



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday, 1 June 2017**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday, 1 June 2017**

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

**The SPEAKER** read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

## *Bills*

**MINING AND PETROLEUM LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017**

**FIREARMS AND WEAPONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017**

## **First Reading**

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

**The SPEAKER:** I order that the second reading of the bills stand as orders of the day for a future day.

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## **PARLIAMENTARY CONTRIBUTORY SUPERANNUATION AMENDMENT (CRIMINAL CHARGES AND CONVICTIONS) BILL 2017**

### **Consideration in Detail**

#### **Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments.**

*Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 31 May 2017.*

**No. 1      AJP No. 1 [c2017-050B]**

Page 3, Schedule 1 [3], lines 20-22. Omit all words on those lines.

Insert instead:

- (a)      the person ceases to have any entitlement to receive a pension or any further payment of a pension under this Part, and any pension already paid is to be repaid to the Fund, and

**No. 2      AJP No. 2 [c2017-050B]**

Page 3, Schedule 1 [3], lines 30-38. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

- (4A)      If the person, before being convicted of the serious offence, had been in receipt of a pension or had received a lump sum payment pursuant to an election under section 20, the trustees may refund net contributions by deducting the amount of the refund from any pension already paid, or any lump sum payment, that the person is required to repay to the Fund under subsection (4).

**No. 3      AJP No. 3 [c2017-050B]**

Page 3, Schedule 1 [3], lines 41 and 42. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead "person, reinstate the person's pension and repay to the person any amount of pension, or any part of the lump sum, that the person has repaid to the Fund".

**No. 4      AJP No. 4 [c2017-050B]**

Page 4, Schedule 1. Insert after line 18:

**[7]      Section 19AA (8A)**

Insert after section 19AA (8):

- (8A)      Criminal proceedings that result in a person being convicted or acquitted are still pending for the purposes of this section until they are finalised for the purposes of this section.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (10:13):** On behalf of Ms Gladys Berejiklian: I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendments.

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (10:13):** The Opposition supports the amendments. I note the amendments moved by the Animal Justice Party in the other place. I understand they are Government amendments and, in the absence of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, the Animal Justice Party has taken on his role of moving

Government amendments. The last amendment seems to be circular but it does not do any damage. The first amendment is interesting in that it seems to be a significant oversight in the drafting of the bill. I am not imputing any bad management to the Government, but in light of what has happened with the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the appointment of the chief commissioner, too often we are receiving bad drafts on important bills. Having made those brief points, the Opposition supports the amendments moved in the upper House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Budget*

## **BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2016-17**

**Debate resumed from 3 May 2017.**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (10:15):** On behalf of Ms Gladys Berejiklian: In reply: I thank all members for their contribution to the debate. I commend the motion to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Motions*

## **FORESTRY ACT: REVOCATION OF DEDICATION**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (10:15):**  
I move:

That:

- (1) Pursuant and subject to the conditions of the Forestry Act 2012, this House agrees to the revocation of:
  - (a) Bateman State Forest No. 870 dedicated on 10 November 1939 comprising Lot 244 in Deposited Plan 1207432;
  - (b) Condobolin State Forest No. 932 dedicated on 24 April 1952, comprising Lots 9 and 10 Section 1 in Deposited Plan 758271 Crown Plan 35.1705;
  - (c) Dorrigo State Forest No. 906 dedicated on 14 October 1949 and Dorrigo State Forest No. 906 Extension No. 1 dedicated on 28 August 1964 comprising Lot 7310 in Deposited Plan 1134271;
  - (d) Dubbo State Forest No. 807 Extension No. 1 dedicated on 23 June 1950, comprising Lot 101 in Deposited Plan 1178129;
  - (e) Forbes State Forest No. 942 dedicated on 14 January 1955, comprising Lot 1618 in Deposited Plan 750158 Crown Plan 8822.1770;
  - (f) Narrandera State Forest No. 786 dedicated on 15 March 1957, comprising Lots 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Deposited Plan 444708 and Narrandera State Forest No. 786 Extension No. 2 dedicated on 18 July 1958, comprising Lot 8 in Deposited Plan 1208213 and Narrandera State Forest No. 786 Extension No. 3 dedicated on 11 August 1978, comprising Lot 9 in Deposited Plan 1208213.
  - (g) Broken Bago State Forest No. 184 Extension No. 11 dedicated on 12 January 1951 and Broken Bago State Forest No. 184 Extension No. 17 as to the part shown in Crown Plan 4939.3070 dedicated 8 September 1967 comprising Lot 1048 in Deposited Plan 1177454;
  - (h) Bulahdelah State Forest No. 296 Extension No. 9 dedicated on 15 October 1954, comprising Lot 185 in Deposited Plan 753154; and

