejiklian, Ms G
Marshall, Mr A
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R

Motion negatived.*Motions***INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY**

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (13:17): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes nurses are the single largest profession in the health workforce and provide an invaluable contribution to the wellbeing of healthcare patients in Australia and across the world.
- (2) Notes that International Nurses Day is celebrated each year on 12 May, the birthday of the world's most famous nurse, Florence Nightingale.
- (3) Congratulates the 49,900 nurses and midwives in the New South Wales public hospital system on the invaluable service they provide to the community and the significant contribution they make to improve the health of the population. As a former nurse, it gives me great pleasure to stand beside those 50,000 nurses who do an absolutely amazing job in our public and private hospitals, in the community and in our aged care facilities and multipurpose services. As the motion states, International Nurses Day is celebrated on 12 May. On that day we take the time to recognise the compassion, professionalism and round-the-clock commitment of all nurses caring for patients in our health system. NSW Health employs almost 50,000 nurses, but approximately 100,000 nurses and midwives are registered in New South Wales. As the single largest workforce group within NSW Health, nurses make a real difference to the care and the experience of patients, families and carers. Nurses also contribute to leadership in our healthcare systems to improve patient care and to promote a culture of safety.

In my role as Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health I am always pleased to hear about nurse-led innovations in patient safety initiatives and in the research sector. At a recent Health roundtable a clinical nurse consultant in palliative care, Ms Linda Ora, from the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District, was a shining example of a clinical nursing leader in action. Linda generously shared her knowledge and experience and exhibited her strong focus on quality patient care. She also offered her reflections and ideas on how we can improve palliative care services in New South Wales. I appreciate her input as well as the input of other nurses who attend palliative care roundtable discussions. I take this opportunity to reflect on a couple of outstanding nurses in my electorate of Port Macquarie.

Cheryl Nolte is the nursing unit manager in the paediatric unit at Port Macquarie Base Hospital. She is highly regarded in the Port Macquarie-Hastings community for her dedication and commitment to sick children. She is very much a hands-on health professional and many of her patients' families have become lifelong friends. That is an indication of the impact Cheryl has had on the lives of her many patients. Cheryl has been a registered nurse for more than 35 years—15 years as the unit manager in the paediatric unit at Port Macquarie Base Hospital. Her lifelong commitment to caring for sick children and newborn babies includes working in the maternity unit at Port Macquarie hospital and as the acting nurse unit manager for the hospital's special care nursery. In December last year her commitment to the care of sick children was recognised by the children's charity, Humpty Dumpty Foundation. Cheryl was named runner-up in the national award named in memory of Sydney nurse Michelle Beets, who tragically lost her life in 2010. On a few occasions it was my privilege and honour to work alongside Cheryl in her role as the nursing unit manager at Port Macquarie Base Hospital.

Annette Clark started her remarkable calling to be a nurse as a 16-year-old fresh out of school. She started at Dorrigo Hospital in 1965 and ever since she has been an integral part of the Dorrigo Health Campus. In 1969, when enrolled nurse training was introduced at Dorrigo, Annette thought she would give it a go and over the years she has continued to provide professional care to the majority of the Dorrigo Plateau community, not to mention delivering a number of babies and they now have families of their own. She is a remarkable woman who has provided extraordinary service to her hospital and to her community, and she continues to care for the sick while mentoring the young.

They are just a couple of examples. No doubt all members would be able to tell the House about other wonderful nurses in their electorates. Today we take our hats off to all the nurses who so often work above and beyond what is required of them for their patients and their families. The annual Essentials of Care Showcase scheduled for later this month, which is to be opened by the Minister for Health, will highlight this year's innovations, initiatives and quality improvement outcomes delivered through nursing projects across New South Wales. This work, led by nurses and local teams within local health districts and facility levels, will help to improve the patient experience and staff satisfaction. It will also help to reduce adverse outcomes and implement local solutions.

New graduate nurses and midwives are critical to the future of NSW Health. This year more than 2,200 new graduates commenced work in the New South Wales public health system, and more than one-quarter of this cohort commenced their nursing practice in rural and regional locations. It is wonderful to welcome these new practitioners. I wish them a satisfying and successful career in this noble profession. They will continue to bring empathy, care and skill to our communities. Indeed, they are our future. I particularly welcome them to our regional and remote communities.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (13:24): On behalf of the Labor Opposition I support the motion of the member for Port Macquarie and endorse all of the points raised in her contribution to this debate. International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world on 12 May every year, the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth. The 2017 International Nurses Day theme is "Nurses: A Voice to Lead—Achieving the Sustainable Development Goal". The aim is to raise awareness amongst the nursing profession of those sustainable development goals and why they matter and amongst the population, governments and other decision-makers of the contributions nurses are already making to achieve those sustainable development goals.

Those goals were adopted in 2015 by the United Nations. The 17 sustainable development goals encompass a broad range of sustainable development issues for the world, such as ending poverty and hunger, improving health and education, combating climate change, and many others. Although there have been vast improvements in health outcomes globally, health inequities remain a significant challenge. Those health inequities result from the social determinants of health. The social determinants of health are the conditions and the set of forces and systems shaping life and health throughout life's journey. That is particularly the case for the Australian Indigenous community, and I know that the member for Port Macquarie would share the sentiment that we should do more to support Indigenous health.

Government members should support International Nurses Day by showing real support for our nurses. This should be done immediately on the two current issues of privatisation and ratios. The public-private

partnerships will directly affect staff who may not be offered positions at their current hospitals and will have little choice of alternatives in their areas. Local nurses and midwives in my electorate remain in the dark about their future working conditions and entitlements, with only a two-year employment guarantee offered and no opportunity to negotiate. There was absolutely no warning or consultation with the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association or their members prior to that announcement. Not only has the Government shut the community out of the decision-making process but it also has forced hundreds of professional nursing and midwifery staff to wait on the sidelines as their future prospects are discussed without consulting them. This Government has chosen to turn on the people of New South Wales, blatantly ignoring the rights of workers and the community.

In June last year this Liberal-Nationals Government introduced a regulation that terminated the redundancy entitlements of public servants who are transferred to the non-government sector. The then Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, stipulated in her media release that only permanent staff would be offered a position, provided an equivalent job existed. Those who were not eligible would forfeit any kind of redundancy they were entitled to under the public system. Casual staff have limited rights in this situation. These dedicated nurses and hospital staff deserve better. In my community, Wyong Hospital employs 1,500 staff and has 300 beds. Mr Brett Holmes, Secretary of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association—who was in the gallery during debate on the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016 earlier today—said at the time:

This news to suddenly privatise five public hospitals—

It is now four—

has been thrown on the people of NSW in the same way this Government deals with everything: zero consultation with workers, their unions, the community or professionals.

Wyong nurses were told in staff meetings on Monday—days after the announcement. All we have to go off is a press release sent from Minister Skinner's office with no indication of how the model will work and a meagre two year employment guarantee.

Not even the State Government seems to know the details.

There's been no thought put into this plan, which we know from past experience will only benefit shareholders of the private operators.

Privatised public hospital models have a history of failure in Australia. We all know how badly Port Macquarie Base Hospital failed under a similar arrangement. Private operators promise to deliver cheaper services, but they had to come back to the Government for more money because they underestimated demand. Governments pay up or have to take back control and pay large compensation to private companies. I pay tribute to nurses for the important work they do. They deserve better recognition than they are getting from this Government. Last year Wyong hospital had 65,000 presentations to its emergency department—an average of 200 patients per day.

I turn now to the issue of nurse ratios. Nurses and midwives have called on the Berejiklian Government to put patient safety first by improving and extending legally enforceable mandated nursing hours equivalent ratios within the Public Health System Nurses and Midwives (State) Award. New South Wales is now lagging behind other States, including Victoria and Queensland which introduced nurse-to-patient ratio legislation in 2016. It is incumbent on the Berejiklian Government to deliver these changes and make patient safety the priority in our health sector. On International Nurses Day the Berejiklian Government should make a commitment to support nurses by stopping privatisation of hospital services, guaranteeing their staffing levels and introducing ratios.

The Government should make a real commitment to nurses in their actions, not just say kind words. Given the way nurses and ancillary staff are being treated in my area, the Government has a long way to go. I meet with those people on a regular basis and they are not happy. The Government's lack of consultation is disturbing and its policies are hurting our nurses. The Government should be listening to nurses and negotiating with them in recognition of their hard work. On International Nurses Day, in particular, the Government should be supporting our nurses instead of trying to take their jobs away on the Central Coast.

Debate interrupted.

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: Before I welcome our visitors, I congratulate the member for Sydney, who is celebrating his fifth wedding anniversary today.

I extend a very warm welcome to Mrs Josephine Dominello and her five friends from Ryde to the Chamber this afternoon, mother of the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. You must be a wonderful

mother because you have a wonderful son, there is no doubt about that. I think it would be a bipartisan view on both sides of the House that he is a wonderful Minister, and third only to the member for Balmain, who is teacher's pet.

I also extend a very warm welcome to the gallery to high school captains from Galstaun College, Northern Beaches Christian School, Mater Maria Catholic College, Barrenjoey High School, German International School Sydney, Narrabeen Sports High School and Pittwater High School, guests of the Minister for Education and member for Pittwater—another delightful member of Parliament.

Mr Clayton Barr: Where does he rank?

The SPEAKER: Probably fourth. I also welcome the delegation from the Country Women's Association Albion Park Ladies Group, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, Parliamentary Secretary for Education, and member for Kiama—not a teacher's pet, but it depends on the day.

I also welcome to the Chamber Diane Fisher, who is visiting from Hayling Island in the United Kingdom, the mother of Rebecca Cartwright in the Government's Whip's Office—she is also a wonderful young woman and she works really hard for all members—a guest of the member for Wagga Wagga and the member for Heathcote. Finally, I welcome the former member for Monaro Peter Cochran.

Members

MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I advise the House that the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business will answer questions on behalf of the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills.

Question Time

SCHOOLS FUNDING

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:20): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional New South Wales. Given the Turnbull Government's new school funding plan will deliver \$400 million less to public schools in regional New South Wales over the next two years than had been agreed, including a cut of \$23 million in the electorate of Barwon alone, does the Minister support or oppose the plan?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:21): I welcome the question because it gives us an opportunity to talk, as a Liberal-Nationals Government, about the support that we put behind the Gonski resource allocation model, of which we see the benefits in all our seats in regional and rural New South Wales. We saw the benefits from the former Minister for Education in New South Wales, Adrian Piccoli, who fought for designing a needs-based funding model that supports regional and rural schools.

The Liberal-Nationals Government in 2013 made tough decisions in relation to the budget so that we could find the \$1.7 billion to do a deal with the then Federal Government that guaranteed funding over a period of six years. We are now seeing those benefits in places such as in my town of Queanbeyan. In Queanbeyan East Public School we can see those benefits because they now have the opportunity to put programs in place to support their kids. Those benefits are now being realised and that is why members on this side of the House have been strong champions of Gonski and needs-based funding right across the education sector. You are never going to find a government that is stronger on this issue.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: You will never find a Minister like the former Minister who championed this issue right across the nation and changed the landscape when it comes to education. We have a new Minister who will continue the fight.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. It is great to hear about Gonski but the question was: Do you support the cuts?

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am being relevant. We are talking about Gonski and the resource allocation, which talks about money for regional and rural schools. On this side of the House—the former Minister, the current Minister, the Government, the former and current Premier—everybody supports the model that is in place which means more money for some of the most disadvantaged students, especially in regional and rural

communities. If we match that with the investment in new classrooms, in the facilities for those great teaching and learning environments, and the investment in technology in our schools, we are seeing a record investment in education. We have changed the landscape with great policies and we are seeing great outcomes. That is what this side of the House has always supported.

It is clear that the Federal budget delivered short on the Federal Government's original promise to New South Wales. This side of the House, the Liberal-Nationals, made tough budget decisions in 2013 to make sure that we could put our share of funding on the table, because we saw the value in it and we signed a deal with the Federal Government. What I recently asked as a local member, Minister and Deputy Premier was that the Federal Government honour the deal. The Government planned for this funding and is saying, "Honour the deal". The Minister is championing that. Of course we welcome the additional funding. After budget day there were question marks over funding for education from the Federal Government. So we welcome the guaranteed increase in needs-based funding from the Federal Government. But our position in New South Wales should always be that we want the deal honoured. That is all we are asking for and that is a fair request because everybody on this side of the House genuinely wants to support students, especially in regional and rural communities.

My National Party colleagues and my Country Liberal colleagues, together with my city colleagues, want to see more funding for students right across this State. But those opposite will use this as a political issue. Why? Because they have nothing else to talk about. They know they cannot criticise the State Government for our approach to education in New South Wales so they look at the Federal budget and want to turn that on us. But our track record over the past six years has been clear in relation to investment in our schools—record investment for which we are seeing great outcomes.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Across the State we are supporting the teachers in the system, we are supporting our students, and we are supporting families. This is the theme of those opposite: Use it as a political football and do not care about the actual outcomes. They create fear, like they did on TAFE—it is a similar story. I am happy to sit on this side of the House with our track record in education in New South Wales and I will not be lectured by those opposite. [*Time expired*]

ENDEAVOUR ENERGY TRANSACTION

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (14:26): My question is addressed to the Premier. How has the Government delivered another outstanding outcome for the people of New South Wales for its Endeavour Energy transaction?

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: My point of order relates to the framing of the question and to the use of the word "outstanding" which is clearly a judgement. It is irony and it is hypothetical. I ask you to ask the member to reword the question.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:27): I thank the member for Manly for his question and commend him on his outstanding inaugural speech. If that is anything to judge by, the people of Manly will be well served by his efforts in this place. He raised a question of fact and that is that we have an outstanding result today for the people of New South Wales—\$7.6 billion in gross proceeds. Today's result reminded me of the taunts from those opposite before the Ausgrid transaction and before the Endeavour transaction, and I say to those opposite—you are stuffed! You are stuffed! Today is an opportunity to thank a number of people for these successful transactions. Firstly, thank you to the people of New South Wales for trusting us to take care of these important assets and reaping billions of dollars to invest in infrastructure.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Secondly, I thank the Treasurer and the Treasury team. Thirdly, I thank the trade union movement because they have invested through the super funds and are backing the consortium.

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the Premier's answer. Members will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association for their affiliation with the consortia, the AMP super fund. Their national assistant secretary sits on the board of the super fund. It is well worth mentioning the unions that supported us in the Ausgrid transaction. The Australian Council of Trade Unions [ACTU] had a 50 per cent share in AustralianSuper. The Australian Workers Union [AWU] also invested. It was brought to my attention that at least two members opposite are members of the AWU. I thank the member for Kogarah for his contribution and the member for Prospect for his contribution. I thank the Transport Workers Union, of which the member for Londonderry is a member.

I thank the Australian Services Union of, which the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Blue Mountains and the member for Summer Hill are members. I thank the Independent Education Union of which the member for Fairfield is a member. Within the super funds we have unions from across Australia representing mum and dad investors and other super fund holders who invested New South Wales assets. That is welcome. I thank everybody for their contribution. In all seriousness, we went to the last election making a commitment to the people of New South Wales that if they trusted us to conduct these transactions at the highest level of probity and in the public interest we would return billions of dollars to roads, rail, schools and hospitals.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Kiama to order for the first time. I direct the Clerk to stop the clock. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr Michael Daley: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. There is \$7.6 billion waiting to pay for the WestConnex blowout.

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

[Extension of time]

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: This Government not only has delivered on that commitment but also has delivered in spades. I say this to those opposite: they cannot handle the fact that every single project of this Government—touch wood—is being managed on time and on budget. Do not believe those economic vandals opposite. They cannot handle the truth. We know the truth.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting. I call the member for Kogarah to order for the first time. I warn Ministers that if they interject they will be called to order. Members who continue to interject will be placed on calls to order and removed from the Chamber.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: In part, Madam Speaker, you have already ruled. My point of order is Standing Order 52. It is about noise and disruption during the Premier's answer. While I appreciate it is coming from both sides, it seems when Opposition members cause disruption they are put on a call, yet Government members suffer no consequence.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member's point is well taken. This is a general warning to Government members; they will come to order. I ask the Government Whips to do something about the level of interjections. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: For 16 long years Labor said it could not be done, that it was not possible to build the roads, rail, hospitals and schools, but the Government says it can be done. Today I was asked why the Victorian Premier was whingeing about not receiving enough Federal funding for infrastructure. I say to Labor: "Work harder. Do your homework and deliver for the people of the State". It is no accident that New South Wales is both the economic and infrastructure powerhouse of the nation. That will continue because this Government knows what it means for the great people of this State. Communities will be stronger. This Government will work harder, faster and stronger to deliver all of its projects.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I will not call on another member until there is silence.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (14:36): I direct my question to the Premier. Will the Premier inform the House how she can say she is extremely proud of the Turnbull Government's approach to education funding, as you did in this place last Tuesday, when schools in my electorate will be \$12 million worse off over the next two years?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:36): Of course I am proud of this Government's contribution to education. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals are putting more money towards education than Labor could ever hope to deliver. I inform the member for Wollongong, who is new to this House, and I do not blame him for that, that when the Labor Party was in Government it did not invest enough in schools.

Ms Kate Washington: Point of order: I ask you direct the Premier to direct her comments through the chair instead of pointing at the member for Wollongong.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Not only did Labor not invest enough in schools but on the eve of the 2011 election Labor hid a report that stated it was planning to close down schools, reduce the number of teachers and sell off surplus land. You cannot handle the truth.

Mr Jihad Dib: Point of order: I can handle the truth—20 schools in 2015.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lakemba will resume his seat. Members will cease arguing across the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I cannot be clearer. This is the ninth question on this issue. We were the first State to sign up to Gonski. Had Labor been in Government it would not have been able to afford to sign up.

Ms Jodie Harrison: Point of order—

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

Ms Jodie Harrison: The Premier has previously been directed to address her answers through the chair, which she continues to ignore.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I take this opportunity to reassure every single school community in New South Wales, no matter where that school is, no matter who is providing the education services at the school, that whilst ever the Liberal-Nationals are in government in New South Wales they will do better. Our children will do better and teachers will be better off, as will school communities. That is in stark contrast to what Labor members did in government, which is very telling.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: They say one thing but they fail to act. What we have done in education is putting them to shame. That is why I am proud of the Liberal-Nationals record in New South Wales

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (14:40): My question is addressed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. Can the Treasurer advise the House on this Government's record and achievements with the long-term lease of electricity networks to fund the Rebuilding NSW plan?