being areas of land to be vested in the Forestry Corporation of New South Wales and described in the citations tabled in this House on 31 May 2017.
- (2) The foregoing resolution be communicated by address to His Excellency the Governor. This revocation relates to buildings constructed in Batemans Bay in 1939; Condobolin in 1952; Dorrigo in 1949 and 1964; Dubbo in 1950; Forbes in 1955; Narrandera in 1957, 1958 and 1978; Broken Bago in 1967; and Bulahdelah in 1954. The lands also defined as State Forest lots consist of office buildings, works depots and ancillary buildings and are not forested land. In many instances these were freehold properties in towns that were purchased by the former Forestry Commission. The lands were then dedicated as State forests for activities associated with the management of State forests and have been consistently used as forestry office complexes, depots and ancillary buildings associated with the management of State forests. These lands are not forests, so the State forest dedication over these lands is a historical anomaly that, at the moment, is simply denying councils rates revenue and severely limiting the options for the use of these sites. In fact, some of these sites contain buildings that have been vacant for extended periods and are falling into disrepair, becoming unsafe and removing opportunities for businesses to set up and invest in these local communities.



Revocation of the State forest dedication will not necessarily mean sale of land; in fact, these parcels of land include two key regional headquarters in Batemans Bay and Wauchope that Forestry Corporation has no immediate intention to move. Forestry Corporation of NSW is simply seeking the flexibility to manage these buildings as any other business would—so as the buildings near the end of their economic lives they can look at all the options from refurbishing the buildings to selling the properties and leasing alternative accommodation. By allowing this flexibility, these revocations will allow a much more responsible use of public money and greater returns to the State of New South Wales because the more the Forestry Corporation reduces its overheads such as building maintenance costs, the greater the financial return to the people of this State in the form of larger annual dividends.

No decision has yet been made about selling any of these blocks of land. If and when a decision is made to offer a block for sale, appropriate consultations will take place with the local community. In the meantime, vesting the land in the Forestry Corporation of NSW benefits the community by virtue of making it rateable. People will see that not only sustainable management of our forests by the corporation benefits the community by providing jobs, the recreation opportunities they enjoy and the timber they need, but that the Forestry Corporation, as the good corporate citizen that it is, pays its way in the local area. And then, if a block is sold, the community will continue to benefit from the new business or community service opportunities that it will provide.

For example, the nursery site in Forbes has been leased to the local council for a community garden. The council and the corporation have been in discussions about a swap whereby the corporation acquires a site in the council's industrial estate and the council takes over the nursery site for the community garden. The revocation of State forest dedication over the site facilitates these discussions and makes it easier for the council and the Forestry Corporation to reach agreement. It is far better for a building in town to be used for a business purpose or community benefit and pay rates than to let it fall into disrepair and become a dangerous derelict site. Revoking the State forest dedication and turning the land into vacant Crown land does not help anyone.

Revocation of State forest dedication over these buildings has no impact on employment in the local community. If the Forestry Corporation decides a building is no longer fit for purpose, the Forestry Corporation will look to lease more suitable offices in the same local area. I reiterate, there are no job losses associated with the Forestry Corporation's plans to review its property assets and dispose of surplus properties, if appropriate. Importantly, there are also some buildings that have been vacant for several years and are unable to be used, including former nurseries and old houses that were historically used as staff accommodation. These buildings serve no benefit to the community in their current state and removing the State forest dedication will ensure they are available to local businesses and community groups to use.

Removing the State forest dedication will allow us to breathe life into regional communities by increasing revenue for local councils and, in instances where the buildings are no longer required, making them available to be purchased by local businesses who will then invest in new local facilities and jobs—with proceeds of the sales to come back to the Government in the form of dividends. It defies belief that those opposite would want to rob communities of the opportunity for investment, local jobs and council rates, especially when the same party wholeheartedly supported a measure to remove the State forest dedication over office buildings in the Coffs Harbour central business district less than three years ago.

Each of the lands comprises a relevant building as defined under schedule 2, part 2, subsection (7) of the Forestry Act 2012. The lands and buildings are assets in the local communities but they are nearing or are past the end of their economic life for forestry purposes. As the Forestry Corporation stops using them they will fall into disrepair, whereas if they are sold for alternative uses, the assets can continue to benefit the local communities. A revocation of State forest requires tabling the documentation seeking approval in both Houses of Parliament followed by an Executive Council minute seeking approval from the Governor. On gazettal of the revocation in the New South Wales *Government Gazette*, the lands will be vested in the Forestry Corporation of NSW.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (10:25):** On behalf of the Opposition I speak to this revocation under section 15 of the Forestry Act 2012. I state from the outset that the Opposition is opposed to this revocation of dedication. I respectfully acknowledge the contribution of the Minister for Lands and Forestry, but I submit he spoke the biggest load of drivel I have heard in this Chamber in the six years I have been here. Quite frankly, when the Forestry Act was introduced in 2012 we, as the then Opposition, tried to tell this House and the communities of New South Wales that the ultimate outcome of setting up the State-owned corporation, taken out of State Forest, would be that the Government would sell off land.

At the time the Government did not accept our proposition and said that the Opposition was scaremongering people by making that up. Less than five years later we have a revocation before the House so that land that had been dedicated as Crown land—land to be used by the public for the Crown as State forest land—will be transferred as freehold land to this State-owned corporation. The Minister used a number of words

that clearly showed the intention is to sell that land. Recent reports in the media have identified that there have been \$50 billion worth of asset sales—

**Mr John Robertson:** How much?

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** Fifty billion dollars, which equates to about 20 per cent of the State's asset value in the past six years. To suggest that these eight blocks of land will not be added to that sell-off list is fanciful. Of course, that is where this revocation is heading and exactly why this revocation is so important. The timing of this revocation interests me no end. In the past six years since becoming a member of Parliament I have become aware of certain times of the year when the Government brings out its dirty laundry—the things that the Government does not necessarily want the public to pay attention to. State of Origin week is always a classic example. If we read *Hansard* for the past few years we see that almost every year when a State of Origin game is being played a controversial and publicly unpopular motion comes before the House. That is my first concern about the timing of this motion. My second concern is the absence of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile from the other place—and I will return to that shortly.

A few weeks ago we debated the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 in this House and in the other place. Much of the debate centred on the transparency and the principles through which Crown land is to be managed in New South Wales. The Government went to great lengths in that debate to offer its view that the legislation would increase transparency and extend the opportunity for public involvement in management plans, which includes the potential sale of Crown land. That was one of the Government's claims. But we called out the Government in that debate with regard to transparency. We said that the legislation was largely about disposing of Crown land—selling it off and putting it on the chopping block; call the real estate agent there is Crown land for sale. But Government members said, "No, no, no, we are going to enshrine transparency in the bill. If we make a decision, the community will be consulted before the decision is made; the community will be part of the decision."

That was just a few weeks ago. Today we are essentially removing transparency, cutting out community consultation and denying the community a voice in the decision-making process because the decision has been made. During his contribution the Minister suggested that if in the future the Forestry Corporation, which is a State-owned corporation, decides to sell this land the community will be consulted. I will tell the House how that process rolls out. The Hunter Water Corporation, which is also a State-owned corporation, is in my area and it frequently disposes of assets. Let me tell the House about the community consultation process that ensues when a State-owned corporation decides to sell assets. There is a little notice on page 47 in the bottom right-hand corner of the newspaper; the decision has been made. If people would like to make a comment they can send an email and the corporation will take their thoughts on board. Not a single decision has ever been reversed. That is how State-owned corporations operate.

They operate like that essentially because they are State-owned corporations. The State determines a dividend and the corporation is told, "You will return to this State X amount of dollars." The State-owned corporation has a responsibility to find that money, by whatever means it can, from within, which may involve selling off assets or incurring debt. The Government does not care what they do; it just wants the money. We can imagine the Forestry Corporation being instructed that it has a responsibility to return a certain dividend to the State, and it can raise the amount only by selling off some of its assets. Once these eight assets are transferred to the Forestry Corporation, and are no longer dedicated Crown land but freehold land, then of course they will be on the chopping block.

I agreed with some of the Minister's comments. I agree that the assets are not forest lands; they are blocks in towns or on the edge of towns. They are office buildings or buildings for the purpose of accommodation. I agree with the Minister that they are no longer required for purpose. Certainly in the briefing that was provided to the Labor Party it is stated that many of the buildings are in disrepair and require attention. I agree with all that. But in agreeing with that, I point out there are two paths for the State to take in dealing with this land. The first is to transfer it to Crown Lands, which would provide a certain way forward that could include disposal. The other path is to transfer it to the Forestry Corporation, a State-owned corporation, which has no public scrutiny and ultimately the land could be sold. Either way, the land potentially could be sold if it is no longer required for purpose.

The first path, through Crown Lands, would ensure community consultation. But here lies the problem, and last night the Hon. Robert Brown in the other place belled the cat. If Crown land no longer has a dedicated purpose, there is the potential for an Aboriginal land claim on that land. If the decision was made to transfer the land to Crown Lands and it did not have a dedicated purpose, then of course the local Aboriginal community could make a claim on it. But it seems the Government has deliberately chosen a path that will prevent Aboriginal land claims. Last night in the other place the Hon. Robert Brown said:

The Government in its briefing to us indicated that if it were to try to transfer these properties to Crown land we would have Aboriginal land titles coming out of our ears.