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (14:40): As members would be aware, in 2014 this Government announced that, after years of Labor neglect, it would rebuild this State from the ground up to deliver the world-class infrastructure and services that our State needs. Unlike the plans proposed by other governments this was not just a fantasy. We had a way to fund our game-changing agenda—leasing 49 per cent of the electricity network and using the proceeds to create a \$20 billion infrastructure plan called Rebuilding NSW.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Rockdale will cease shouting.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The member for Keira was on radio 2SM telling us how the New South Wales Government should spend the proceeds which under Labor we would never have had.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We would have had no infrastructure under Labor.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: What did we do? Under the leadership of former Premier Mike Baird—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: —we took our plan to the people and the people put their faith in us. Today that faith is being rewarded.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: With the successful transaction of Endeavour Energy this morning we have delivered on our promise to lease the poles and wires, making our \$20 billion program a reality. More importantly, we have delivered on our promise to embark on the most bold, ambitious and wide-reaching construction program that this State has ever seen. Rebuilding NSW is already changing the face of our State with \$7 billion invested in the Sydney Metro, \$6 billion set aside for our regions, and hundreds of millions of dollars allocated to health and education construction.

This is possible only because this Government made the sensible decision to start making the State's assets work for the people of New South Wales. When we look at the trail of destruction across other States we see that New South Wales is streets ahead. For context, earlier in the week the Federal Government announced in its budget a \$70 billion infrastructure program over 10 years. That is pretty good, but New South Wales will have a \$73 billion infrastructure program over four years. For the benefit of the people in the gallery, Labor's efforts over 16 years produced only half a rail line. To give Labor credit, I genuinely believe that every member in this place is united in one thing—

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: —a desire to do good things for the people of this State. But only one side has a track record in delivering. Government members do not doubt Labor's sincerity; we just doubt its ability. We know that Labor members try hard but they cannot deliver anything. It is true, because we heard their comments today. Even after the Government has transformed this State they still believe that asset recycling is a dirty word. They talk about selling while the net worth of this State continues to grow.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Despite all the evidence they cannot accept that asset recycling is what good governments do.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: As the Premier said this week, Labor members announced many projects when they were in government, but they could never fund them. For NSW Labor only the thought counts. But a thought bubble cannot cut travel times from Parramatta to Sydney Airport by 40 minutes. Commuters cannot catch a Labor Party thought bubble every four minutes from Martin Place and our hospitals cannot use a Labor thought bubble to treat thousands of patients in regional New South Wales. Labor's time in government is a shameful litany of failure—so many projects announced and none ever delivered.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I am talking about the Coalition Government's awesome transactions in this State—\$73 billion of infrastructure projects that Labor would never have been able to deliver.

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

[Extension of time]

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Opposition members should hang their heads in shame and get out of this Chamber quickly. Instead of acknowledging their abject failure and working in a bipartisan way to deliver good outcomes to the people of this State, those opposite have wilfully and deliberately chosen to obstruct progress. At every turn they talk down New South Wales. At every opportunity they block reform. When they are given an opportunity they come up with even more elaborate ways to oppose what is manifestly good for this State and the people of New South Wales. When we first announced the poles and wires plan they said they feared the Chinese community. When the first leases were completed and exceeded expectations they said it was not a good deal.

The SPEAKER: Order! The behaviour of Opposition members today is disgraceful.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Even today, which should be known as "Infrastructure Awareness Day", we should get little badges made up. We should all be celebrating but all that Labor members are doing is naysaying a process that has unlocked billions of dollars for this State.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: In coming years, when members are driving down WestConnex, they should remember that Labor tried to stop it. When catching the Sydney Metro to work, members should remember that Labor tried to stop it.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: When members take their families to sports stadiums, their children to new schools, or their loved ones to hospitals, they should remember that Labor tried to stop it. In contrast, this Liberal-Nationals Coalition has delivered and will keep delivering for the people of New South Wales. Today we thank the people of New South Wales for the faith that they have put in us. I assure every person across this State that we respect their trust. They will reap rewards because of that trust. Our contract with them will always be to go above and beyond to make New South Wales the premier State.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (14:47): My question is directed to the Premier. How can the Premier praise the Federal Government for its education funding when schools in my electorate will be \$10 million worse off over the next two years.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:48): I acknowledge the member's question and I reiterate that so long as the Liberal-Nationals are in government in New South Wales her community has nothing to worry about.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Bankstown that she is on three calls to order. If she continues to interject she will be removed from the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Because the member for Wallsend is honourable—I am sure all members will concede that—she should ask her leader how he anticipates raising the money to support our education system in New South Wales. He does not put out policies often but when he does they have nothing to do with raising funds, fiscal responsibility or education. In fact, his most recent policy demonstrates how out of touch he is as it was not about education, fixing the budget or anything else. It is one thing when politicians are in government to act in an arrogant fashion but it is another thing when they are in opposition. The policy proposal put out by the Leader of the Opposition involved relocating the Office of the Premier and Cabinet room to one of Sydney's pre-eminent public buildings—the Chief Secretary's building on the corner of Bridge and Macquarie streets. This will not only cost \$35 million—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: Madam Speaker, on this side of the House we value education. I know that the Premier is of talking about it, but could she answer the question?

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I advise the member for Strathfield not to make such remarks in my presence.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Exactly. The member for Strathfield suggested that Labor members care about education but in all the years that I have been a member in this place they have not put forward a single proposal as to how they would fund education in New South Wales. The most recent policy announcement of the Leader of the Opposition last month will cost the State \$35 million. If he ever occupies the government benches—I shudder at the thought—he would be more concerned about where his office would be rather than where classrooms and hospitals would be or where Labor would build road and rail projects. Labor members do not support infrastructure projects but they support relocating the Office of Premier and Cabinet.

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 52. Madam Speaker, you made a ruling and Government members are flouting that ruling.

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: If members want confirmation about how out of touch this policy is, I will read to the House the description of the kind of office to which the Leader of the Opposition would like to relocate. His policy document states, "The vestibules feature black and white patterned marble tiled floors—

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I have already ruled on relevance. Does the member for Fairfield have a different point of order?

Mr Guy Zangari: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73 and Standing Order 129, relevance. Offices of a future Premier are not relevant to the question asked by the member for Wallsend.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will hear further from the Premier. The member for Fairfield does not need to elaborate. He will resume his seat.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Let me demonstrate what Opposition members would be like if they occupied the Government benches. I hate to think of it. They do not care about raising money to support our schools or hospitals but they do care about where their offices are. The office is described as follows, "The vestibules feature black and white patterned marble tiled floors, plaster barrel-vaulted ceilings and terrazzo marble structures". I do not know what they are.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. I want to hear what the Premier has to say about the question asked by the member for Wallsend.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier just demonstrated how her answer is relevant to the question.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I think I have made my point. Whilst Government members care and are worrying about where to deliver schools, hospitals, roads and rail, the Leader of the Opposition is busy working out where he would like his office.

RURAL AND REGIONAL ROAD FUNDING

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (14:52): My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Will the Minister provide an update on the Fixing Country Roads Program, as well as any other related matters?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (14:53): On Monday I visited the electorate of the member for Upper Hunter which was a great day for the Upper Hunter. In fact it was a great two weeks for the Upper Hunter as this Government announced \$19 million in road funding.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: I thank all members for supporting Road Safety Week and for wearing a yellow ribbon. During this incredibly important week all members will be taking a bipartisan approach to addressing road safety.

Ms Jodi McKay: Will you come to my roundtable?

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: A bipartisan approach is what is needed. On Sunday night the Parliamentary Secretary and I saw something special happening in Sydney. The Governor General flicked on the lights which turned Sydney Harbour Bridge yellow in recognition of United Nations Global Road Safety Week. I pay tribute to Peter Frazer and his wife, Judy. After a terrible tragedy, when their daughter was taken from them in 2012, Peter and Judy tried desperately to cope with their loss. When I was not long into my portfolio Peter asked me whether we could join the United Nations campaign and turn the Sydney Harbour Bridge yellow. We supported that wonderful initiative.

Last year 254 people died on country roads, which is two-thirds of the State's road toll—something that this Government needs to address. I am proud to say that this Government is addressing that issue by putting the majority of our road funding into regional roads where these fatalities are occurring. We need to fix those blackspots. As the member for Upper Hunter knows, Bucketts Way is a very dangerous road. I am grateful for the bipartisan approach of members in this Chamber to the wearing of yellow ribbons. Today the Opposition spokesperson issued a press release in which it was claimed that more than 12,000 people have been seriously injured on the State's roads since the start of the year, which is wrong, disappointing, sloppy and disgraceful. That is not what we want to hear from the Opposition's spokesperson on this important initiative.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: Will the Minister accept my invitation for a bipartisan approach by attending a roundtable on road safety?

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order. I place the member for Strathfield on three calls to order. The member will come to order or she will be removed from the Chamber.

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY: This is not about scoring cheap political points; it is an important initiative that must be dealt with honestly and accurately. It is not about doing or saying anything to get a headline. We will engage with all stakeholders on this important issue. I implore Opposition members to get their facts right and not to engage in unnecessary and inappropriate scaremongering. It is not fair on the community or the people of New South Wales who should expect better from an alternative government. It is not good enough. I ask the Opposition spokesperson to apologise and to set the facts straight.

Importantly, this Government demonstrated to communities in the Upper Hunter that by contributing \$5.6 million to upgrade Main Road 358 between Merriwa and Willow Tree, B-doubles will be able to travel on the route, saving an average of 1.5 hours of travel time, and our farmers will be able to get their goods to market

more efficiently and quickly. As this is one of the most productive areas of the State, many of our eggs, chickens and dairy products come from this part of the world. [*Extension of time*]

We must ensure that this is done efficiently and safely by improving the quality of the road by constructing new bridges. We will ensure that those communities are safe and that they are able to conduct their business. Dungog Council will receive \$5.5 million to enable the replacement of the bridge over Williams River in Clarence Town. On Monday I saw that single-lane timber bridge, which is way beyond its use-by date. I am proud of this initiative. I know that the member for Upper Hunter has been fighting long and hard to ensure that these vital infrastructure improvements make our roads safer and more efficient. We are also committing \$8.4 million to upgrade Bucketts Way. The Opposition spokesperson should appreciate that. Her parents, as good country people from Gloucester, would be well used to Bucketts Way. Ensuring that safety and efficiency to market is improved along that road is very important.

I encourage members to appreciate the support we have received from major stakeholder the Livestock, Bulk and Rural Carriers Association, which represents a large portion of rural and regional owner drivers. Those good, mum and dad operators are 100 per cent behind our policy to support country people, businesses and communities. Members opposite could learn a lot from that. The only stakeholders they listen to are the unions. The Transport Workers Union says they should listen only to it. We listen to communities and stakeholders such as the Livestock, Bulk and Rural Carriers Association. They are important stakeholders to keep this State moving, keep people employed, keep economies going and keep New South Wales number one.

TRANSPORT FOR NSW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:00:3): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Why has the executive director responsible for managing freedom of information requests in his department been stood down?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:01): I just got what could be called the hairy eyeball. The good member opposite spent some time as a Minister in the last Labor Government. She would know that appointments at the middle management level of agencies are very much in the hands of people such as secretaries of departments. The member for Strathfield has not had a particularly good fortnight. It seems that every day she has issued a press release that has sought to mislead the people of New South Wales.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: If my question is misleading the House the Minister can tell me.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. If the member for Strathfield takes another point of order simply to argue at the microphone she will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr David Harris: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The Minister is casting aspersions. He must refrain from using that language or do it by way of substantive motion.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not agree, given the nature of the language I hear in this Chamber during question time. There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I thought middle management issues belonged to the member for Maroubra. This is somewhat ironic. Today we have completed the last transaction around the poles and wires. We have a State on the move and \$73 billion worth of infrastructure programs over the next four years, which I note compares in an interesting way with the Commonwealth budget. But what do we get from the Opposition? Questions about the Government Information (Public Access) Act. We will continue our program of delivering the best infrastructure for this State. We will not tolerate ongoing nonsense from members opposite who protest across our communities, spread mendacious information and tell all sorts of fibs.

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

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

Mr Michael Daley: It was a simple question seeking information. A senior officer in charge of freedom of information within the department of transport has been stood down. All the member wants to know is why.

Mr Anthony Roberts: GIPA it.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I note the interjection from the Leader of the House—"GIPA it". I have not had a sensible transport question from the shadow Minister for well over 12 months. I have been asked nothing about infrastructure or the 19,000 additional services. The best she can do is ask a question about middle management in the public sector. That is the bottom line. We know where her interest is.

Mr Gareth Ward: Where are their diaries?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: As the member for Kiama says, when are they going to start to publish their diaries? They want to talk about transparency. When they are going to start to fill out their pecuniary interest statements properly?

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:05): My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. How are twenty-first century government services transforming New South Wales and are there any alternative approaches?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (15:06): I thank the member for North Shore for her first question and I congratulate her on her heartfelt inaugural speech. She will be a strong advocate for the people of North Shore. I acknowledge my mum in the gallery. I say to her under parliamentary privilege she has seen firsthand that we are all angels in this place; please go out and tell the world. I come to this House with some good news. It is good news week for the New South Wales Government and the people. New South Wales is being transformed into a twenty-first century State that is delivering world-leading services. Since 2011 our economy has transformed from the runt of the litter to the leader of the pack. In just six short years we have gone from a backwater of government services to a world leader in providing government digital services. Labor's time in government was defined by relics of a bygone area—fax machines, paper forms, floppy disks, an antiquated motor registry and the failed Tcard.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Rockdale to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of one hour.

[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Rockdale left the Chamber at 15:07.]

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I have some nostalgic news about the Tcard. It was 20 years ago today that then Labor Minister Brian Langton uttered these words: 'We expect Olympic tourists to use ... a smart ticket that can be used on all transport modes on any day, with decent interchange, is obviously the best solution for Sydney's commuters and the best way to get to Olympic Games events. That was in 1997. We all remember the Sydney Olympics but we do not remember a simple transport system; we remember a failed Tcard. The Opposition's attempt at smart ticketing was nothing short of abysmal. Members do not have to take my word for it. It was reported in article in the *Daily Telegraph* in 2009 that:

The T-card has come to symbolise the shambolic state of this [New South Wales Labor] Government and its complete failure to deliver even basic services let alone upgrade existing ones into the 21st century. The Government should just give up and confess that the delivery of [the] T-card is beyond their capabilities—and leave it to the next Government.

Labor got the message and left the Tcard in abeyance. The Premier, and then transport Minister—the great Gladys; the fighter for the people of New South Wales—delivered the Opal card.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Blacktown will come to order. If he continues to interject he will be removed from the Chamber. I place the member for Blacktown on three calls to order.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Twenty-first century service to the people of this State is at the heart of this Government. The Opal card is not the only example of that. We have also taken that one-stop shop approach with Service NSW. We inherited a mess from those opposite, including a mess of fixed line telephones, paper forms and fax machines. Under those opposite, there were 100 call centres, 400 shopfronts, 1,000 websites and 8,000 different phone numbers. In less than six years this Government has created 75 one-stop shops across this State, a single 24-hour phone number for people to call and one website, which people have given a thumbs up and a 98 per cent customer satisfaction rating.

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

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: This may come as a surprise, but it was not our government that first pioneered the one-stop shop—I wish we had, but we did not do it. *[Extension of time]*

Those opposite also had a one-stop shop. Where do you think Labor's flagship one-stop shop was opened? Was it in regional New South Wales? No chance. Was it in Western Sydney? No way. Was it near Central station? No, but that is getting warm. It was right here on level 11—Eddie Obeid's office. You could go there and get anything you needed—a preselection fix, a mining licence, a week at a ski resort and a night overlooking Terrigal beach.

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

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: You could even get a new Premier!

Mr Clayton Barr: Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129, relevance.

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

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Those opposite they had one number, one email address and a single website, all owned by Monsignor Eddie Obeid. When it comes to twenty-first century government services, there is still much more to do. The Berejiklian-Barilaro Government looks forward to continuing to deliver better services to businesses and citizens across New South Wales to ensure that our economy remains strong. I am sure the verdict right now would be thumbs up for this Government and thumbs down for those opposite.

WESTCONNEX

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (15:13): My question is directed to the Minister for WestConnex. How can the Government claim that it has been genuinely consulting on alternative dive site locations in Leichhardt when it had already issued a notice to acquire the Darley Road site in November of last year?

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (15:14): I thank the member for Balmain for his question. The M4-M5 link is the most important part of the WestConnex project. It allows us to get the full benefit of upgrading and enhancing the new M5 and also upgrades to the new M4. If we were not able to distribute traffic with a genuine central business district bypass we would not get long-term benefits from our significant investment in WestConnex. This important part of the roadwork will also allow for the long-term creation of the F6, the southern connecting motorway, and is the forerunner to the western harbour tunnel. To construct the M4-M5 link we need at least two dive and construction sites. One of those sites, located at Camperdown, has already been confirmed for inclusion in the environmental impact statement. Investigations continue for a second site.

I am advised that Roads and Maritime Services and the Sydney Motorway Corporation are investigating a site at 7 Darley Road, Leichhardt, as a potential construction site. A site adjacent to the Sydney Secondary College, Leichhardt, was previously considered but has been ruled out. I am also advised that the Inner West Council has requested that the Sydney Motorway Corporation investigate other sites for construction and dive site locations. Importantly, all construction and dive sites will be subject to community consultation through the environmental impact statement that will be released later this year.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira has pointed out that Deputy Mayor John Dorahy of Wollongong City Council is seated in the public gallery. I extend a warm welcome to the Deputy Mayor.

SYDNEY ROYAL EASTER SHOW

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (15:16): My question is addressed to the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation. Will the Minister update the House on the work of NSW Fair Trading at the 2017 Royal Easter Show?

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (15:16): Madam Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. I direct the Clerk to stop the clock. We will wait until members come to order. I call the member for Lakemba to order for the first time. I call the member for Lakemba to order for the second time.

Mr MATT KEAN: I thank the outstanding member for Miranda for her question and note her love and support for the Sydney Royal Easter Show. The show was held a few weeks ago and I take this opportunity to update the House on the good work being done by NSW Fair Trading officers. As members know, each year NSW Fair Trading performs an important service at the Easter show by checking the show bags to make sure they are safe for the thousands of men, women and children who purchase them. This year I officially opened the Showbag Pavilion with an honorary Fair Trading officer, young Maddie Dunstan. Maddie was a 000 hero who saved her mum's life in an emergency. It was Maddie's first time at the show and I can report to the House that she had an absolute ball.

This year we had some great show bags. In fact, there was a record-breaking number of 381 show bags on display. We had some old favourites, such as the favourite of the member for Keira, the Bertie Beetle show bag, and the Freddo Frog show bag. We also had some new favourites like Peppa Pig and Frozen—the Treasurer's daughters loved the Frozen show bag. There was something for everyone. NSW Fair Trading checked every bag for safety before it was made available to the public. NSW Fair Trading identified 18 defective items in those bags and traders were given advice about how to rectify the issues before show day. All defective items were either removed or adjusted. NSW Fair Trading officers normally restrict their inspections to show bags and to

Sideshow Alley, but they spread the net a little wider this year. They also inspected 15 stalls in the kids' pavilion, 12 stalls in the World Bazaar and 60 stalls in Sideshow Alley.