Ring-a-ding-ding! There it is, as clear as can be. There were two paths forward in disposing of this land and in revoking the dedication. One path would have allowed for Aboriginal land claims and public consultation—which is not the path the Government has chosen—and the other sneaks the land into a State-owned corporation and all but guarantees a sale. That is the path this Government has chosen. It has chosen meagre amounts of money over the entitlement and the rights of our Aboriginal peoples, who have been treated so poorly by this nation for the past 240 years. Through this revocation they will be treated poorly again. I come back to Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. What is the link? There is one thing that Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile has stood for in the New South Wales Parliament throughout his long time here.

**Mr John Robertson:** What is it?

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** I will tell the House. Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile has always backed the notion that the Aboriginal people have the right to land. But Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile has been away from Parliament for a few weeks, which means that at present there is a quite interesting dynamic in the upper House. A number of votes have been tied at 18-18 and the President was required to make a casting vote. Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile was absent when this revocation motion was decided in the other place yesterday, and the result of the division was 18-18. The voting decisions of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile are not always predictable, but on one issue they are: On Aboriginal land rights he is entirely predictable. As I said, the Hon. Robert Brown from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party belled the cat in the other House yesterday.

There is one guarantee I can give about Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, and that is he would have voted against this revocation. He would have ensured that the land was transferred to Crown Lands so that if the local Aboriginal communities so desired they could make a land claim on it. As to the timing of the motion, we can join a few dots. I know the Government will say no, that is not what is happening, but let us join a few dots. There is the timing of the motion—it is State of Origin week and Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile is away. The options are to go down the path of dedicating the land as Crown land or transferring it to the Forestry Corporation. The Minister has acknowledged that the land is no longer fit for purpose and that the Forestry Corporation has other priorities, and so it may be sold. I am going to join all those dots and say that the Government moved the motion this week on purpose. It is going to sign over the land to the Forestry Corporation so that it can be sold and it is doing that in such a way that the local community will get no say. Because of that, we oppose this revocation and this motion.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (10:39):** As the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, I endorse the comments of the previous speaker, the member for Cessnock. This week is National Reconciliation Week. As we remember the anniversaries of dark times in our history, the Government is again exposed as endeavouring to take away the rights of Aboriginal people in this State. I repeat the words of the Hon. Robert Brown from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in the other place to which the member for Cessnock referred. He said:

The Government in its briefing to us indicted that if it were to try to transfer these properties to Crown land we would have Aboriginal land titles coming out of our ears.

The Minister for Lands and Forestry has the opportunity to confirm whether the Hon. Robert Brown was telling mistruths or his comments about the briefing are correct. As the member for Cessnock said, the Government had choices: It could take the ethical, moral pathway and transfer the properties to Crown Lands, which would allow for Aboriginal land claims; or it could transfer the land to a State-owned corporation and take away that right. The Government chose the latter option. This Government has form in this area—for example, the amendments to Crown lands legislation that passed through this House recently. We opposed those amendments because we feared that the Government was doing its level best to inadvertently extinguish the rights of Aboriginal people to make land claims in this State by creating little pathways to sneak land through the system. On the one hand, the Government says it is on the side of Aboriginal people and that it is sorry for the injustices of the past.

*[Business interrupted.]*

### *Business of the House*

#### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to postpone the commencement of General Business Orders of the Day (for Bills) until the conclusion of the consideration of the motion of revocation of the dedication of parts of State Forests.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Motions***FORESTRY ACT: REVOCATION OF DEDICATION***[Business resumed.]*

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (10:42):** This week the Government has given nice speeches at functions to commemorate National Reconciliation Week and said that it is sorry for the injustices of the past. Yet it has moved a motion, without proper community consultation, that would again remove the rights of Aboriginal people. The Government needs to come clean. It needs to state whether it supports the rights of Aboriginal people to make land claims and their right to economic independence or it is still following the policies of the past that removed the rights of Aboriginal people and denied them economic independence. It has to say whether the Hon. Robert Brown was telling the truth about this matter. Is there an agenda to remove the rights of Aboriginal people in this State? This may appear to be a small matter—it is agreed that the sites are no longer used—but there is a bigger issue at play. The issue is whether the Government has a real policy to try to close the gap and end disadvantage in our Aboriginal communities or it intends simply to continue the bad policies of the past to ensure that the Aboriginal people in this State remain disadvantaged.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....47

Noes .....37

Majority..... 10

**AYES**

Anderson, Mr K  
Berejiklian, Ms G  
Conolly, Mr K  
Crouch, Mr A  
Elliott, Mr D  
Gibbons, Ms M  
Griffin, Mr J  
Henskens, Mr A  
Johnsen, Mr M  
Maguire, Mr D  
O'Dea, Mr J  
Petinos, Ms E  
Sidoti, Mr J  
Taylor, Mr M  
Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

Aplin, Mr G  
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)  
Constance, Mr A  
Davies, Ms T  
Evans, Mr L  
Goward, Ms P  
Gulaptis, Mr C  
Hodgkinson, Ms K  
Kean, Mr M  
Marshall, Mr A  
Patterson, Mr C (teller)  
Provest, Mr G  
Speakman, Mr M  
Toole, Mr P  
Ward, Mr G  
Wilson, Ms F

Barilaro, Mr J  
Brookes, Mr G  
Coure, Mr M  
Dominello, Mr V  
Fraser, Mr A  
Grant, Mr T  
Hazzard, Mr B  
Humphries, Mr K  
Lee, Dr G  
Notley-Smith, Mr B  
Pavey, Mrs M  
Roberts, Mr A  
Stokes, Mr R  
Tudehope, Mr D  
Williams, Mr R

**NOES**

Aitchison, Ms J  
Catley, Ms Y  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Donato, Mr P  
Foley, Mr L  
Harrison, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mehan, Mr D  
Parker, Mr J  
Scully, Mr P  
Warren, Mr G  
Zangari, Mr G

Barr, Mr C  
Chanthivong, Mr A  
Daley, Mr M  
Doyle, Ms T  
Greenwich, Mr A  
Haylen, Ms J  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McDermott, Dr H  
Minns, Mr C  
Piper, Mr G  
Smith, Ms T F  
Washington, Ms K

Car, Ms P  
Cotsis, Ms S  
Dib, Mr J  
Finn, Ms J  
Harris, Mr D  
Hornery, Ms S  
Leong, Ms J  
McKay, Ms J  
Park, Mr R  
Robertson, Mr J  
Tesch, Ms L  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

## PAIRS

Ayres, Mr S  
Perrottet, Mr D  
Piccoli, Mr A

Atalla, Mr E  
Hoenig, Mr R  
Mihailuk, Ms T

**Motion agreed to.**

*Bills***PUBLIC HEALTH (MEDICINAL CANNABIS) BILL 2017****Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 25 May 2017.**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (10:53):** I support this very important bill, the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2017. I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on his leadership in bringing this important legislation to the floor of the Parliament. This is exactly the type of legislation that members are elected to Parliament to develop, work on and enhance. It does not matter which party introduces it; this is the sort of legislation that we should be debating in this place. The Leader of the Opposition, whom I have known for a very long time, takes a deep and personal interest in this issue that began long before he became leader. Like many in the Labor Party, he feels very strongly about this issue. But, more importantly, the community—and particularly people suffering serious and life-threatening illnesses—feel very strongly about it. Last week I listened to the contribution of the member for Londonderry to this debate. She spoke about her experiences with people with multiple sclerosis—an insidious disease that does awful damage to the bodies of the individuals it ravages.

I have a similar story about a young man who has become a high-profile advocate for medicinal cannabis—Ben Oakley. Ben has become, like Lucy Haslam, one of the faces of the medicinal cannabis campaign. I first met Ben some years ago during my first term in this place. He came into my electorate office virtually crippled, having had hundreds of seizures over a short period. He was a broken individual. I met Ben's parents one Saturday morning—this will stay in my mind forever. I was having a cup of coffee, reading the paper—doing all those trivial things—when a distraught father and mother came in from Wollongong Hospital, which is near where I was having my coffee. They grabbed their brekkie and sat down, and after some time the father got up and came over to my table. He asked whether I was Ryan Park, the member for Parliament. I said, "Well, I hope there are not two of them".

**Mr Clayton Barr:** We all do.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** We all do—including my mum. I said that I was and he said, "We need your help; we are in a desperate situation. Our son has just had a night of ongoing seizures". During that night on multiple occasions the doctors told Ben's parents that he might not make it to morning. Ben suffers from an insidious illness known as stiff person syndrome, which destroys a person's body. He was a fit, energetic triathlete and had enormous passion for life. Yet there were his parents at a coffee shop on a Saturday morning with nowhere else to turn. I will never forget it. Ben's father told me that Ben had started to use medicinal cannabis but that they felt like criminals. These people have never broken the law in their lives—they are law-abiding citizens. What do you say to them? Do you try for a few minutes to take off your member of Parliament hat and put on your father hat? Do you walk in the shoes of these people who are breaking the law?

Those of us on this side of the House who believe in this bill, like the Leader of the Opposition, have pursued this issue relentlessly. It has become a passion of mine to see legislation brought before this place that allows people to get the treatment they need. I have met with the Oakleys and I have been to their house on many, many occasions. Ben's condition has improved somewhat. As I said, he first came into my office in a wheelchair, virtually crippled. He struggled to attend university because he was having seizures and the university had to support him enormously. We faced the challenge of his trying to secure a permanent supply of cannabis. His parents were extremely supportive of him, but it was very difficult on the family. Ben's father, Michael, uses #letsdothis, and I told him that I knew the Leader of the Opposition was very keen to get this legislation passed. The Leader of the Opposition met the family in my office; he took the time both to understand the issues and to bring the legislation before this place. That is why I am proud of the Leader of the Opposition.