The officers tested around 409 products on those stalls. Two stalls were found to be non-compliant in the kids' pavilion, but all issues were rectified. One stall was non-compliant in the World Bazaar, with two projectile toys being removed. All stalls and products in Sideshow Alley were compliant. Our Fair Trading officers did a great job testing a total of almost 900 products to ensure that we could all go to the show and come home with products that are safe. Ensuring that there are no dodgy show bags or dodgy products in those show bags is an important job. As the State's most senior Fair Trading officer, I wanted to get out there, roll up my sleeves and make sure for myself that there were no products that would endanger the New South Wales community.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will be heard in silence.

Mr MATT KEAN: Notwithstanding my relative inexperience, I found the most dangerous show bag in the history of the Royal Easter Show: the Mega Fizzers show bag. I thought it was just about the leadership ambitions of the member for Maroubra—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: In all seriousness, this is a new low for the House. I have never seen a member show bagging before. If the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation is going to do this, he should at least make it funny. But this is not even funny; this is really low-rent stuff.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. When the member for Maroubra is a Minister he can try to be funny. Government members will come to order.

Mr MATT KEAN: In the interests of consumer protection, and as it is a Thursday, I thought I would highlight to the House 10 highly defective items that we found in the show bags. The first one we found was—

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: Tell us about the fundraising you did for Mannoun. Have you given evidence to ICAC yet? The Minister is clearly using a prop and, even given his low standards, that is a breach of the standing orders.

The SPEAKER: Order! Given the nature of the question, I will allow it.

Mr MATT KEAN: I found one dangerous product—the factional playbook of the member for Cessnock: *The Power of One*.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: Whatever this is now about, it is not about the question the Minister was asked. The Minister is clearly in breach of Standing Order 129. It does not pass the test even for the final answer on the Thursday after a fortnight's sitting.

The SPEAKER: Order! I understand the point of order. However, I will hear further from the Minister.

[Extension of time]

Mr MATT KEAN: Also in the show bag were box tickets to every Greater Western Sydney game for the Leader of the Opposition, courtesy of Tony Shepherd. I also found some Greens' material in traditional Labor property—I guess it is a little like the member for Balmain representing the area where the Labor Party was founded. It must have been a product left over from his old job: Horny Goat Weed.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will allow the Minister to present one more item.

Mr MATT KEAN: A collector's item—

Ms Yasmin Catley: Point of order: The Minister has been speaking for six minutes and he has not mentioned the paper bag. But that is probably because he was not at the Newcastle Show.

Mr MATT KEAN: I found a very dangerous product: the member for Prospect's medals. They are made of chocolate so they should not be worn in the sun. Also, I have Ian Macdonald's favourite movie: *Breakfast at Tiffany's*.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: Given the traditions of the House of Commons and where we have come from, this is appalling. My point of order is under Standing Order 59, tedious repetition.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has almost concluded his answer.

Mr MATT KEAN: Perhaps the most famous one is the Cooma correctional branch campaign T-shirt signed by Eddie Obeid. They are all dangerous products—dangerous for the Easter show and dangerous for the State.

*Committees***JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS****Chair**

The SPEAKER: According to Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 10 May 2017 the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, MLC, was elected Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters.

*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: AUSLAN INTERPRETER**

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to permit an accredited Auslan interpreter to be present on the floor of the House for the purpose of translating the inaugural speech of 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**.

Surry Hills Light Rail Station

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

Privacy Laws

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

Inner-city Social Housing

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

Social Housing

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

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

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

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:26): I thank the House for the opportunity to speak about the Legislative Review Committee's thirty-sixth digest for the Fifty-sixth Parliament. The committee reviewed four bills introduced into Parliament in the sitting week commencing 3 May 2017. The committee identified issues in relation to those four bills—the Civil Liability (Third Party Claims Against Insurers) Bill 2017, the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2017 and the

Transport Administration Amendment (Closure of Railway Line Between Rosewood and Tumbarumba) Bill 2017. I will now outline some of the observations of the committee.

The Civil Liability (Third Party Claims Against Insurers) Bill 2017 replaces section 6 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1946 to empower a third party to bring proceedings directly against the insurer in respect of his or her claim for damages, compensation or costs against the insured person, rather than proceeding to enforce a specially created statutory charge. One of the issues identified by the committee is that the bill restricts a judicial discretion for determining when to refuse leave. Clause 5 (4) of the bill provides that the court must refuse leave if the insurer can establish that it is entitled to disclaim liability under the contract of insurance or under any Act or law. The committee notes that the removal of judicial discretion may impact on an individual's right to sue an insurer under the principal Act. However, given the policy intentions and the findings of the NSW Law Reform Commission's report into third party claims on insurance money, the committee notes that the restriction is reasonable in these circumstances.

The Crown Land Management Act 2016—the principal Act—consolidates in one Act the statutory provisions dealing with the ownership, use and management of the Crown land of New South Wales. The bill for the principal Act was described in its explanatory note as being the first stage of the process of creating a new legislative regime for the improved management of Crown land. One of the issues identified by the committee is that schedule 1 [18] and schedule 1 [54] to the bill empower the regulations to modify the provisions of the bill and relevant State legislation in relation to land that is purchased or leased or over which an easement is acquired and in relation to transferring regulatory authorisation from an abolished body to a successive body. The committee notes that these provisions have the effect of being a Henry VIII clause and refers this regulatory power to the Parliament. The committee also refers the Parliament to schedule 1 [30], which provides that regulations may exempt any person, matter or thing from the operation of the principal Act that prevents parliamentary scrutiny of this decision.

The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2017 repeals and amends certain Acts, regulations and instruments for the purpose of effecting statute law revision. One of the issues identified by the committee is that schedule 1.1 [4] to the bill empowers the Minister to approve or consent to ancillary functions of land of Barangaroo Reserve that may be given, limited or withdrawn at any time. The committee notes that these wideranging powers may create a lack of certainty for persons and business owners with interests pertaining to Barangaroo Reserve and surrounding areas.

The Transport Administration Amendment (Closure of Railway Line Between Rosewood and Tumbarumba) Bill 2017 authorises the closure of the Rosewood to Tumbarumba line to create a rail trail for walking and bicycle use, with the intention of boosting tourism and employment opportunities in the area. One of the issues identified by the committee is that the bill empowers the rail infrastructure owner to close the whole or any part of the railway line. It is not clear to the committee whether the rail infrastructure owner may only close the railway line in order to achieve the objective of this bill, being the development of a rail trail. The committee draws this lack of certainty to the attention of Parliament for further consideration.

That concludes my remarks on this digest. In line with the standing orders of this place, I have personally reminded members of the committee of the confidential framework within which the committee operates and I trust that we will have no further issues of the kind encountered last week. I thank the committee staff and members for their due diligence in the exercise of the Committee's remit. I commend the thirty-sixth Legislation Review Digest to the House.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:31): On behalf of the Opposition, I augment the comments of the chair regarding the thirty-sixth digest of the Legislation Review Committee in this Parliament. As the chair reported, the committee commented on four bills. I will not go through them all again. The most strident comments made by the committee revolved around Henry VIII clauses in the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017. Henry VIII clauses are clauses included in legislation that allow the Executive to change the intent of the legislation without referring the matter to Parliament. The committee has commented on Henry VIII clauses several times during this Parliament but the relevant legislation then passed through both Houses of Parliament. The committee commented quite extensively on the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, and considered five separate elements of the bill that transgressed the Henry VIII clause provision.

I am delighted to report to the House that the Legislation Review Committee's digest was referred to in the other place yesterday evening during its consideration of the bill when some amendments were proposed. It is good to see that the committee's report being used. Those amendments did not pass, but it was pleasing to see members having regard to the committee's report. It is less pleasing that the responsible Ministers in this and the other place did not refer to those clauses in their comments on the bill. Nevertheless, we are moving in the right direction. I again thank the secretariat that supports the committee, and commend the digest to the House.

Report noted.*Matter of Public Importance***OVARIAN CANCER**

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (15:34): I am proud to be an ambassador for Ovarian Cancer Australia [OCA]. I am a passionate advocate for support and action for women affected by this disease. Today marks the first anniversary of the death of Bridget Whelan from ovarian cancer. Bridget was a good friend to and loyal servant of the New South Wales Parliament, where she worked for nine years serving the people of New South Wales through her work with a number of senior Ministers. Bridget was diagnosed with this insidious disease in 2010 and lived with it for six years. Following her diagnosis, she used her considerable professional skills in her volunteer work as a consumer advocate to ensure that the consumer experience informs cancer research policy and care. Bridget was committed to improving outcomes for women with ovarian cancer and in 2015 she was awarded the Jeannie Ferris Cancer Australia Recognition Award. This award recognises exceptional efforts by individual Australians to improve outcomes for women with gynaecological cancers.

I know that many people will be thinking fondly of Bridget today. World Ovarian Cancer Day was on Monday 8 May. The first World Ovarian Cancer Day was on 8 May 2013. On this day ovarian cancer organisations from around the world unite to educate their communities about ovarian cancer and its symptoms. Unlike more common cancers, there are significant challenges as the disease has been largely overlooked and underfunded to this point. This initial meeting encouraged the community to begin thinking about what could be accomplished on a global level to begin changing this. The statistics speak for themselves. Ovarian cancer has the lowest survival rate of all gynaecological cancers. In Australia more than 1,400 women are diagnosed with the disease every year and, of those, more than 900 will die from the disease. That is two out of three women. With the symptoms of the disease sometimes mimicking those of less serious health issues and the absence of an early detection test, diagnosis is often not made until the disease is at an advanced stage, resulting in poor outcomes for many women.

The focus of World Ovarian Cancer Day this year is being aware of your family history of cancer. This is particularly relevant for ovarian cancer as around 20 per cent of ovarian cancers are inherited due largely to a faulty BRCA gene, which can also be associated with breast cancer. Ovarian Cancer Australia is the peak awareness and support body for women and their families. It is doing magnificent work, and I commend Ovarian Cancer Australia, its chief executive officer and the many staff, volunteers and ambassadors for the work they have done and are doing. They are working to make sure that all women diagnosed with ovarian cancer are aware of the availability of genetic testing. Access to this information means that their family can be tested also and then make informed decisions about preventative treatment.

One of OCA's priority projects over the next four years is Traceback. This will identify women diagnosed with ovarian cancer who were not previously offered genetic testing and offer that testing to them and their families now. It is estimated that this project will prevent 800 future cases of ovarian cancer and 2,500 breast cancer sufferers. Women with advanced ovarian cancer now pay significantly less for treatment. I commend the many members of Parliament who attended a function last Monday organised by the Garvan Institute and OCA. In February a number of colleagues organised a forum, and I commend the work of members of Parliament in this space. However, the Government must provide additional funding in this area. There has been some advancement with a groundbreaking drug that has been hailed as the biggest development in the treatment of the disease in 30 years. The cost for a month of Lynparza, also known as Olaparib, has reduced from \$2,250 to \$38, as it was added to the Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (15:39): I commend the member for Canterbury for bringing this matter of public importance before the House and sharing the story of Bridget Whelan. We all love and cherish the women in our lives: our mothers, daughters, sisters and friends. Unfortunately, every woman in the world is at risk of developing ovarian cancer. World Ovarian Cancer Day provides an opportunity to raise awareness of this disease. I will put on the record a few unfortunate facts. Between 2007 and 2015 ovarian cancer ranked sixth in terms of the most common cause of cancer deaths in females. There were 298 deaths from ovarian cancer in New South Wales in 2012, which represents 4.8 per cent of cancer deaths in women.

The rate of ovarian cancer deaths in New South Wales has remained unchanged over the past 10 years. That is a tragedy. One in 80 women will develop ovarian cancer by the age of 85. Overall, the five-year survival rate is 44 per cent, which is much lower than for other gynaecological cancers. Early detection is a significant factor in survival of ovarian cancer, with a survival rate of 86 per cent where the disease is localised when diagnosed. This is the case for one in every five women diagnosed with ovarian cancer.

Between 2007 and 2015 the New South Wales Government, through the Cancer Institute NSW, awarded \$33 million in competitive research infrastructure funding to the Garvan Institute of Medical Research in an effort

to combat this disease. It is important to be aware of the symptoms of ovarian cancer as they can be vague and similar to other common conditions. Some of these symptoms include abdominal bloating, increased abdominal size, pelvic pain, loss of appetite and indigestion. Women who report persistent unexplained symptoms must receive appropriate assessment. Unfortunately, there is no screening test for ovarian cancer.

The development of a screening test requires breakthroughs in our understanding of ovarian cancer through basic, clinical and translational research. Recent research is bringing us closer to that goal and we hope that comes soon. A collaboration between clinicians, scientists and women with ovarian cancer has formed one of the largest ovarian cancer cohort studies in the world. This work is changing knowledge about the biology of ovarian cancer and discovering new therapies to treat it. It is important to remain vigilant in combating this disease. I commend the matter of public importance to the House and thank the member for Canterbury for bringing it to the attention of the House.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (15:42): I contribute to debate on this matter of public importance on World Ovarian Cancer Day and thank the member for Canterbury for bringing it to the House. I acknowledge the work undertaken in the screening and treatment of ovarian cancer and the health clinicians in New South Wales. It is important to note also the significance of the disease for women, particularly in Western Sydney and parts of New South Wales where they may not have access to direct support from general practitioners and gynaecologists during treatment.

What is most telling about this disease is how difficult it is to detect and to accurately calculate the stage of the cancer. By the time a woman is diagnosed with ovarian cancer, she is likely to be at a later stage of the disease. That happens for varying reasons. Women, particularly mothers, are likely to have other priorities in their life and not look after their own health. They look after others in their extended family. It is not surprising that women are unlikely to notice symptoms of ovarian cancer, which often are unclear. I acknowledge the Garvan Institute of Medical Research and the medical researchers who are working to find a cure and better treatment.

The drug Lynparza, also known as Olaparib, has been successful in the treatment of ovarian cancer. It originally cost almost \$2,500 per month but has been reduced to \$38 following its addition to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. That is a great relief to anyone suffering from ovarian cancer. I note that the HPV vaccination is reducing the rates of cervical cancer. My daughter who is in year 7 just had her first vaccination. I am glad that it is now available for young girls. It is important for every member to support vaccination.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (15:45): By leave: I speak to this matter of public importance about World Ovarian Cancer Day. I thank the member for Canterbury for raising this matter in this place. I will always speak for those we have lost to ovarian cancer and to raise the profile of this deadly disease. I note the reference earlier to Bridget Whelan and her tragic death from this disease. I acknowledge the family of Kylie Bear and her parents Rob and Carolyn who have done so much in the Hunter to raise awareness and money to fight this dreadful disease.

Ovarian cancer is a lethal cancer for women as it is so difficult to detect. I have shared in the House previously that my family carries one of the breast cancer genes that is linked to ovarian cancer. Previous generations of women in my family have lost their battle with this disease. With knowledge of their struggle, this generation has been tested for the gene mutation. It is important to have research into genetic disorders such as the BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations. I acknowledge the work of Dr David Clark and registered nurse Judith Silcock from the Breast and Endocrine Centre, Gateshead, Lake Macquarie. They have studied the impact of the BRCA2 gene on breast cancer outcomes.

The member for Canterbury and the member for Bankstown spoke of advances in the treatment of ovarian cancer. It is important to say to every woman to not ignore unusual symptoms. The rate of detection is low because women tend to ignore the pain due to commitments and responsibilities with family and work and it is often hard to get the medical profession to take the symptoms seriously. Early on in my life, I remember going to doctors for a number of years before the issue was resolved. I would urge anyone who has any of the symptoms mentioned by the member for Manly to see a doctor. More funding into research is required if we are to cure this disease.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (15:48): In reply: I thank the member for Manly for his contribution today. I thank the member for Bankstown, our shadow Minister for Medical Research, and the member for Maitland for their contributions to the debate. The message is clear, it is important to be aware of your family history of cancer. It was great to see a male member of this place, the member for Manly, speak on this matter. I acknowledge also the contribution made by the member for Maitland, who talked about the importance of tracing your family history in relation to cancer.

It is very important that everyone in this place and the other place continues to lobby this government and the Federal Government to do everything they possibly can to increase awareness. As the shadow Minister for Multiculturalism one of the issues I constantly raise and advocate for is that we have multilingual information, particularly about ovarian cancer. I have raised this with the Minister for Health, the previous Minister for Health and with my shadow Minister for Health. It is very important that women, particularly from non-English speaking backgrounds who may not be aware of symptoms have all the information. It is important to get the information out to our regional, remote and Indigenous communities. Thank you for the opportunity.

Community Recognition Statements

MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYERS

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:51): I inform the House that brothers Matt and Harry Croker from Nabadah have been named in the New South Wales under-16 and under-18 rugby league squads to play Queensland. Matt, who is based in Newcastle and played SG Ball with Newcastle Knights, is in the under-18 squad, with Harry named in the under-16s. Both play in the back row. Harry was recently a member of the Newcastle premiership-winning Harold Matthews Shield team. Matt captained Taree City to win the Group 3 under-18 premiership last year. The under-18 squad will meet for training on 24 May and 7 June before the final team selection on 10 June. They will then go into camp on 16 June to prepare for the match against Queensland as the curtain-raiser for the State of Origin game on 21 June.

Max Buderus from Foster-Tuncurry is also in the under-16 squad. He was five-eighth for the Newcastle Knights Harold Matthews Shield team. Kobe Davies from Singleton, who was halfback with the Newcastle Knights Harold Matthews Shield team, also has been named in the team. His parents, Sean and Leanne Davies, are from Taree. The squad will train on 17 May, 14 June and 28 June. The final team announcement will be on 1 July before the team goes to Canberra on 7 July. New South Wales meets Queensland on 12 July. I wish the players luck as they do battle with Queensland.

SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST FUNDRAISING

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:52): On 20 April 2017 I had the great pleasure of attending a fundraiser hosted by the Michael Hughes Foundation and Police Citizens Youth Club [PCYC] NSW. The event was a great opportunity to raise awareness of sudden cardiac arrest while also raising vital funds that will enable PCYC NSW to install an additional 32 defibrillators in various locations throughout New South Wales. I thank everyone who was involved in making the event a great success and to all those who dug deep to help fund an incredibly valuable resource for our PCYCs. I commend Miss Julie Hughes of the Michael Hughes Foundation and the Michael Hughes Foundation board for their ongoing dedication towards raising awareness of sudden cardiac arrest in our communities and for their drive to get as many defibrillators out into our communities as soon as possible. Well done to everyone involved.

HOLBROOK VILLAGE HOSTEL

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (15:53): Holbrook Village Hostel, a residential aged care facility run by UPA Murray, recently celebrated its silver jubilee and honoured the hard work and dedication of the volunteer group Friends of the Hostel. The regional director, Tony Dunn, congratulated volunteers Leonie Hibberson, Heather Lees, Irene Lister, Isabel Fealy, Pat Pitzon, Joy Quick and Betty Winzer for their amazing efforts in raising thousands of dollars over the years. All the Devonshire teas, raffles and community market stalls have certainly made a difference to the residents of the hostel, with the purchase of large-screen televisions, a wheelchair, a princess chair for palliative care and a fish tank and funding for the annual Christmas lunch for residents and their families. I thank the Friends of the Hostel for their sustained commitment and for their marvellous accomplishments. They are a great asset to the community of Holbrook.

NORTH ARM COVE FELLOWSHIP OF AUSTRALIAN WRITERS

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (15:53): One of the many things I love about Port Stephens is its thriving artistic community, which includes many talented writers. Last week I joined the North Arm Cove branch of the Fellowship of Australian Writers for the launch of two of their latest books. I helped launch Garry Boyd's sixth novel, a detective mystery set in the bush, entitled *Bent Arm*, and Ron Stewart's second novel entitled *Red Buddha*, a story about two young men during the Chinese cultural revolution. The North Arm Cove branch is a vibrant group of 21 writers who meet monthly to share ideas and encourage new writers. They are a supportive, creative and friendly bunch, and very productive—between them they have published 18 books. I congratulate all of the members and Ron Stewart and Garry Boyd on their new novels and I particularly congratulate the secretary and treasurer of the group, Maureen Kelly, OAM, on her commitment to fostering a creative community.

MOLLYMOOK SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (15:54): I inform the House that an amazing \$40,000 was awarded to Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club as part of the New South Wales Government's \$2 million Surf Club Facility Program for 2016-17. I am proud to see the Government recognise the contribution of this club's members—and other clubs of course—by supporting them in this way. The grant will assist this worthy club with the upgrade of its toilet and shower facilities, which are in dire need of attention. Recognition goes to Margy Reed, a member of the club, who worked tirelessly to ensure that the funding submission was of the highest calibre. To President Rodney Austin, I commend your leadership and dedication, which have seen the improvement not only of this facility but of the entire club. Finally, congratulations to the Mollymook surf club boat team on winning gold at the Australian Masters on the Gold Coast in March. A great result and a fantastic team. Well done Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club.

TRIBUTE TO COLLEEN SMITH

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (15:55): With regret I inform the House of the recent passing of Maitland resident Mrs Colleen Smith at age 90. Colleen was a member of the Labor Party for over 45 years. In 1999 when we celebrated International Year of Older Persons, the Carr Government marked this occasion by issuing posters, postcards and publications. Colleen was chosen to be the face on all of these—something she was tremendously proud of. Colleen was originally from the Central Coast and moved to Maitland three years ago. Her contribution to this State and her community has been tremendous.

Colleen was active in the St John Ambulance Australia service, the RSPCA, the Red Cross, the Country Women's Association and the Rural Fire Service of New South Wales. This is only a small section of a much larger list of her volunteering activities. Her final years were spent in the retirement community at Sandgate and as a member of the East Maitland Labor branch. One of her most treasured possessions was a card from Senator Deborah O'Neill labelling her "a remarkable Australian". I concur with this statement and I am honoured to commemorate Colleen in this place.

ADDIES SPECIALTY TEA ROOM

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:57): Today I recognise Addie's Specialty Tea Room is a Hammondville small business specialising in high teas, morning teas and lunches in the Hammondville community. Addie's owner, Caroline Koulouris, has poured her heart and soul into the Hammondville store. It has been operating since early 2013 and has been a very welcoming and homely space for its customers. Unfortunately, due to restrictions, time and layout, it looks like this business may have to close. I thank all of the Hammondville community for recently getting behind this small business.

In our community, Addie's is said to be "a place where memories have been made and friendships have been formed". This small tearoom has a very big personality, as has been demonstrated by a string of celebrity visitors, including Justice Crew, the Hon. Mike Baird and the Hon. Pru Goward. I believe Nicole Kidman has even tried their coffee. It will be extremely upsetting if we lose this important part of our community. Once again I recognise and appreciate the work of everyone at Addies. Thank you for bringing us such a homely space. I hope the future is brighter and we continue to see you thrive.

PALESTINIAN GRADUATION DINNER

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (15:57): I recognise the Palestinian Graduation Dinner 2017, which was held last Saturday 6 May at the Australian Palestinian Club. The event was hosted by the General Union of Palestinian Workers, the Australian Palestinian Club and the Australian Palestinian Graduates Association. The night had a number of purposes. One was to recognise the academic achievements of university graduates and Higher School Certificate students in 2017. There was an impressive number of doctors of philosophy present, who were specifically acknowledged by Bob Carr.

A video of a speech from Palestine by Dr Samir Rifai was presented, as well as a short play by Khaled Ghanam, *The Wall*. The title points to the obvious subject matter. The masters of ceremony on the evening were Laila and Delilah Ayshan. It was a bitter sweet night because as well as celebrating the success of graduates the function also acknowledged the sixty-ninth anniversary of Alnakaba, which translates into English as the catastrophe of 1948. It has been rendered worse by 60 years of occupation and illegal settlements on the West Bank and turning Gaza into the largest open-air prison in the world. I also note the appropriate use in material on the night of the iconic image of Handala. sailability Manly

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (15:59): I recognise the efforts and contribution of volunteers who support Sailability Manly and who celebrated the twenty-first birthday of Sailability Manly at its recent annual volunteer recognition dinner. More than 44 people attended this wonderful dinner at the Manly Yacht Club. In

particular, I acknowledge Warwick McKenzie who was awarded a special certificate for his hard work with Sailability Manly. From humble beginnings of fundraising on Manly Corso by selling second-hand clothes, discarded books and plants grown by volunteers, Manly Sailability lives up to its motto "Freedom on the water, regardless of ability". I look forward to supporting Sailability Manly and congratulate them for all they do.

SYDNEY TAMIL MAGALIR MANDRAM

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (15:59): I bring to the attention of the House the extraordinary work of Sydney Tamil Magalir Mandram, which was established in October 2016 by a group of mothers who recognised the need for a Tamil support network, particularly for women newly arrived in Australia. The group, which was originally known as Tamil Mums Connect, was established through social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook. Members are encouraged to promote their small businesses as well as celebrate their shared heritage. They also provide friendship and support.

The group has grown tremendously, and now has more than 430 members on Facebook and 250 members on WhatsApp. They have established their own charity and recently raised money for families in Tamil Nadu. I acknowledge and congratulate all the women involved, particularly the committee of Vinithra Jayaraman, Anitha Subash, Ashritha Balaji and Sangeetha Eshwarappa. I love the innovation shown by these women in embracing each other through social media. I give them my full support and on behalf of this Parliament congratulate them on all they have achieved so far.

WHITE HORSE COFFEE AWARD WINNER

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (16:00): I acknowledge Dominick Majdandzic of Como, owner of the shire's local roaster White Horse Coffee, who received a bronze medal at the 2017 Australian International Coffee Awards. Dominick's immediate passion for the coffee industry started from a young age, as he challenged himself by competing in various competitions. After his success, Dominick began managing his first coffee shop in Japan, later coming back home to start his career in Sydney. Since 2008, Dominick and his co-owner, Matt, have been committed to their local business, having developed the original White Horse Coffee beans in their Kirrawee stores. They have served thousands of loyal customers over the years, with the expansion of their blend selling not only in the shire but also across New South Wales. With more than 800 entries, the signature blend "White Knight" received the bronze medal. To be awarded this medal in Australia recognises the individual achievement of local coffee blenders. I commend the White Horse team for its ability to create and produce such an exceptional product. Congratulations again to owner Dominick Majdandzic and the White Horse team on this award.

WOLLONGONG ELECTORATE VOLUNTEERS

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:01): As this week is National Volunteers Week, on behalf of everyone in Wollongong, I thank and acknowledge all the volunteers in Wollongong, who give so freely of their time to support others. Earlier this week I attended a thank you lunch for the volunteers who support the Multicultural Communities Council of the Illawarra [MCCI]. Approximately 100 volunteers attended, ranging from those who have volunteered a few weeks of their time to others who have volunteered more than 40 years for MCCI. As general manager of MCCI, Chris Lacey said in his vote of thanks, "We could not do this work without you", and he is absolutely right. Each of the volunteers told me how much they loved helping out and, more importantly, knowing that their efforts to help people made a difference made them happy too. Monday's event included a small sample of the thousands of volunteers in Wollongong, but every single volunteer must be thanked and recognised for the energy, effort and hard work they put in. From surf lifesavers to the State Emergency Service, from those who provide care for children to those who support seniors, to everyone who gives up their time we owe them a great deal of thanks and gratitude.

BO CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, SIERRA LEONE, FUNDRAISING

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (16:02): I pay tribute to The Quiet Ones, a Hornsby rock band that is striving to raise money as financial aid for Bo Children's Hospital in Sierra Leone, Africa. Its current plan is to raise \$10,000 which will support the hospital in its expansion and supply of medical equipment and in updating hygiene facilities. The Hornsby band members, who are all in their late sixties and seventies, grew up locally, attending Normanhurst Boys High, Asquith Boys High and Epping Boys High. Laurie Facer, the bass player, will visit the Bo Children's Hospital next January to witness the hardships the hospital faces and to observe the effects of the band's fundraising on hospital resources. The fundraising gig, which was on 18 February, centred on reliving 1960s hits that the band enjoyed when they were younger. The band altered its outlook and purpose eight years ago, dedicating the money they raise from performances to various charities. Since this change, the band has raised upwards of \$20,000, which is an

extraordinary feat. I thank The Quiet Ones for their incredible work and commitment to helping those who are underprivileged.

BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY FESTIVAL

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:02): This past weekend I had the pleasure of attending celebrations for Buddha's birthday with the community of south-west Sydney. On Saturday morning I was joined by many of my parliamentary colleagues at Buddha's birthday celebrations in Freedom Plaza, Cabramatta, organised by the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society and the Prajna Monastery. The bathing of the Buddha has become an annual highlight of the calendar in Cabramatta, with thousands flocking to cleanse themselves of evil and impurities by symbolically bathing the Buddha. I acknowledge the Venerable Master Bo Yeh, who organised the event and camped the whole weekend in Freedom Plaza to protect the altar.

On Sunday I attended the Phuoc Hue Temple in Wetherill Park where I once again bathed the Buddha—the first wash symbolising the elimination of evil thoughts, the second wash symbolising the cultivation of good deeds, and the third wash symbolising the saving of all living beings. Vesak Day is actually on Wednesday 10 May. May I wish the Lord Buddha a very happy birthday on behalf of the House and may the Lord Buddha smile down upon everyone here.

BAULKHAM HILLS ELECTORATE SCHOOL LEADERS RECEPTION

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (16:04): I inform the House that yesterday I had the pleasure of hosting more than 50 school leaders from my electorate of Baulkham Hills in the Speaker's Garden for my annual School Leaders Reception. We were lucky enough to be joined by the Premier as well as NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons, NSW Corrective Services Commissioner Peter Severin, the Hills Local Area Command Superintendent Rob Critchlow, former Castle Hill RSL Sub-Branch president Colonel Don Tait, Official Secretary to His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales Colonel Michael Miller, and many other community leaders.

I commend the outstanding school captains from the following schools: Baulkham Hills High, Baulkham Hills North Public, Christ the King Primary North Rocks, Crestwood Public, Excelsior Public, Jasper Road Public, Matthew Pearce Public, Muirfield High, Murray Farm Public, Oakhill College, Our Lady of Lourdes Primary Baulkham Hills, St Angela's Kellyville, St Michael's Primary Baulkham Hills, and West Pennant Hills Public. I place on the record also my gratitude to Mrs Michelle Byrne and Ms Zoe Byrne who put in a great deal effort to make this a very successful afternoon.

NATIONAL MOTHERING WEEK

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:05): This week is National Mothering Week, a week that encourages mothers to take a moment in our busy, complex lives to appreciate the simple pleasures that come from being a parent. The week is coordinated by the Australian Breastfeeding Association, a brilliant volunteer organisation that supports mums and promotes that breastfeeding is important and culturally normal. While Mother's Day is a good reminder to take mum to lunch and give her a bunch of flowers, National Mothering Week is all about promoting self-care for mums.

As any mum knows, it is not always easy and some of us have more support than others. I acknowledge that for most mums balancing the pressures of work and family are a constant source of anxiety and guilt, particularly in a society that still does not fully value the work of women work either at home or in the workplace. I am in awe of those mums out there who are balancing complex needs, including single mums, mums caring for children with disability or illness, and mums with postnatal depression or facing their own health issues. You are heroes to your children and to women everywhere. This National Mothering Week I will try to take a moment to enjoy the wonders of being a mum to my beautiful boy and I also will reflect on how precious and invaluable mums are across our State.

KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE MARKETING FORUM

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:06): Ku-ring-gai Council, in partnership with the CSIRO, is hosting another forum titled, "The wealth of ideas—turning concepts into cash", on Thursday 18 May at the CSIRO Bradfield Road site at Lindfield. The event is designed for people who want to start or change their own business or intend to develop an existing product or service. The event is divided into two parts. First, expert keynote speakers impart valuable knowledge on marketing ideas and developing businesses. Secondly, there is a networking opportunity among people with the knowledge, skills and connections to turn ideas into commercial success. This free event is hosted by Ku-ring-gai Council and the CSIRO with the support of the New South Wales Government Boosting Business Innovation Program. I wish it every success.

SALVATION ARMY RED SHIELD APPEAL

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (16:07): It is again the time of year for the Red Shield Appeal. As members know, every year the Salvation Army—or, as we fondly call them, the Salvos—run this large-scale fundraising drive to provide funds for a large variety of social services to those in need. Their contribution to the Australian community is immeasurable, giving to help anyone and everyone on both a national scale and personally. This year, their focus is on homelessness—aiming to help those who are hungry, vulnerable to the harsh weather and disadvantaged through opportunities that may lead to a better life. The latest available census data in 2011 showed that there were more than 105,000 homeless people in New South Wales. Homelessness is a relentless cycle that can only be broken with determination. Each week the Salvos deliver 100,000 meals and provide 2,000 beds and 5,000-plus food vouchers. I encourage everyone to be involved in the Red Shield Appeal, which is running over the following three months.

TRIBUTE TO DR STEPHEN DIAKATOS

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (16:08): I acknowledge Dr Stephen Diakatos of Gymea, a local dentist who travelled to Tanzania to treat underprivileged high school students. Dr Diakatos visited Katoke-Lweru Secondary School, where he individually checked the health and wellbeing of students, teachers and staff in order to improve their dental health. Dr Diakatos, together with Gymea general practitioner Dr Glendinning, voluntarily partnered with the school nurse to improve and develop the skills required when responding to the urgent treatment of students. Throughout his years as a dentist, Dr Diakatos' passion for dental care has encouraged many shire residents to donate time and money in order to improve the dental health of those less fortunate. In addition, Dr Diakatos dedicates his spare time as a martial arts instructor. He has successfully climbed his way to the top, recently becoming a Brown belt instructor. I commend Dr Diakatos for his extraordinary achievements and wish him the best in his future endeavours.

AWARD

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:09): In all communities there are hardworking people whose quiet achievements make such a difference to the lives of those around them. It is great when we get the opportunity to recognise that hard work. Sue Stewart is one of those people. I nominated Sue for the NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year Award because she is an incredible role model for young Aboriginal women and women in general. A teacher for 45 years, Sue was the first Aboriginal person in New South Wales to be awarded the Highly Accomplished Teacher's Award and received the prestigious award twice. She currently works as the assistant principal at Swansea Public School. Last year Sue was elected as the vice president of Minimbah Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, where she has been a member for eight years. Sue strives to support Aboriginal students and foster a genuine partnership with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies to facilitate healing and reconciliation in a meaningful way. Her efforts should be commended. I was delighted to be able to nominate Sue for an award on International Women's Day.

EPILEPSY FUNDRAISING EVENT

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (16:10): Every year Purple Day is held on 26 March, marking an international initiative that strives to raise awareness for epilepsy and create a sense of solidarity for those who have the condition. The fundraiser fights for such a wonderful cause and draws attention to some of the struggles faced by individuals with epilepsy on a day-to-day basis. Epilepsy is the most common serious brain disorder in the world and affects more than 250,000 Australians.

I recognise the incredible efforts of the 1st Waitara Girl Guides group who worked together to raise \$270 for Epilepsy Action Australia. Led by a number of outstanding community members, the Waitara group had the opportunity to hear from Rose Marie, one of their unit leaders, about some of the hardships faced by people suffering epilepsy. This prompted the education of the Girl Guides group in first aid procedures to follow when responding to an epileptic person, which is a critical skill in situations like that. Instead of having a Purple Day, the 1st Waitara Girl Guides group hosted a fundraising event called Purple Night where everyone wore purple and the girls pampered their mothers by painting their nails and offering massages. It sounded like a fun night for all involved. I thank the group for their commitment to helping others.

OUR LADY OF LEBANON CO-CATHEDRAL

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:11): I congratulate Father Tony Sarkis and Our Lady of Lebanon Co-Cathedral on their wonderful mass last Sunday to welcome His Eminence Leonardo Cardinal Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for Oriental Churches. There is a strong affinity between the eastern churches in Australia, who came together for mass. The Maronite Bishop of Australia, the Most Reverend Antoine Charbel Tarabay, celebrated the mass and was joined by: Most Reverend Robert Rabbat, Melkite Bishop of Australia and New Zealand; Very Reverend Monsignor Basilios Georges Casmoussa, Patriarchal Visitor for Syriac Catholic

Church; Reverend Father Youhanna Ina of the Syriac Catholic Church; Most Reverend Adolfo Tito Yllana, Apostolic Nuncio to Australia; Reverend Father Sebastiano Sanna; Most Reverend Mar Mor Malatius Malki of the Syrian Orthodox Bishop of Australia and New Zealand; and Most Reverend Mar Amel Shamon Nona, Chaldean Catholic Bishop of Australia. Afterwards the Maronite Catholic Society hosted morning tea and showed incredible artworks on loan from St Maroun's Cathedral. I congratulate Father Tony and Our Lady of Lebanon on bringing everyone together to welcome Cardinal Sandri.

IVANHOE PARK BOTANIC GARDEN

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:12): I speak in support of the hopeful formation of the Friends of Ivanhoe Park Botanic Garden group. This group will seek to enhance the protection, sustainability and accessibility of Ivanhoe Park, which is a unique area of Manly. The earliest mention of Ivanhoe Park is from January 1871 when the businessman H. W. Wardle erected a large pavilion left over from the Intercolonial Exhibition held in Sydney the previous year. In 2006 the Geographic Names Board named the reserve at the western end of the park Ivanhoe Park Botanic Garden. The formation of the group will assist in the beautification of Ivanhoe Park and I hope to assist them when I can. I particularly thank and congratulate Denise Keen, who has been a driving force behind the hopeful formation of the group.