Members of Parliament are in the privileged position of being able to make a difference. We do not always agree, but we have a right and a responsibility to bring forward important issues for debate on the floor of the House. The member for Wollongong, who is in the Chamber, also knows the Oakleys very well. But this is not about us; it is about Ben and every single sufferer who must no longer be treated like a criminal. Like us all,

they must be treated humanely. I distinctly remember saying to Michael, when he told me about the difficulties, that I would push hard for this bill. If it were my two boys and I approached my local member of Parliament, I would expect the member to do more than write a letter to the relevant Minister. I say to the Oakleys, and to everyone who desperately needs this Parliament to enable them to access this vital health treatment—and it is a health treatment and should be considered as such—that this bill is for them.

If the Government can improve this bill it should do so, but I ask that Government members not sit on their hands and waste time. By wasting time, they are punishing good people who have done nothing wrong other than to care for their loved ones who are facing life-changing circumstances. On behalf of a very grateful community and the Labor Party, I thank the Leader of the Opposition. This is what Labor stands for; it is what we believe in. We believe in taking a strong stance on tough issues and prosecuting them in the community. When I first started talking about this issue many years ago, after I met the Oakleys, letters were sent to my electorate office asking whether I was soft on drugs and in favour of decriminalising drugs. But times have changed. In the region that the member for Wollongong and I are fortunate to represent, people now say, as Michael Oakley so clearly put it, "Let's get this done."

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (11:01):** I am pleased to speak to the second reading debate on the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2017. At the outset, I express my view that this legislation is not the right approach. I will elaborate further in my contribution. In 2013, the Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4 inquired into the use of cannabis for medical purposes. In particular, it reported on the issues of efficacy and safety, the method of supply, and legal implications. I thank the members of the committee. I understand that this is the first time in 15 years that the use of cannabis for medical purposes has been formally considered in New South Wales. I thank my Nationals colleagues for their attentiveness to this issue, in particular, the chair of the committee, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, and my colleague the Hon. Trevor Khan. I note the comments from the chair in her foreword, summarising the findings of the inquiry: She stated:

The Committee has found that in general terms medical cannabis has potential as an effective treatment for some medical conditions with appropriate safeguards in place. Our reading of the evidence—including rigorous scientific evidence—is that cannabis products are emerging as a promising area of medicine, most notably in respect of a number of painful conditions that do not respond to existing treatments. Given this evidence, a compassionate approach is appropriate here. Such treatments will only be suitable for a small number of people in specific circumstances and under the supervision of medical practitioners with relevant expertise.

I commend also the advocacy of the member for Tamworth, who has contributed to this debate, in ensuring that this issue remains a focus for the Government. He understands, as he articulated in his speech, the significance of our work relating to medicinal cannabis. Like many of my Nationals colleagues, I have been privileged to meet Lucy Haslam. I thank her for her frank and open conversation about this issue and for her strong and unwavering advocacy. Her strength and persistence as she works with jurisdictions across the nation to ensure the availability of medicinal cannabis for those with terminal illness, like her son Dan, is incredible, and for that she has my admiration and support.

As a member of The Nationals, I am very proud that we have taken the lead in raising this important issue to ensure access to medicinal cannabis to those suffering from debilitating illness. As a result, in 2014 the New South Wales Government formed a working group to initiate a clinical trial. The Government response involves a range of initiatives, including guidelines for police officers about the use of discretion to not charge terminally ill adults who use cannabis to alleviate their symptoms. The Government quickly responded by introducing the then named Terminal Illness Cannabis Scheme, a registration scheme for terminally ill users of medicinal cannabis and their carers. The scheme's name was later altered to the Medicinal Cannabis Compassionate Use Scheme.

Funds of \$9 million have been provided to establish trials in three areas identified by an expert panel: to explore relief through the use of cannabis in children with severe drug-resistant epilepsy, in partnership with the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network; for adults with terminal illness, focusing on improving quality of life and treating symptoms such as pain, nausea and vomiting; and for adults with chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting where standard treatment is ineffective. In 2015, the \$12 million New South Wales Centre for Medicinal Cannabis Research and Innovation was launched to develop understanding of the benefits and treatment options provided by medicinal cannabis. Soon after, the Federal Parliament passed landmark legislation to allow for the controlled cultivation of cannabis for medicinal or related scientific purposes through one national licensing scheme. New South Wales was the first State in 2016 to receive authorisation from the Commonwealth Government to conduct medicinal cannabis cultivation research. The cultivation research will be conducted in a new state-of-the-art, high-security facility.