UNITED NATIONS DAY OF VESAK

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (16:13): On Saturday 6 May 2017 I was honoured to represent the Hon. Bill Shorten, Federal Leader of the Opposition, at the 2017 Australian Observance of the United Nations Day of Vesak held at Paul Keating Park in Bankstown. The Day of Vesak is the festival which celebrates the birth, enlightenment and death of the Lord Buddha. Over a three-day period the Buddhist community celebrates the teachings of Buddhism, particularly compassion for all living beings, mindfulness, meaningful engagement with all people, and celebrating diversity as a strength. I recognise and thank the Buddhist Federation of Australia, in particular Mr Henry Dang, for organising such a wonderful event in my electorate. I extend my well wishes to all members of the Buddhist community in Bankstown and throughout New South Wales on the festive occasion of Vesak in 2017.

GOULBURN POLICE ACADEMY GRADUATES

Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (16:14): On Wednesday 4 May my community had the privilege of welcoming three new probationary constables to the Hills Local Area Command. Thomas Hartmann, Matthew Dolbel and Chad Voysey graduated from a Goulburn Police Academy class of 330 and worked their first shift together at Castle Hill police station. All three young men are testament to the exemplary standard of officers that Goulburn produces, but I must also mention the valiant service of Mr Hartmann, who has also been a member of the Hills State Emergency Service for more than five years. I congratulate these men on their entrance into the NSW Police Force and commend them for committing to a life that, though never easy, is vital to maintaining the freedoms, safety and security that we too often take for granted. I also congratulate them on choosing the Hills for their first command and commend them to Superintendent Robert Critchlow.

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (16:14): This year the Community Environment Network on the Central Coast will celebrate its twentieth anniversary. The Community Environment Network aims to bring together various environmental groups to engage with stakeholders under a united banner. They take on big issues such as climate change and encourage locals to reduce their contribution to emissions. However, they mostly take on local issues such as sustainable development in our region and the protection of endangered species and sites that are threatened by human impact. As part of its twentieth anniversary celebrations the Community Environment Network is holding an amateur photography competition to engage locals in photographing some of the wonderful natural beauty of the Central Coast. I encourage anyone who fancies themselves good with a camera to enter and help showcase our beautiful part of the world. I congratulate the network on 20 years. I hope to see it there in 20 more.

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY RIGHTS SERVICE

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (16:15): I acknowledge Catherine Lukic of Miranda, who is a volunteer at Sutherland Court helping people with intellectual disabilities. Catherine Lukic has had a positive impact on all individuals involved with the court system at Sutherland. She is one of only 130 volunteers across New South Wales who work with the Intellectual Disability Rights Service. She provides a significant amount of aid and support to people with intellectual disabilities who are struggling to navigate the legal and criminal justice system. Catherine is one of the three volunteers at Sutherland Court who have dedicated their time and service in providing legal assistance.

Over the past two years alone, Sutherland Shire volunteers have clocked up 650 hours of work, freely provided to those most in need. It can be confronting when dealing with the court system. To have volunteers like Catherine providing support and offering legal assistance is an incredible contribution to those in need. Catherine's care and compassion towards our community exemplifies the spirit of volunteering that we uphold in our shire. I thank Catherine for her dedicated service and extend my best wishes for her future endeavours.

TRIBUTE TO LES DARCY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:16): This year Maitland will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the death of one of our most famous sons. The great boxer Les Darcy grew up in a large, poor Roman Catholic family in East Maitland. As legend has it, Les purchased a set of boxing gloves with a few pence from his job as a blacksmith. He then walked around Maitland and challenged anyone who was game to a sparring match. From these humble beginnings he went on to box at Sydney Stadium at age 19 with the American boxer Frits Holland.

He began to win some fights and with the winnings from those bouts he bought his parents a house that still stands in East Maitland on the New England Highway. By 1916 Darcy had become the Australian World Middleweight Champion and the Australian Heavyweight Champion. Darcy stowed away on a ship bound for the United States in 1917 but, like Phar Lap, he never came back. Darcy tragically passed away in May 1917 aged only 21. He fought 56 fights and won 52 of them, 32 by knock out. His story is one of a poor boy done good who never forgot his parents or his origins. He was taken too soon.

CANREVIVE CANCER SERVICES

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:17): CanRevive is an organisation that has a holistic approach to assisting patients and their families living with cancer. Whether it is through the patient support group or the living with cancer program, CanRevive is true to its motto that No One Should Face Cancer Alone. What is unique and special about CanRevive is its approach to supporting patients and their families with practical and useful information and services. This is why I am delighted that the New South Wales Government provided \$60,000 to CanRevive to carry out renovations to its office space so it can continue its extraordinary work. The Government recognises the important role CanRevive plays in assisting newly diagnosed patients, people living with cancer, those in remission and, of course, their families. We are enormously proud to have contributed funding to assist in the ongoing work of CanRevive.

CANCER RESEARCH FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (16:18): There are few people who have not been touched by cancer either directly or indirectly. There are even fewer of the likes of Lisa Greissl who have not only had the strength to beat it but help to cure it. This young Lake Macquarie mum was diagnosed with a rare tumour just four days after giving birth to her first child several years ago. With chemotherapy, surgery and specialist care she beat the cancer but wanted to do something to thank the oncologist who saved her life. So she organised a charity ball at Caves Beach that raised more than \$20,000 for the Cure Cancer Foundation. Since then she has undertaken and organised numerous other fundraisers for the charity, which is funding a number of research projects into finding a cancer cure. More recently she was the charity's local ambassador for the month-long BarbeCure event. I am pleased to say that I held my own BarbeCure with Lisa at Booragul. I am pleased to acknowledge in this Parliament Lisa's extraordinary efforts inspired by her experience to help fund the research that will hopefully find a cure for this disease that claims almost 50,000 Australian lives each year.

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:19): International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world on 12 May every year—the anniversary of the birth of the world's most famous nurse, Florence Nightingale. It takes a special person to be a nurse or midwife. My wife is one of those great people, and I am always struck by the selflessness and dedication of the nurses and midwives across this State. On the Central Coast 4,500 nurses are listed as working between Gosford and Wyong, but today I name only a few of them: Elaine McGuire, emergency department nurse, Wyong hospital; Amanda Bartrim, now an orthopaedics and trauma nurse at Royal North Shore Hospital; Jessica Campbell, cardiac nurse, Gosford Hospital; Corina Hartley, oncology nurse, Gosford Hospital; Jo Mason, registered nurse, Wyong Hospital; Jo's husband, Rob, was so inspired by his wife that he is now a second year registered nurse student, Newcastle University, Ourimbah Campus; Carol Norton, midwife, Gosford Private Hospital; and Stephanie Foster, the 2017 Terrigal Woman of the Year, is a clinical nurse consultant, Gosford Cancer Centre. I thank them all for their tireless efforts.

BELVOIR STREET THEATRE COMPANY ONSTAGE

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:20): Though not in the Swansea electorate, I pay tribute to the Belvoir Street Theatre Company located in Surry Hills. Recently, Belvoir hosted 23 year 11 and year 12 performing arts students from Swansea and Belmont High schools during OnSTAGE—a showcase of last year's best Higher School Certificate drama performances. While they were there, students participated in two workshops run by professional actors working in the industry. Students from Belmont High School also participated in a monologue workshop, to develop tools and techniques that will assist them in this year's Higher School Certificate. Each year, Belvoir provides senior students with a valuable opportunity to connect with artists in the theatre industry, which is especially important for those students from regional areas like Swansea who would not ordinarily have such an opportunity. For the past 30-odd years, Belvoir has been run by individuals, who are passionate about the arts and passionate about nurturing young talent. And for that, they are to be commended.

HORNSBY RSL YOUTH SPORTS CLUB

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (16:21): Today I congratulate the Hornsby RSL Youth Football Club's Under 12X team on its success last year. Topping the season was winning the Football NSW U12 Boys State Cup and defending the team's undefeated title at the Northern Suburbs Football Association Under 12s Division 1 competition. This team has become the most successful team that the Hornsby RSL Youth Football Club has seen since its establishment 56 years ago. This team was nominated for the Junior Sports Star Award, which regardless of the result speaks volumes about its achievements as a team. The team morale of the under 12s has been praised and described as passionate, supportive, fun and enthusiastic. It would be remiss of me not to mention the nurturing environment that the Hornsby RSL Club strives to create, which has clearly added to the accomplishments of the team. The club centres its training on a passion for the game, fun, effective teamwork, and strong friendships. I thank everyone involved in this outstanding club, especially youth president Matt Wall, directors Roy Ashople and David Clarke, and the entire Clarke family. They do a fantastic job for our community. I appreciate everything they have done for our young people.

BULA HIBISCUS FESTIVAL

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:22): Today I recognise the Bula Hibiscus Festival, which was held in Liverpool on 29 April at Woodward Park. The hibiscus festival has its origins in 1956 in Fiji. It has now developed into a nine-day event in Fiji and is quite a significant celebration. With that example as its inspiration, a community-based group, led by Shashi Lal, organised a Bula Hibiscus Festival for Liverpool. As Shashi Lal said:

The purpose of this community festival is to provide for people of South Pacific origins living in Australia to come together and participate in our Pacific style cultural event. This is also an opportunity for the other Australian communities to participate in our Pacific style event as well as to taste some of the delicious island food, especially Fiji's internationally famous lovo feast.

The festival brought together the Fijian and Indian-Fijian communities and showcased their cultural traditions to the wider Liverpool community. It was another excellent example of Liverpool's multiculturalism.

Private Members' Statements

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:23): The expectation of parents is that the education children receive in the public system is accessible, challenging, balanced and engaging. We expect that education to give them the strongest foundation on which to participate most fully in our modern world. Many parents would accept that teaching kids some form of comparative religion helps them to better understand the faiths that underpin modern societies across the world. But parents will not cop unknowingly finding their children being funnelled into a system of special religious education because of backroom political deals. I take this opportunity to explain the current situation. When parents enrol their child in their local public school, they are given a form that asks them to identify their child's religion. That form is then taken by the school administration and used to create a list of students, which is handed to special religious education providers. Then once a week, for up to an hour, those students are provided with instruction by a lay preacher, volunteer or other from a registered special religious education provider.

Those students whose parents did not indicate a religion, are provided with minimal supervision and sit in a classroom or the playground. They are not permitted to undertake any activity related to the current curriculum. Put another way, for one hour every week those children are not receiving an education. That means for 330 hours over the course of their primary school education, these children are not being educated. These children are entering a global competitive market, so that just does not make any sense to me. I have spoken to

many residents in my electorate about special religious education. Some are opposed outright to religion being taught in our public schools. Some would prefer that it was not taught but can appreciate that it provides some value for their kids. Others have spoken to me about the importance of teaching these fundamental beliefs and religious stories to their children.

Some have raised concern that the special religious education curriculum is developed by providers and not approved by the Department of Education, and that it is being taught by volunteers often with no training or qualifications. Others have been shocked when they found their child had been placed in a special religious education class when they had not identified a religion. No matter whether or not one supports special religious education in our schools, these valid concerns go to the quality of the public education system in New South Wales. These divergent views of parents show that choice and transparency should be at the centre of public education. Instead, when it comes to special religious education in New South Wales, this Government is not meeting community expectations—in fact, it is protecting particular interests ahead of the interests of all.

Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile in the other place and former Premier Baird did a deal. Parents are now forced to navigate an unnecessarily convoluted enrolment process if they want their children to participate in ethics classes, rather than undertaking special religious education or sitting in the playground. That deal was transactional, ideological politics at its very worst. It means that balance, transparency and parental choice have been removed. If those opposite are serious about parent choice, they would not have rejected out of hand the majority of the 56 recommendations contained in the "Review of Special Religious Education and Special Education in Ethics in New South Wales Government Schools" report. Most importantly, they would return the option for parents of choosing ethics classes for their kids on the enrolment form.

Recently I was privileged to observe a class run by Primary Ethics in Marrickville. I went to the class with an open mind. I had a broad understanding of the objectives of the class, but not much more than that. I was awestruck by the professionalism of the volunteer teachers, the level of engagement by the students, and the complexity and worthiness of the material they were studying. These kids were learning skills that they will use throughout their lifetime—skills to help them better understand and empathise with the experiences of others. I observed a year 4 class focused on being greedy. They were presented with a series of scenarios that encouraged them to see every day experiences from different perspectives. The aim of the class was to learn what it means to balance our personal desires and wants with those of others. It is heady, advanced, complex stuff but, to my surprise, these kids really got it.

These are important values. Some parents will choose for their children to learn these lessons through the foundational stories taught in religious education. Others will choose the superb lessons taught in ethics classes across the State. At the end of the day, it is all about parent choice. I share the disappointment of parents who feel that their choice has been undermined by the actions of this Government. However, there is common ground here. The choices we make for our kids are amongst the most difficult and significant ones we will ever make. They go to our values—the values we want to share with our children. When it comes to public education, we must pull back the pendulum and restore the ability of all parents to make these decisions for themselves.

LOOSE-FILL ASBESTOS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (16:28): Holbrook is a State hotspot, with up to 37 homes affected by dangerous Mr Fluffy loose-fill asbestos insulation. Remarkably, 5 per cent of homes in Holbrook require demolition. This is a devastating scenario for a country town. Stress and emotions have been high, and for very good reason. I took-up the cause last June, and brought Holbrook's position to this Parliament in a speech that I gave on 8 March. I said then of the initial remedial package: The right things are being done by the right people and organisations, yet progress is hindered by a lack of flexibility in the scheme.

I gave this warning:

Unfortunately, we are seeing shortfalls in the current guidelines of the program, which places the future of Holbrook in jeopardy. If we are not watchful, we will end up with the worst of all scenarios—too many people will leave town for good or stay in their dangerous homes.

With the new Minister appointed, I was quickly at his door and I am pleased to say he was just as quick to agree to come to Holbrook to have a look for himself. On 24 April, we toured the area together, meeting people whose homes were affected. At a community meeting, when Mr Kean promised he would return in two weeks with an improved solution, I recall an audible gasp rising from the crowd. Then on 8 May, two weeks to the day, the Minister returned to Holbrook to announce increased funding and improved flexibility. Scepticism gave way to genuine delight. As one local said, "It gives me a new respect for politicians", and that is not something we hear every day. There is no obligation on the Government to step in and compensate people who dealt with the now defunct Mr Fluffy business, but good governments protect their citizens and here the wider public health issue demanded strong action.

While the initial government scheme was helpful to people caught up in the wake of this debacle, in operation there were two main problems with the standard deal offered to affected home owners. This is where I was able to bring local knowledge to bear, bringing insight to the task force and the Minister. First was the limitation on compensation to \$1,000 for loss of soft furnishings such as curtains, carpets, rugs, sofas and bedding, which must be destroyed. The amount of \$1,000 does not go very far when a person has to dispose of, quite literally, the fabric of their home. Under the new deal, the New South Wales Government will increase this amount to \$5,000 for each affected home where the home owner participates in the program. The second hurdle centred on the best way to encourage residents to accept the offer and stay in the area rather than take some cash and move out. I would not contemplate the idea of Holbrook losing so many residents and cottages.

A deal was done in which an additional amount up to \$6,000 is available for each home owner who builds or purchases in the Shire. This combines \$5,000 of State Government money with \$1,000 from Greater Hume Shire Council. In short, up to an additional \$10,000 will be available for each property. The aim of this funding is to assist with the myriad costs associated with a personal upheaval of this nature, whether they be storage, rental accommodation or the like. Those needs will differ according to personal circumstances. For example, a person might have a shed where they can store belongings, or they might be able to stay with a friend or relative nearby while demolition and construction take place. Importantly, there is accountability with this aspect of the package. The money must be spent on things which are part of the process. The mayor and I will sit on the assessment panel.

There are many people to acknowledge and thank for their contribution to this great result—Greater Hume Shire Council Mayor Heather Wilton, General Manager Steve Pinnuck, Joe D'Ermilio and the loose-fill asbestos implementation task force, Holbrook's residents, and the Minister for his personal involvement and speedy action. In the end, this issue and its resolution reminds us that while it is up to governments to provide policy solutions facing their citizens, it is also necessary to be prepared to be flexible to understand intrinsically that a one-size-fits-all approach will not always work, to be willing to change courses very publicly, and to put in more resources.

On both visits from the Minister, we met with resident John "Archie" Quinnell, a retiree who still lives in the home built by his parents 53 years ago. He remembers when the asbestos was pumped into the roof as a kind of slurry. He told us that the workmen wore a high level of protective gear, so much so that as a child he leapt on his bicycle and got out of there as soon as possible. Archie's mother died from mesothelioma and he cannot help but wonder if the insulation played a role. In March, I made this plea to Government:

I ask for the people of Holbrook: Can we solve this quickly?

This Government has delivered for the great future of this well-loved highway town and its remarkable people.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (16:33): I congratulate the member for Albury on the way in which he has managed a challenging problem. I was on the asbestos task force, chaired by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile in the other place. The stories that we heard were heartbreaking. People were losing their homes; they were unable to live in them because of loose-fill asbestos. I acknowledge the quick work of the Minister and the measures that have been put in place to retain citizens in that town. It is a win-win for Holbrook and its community. I acknowledge Heather Wilton, the mayor; Steve Pinnuck, the general manager; and Joe D'Ermilio and their team for the tireless work and the sympathetic and caring way in which they have worked with the member for Albury to deliver this outcome. This is a win-win for regional New South Wales and for those people who were devastated by the loose-fill asbestos. I congratulate the member for the way in which he continues to work hard for his electorate.

FOOTBALL TRAINING ACADEMIES

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (16:34): I bring to the attention of the House the fantastic work being done by a facility a fair way out of my electorate, but one that I hope to see replicated a bit closer to home in the near future. Like many members of this place, I have received numerous complaints about the tactics and payment schemes of private children's football training programs, and the rampant exploitation of families and publically owned facilities which is underwriting many of these questionable schemes. As the House would be aware, my colleague the member for Heffron has been very vocal on this issue and, following the overwhelming feedback received from the huge junior soccer communities in the south of Sydney, it became apparent that the questionable behaviour of some of these training academies was even more widespread than we had previously thought.

I have heard uncountable stories of absolutely disgraceful behaviour by these clubs, drawing in families with promises that their child will be the next David Beckham, and demanding thousands of dollars for the privilege of additional training, often with the implication that should their child not enrol in the academy their chances of qualifying to play for the associated club would be compromised. To make matters worse, many of

these academies are set up to exploit non-commercial arrangements between soccer clubs and local councils, paying non-commercial rents to generate commercial profits while the community foots the bill.