The New South Wales Government has also made regulatory changes to allow doctors in this State to apply to prescribe a broader range of cannabis-based medicines to certain patients who have exhausted standard treatment options. I am pleased that the Minister for Health, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, recently announced that the

medicinal cannabis trial for chemotherapy patients will be expanded to seven more hospitals across the State, including in my electorate at Port Macquarie Base Hospital. Patients at Campbelltown, Concord, Royal North Shore, Calvary Mater Newcastle, Coffs Harbour and Wollongong hospitals will now be able to take part in the world-first trial for the prevention of chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting using new generation anti-nausea products alongside cannabis products. I commend the Government and the Minister in leading the country in developing much-needed evidence for the use of medicinal cannabis through these groundbreaking clinical trials, research and reforms.

I now turn to the details of the bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition. The bill seeks to establish a registration scheme for medicinal users of cannabis and their carers; to introduce regulations that will enable the establishment of a scheme of authorities for cultivating, manufacturing and supplying cannabis for the use of registered medicinal users; and to protect registered medicinal users, their carers and those acting under authority from criminal liability. The bill creates a register to allow medicinal cannabis users and their carers to register with the Health secretary if the patient is terminally ill or has a serious medical condition. The registered patient carer has protection from criminal liability for administering, possessing and manufacturing small amounts of cannabis for the purpose of relieving a patient's condition. Carers supplying the patient would also be protected. The bill also provides powers for the Minister for Health to make regulations authorising the cultivation, harvesting, manufacturing, storing and supplying of cannabis via a licensing scheme or the granting of authorities. Additionally, the bill provides for the inclusion of children on the register.

As I explained earlier, the Medicinal Cannabis Compassionate Use Scheme currently provides some protection from prosecution for terminally ill patients. The scheme was set up to provide police with the discretion to not charge registered terminally ill adults who use illicit cannabis sourced on the black market until a long-term supply of regulated cannabis-based medicines is found. This bill exposes people, including children, to the potential risks associated with illicit cannabis-based medicinal products. Additionally, the bill fails to address a number of significant issues, including the quality control of cultivating cannabis, which can lead to serious public health and safety implications, as well as the unknown composition of products. Other health concerns include lack of knowledge and information about dosage and potential for unpredictable drug interactions when using products of unknown composition. These issues apply whether patients are cultivating their own cannabis or source it on the black market. Maintaining a regulated, medical approach is recommended by both the Chief Scientist and Engineer and most medical practitioners.

A recent review established to consider expansion of the scheme beyond the terminally ill recommended that it not be broadened at this time. This view is supported by the Government. Given the potential health and safety concerns, doctors should continue to prescribe and monitor the efficacy of cannabis-based medicines for the terminally ill. While Labor's focus appears to be on decriminalisation, this Government continues to support a medical approach with the emphasis on safety for registered users. This approach is in line with that of the Federal Government and other States and Territories, which are continuing to adopt an evidence-based approach to medicinal cannabis reform.

Further, Labor's efforts to decriminalise illicit use in this area creates further misconceptions within our community about the efficacy and safety of unregulated cannabis products. The Nationals will work to further reform and refine the current Medical Cannabis Compassionate Use Scheme. In conclusion, the Government will not be supporting this bill for sound and considered reasons, as outlined by me and the member for Tamworth. Given our long involvement in pushing for access to medicinal cannabis, The Nationals will continue to investigate what more can be done with regard to strengthening the compassionate access scheme for adults with terminal illness and long-term degenerative conditions. It is critical that we get this right. As indicated by my colleague the member for Tamworth, The Nationals will be looking at further reforms.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (11:10):** I support the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2017. The bill was introduced by the Leader of the Opposition, who continues to lead debate in this State and is now moving to legislate for change. Every member of this House has been touched by a terminal illness. Every member in this Chamber has a story of someone in their electorate, of family or friends who have fought a battle with cancer or have suffered from some other terminal illness or ongoing chronic disease such as multiple sclerosis. Those people have experienced symptoms such as numbness, tremors, spasms and seizures. It is a dark time for those who suffer from such illness and for their family and loved ones.

I have had numerous representations from people in my electorate who have been impacted by the failure of this Government to implement compassionate legislation on this issue. As the member for Keira stated in his moving speech this morning: It is not a question of why would the Government support it, but why would it not? The community is calling for this legislation. The member for Port Macquarie spoke of the Government's commitment to action regarding medicinal cannabis legislation and medical regulation. If that were so, Government members would look to this bill and, if genuinely concerned, would call for amendments. Instead,

they stick their heads in the sand like ostriches. This bill has a simple aim. It is not a trick or a slow move to the softening of drug laws. The Leader of the Opposition explained it in his second reading speech when he said:

It is about restoring the dignity to people with a terminal illness or serious medical condition who are seeking temporary relief from their pain and suffering.