Football is becoming increasingly popular, and it is important that we are able to train world-class soccer players. That is why I was encouraged to hear from the member for Lismore that a brilliant football academy is currently operating on the far North Coast and is providing exactly the sort of service families and players should have the right to expect when they engage in these programs. As a consequence, the member for Heffron and I recently travelled to Lismore to investigate the facility, and I am happy to report back to the House that the Liverpool Football Club International Academy New South Wales, based at Southern Cross University in Lismore, is surely the best-kept secret in football anywhere in Australia.

Despite the ravage of the recent floods, we were graciously welcomed to the academy by the general manager of the football centre, Scott Collis, and what we saw there was truly impressive. As a joint initiative between the internationally renowned Liverpool Football Club and Southern Cross University, this academy is true to its commitment of providing a stepping stone for keen young players to move up to the next level. I put on record my personal congratulations to Scott Collis, who I understand personally played a large role in creating this strategic partnership between Southern Cross University and one of the greatest football clubs in the world.

We were fortunate to have head coach James Gow guide us around the playing grounds and facilities during a training night, and after we battled through his thick Liverpool accent it became very clear to us that there is a significant point of difference between what they are doing there and what many of the academies in Sydney are doing. They are not just teaching young players by rote but are instructing them in lateral and strategic thinking, in making their responses on the field and their positioning instinctual, and in how to adapt complex techniques into their standard play style. The football academy was also clearly taking advantage of the integration with the university, with students specialising in sports science, administration and medicine assisting with training.

While there was simply too much happening for me to provide a full report to the House, as the need for reform in the operation of junior soccer grows, I encourage all those with an interest in this area to look to this incredible football academy so that we can seek the replication of this model across New South Wales. I for one would welcome the establishment of such a partnership in Rockdale as I believe the best-practice, family friendly atmosphere is what we need access to in order to propel Australian soccer to the next level.

While they say that the King of Rock and Roll, Elvis Presley, might still be out there somewhere, I can report that the King of Lismore is alive and well—and his name is Thomas George. I offer my sincere thanks to the member for Lismore, Deputy Speaker Thomas George, who made many of the arrangements for our trip and was unequalled as a host throughout our visit to his electorate. We could not take two steps without somebody stopping Thomas to have a chat. After the overwhelmingly negative feedback I have received about children's football academies, it was a breath of fresh air to experience an academy that was genuinely working in the best interests of the children and families concerned. Once again, I thank Scott, James, Ron and Thomas for giving me the opportunity to see that.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:40): Somewhat unusually, I wish to compliment the member for Heffron and the member for Rockdale for bringing to the attention of the House and the public some of the practices of private football coaching academies. Some of those practices are not the best ways to encourage our young men and women to enjoy a great sport. I was a little concerned to hear that the member for Heffron and the member for Rockdale had gone on a road trip—images from *Thelma & Louise* immediately came to my mind. But that is a light comment about a very serious subject, and I thank the members for bringing those matters to the attention of the House.

ROBERT MENZIES "FORGOTTEN PEOPLE" SPEECH ANNIVERSARY

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (16:40): On behalf of the constituents of Hawkesbury, I speak in anticipation of the seventy-fifth anniversary of Robert Menzies' speech on "The Forgotten People". On 22 May 1942, during the dark days of the Second World War, Robert Menzies gave an address on radio. This address would forever change the political landscape in this country and lay the foundations for the ideology and aspirations of the Liberal Party. While Menzies was reluctant to divide Australia into classes, he said that we must speak of "the middle class, who, properly regarded, represent the backbone of this country". The members of the middle class, said Menzies, are driven by "ordinary ambitions"—the ambition to realise their own good, and that of their families, and that of their communities—which are the things at the centre of their lives.

According to Menzies, members of the middle class are not notably affluent, or obsessed with their own victimhood or with trying to claim minority status. They often have too few problems to agitate for serious change, and too little wealth or influence to press for the changes they may want. But it is these middle-class citizens—

the "nameless and unadvertised masses"—that, according to Menzies, are "the real life of the nation". Today I wish to remind the House of those words of Menzies, because it is in understanding and fighting for those forgotten people that the Liberal Party found its narrative—one that began with Menzies, continued with Howard's battlers and Tony's tradies, and continues today. It is clear that Menzies' words are as relevant today as they were then. If we look around the world today, we see an increasingly turbulent and polarised political climate developing, with the "forgotten people" in the United States and the United Kingdom making their voices heard in, respectively, the election of President Trump and the vote on Brexit. These political shocks are what happens when the political establishment becomes disconnected from the mainstream.

While we in the Liberal Party have built a narrative around the backbone of Australia, other political parties have chosen to pander to the extremities. Having abandoned the workers for the sake of self-interest, other parties depend on minorities and identity politics for a cause. It is this self-interest that has led to their inability to understand the masses that make up mainstream Australia. In fact, it is this very attitude that has driven ordinary Australians to thinking, in despair, that their elected representatives are disconnected from the needs, wants and desires of everyday Australians. But, as the great Liberal Prime Minister John Howard said, "Mainstream government means making decisions in the interests of the whole community, uniting not dividing the nation."

It is the belief of great Liberal leaders like Robert Menzies and John Howard that the Liberal Party is at its best when it combines both our liberal and conservative traditions. The Liberal Party is a truly progressive liberal party, because we strive for the progress of individuals, their rights and their enterprise. But while the Liberal Party is the party of economic progress, we recognise that this progress is built on a conservative foundation. Mainstream Australians know that our prosperity has come from freedom, faith, flag, family and free markets—and this is conservatism.

This is the philosophy that allows those things to flourish. Conservatism conserves the soul of our State. It is in the Liberal Party that we see the union of these two great political traditions: liberalism and conservatism. Economic management is noble and necessary to sustain life but conservatism understands what makes life worth living. It is conservatism that underlies Liberal Party belief that all people are equal and are entitled to equal opportunities and the belief of ordinary Australians that if you work you are entitled to your just reward. The Liberal Party owes a great deal to our former leader Robert Menzies. On the approaching anniversary of this great speech about the mainstream of Australia, I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to him and my hope that the values that he expressed will always be the central tenets of the Liberal Party.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:45): I thank the Treasurer and member for Hawkesbury for reminding us of the important political anniversary that is approaching: the articulation of the central philosophy of the Liberal Party, which is to appeal not to big business or to big organisations like the trade union movement, but to little people. At the time that Menzies spoke about the "forgotten people" about 80 per cent of the working population in Australia were in the union movement. Today, it is something under 20 per cent. The people that Menzies spoke about have become a much greater proportion of our community than when he made his speech. Therefore, the importance and relevance of that speech is even greater today. I thank the Treasurer for bringing those matters to the attention of the House.

TRIBUTE TO THE VERY REVEREND DONALD KIRK

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:45): I pay homage to the Very Reverend Donald Kirk, the Dean of Christ Church Cathedral in Grafton, who gave his final service in the cathedral in February this year. Father Donald has departed to be Rector of the Parish of Hamilton and Archdeacon of the South West of the Diocese of Ballarat in Victoria. Father Donald had been in Grafton for nine years and there have been some tumultuous times for the local Anglican church since he arrived in 2008 with wife, Cameron, and their children, Caitlin and Lachlan. During that time the diocese has been involved in the Royal Commission into Institutionalised Responses to Child Sexual Abuse over its handling of claims of abuse at the North Coast Children's Home in Lismore between 1940 and the 1980s. The audit of the diocesan response to the allegations led to the resignation of Bishop Keith Slater in 2013—an event that Father Donald described as "a very stressful period". He said, "I was not involved directly in it but felt obliged to offer support to other clergy in the diocese. My role was looking after the cathedral, so it meant I was not directly involved in any of those issues".

The June 2015 arson attack on the Anglican op shop and the bookstore that shared the building was another trying time. Father Donald was awakened in the middle of the night to find firefighters drenching the shop with water. The damage forced the op shop and bookstore to move to alternative premises for a year. Father Donald said that funerals were an important part of the cathedral's role and he could remember some important ones in his time at Grafton. The funeral for Jeremy and Sue Challacombe was a very moving experience for Father Donald, given that they were both important figures in the community and in the church. The funeral for champion lifesaver Jacob Lollback, who died in a tragic diving accident just short of his twenty-first birthday

was another moving experience for Father Donald. The congregation at Jacob's funeral was massive, as he was highly regarded by the community.

Father Donald has also been involved in many of the church's happier times, arriving just in time for the 125th anniversary of the building of the cathedral. Two significant figures from the cathedral's past—Father John Edwards, the third Dean of Grafton, and the Right Reverend Richard Hereford, the fifth Dean of Grafton who recently retired as the Bishop of Bathurst—returned for the joyful occasion. I know that Father Donald is looking forward to the challenges he will face in Victoria. He said, "It is not going to be easy to leave. It has been the place where our family has grown up. It is going to be busier but it is a different kind of role to here. As Archdeacon, I will have the responsibility of being a mentor to other clergy in the diocese".

Father Donald was also a police chaplain for the Coffs-Clarence Local Area Command. Before he left, the command held a ceremony at Grafton Police Station to recognise his nine years in that role. Coffs Clarence Commander Superintendent Mark Holohan presented Father Donald with his NSW Police Force badge of rank board. This board carries all the rank attainments that a police officer has reached. Superintendent Holohan said that a police chaplain is equivalent to a commissioned officer in the force and entitles the chaplain to wear the uniform of that rank. Father Donald said the uniform could cause some consternation in the ranks and recalled an amusing situation when he was police chaplain in Tamworth. He said:

When I was police chaplain in Tamworth I came into the station to find the desk sergeant with his feet up on the desk. When he saw the commissioned officer's uniform he jumped to his feet and began to look busy. Then he realised who I was, relaxed and said, "Oh, you're just the chaplain."

Superintendent Holohan said Father Donald was never "just the chaplain" in his command. He said the quiet and unassuming way that Father Donald carried out his chaplain's duties mirrored the way chaplaincy had changed in the force. He said:

We've moved on from the hatched, matched and dispatched days. You've had a real impact in the way you've carried out those duties. You've been a steady hand and have the ability to talk to people quietly.

A senior constable at Grafton, Paul Johnston, who also served at Tamworth while Father Donald was chaplain, described his effectiveness in the role. He said:

It was the relationships he established, he was here every week so people got to know and trust him. And because of that if someone was low or felt they needed someone to talk to, he was there and could be trusted.

He said the chaplain's role went beyond religion. He stated:

It was never about religion for Fr Donald, he could turn himself to any topic.

That is exactly the way the community of the Clarence Valley regarded Father Donald. Yes, he was the Dean of Christ Church Cathedral in Grafton but he was also a man of the people and he will be sorely missed.

Members

INAUGURAL SPEECH

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I extend a very warm welcome to the family, friends and supporters of the member for Gosford: in particular, her husband, Mark Thomson; her sister, Trudii Tesch; former member for Gosford Marie Andrews; and close friends Jarrod Vero, Linda Bracken, Bill Watkins, Genny Murphy and Anne Charlton. We are also privileged to have an Auslan interpreter present as well.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:52): It is with a great sense of pride, privilege and an even greater sense of responsibility that I address the House for the first time today. I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which this Parliament sits, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and pay my respects to elders past, present and future. I honour the Darkinjung and Guringai peoples and the beautiful and sacred lands and waterways of the Gosford electorate. I also acknowledge and thank the Aboriginal people who join us here today. Labor has been a champion of reconciliation and recognition of our first peoples. In that spirit and example, I look forward to us working together to continue to strengthen relationships and understanding with our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, especially the young Aboriginal people in our community. I also look forward to celebrating with communities across Australia the day when Aboriginal people are finally recognised in the Australian Constitution.

Allow me to paint a picture of an idyllic destination just over an hour north of Sydney and its access to magnificent waterways. You all know the beautiful Hawkesbury River, flanked by the magnificent Sydney Basin Hawkesbury sandstone, symbolic of the gateway to the beautiful Central Coast. To the east, the Brisbane Water—host of an extensive boat-building industry in its heyday—divides us from the Terrigal electorate. Both these pristine waterways are a playground for boating and recreation, touching on the edges of five magnificent national parks and also dotted with splendid, uncrowded beaches. The Gosford electorate is part of the greater Central

Coast, touting a very-important-to-our-economy visitor spending of \$860 million last year. If you have not had a weekend with us, we hope to see you in one of our cafes or hotels next weekend, or maybe on the June long weekend.

I thank the people of Gosford for entrusting me with the opportunity to be their representative in the Parliament. I feel the significance and scale of the responsibility today and every day. And I love it! I particularly thank Kathy Smith for the work she has done before me. I spoke with many people in the lead-up to the by-election and they expressed how grateful they are to Kathy for all her achievements, large and small, in our community.

My gratitude also goes to the people who assisted and supported me in the Gosford by-election. At a glance, I can see many of them here this evening. Sincere and heartfelt thanks go to Senator Deborah O'Neil and Marie Andrews, long-time female leaders and role models on the Central Coast, who inspired me to put up my hand alongside the wonderful candidate for the seat of Robertson, Anne Charlton. To my colleagues here in the Parliament, all of our great Labor team who took time to visit the Gosford community, thank you for your ongoing support and guidance.

Thank you to the tireless and awe-inspiring campaign team led by David Dobson: Emma Murphy, Peter Duggan, Zach Harrison and Brody Willets who lived, ate and breathed the community of Gosford. Thank you to New South Wales Labor, and the irrepressible Kaila Murnain and Pat Garcia. Your support for me, and the campaign, has made all this possible. To our passionate branch members and supporters of the Labor Party who were extraordinarily generous with their time, energy and contribution, thank you. To our brothers and sisters in the union movement, thank you.

Special thanks to Mark Moray and Salim Barber for standing with me throughout the campaign. I thank the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association for fighting to protect the penalty rates of some of our most vulnerable workers on the Coast; the Transport Workers Union for standing up for our local garbos and protecting their take home pay; and the United Services Union for defending local government workers during the amalgamation of our local councils. Amongst it all, Young Labor descended on the electorate energising it with the spirit, fun and enthusiasm of intelligent youth, helping to turn the tide of Gosford towards a great win. I will never take that for granted.

I thank my good friends from school, university, sport, neighbourhood, international development, and life. I thank my brother-in-law, Jarrod. In particular, I thank my colleagues in public education, exemplified here today in the camaraderie of the champagne crafternoon team from Brisbane Water Secondary College. I love a challenge and look forward to the new challenge of realising our goals as the member for Gosford. My priority is to be the catalyst for the positive change that the region is crying out for. I believe my life experiences have given me the skills, resilience and vision to achieve this.

I had a wonderfully privileged childhood. My sister, Trudii, and I grew up in a caravan, built by our father, an architect who spent much of his life designing low-cost, sustainable housing as an ideological solution for a burgeoning society. We lived in a number of locations on the coast of New Zealand's South Island with five cats, three goats, a rabbit and a pig. We went barefoot in summer, wore gumboots in winter, and enjoyed bush tucker as a regular part of our diet. It was not a normal family environment, but it was one of love that allowed us to connect directly with nature from a very young age and to always appreciate and revere the natural world.

This experience has created a lasting interest in the importance of human stewardship of the environment and the preservation of green space within the community. My family returned to Australia when I was seven years old, initially living in a boatshed and moving at least 10 times in 10 years before Mum, aged 50, purchased our first family home on Labor's low-interest HomeFund loan scheme. Dad moved onto the homemade houseboat—once again, for us, affordable housing.

Change is not always by choice, but I have learned to embrace it. It has helped me to be flexible and pragmatic when necessary and to adapt quickly and positively to new circumstances. As an active young person who crashed my bicycle and broke my back when I was 19, I had no idea of the very important role that sport would play in my life. As a new wheelchair user, wheeling into the Wheelchair Sports NSW stadium at Mount Druitt and seeing people with disabilities going fast and having fun—people who had lives, boyfriends, cars and jobs—instilled in me a whole new world of possibility. I immediately fell in love with the game of wheelchair basketball.

I used my \$2 pensioner ticket to travel from Blackalls Park in Lake Macquarie near Newcastle to Mount Druitt every Thursday evening for training and was selected in the Australian women's team. After playing in the national men's league with a group of women for a number of years, we established the Women's National Wheelchair Basketball League, which I enjoyed competing in again last weekend. Go the Sydney Flames—top of the league! After placing seventh in Barcelona in 1992 and fourth in Atlanta in 1996, it was an honour to be a

part of a team of athletes who worked with the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Organising Committee to educate Sydneysiders and beyond about what a Paralympics was going to deliver to our city.

Sydney 2000 left a legacy not only of improved physical access, but also we saw a vast shift in the attitude towards people with disabilities in Australia. For the first time in Paralympic history, we competed in front of packed houses. Stadiums were filled with school students. No longer did children ask their parents or teachers "What is wrong with that person?" but rather "What sport does that person play?" Thank you so much, Sydney and your volunteers. Everyone involved in that era speaks of the games with heartfelt joy. Our first silver medal, in front of the home crowd, led to an offer to play in Europe and a career as the first woman in the world to play professionally in the men's league in Spain, then in Italy and in France. In all three nations I was motivated to develop sufficient language proficiency to collect the phone numbers of the female spectators and work to establish women's teams.

I was living in a tiny apartment in Paris, travelling around France on weekends and being paid to do what I love, when an email arrived from the Department of Education with a job offer at Brisbane Water Secondary College in Woy Woy. As a good geography teacher, I immediately googled the peninsula. It has water on three sides, a ferry to friends in Saratoga and another to the Northern Beaches, easy access to trains, and an expressway travelling both north and south. And so I moved from Paris to Woy Woy. I had barely had time to settle into life in Woy Woy when the opportunity to try out for a spot in the Sydney to Hobart yacht race with Sailors with disABILITIES arrived. Our vision-impaired skipper was by far the best sailor at night—thanks, Kirk—and the two double-leg-above-knee amputees working on the front of the boat had no legs to be swept out from underneath them as the waves of Bass Strait crashed over the foredeck. Our navigator, Bill, was adept at his job as the boat rolled, ably holding all technology steady with his 4½ elbows and 7¼ fingers. Give us a wave, Bill.

In addition, I met my wonderful partner, Mark, an able-bodied volunteer, on my first Sydney to Hobart race. After years of sailing together and his travelling around the world chasing this Paralympian, Mark is perfect—the supportive partner of a member of Parliament who lives most evenings amongst the community and nights away in Parliament. Thank you to all our families and thank you so much, hubby. Experiencing the Sydney to Hobart with Sailors with disABILITIES is a celebration of diversity and a lesson in creative solutions for all of us.

The documentary of this race was the catalyst for Paralympic sailor Daniel Fitzgibbon to chase this wheelchair basketballer as future crew. After our first trial sailing together, Dan invited me to compete in Miami the following week. We won our first three regattas. On returning to Australia, I sadly retired from the Aussie Gliders. After five Paralympic Games playing wheelchair basketball, we had won two silvers and a bronze. For the following six years, Dan and I spent almost every weekend and school holidays on the water training to beat the best Paralympic sailors in the world. We backed up the gold medal we won at the London games with another gold in Rio last year.

It is not only elite sporting competition that has shaped the direction of my life. My mum, who was a magical woman, instilled in my sister, Trudii, and me a deep passion for life and for people. In her efforts to support our family, Mum's talents as a potter created wonderful artistic and community adventures. She developed in us an enduring enjoyment of the arts and a strong belief in the importance of the arts and culture for celebrating, humanising and enriching society. Having worked in aged care for much of her life, Mum taught us about taking time to listen to the stories of life and the needs and achievements of individuals and communities. Mum spent time as a palliative care volunteer, giving much to those in need. It is not just for my Mum, whom we lost to breast cancer, or for Kathy Smith, who is currently battling cancer, but for all of us that I commit to expanding the resources dedicated to people who need palliative care across New South Wales and the Central Coast.

Our electorate has a world-class facility in Gosford Hospital. To the north lies Wyong Public Hospital, initially built using instalments of miners' wages to construct the first stages of the hospital. Plans to privatise this hospital and the consequential impact on job security and mental wellbeing for health workers are affecting, and will continue to affect, people across the whole of the Central Coast. No health professional imagined their role would include having to wage a political campaign to save their workplace and their job security. Nor should access to quality health care be bound by what people can afford. I commit to working hard to ensure that the health service provided to the people of New South Wales supports good health now and in the future. Money invested proactively in prevention is a more effective long-term measure, both financially and for the health of our community.

Whilst my sister, Trudii, studied nursing and paid the Higher Education Contribution Scheme, I was lucky enough to commence university in the post-Whitlam era, without the social or financial barriers to tertiary education that are emerging today. It is a top priority for me to make education and training financially accessible for the next generation to reduce their risk of being left behind. I will always champion the value of quality education and continue to fight to reinstate the jobs and training spaces that have been taken from young people

in TAFE courses across New South Wales. We must increase the number of apprenticeships and support employers to adopt training policies that not only employ youth but also equip them with training for future innovation in Australia and the world.

At this point, I send a shout-out to the tradies from the coast. Almost 10 per cent of our population are employed in the construction industry. Most of them relied on TAFE for their qualifications, many gained their skills within the framework of apprenticeships and many travel to Sydney every day for work. I pay my respects to the nearly one-quarter of Gosford locals who travel outside the electorate every day for work. The average commute is more than three hours per day—valuable time that takes my constituents away from their families and communities. This has a crippling impact on their quality of life. It is hard to exercise, to help their children with their homework or to contribute to a community group when they are stuck on the M1 or the train.

I have a vision to transform Gosford into a thriving, energised business and social community, the capital city of the Central Coast with a beating heart, a waterside community that people are proud to call home. Growth in the Gosford electorate coincides with Labor's commitment to an increase, not a decrease, in government engagement to generate jobs on the coast. We will ensure the development of infrastructure, the safety of our waterways, and quality, accessible health care. I know that Labor will deliver equitable access to tertiary education and understands the issue of the increasing need for affordable housing. The people of the Gosford electorate are not "Greater Sydney", and as such the area needs development particular to our needs and identity, expanding on all that we already have to offer. We must be recognised and resourced as a region. On this note, the importance of inspiring, extending and supporting education and employment opportunities for young people cannot be underestimated in society, especially on the Central Coast.

In one of my last lessons as a geography teacher, we discussed as a class the youth unemployment rate of the Gosford electorate—which currently stands at almost 17 per cent. Eden, a year 10 student, came to me at the end of the class remarking that, when taking those statistics into account, five of the 30 children in that class would not get a job. Not to mention, as a young Aboriginal man, Eden's outlook for employment may be even statistically worse. These are sobering statistics and a reality that I hope to change. I have been a teacher for 25 years and more than 20 of those have been in public education on the beautiful Central Coast—and I must say, Mr Deputy Speaker, in asking for an extension of time, I think that the class that you have to deal with in this Chamber is possibly worse than any class I have ever taught. [*Extension of time*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please continue. This is your life.

Ms LIESL TESCH: I have seen the fantastic work that our teachers and principals do, educating our youth and helping them become active members of our community. There is much we can learn from leading world-class education systems, such as those with decentralised school structures, without the overinvestment in one-off, standardised tests that artificially categorise both students and teachers. My initial visit to this place was so exciting. As an active wheelchair user and incomplete paraplegic, I popped a wheelie to jump the single step into the Chamber—cool! There is a long ramp that allows me to enter beside the big stairs from Macquarie Street—tick. One of the first things that drew my attention was the wheelchair accessible bathroom and shower on the same level as my office—tick. Since my arrival we now have new bendy microphones on our side of the House—tick.

My Labor colleagues have been out and about with me in Gosford and have a pretty good understanding of what I can and cannot do in my chair. They are still learning, and continue to ask lots of questions. It is so good to feel so welcome. However, on my first morning of Parliament, I chose not to use the gym or the pool before work—four steps, no handrail, and I could not even fit in the door of the shower. Couldn't I go upstairs to the accessible shower? You do not want to see me wheeling through the corridors of Parliament House in a dripping bikini, I can assure you.

I would love to join my colleagues for lunch in the gorgeous Domain out the back, but as they quickly saunter up the steps back to their offices, I have to detour through the hospital next door to get to the front gate on Macquarie Street. And when I leave Parliament in the evening after hours, I push the button and wait for the police to let me out as my colleagues wave, "Have a good time at dinner". You might notice I have a lower lectern, and one day I hope we can work to enable future wheelchair users, with less balance agility than I have due to the nature of their diverse disabilities, to sit properly under this table.

In addition, after my first day in Parliament, I arrived at the accommodation I had booked as "an active wheelchair user", only to be welcomed by a flight of stairs. Nice one! The booking agency organised a second night down near Central station—it was pretty cool pushing up with my backpack and it is not what I had in mind—and then for the final night they informed me, "We can't find any wheelchair accessible accommodation in Sydney". I say this not to seek pity—ask any one of my sporting teammates or opponents how they fared when pitted against me—I speak about the reality of everyday life for people with disabilities in our community. I know

this old building is history and with it come some physical limitations, and there will be more budget to spend on changes next year.

We are a progressive Parliament, and people and change make history. People with disabilities do not want to be fighting for access. We want to be able to live our lives well and, in my case, roll in on day one to be an active and effective member of Australia's workforce. We must remind ourselves that the bottom line of the whole National Disability Insurance Scheme agreement was about people with disabilities doing just that.

In conclusion, I say to the people of the Gosford electorate: Thank you. I am so excited to be working with and for a community of people who know what I stand for, know what I believe in, and know that I will fight for justice, fairness, equity and inclusion in our community. Now, come and visit. Let me know about your visions for the future of our community. Bring the school students of the Central Coast in to check out your Gosford office here in Parliament House. Mum's pottery is on the bookshelf, and on the wall is a fantastic painting by Audrey Hennessey—who is up there in the gallery—a young Wakka Wakka and Yaegl woman who moved in with my partner, Mark, and me when she outgrew her foster home. Audrey's year 12 major work depicts her home life in Baryulgil, and the magnificent colours and textures of the bush tucker that was her childhood. In the centre of the painting are the symbolically represented mission's nine dwellings, dusted with white of the nearby asbestos mine.

James Hardy and the New South Wales Government both knew the implications at the time, but kept the mine open due to the success of high levels of Aboriginal employment. This reminds me every day of the importance of the integrity of government decisions, and that we must not compromise profit and key performance indicators at the expense and wellbeing of Australian workers and communities. In closing, I would like you all to shut your eyes and listen to the sound of the Rio Gold Medal—as that is how some people in our community see the world. It is one thing to put on the green and gold and wheel out onto the court or sail out onto the bay to represent our great nation. It is another thing to be elected to work with and for the people of the Gosford electorate to make our community the best place in the world to live.

Members stood in their places and applauded.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: On behalf of every member in this House and the wonderful crowd that you have here this afternoon, we extend our congratulations to you and wish you every success in your career.

Private Members' Statements

CANTERBURY ELECTORATE ROAD MAINTENANCE

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:19): Some of the local roads in my electorate of Canterbury are in an appalling state. The Berejiklian Government must address the shortfall that councils have experienced over the past three years as a result of the cuts the Federal Government made to the local government grants that provide money for local road upgrades. As members know, the Federal Government under Tony Abbott and Joe Hockey imposed a freeze on the indexation of Financial Assistance Grants from 2014-15 through to this 2016-17 budget. These grants are split into two components. One is for general purposes and the other is to provide key funding to councils specifically for road maintenance.

NSW Labor welcomes the Federal Government's budget decision to unfreeze indexation of Financial Assistance Grants. In that regard I acknowledge my colleague the Hon. Peter Primrose, who is the shadow Minister for Local Government. However, when will this Government address the funding shortfall over the three years in which New South Wales councils missed out on an estimated \$287.7 million? While the Federal and State governments squabble over this funding, hardworking residents all over New South Wales—and especially in my electorate—are fighting just to get simple maintenance and repairs carried out on their local roads and streets. It is estimated that the combined impact on the former Canterbury Council over the past three years is close to \$1 million.

I recently held a street meeting with residents in Waterside Crescent, Earlwood. That road looks like the surface of the moon with craters and potholes everywhere. It is in terrible condition and in dire need of repair and resealing. Those residents had to start a petition to draw attention to their street. Street repairs should not have to be demanded. Rather, they should be anticipated and provided. Those roads, and in turn the residents who frequently use them, are victims of short-sighted cuts by the Federal Liberal Government and a lack of action by the State Liberal Government to rectify the funding shortfall. I commend the residents of Waterside Crescent. I acknowledge that after receiving a letter from them the council has agreed to upgrade the road and it is in the forward estimates. However, that work should have been carried out three to five years ago.

Redman Street in Campsie in my electorate was so dilapidated it had to be urgently repaired when brought to the council's attention. Once brought to the attention of council it was fixed efficiently; however, these sorts of

lapses in repairs are the result of funding cuts. There is no doubt about it. The list goes on. Moorefields Road in Roselands and Fore, High and Berna streets in Canterbury all need speed calming measures and traffic management plans. These things must be addressed. I have informed residents that I will be holding a street meeting in a couple of weeks so we can begin advocating to the State Government to provide additional funding to the council.

We now come to one of the worst and most rundown roads in Sydney—Canterbury Road. This Government likes to crow about the things it is doing. What about the things it is not doing? Canterbury Road is the main arterial road into south-west Sydney, and it is by far the largest road traversing my electorate and a number of other electorates. Publicly available data from Roads and Maritime Services indicates that use of Canterbury Road has continued to increase since counting of vehicles began in 2009. I have written to Minister Pavey, who has responded that the Government will be doing something. I acknowledge that, but we need a coordinated plan agreed to by the council and the State Government, particularly in relation to population growth and the development that is happening in the area. I call on the Government to provide additional funds.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:24): I thank the member for Canterbury for raising those important roads, some of which border my electorate. I will be speaking with Minister Pavey and Minister Constance, and if I can facilitate a meeting with Roads and Maritime Services and the council, I will do so. This is a longstanding issue. I do not think any significant repair work has been done on Canterbury Road for many years. That is obviously a situation this Government inherited from the previous Government, and we look forward to addressing it.

FIREARMS CLUBS SAFETY

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:25): I draw the attention of the House to funding provided to a number of shooting and firearms clubs in my electorate. As part of the 2016-17 Safe Shooting Program, three local firearms groups received \$32,000. The Manning Valley Rifle Club was successful in gaining \$6,250 for the installation of solar power connected to the clubhouse and firing range lines. The club, which is in the Kiwarra State Forest, has previously received funding from the Community Building Partnership Fund for disability access, all-weather cover and other projects. The Taree-Wingham Clay Target Club received \$5,500 to install safety fencing, boundary markers, danger signs to comply with standards, and for the purchase of shipping containers for storage. Taree Pistol Club will benefit from a \$20,000 grant to upgrade its existing range division walls and targets to comply with Firearms Registry standards. I congratulate the clubs on achieving that extra funding.

The main aim of the Safe Shooting Program is to increase the safety of shooting facilities in New South Wales, including during club-sponsored activities held away from a club's permanent base. Shooting is an Olympic Games and a Commonwealth Games sport that families can safely enjoy. It is a privilege to support the many firearms clubs in my electorate; I love supporting and helping them. Wingham Rifle Club also received Community Building Partnership funding for an electronic scoreboard. The members told me what a difference it has made because they no longer have people under the targets putting up scores.

A Firearms Registry forum recently held at Wingham attracted more than 60 attendees. They heard from the Firearms Registry and experts in the field about proposed changes and about the way The Nationals are supporting sporting shooters and firearm owners across New South Wales. They all realise that because members of The Nationals are part of the Government they are in the room when policy decisions are made about legislation affecting lawful firearm owners. It is The Nationals who represent regional New South Wales, not minor parties, Independent or others. It was great to be at that forum and to experience the goodwill extended to the Government because of its good policies and the changes it is making. The Firearms Registry is talking about becoming computerised. One of these clubs has applied for solar panels so they can have a computer at the rifle range and get instantaneous access to the Firearms Registry.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Todd Barnard of the Wingham Rifle Club. Todd is the club's target rifle C grade champion. I also congratulate Declan Heaney who was second in the F class B grade championship to Christina Adams. Declan Heaney is the son Ian Heaney, with whom I played rugby some years ago. Superintendent Peter Thurtell is also a member of that club. Peter recently represented Australia in South Africa and he came fifteenth in the world. He was a bit disappointed with that result but I think it was an outstanding achievement. I am proud to support these clubs and as the local member I will continue to assist them in any way I can. I love going out to all the ranges and sometimes having a shoot myself. I congratulate these clubs on receiving this funding.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:30): I commend the member for Myall Lakes for the outstanding work he does in his electorate. He does an outstanding job for the many sporting and shooting organisations in his electorate. I would knight him myself if I had the power, but I will leave that to others.

ANZAC COMMEMORATIONS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:31): Today I recognise and praise the people of the North Shore for the services and events celebrated on Anzac Day this year. On the sombre morning of 25 April I attended the Mosman dawn service at Georges Heights. As with every service commemorating the sacrifice of the fallen, the experience was truly humbling. The North Shore has a long and distinguished tradition of military service and is home to some of the longest serving military bases in the State. HMAS *Waterhen* at Waverton and HMAS *Penguin* at Mosman date from the 1930s and 1940s respectively, and their continued presence is felt and appreciated by the North Shore community.

I am deeply honoured to recognise and extend my gratitude to so many individuals for their contribution to the Mosman dawn service this year: Lieutenant Colonel Ian Henderson, Eileen Henderson, and President Victor Danko, Mosman RSL Sub-branch, for the ode; Reverend Craig Roberts, St Augustine's church, for leading the service in prayer; Commanding Officer Ian Campbell and Olivia Matlock from HMAS *Penguin*, for the upstanding Anzac prologue; Principal Dr Peter Lennox and school captains Annie Ryan and Bernardo Kroll of SCEGGS Redlands, for their very moving dedications and tributes; and Colonel Andrew Condon, for his commemorative address, which so powerfully listed all the details of those who had lost their lives in war. I also thank the Mosman State Emergency Service and the Mosman Lions Club for their work on the day.

The confluence of all these efforts, and the work of countless others, is part of what makes our community so special. Anzac Day deeply moves me and I treasure its observance every year. On Anzac Day we look to something more than ourselves. We forget our own busy lives and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. It is imperative that we cherish and honour the brave men and women who helped make our nation what it is today. Like so many Australians, my family history is intertwined with the Anzac tradition and marked by service to our nation. My grandmother Edna served in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. My grandfather David served as a Lancaster bomber pilot in World War II. He flew 31 missions over Nazi Germany and Europe and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his service. My great-aunt Noala Chandler served as a nurse in World War II. It is these stories and the personal family histories of service that are mirrored in the stories of every Australian. We all have a significant story to tell and we all have a significant connection to the Anzac tradition.

As I stood in silence at the Mosman dawn service, I reflected on what the Anzac story teaches us. It teaches us that our nation is unique, that where we have come from is important, and that we all have a role to play. The values of mateship, courage and sacrifice are at the core of the Anzac story and are as much about the individual as they are our national identity. Each one of us can learn from the Anzacs what it means to serve the people around us, and this spirit of self-sacrifice and service is what I was humbled to witness with many Mosman locals at the dawn service. I am proud to stand here today and extol the people of the North Shore as those who remember in the most honourable and moving of ways. Anzac Day brings our communities together and it highlights the essence of family and friendship. The mantle of remembrance rests on our shoulders, and we have a responsibility to pass on that legacy to continue the Anzac tradition. It is with great joy that I reaffirm that the community of the North Shore remembers with integrity and reverence that the Anzac story will never be forgotten.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:35:0): I congratulate the member for North Shore on her outstanding election result, on her inaugural speech last night and not only on her commitment but also her family's commitment to the Anzac story. It shows a strong history of commitment to our great nation. She will be an outstanding member of this House.

RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (17:36): Today I speak about two railway safety issues. First, the safety concerns and danger in which the State's commuters were left by the Premier when she was transport Minister when her Government ignored track maintenance and safety issues on the northern line of the inner city train network. Secondly, I speak of the lives she will hold in peril when she allows the current transport Minister to staff the new intercity fleet with only one crew member. This means only one person will be available to drive the train, provide first aid to injured passengers, clear debris from the tracks, and see to any other emergency situation that may be encountered.

We must talk about what happened on the Premier's watch as transport Minister. Premier Berejiklian was the Minister for Transport for four years from 3 April 2011 to 2 April 2015. In those four years the then Minister showed a complete failure to act and manage safety for rail commuters in New South Wales. I was recently provided with the report of the Office of Transport Safety Investigations, which reveals there were systemic rail safety inadequacies during the Premier's time in this position. A series of significant safety failures went unreported and unchecked in Boronia tunnel No. 3 between Cowan and Mooney Mooney specifically. Shockingly,

my Newcastle residents travelled on the Newcastle and Central Coast line, unknowingly putting their lives in danger under that Minister's watch. A rail defect comprising of corroded or missing rail fastenings went uninspected time and again. The report states:

The unrestrained track had the potential to displace laterally to the extent that a derailment could have occurred. It was classified at the highest emergency level, which is E1. The inspection revealed there was significant corrosion of the track fastenings and the rail was no longer adequately restrained. An examination of the Boronia tunnel was due in September 2011 and again in 2013, but it was never inspected, and insufficient staff levels and staff training meant that these inspections were either delayed or did not take place. That is simply outrageous. The Government is trying to encourage the Newcastle community to embrace public transport but it is allowing car parks to be swallowed up. Further, when people choose to use this service, can they be assured of their safety?

The report goes on to outline deficiencies in the training and competence of inspectors, and in the assurance of track maintenance activities. The report depicts a government that is merely going through the motions. The Office of Transport Safety Investigations reviewed other similar incidents and Sydney Trains internal audits found that inadequate track inspection and inadequate maintenance were systemic. This follows a 2015 incident when the New South Wales Opposition revealed that Sydney Trains had not repaired the Hawkesbury River Railway Bridge despite being warned two years earlier that repairs were needed within—wait for it—six months. We now know that on the then transport Minister's watch hundreds of thousands of commuters on the Newcastle and Central Coast line were risking their lives because track maintenance and safety issues were being ignored.

The track is now fixed but, unfortunately, Newcastle commuters are about to come under fire again with the Government's plan for the new Intercity train fleet. I was advised by concerned Novocastrians who work for Sydney Trains that the Government was planning to cut down the number of crew members on each train to a driver only. One of my constituents outlined several incidents involving passengers and emergency situations that he had witnessed where a guard was needed. He also pointed out that all trains, apart from metropolitan trains in Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide, are crewed by at least two workers. When I raised this issue in Parliament I was given a vague response of, "Where safe to do so, NSW TrainLink proposes operating the new Intercity fleet trains as driver only".

My constituent outlined two instances when a second crew member was needed in an emergency. The first was a terrible situation. A passenger had a heart attack on the train and one crew member was needed to drive the train while the other administered first aid. The second incident involved a couple of teenagers who were on the track and who were both hit by the train. The driver went into shock and could not move. The crew member had to ascertain that one teenager had been fatally struck and obtain urgent assistance for the other teen. They are just two very real and very much life-and-death scenarios. The Premier and transport Minister are now gambling with people's lives. The Premier has already risked the lives of commuters on the Newcastle and Central Coast line; she should not gamble with their lives again. [*Time expired.*]

SOUTH COAST TAFE CAMPUSES

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (17:41): This evening I speak about TAFE NSW, particularly the campuses in Nowra and Bomaderry in my electorate. Obviously TAFE provides an essential service throughout New South Wales, giving students of all ages access to education and training, advancing their current knowledge or providing them with the necessary skills to advance their careers. Much has been said inside the Chamber and elsewhere about the so-called decimation of TAFE and the changes that have been made to TAFE. If members visit the Nowra campus of TAFE they will see what an extraordinary organisation it has become. The broadening of courses, the depth of courses and the achievements are something to behold. They belie the misinformation and lies about TAFE that are spread by those opposite. Unfortunately, that misinformation sometimes trickles down to the students, who are proud of their achievements and of their TAFE campus. I am also proud of the TAFE campus; it has expanded the number of courses available and the teachers are extremely proud of their achievements.

Most members go to TAFE awards nights, but I suggest that some Labor members do not. If they did, they would see how many courses are being rolled out and how well TAFE is going. The Berejiklian Government has taken new, innovative approaches to bolster TAFE, including trialling an Australian-first program where aged-care facilities will be co-located, with on-the-job training for students at New South Wales campuses; launching a program to provide greater access to vocational education and training for students across regional New South Wales through TAFE's new Connected Learning Centres; and modernising the structure of TAFE to direct more resources to frontline teaching services. As a result, New South Wales will see the opening of 12 brand-new Connected Learning Centres each month, and a new TAFE digital education headquarters in regional New South Wales.

I congratulate the Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business, and the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills on their continued

work in promoting TAFE. The member for Kiama has entered the Chamber. He knows about the fantastic work of TAFE because he also attended the recent TAFE awards night and saw what is going on there and the pride that the teachers have in their work. I am sometimes very disappointed to hear in this Chamber those opposite criticising what TAFE is doing.

A couple of weeks ago the member for Kiama and I attended the TAFE awards ceremony. I will mention some of the award winners, who are really special young people. They included: Naomi Mason, Hannah Stubbles, Jaqelin Elliott, Robyn O'Keefe, Belinda White, Jai Ritter, Patricia Wright, Amy Curwen, Danielle South, Tanesha Deanshaw, Chantelle Scott, Scott Whitfield, Annika Thurbon, Michael Pollock, Sebastian Edward, Callum Walsh, Adam Jolley, Luke Hedger, Katie Sayer, Sakron Vescio, Gail Burnside and Kim-Maree Tate. I also mention the numerous sponsors and supporters of the awards ceremony. There are enormous numbers of sponsors, but they include: Coolangatta Estate, Echidna Early Learning Centre, the Lions Club of Bomaderry, the Lions Club of Nowra, Manildra Group Shoalhaven Starches, RSL Lifecare, Jonathan Rogers GC House, the Shoalhaven Arts Board, the Shoalhaven Business Chamber, Shoalhaven Tourism, Shoalhaven Women's Centre, and the University of Wollongong—Shoalhaven. These are the sponsors who come together to support TAFE NSW, Nowra campus. It is a campus that is expanding and introducing new and innovative courses every day.

Every year I attend these TAFE awards nights, along with the member for Kiama—who, like me, never misses them. We have seen what has been achieved by TAFE NSW. Those opposite come into this Chamber and seek to denigrate the work of the teachers and the students. That is an absolute disgrace. As Speaker, I sometimes sit in the chair now occupied by Temporary Speaker Provost and listen to the comments and think they are bringing students and teachers down. They are really proud of what they are doing, so I congratulate all the students and the hardworking teachers and staff of our local campuses—particularly Bomaderry and Ulladulla. I failed to mention Ulladulla earlier. It is a smaller campus, which has also expanded the number of courses that it provides. Far from decimating or destroying TAFE, the Government is expanding it and making it more competitive. More importantly, we have increased funding for TAFE. I remember when we were in opposition fighting against some of the cuts that were being made by those opposite.

Mr Andrew Fraser: Real cuts.

Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK: Real cuts were made. Now the Government is expanding TAFE. We have faith in it. As a former public school teacher, I value the work that TAFE does in New South Wales—certainly at Nowra and Ulladulla campuses.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (17:46): I thank the member for South Coast for such an eloquent speech celebrating and focusing on the successes of TAFE. It was an absolute delight to join the member for South Coast to witness the excitement in the eyes of students who had achieved so much as they participated in some of the courses that are offered across a plethora of disciplines. This Parliament can be proud of the successes that we see in TAFE—successes not just of the students but also of the teachers. I cannot go anywhere in my electorate without hearing stories about what an outstanding teacher the member for South Coast was—she was a much-loved and admired teacher at Ulladulla High School and, prior to that, at other schools in the Illawarra region. I commend the member for South Coast for taking the opportunity tonight to use her private member's statement to focus on all the successes that we see in TAFE and to rebut some of the appalling statements that are made by those opposite in relation to the outstanding work of TAFE NSW.

COFFS HARBOUR CITY CENTRE MASTERPLAN

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (17:47): Tonight I wish to raise an issue on behalf of the Coffs Harbour City Centre Masterplan Committee. In doing so, I will read onto the record a couple of letters that were sent to me from this committee. These letters were addressed to the General Manager of Coffs Harbour City Council. The first reads:

Dear Steve,

Early this year I attended a meeting at the C.ex about their community safety corridor project which would see better lighting and CCTV cameras in the entertainment area surround the C.ex. Their application for funding required a cash contribution, and the CBD Masterplan Committee was asked for support. Unfortunately I had to inform the C.ex we couldn't consider contributing because our true financial position is unknown. We've had a significant cost blow-out on the Harbour Dr shared zone, and the total cost of the Duke St extension remains allocated to the Special Rate Variation (SRV), despite several requests to have it removed. As recently as the last minutes of the CBD Masterplan Committee, a detailed breakdown of the budget was requested, and once again we received a one page sheet with Budget and YTD totals, and no itemised transaction list. Of concern is the vague note regarding Duke St, saying "additional funding to come from other Council Budget areas." This is not good enough. John Rafferty, CEO of the C.ex was one of those involved in extending the SRV and has repeatedly sought details of the CBD Masterplan budget, which we've been unable to provide. This has obviously prompted the letter (attached) handed to me yesterday, 16 March. The Committee has been requesting clarification of budget issues for the best part of two years now. The situation remains that we only get totals without itemised expenses which are not recorded in approved minutes. Following conversations with John, I have

canvassed several other businesses identified in the letter to the General Manager dated 12 January 2012, and like John, they are concerned we're headed for a similar situation as the first SRV, where unbeknownst to them, they had been charged the full costs of a Project Manager, including a motor vehicle and on-costs, to the value of some \$253,000.

Clearly, what's happening now is not what they agreed to. Central to the negotiation of an extension to the SRV, was that CBD Landowners (the Special-Rate payers) would have a majority of votes on the committee so that no expenditure could be made without their explicit, minuted approval. That was the deal maker. All of the discussion about establishing an extension to the special rate, focused on that critical point. They did not want a situation where Council controlled the decision-making.

He goes on to say in part:

Those paying the SRV are very disappointed that the agreed Terms of Reference can also be rewritten at any time. And I think that that goes to the heart of the issue, in that Council has assumed control of the Masterplan funds. To quote a Council employee of the Masterplan Committee meeting late last year, "It's our money (Council's) and we can spend it on whatever we want, and we don't need your permission", which is clearly contrary to the conditions agreed to in setting up the extension of the SRV, nor does the statement equate to dealings with IPART where clearly the funds are to be spent on projects identified in the CBD Masterplan.

There is also correspondence here from the Chief Executive Officer of the C.ex Club:

The Special Rate Variation was presented to the owners of properties in the CBD after Coffs Harbour City Council had received an extension of the CBD Special Rate Variation for the 2012-13 rate year ...

And now runs to 2017.

On behalf of the Coffs Ex Services Memorial and Sporting Club Ltd and in the view of transparency the Club requests information regarding the use of funds acquired and expended by the CBD Masterplan Committee ... commencing 2013-14 until 28 February 2017.

The Coffs Ex Services Memorial and Sporting Club Ltd is concerned with the progress of the CBD Masterplan and believe that the contributions from the ratepayers for the period in question would be approximately \$2.9 million.

We have a situation where council is failing to provide the information it promised to provide. In applying to the Independent Pricing and Regulation Tribunal [IPART] for that variation, they have also this week given delegated authority to the general manager to hand out a contract on the swimming pools, which has created hundreds of emails and letters to my office. I am calling on IPART and this Government to have a full investigation into the conditions of the special rate variation. There are huge question marks over it. Either the Minister for Local Government has to do it or IPART has to do it, to ensure that the money is spent where it was promised to be spent in the first place, because we are not getting a fair deal from council.

OATLEY ELECTORATE COMMUTER CAR PARKS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:52): I voice my strong support and advocacy for a commuter car park in places in my electorate. In particular, I refer to the urgent need to fund and build a commuter car park at Beverly Hills train station, which borders the electorates of Kogarah and Lakemba. I note that the member for Lakemba is here today. Beverly Hills is located in my electorate and is a vibrant, busy district with many great restaurants, family-owned businesses and a real sense of community. For a long time I have campaigned for a commuter car park at Beverly Hills railway station. A commuter car park will ease parking pressure along King Georges Road, take cars off residential streets and make access to public transport easier for Beverly Hills commuters. Certainly many residents and local business owners have contacted my office over the years about this same issue and I am committed to working with the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Georges River Council and the Australian Government to deliver this project not only for Beverly Hills residents, but those throughout my community.

Having visited local businesses recently along King Georges Road and on surrounding streets I can say there is genuine support from the community for the building of a multi-storey car park at Beverly Hills. A multi-storey car park will serve commuters and provide parking for commercial purposes, including many of the businesses and restaurants along King Georges Road in Beverly Hills. I have fielded dozens of complaints from Beverly Hills residents and local business owners about lack of parking and traffic congestion and from commuters, who tell me it is hard to use the train station at Beverly Hills because they cannot park. This needs to stop. The St George area is a great place to live and work. Its close proximity to the city, with a world-class hospital rebuilt by this Government, fantastic schools boosted by Gonski funding this Government signed up to, and great transport links explains why the population continues to grow.

Local residents are hardworking, ambitious people who want to get to work and grow their businesses. The Berejiklian Government supports this; it understands there is simply not enough commuter car parking at Beverly Hills to help achieve these goals. I am determined to make it easier not only for local residents and business owners to park on the streets but also for customers to visit local businesses and for commuters to access public transport. On being elected member for Oatley I promised that the Liberal-Nationals Government would upgrade Oatley and Narwee stations in my electorate and we are doing just that. Oatley station now has 100 new car parking stations where formerly there were only 15. This has assisted people to access public transport.

Beverly Hills needs the same sort of investment, not just from the State Government but from the Federal Government and the council.

Major accessibility upgrades are underway at Narwee station and commuters will benefit from the new lift, covered walkways, easy parking and accessible and family friendly toilets. A multi-storey car park at Beverly Hills needs to be built on the existing council-owned Edgbaston Road car park. The facility can accommodate mixed purpose parking, including all-day commuter car parking, and short-stay and night-time parking to help businesses as well. Building a commuter car park at Beverly Hills railway station will make it easier for people to access public transport and travel safely between home and work. I will continue to lobby the State Government for additional funding for commuter car parking at Beverly Hills because the Government is delivering on major and significant infrastructure projects across the State and this needs to be delivered.

ANZAC COMMEMORATIONS

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (17:57): I quote:

We think of every man, woman and child, who in those crucial years, died so that the light of freedom and humanity might continue to shine. May we and our successors prove worthy of their sacrifice.

These words were solemnly stated by sub-branch president Mike Askey, who received a life membership award from the Returned Services League [RSL] of Australia (NSW Branch) in February this year. He spoke at the recent Anzac Day dawn service at Roseville RSL. They are moving words that emphasise the responsibility borne by future generations to remember and act in honour of those who gave their lives for this country. I attended a number of Anzac Day memorial services this year, including at the Manly War Memorial at The Corso, the Forestville RSL Sub-Branch, Belrose Country Club, Glenaeon Retirement Village, St John's Anglican Church and the Roseville RSL Sub-Branch. I was also fortunate to visit the Spirit of Anzac Centenary Experience at the International Convention Centre, Sydney at the end of its national tour. I commend all those involved in this flagship community project that featured genuine artefacts and historical stories in an interactive and immersive experience covering Australia's wartime involvement from World War I to the present day.

In particular, I acknowledge the excellent address given by the Hon. Brendan Nelson, who is now the Director of the Australian War Memorial. I pay tribute to the corporate sponsors who made that exhibition possible, in particular, Telstra and the Commonwealth Bank. This year the Roseville RSL Sub-Branch received \$5,610 from the New South Wales Government as part of the Community War Memorial Fund, which is funding 24 projects for the protection and conservation of war memorials across New South Wales. These memorials act as a place of reflection and a constant reminder of the Anzac spirit. They reinforce the message to returned soldiers living in our communities that we appreciate and admire their efforts in the face of war and will always remember them.

The Roseville war memorial is a bronze plaque on a large sandstone rock mounted on a single sandstone step. It is magnificently displayed in the garden next to the Roseville Memorial Club where the annual Anzac Day commemorations are held. Roseville Memorial Club is a crucial local institution and has seen its membership double in recent years. It offers a range of services and activities to members and supports the local community in many ways, including local sporting teams and by hosting fundraising events. Those fundraising events are hosted for non-profit organisations.

It is also home to the Roseville RSL Sub-Branch, which holds the largest Anzac Day dawn service in the area. More than 400 people attended this year's event in the memorial park adjacent to the Roseville club and many enjoyed the complimentary hot breakfast served in the club afterwards. The club and sub-branch also host remembrance services and recognise other days that hold significance for returned service men and women. There is a strong Anzac spirit in my electorate of Davidson. However, we do need to continue educating future generations about the sacrifices made by so many in order that we can continue to enjoy the life we do today. It is important to keep the spirit of the Anzacs alive, to remember their sacrifice and to appreciate and promote a peaceful future. As Aristotle said, "We make war that we may live in peace".

WEST WALLSEND BUTTERFLY CAVE

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (18:02): Tonight I speak about the sacred Aboriginal women's site in the Cessnock electorate known as the Butterfly Cave. The Butterfly Cave is situated in bushland adjacent to the West Wallsend village, which is on the outskirts of the broader Newcastle-Lake Macquarie area. In this bushland is the sacred Aboriginal site known as the Butterfly Cave, a natural cave that has been used for women's business for some 35,000 years. The developers are moving in. I have spoken in this place a number of times on this issue, and I will continue to speak on it.

As it is a natural formation and has not been built using bricks, concrete and steel, it is difficult to have this feature recognised in the heritage planning rules and instruments for what it is. For 35,000 years it has been

a meeting place, a hospital and a place of ceremony and for other special women's events. Today, in modern times, the Aboriginal women of the Awabakal people continue to use it. They take young Aboriginal women up there for sista speak. Sista speak is when the women talk to the young Aboriginal girls about identity and the history of peoples, traditions and culture. The Awabakal women have an ongoing constant connection with this particular site.

These days the land is owned by a developer who is planning a nine-stage development. Six of the stages have been completed. In total, the developer expects to divide the land into some 400 blocks. The Butterfly Cave itself and 20 metres of surrounding bushland have been secured and recognised as an Aboriginal place. This recognition was granted under the stewardship of a former Minister for the Environment, Robyn Parker. However, the 20-metre exclusion zone does not secure much of anything. It certainly does not secure the secrecy of the location or the confidentiality of what happens in that Aboriginal place. For example, in a 1233 ABC Newcastle online news article, Aboriginal women claimed the developer had "spied" on them when they were conducting women's business at the site.

The women had spent three hours at the sacred site doing sista speak and other women's business. They told 1233 ABC Newcastle that as they were leaving the site the developer said to them, "It must have been good up there, you were there for three hours." This was a stupid, arrogant and culturally insensitive remark and is disrespectful to our Aboriginal people. It is disrespectful of the developer to watch women at sacred sites and monitor how long they spend at the site. It would be like a neighbour commenting on how long we have driven our cars on certain days or saying, "Your friends were at your home for two hours last night." This is a sacred site, yet the women have been told that soon closed-circuit television will be installed at the site. We need to respect this site because it is sacred to our Aboriginal women.

Recently there were discussions about who should undertake a geotechnical report of the site. Although I am the local member of Parliament, out of respect for the women I have never been to the site because it is a women's site. I have been close to it, but I will not step onto a women's site. As a male, I respect that place. But the surveyors did not respect it, sending in males to do the geotechnical report. They were asked to send a female surveyor but they said that was not possible. Imagine having your house wired by an unauthorised electrician because an authorised one was not available. We have to do better when dealing with the Awabakal Butterfly Cave. I will continue to raise this issue in this House.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:07 until
Tuesday 23 May 2017 at 12:00.**