This is a noble aim. It is about helping those who are suffering greatly and offering them temporary pain relief in their time of need. It speaks of medical regulation, supply and cultivation. It will mean that those who feel they are treated like criminals when accessing supplies will no longer be subject to that prejudice. Clause 4 of this bill outlines some of the illnesses where medical cannabis use may be permitted. Those who suffer from cancer, HIV, severe intractable epilepsy, or multiple sclerosis are some of the diseases specifically listed in the bill. It can be changed by regulation. The bill will allow those people to apply for medical cannabis use. It is not an exhaustive list, but these are some of the most common terminal illnesses that affect the citizens of New South Wales.

The illnesses identified under clause 4 have not been chosen randomly. Labor did not stick a pin in a page to decide who would be able to use dope. Those illnesses were chosen on the basis of evidence submitted to the Legislative Council inquiry into this matter. They are conditions and illnesses that cause pain, seizures, spasticity, nausea and other symptoms. Each member will recall the first time they heard of the plight of Daniel Haslam. Members have often referred to him in this place. The 20-year-old boy was diagnosed with inoperable bowel cancer. His parents just wanted their son to have some relief from the insurmountable pain he was suffering.

After receiving chemotherapy treatment, Daniel would come home ghostly white and have to vomit into a bag. It is a common experience for many in the community. After administering cannabis, the colour would come back into his face and his appetite would return. Daniel's mum, Lucy, searched at the local coffee shops for a person with connections to purchase cannabis. It defies logic that those who support the Haslams would speak and vote against a bill that will address the issues experienced by that family. There is no justification for imposing that experience on a carer or sufferer. The carers of those with terminal illnesses or serious medical conditions should be able to purchase medical cannabis through a regulated, legal scheme.

Clause 5 of the bill outlines a detailed, responsible set of regulations which sets out how sufferers and carers can access medical cannabis. It is not a random irresponsible bill. The bill requires sufferers to possess a medical certificate confirming they suffer from a terminal illness or serious medical condition. Once an individual is certified, they will receive a certificate of registration, which will include a recent identification photo. These are not onerous regulations, but they ensure that no-one who is not terminally ill or suffering from a serious medical condition gets access to medical cannabis. I reject any argument that providing medicinal cannabis to someone who suffers from a serious medical condition or a terminal illness is a Trojan horse to securing drug decriminalisation. That is an outright lie.

This bill is about giving those in the most desperate circumstances some small amount of pain or symptom relief. Those individuals suffer terrible pain on a daily basis. This bill will occupy the consciousness of members for a few days, but for those who require the leadership of this Parliament on this issue it is an hour-by-hour, minute-by-minute, and moment-by-moment struggle. The Government has been tardy in implementing the long-promised reform to this issue. The community looks to the Leader of the Opposition for the legal ability to use medicinal cannabis. This bill makes it an offence to administer cannabis in a public place. It will allow sufferers to manage their illness in private.

The Australian Medical Association acknowledges on its website that "certain cannabinoids are effective in the treatment of chronic pain". Cannabis can be especially effective, in contrast to opiates which can be extremely addictive. In 2015, when Daniel Haslam died, I reflected on the circumstances he and his family had to endure. I reflected upon those who had approached me with tears in their eyes and desperation in their hearts while they watched a loved one suffer the indignity of pain and symptoms that could be alleviated but for the lack of action by this Government. We will never know the achievements and successes Daniel Haslam could have gone on to attain. His life was filled with pain and suffering, but this Government will do nothing to improve the quality of life for such people. Members have an opportunity to pay tribute to his life and to the campaign for which his parents have been such passionate and persuasive advocates.

Members can accept the medical evidence gathered from inquiries and the knowledge of those who have suffered through terminal illness that medical cannabis provides effective pain relief. I am perplexed to understand why Government members speak in the Chamber in support of medicinal cannabis, but in reality offer no support or hope. If this bill is enacted, the regulated supply and administration of medicinal cannabis will lead to more studies which will provide greater opportunities to observe patients. The working group trial to which the member for Port Macquarie referred has been operating for 365 days a year for three years. That means those patients have suffered for nearly 1,000 days. The Government has spent \$9 million on this trial, but what has it achieved?



We have heard stories from many desperate people around the country who are seeking to obtain medicinal cannabis to administer to their chronically ill family members so that they can receive some relief. Some people who were successful in obtaining medicinal cannabis have had it seized and were treated like criminals. It is a disgrace. A woman who was helping the family of an eight-year-old suffering seizures was treated like a drug dealer. This behaviour is beyond the pale. The bill before the House will ensure that people in this State who need medicinal cannabis will be able to access it. I ask members to look beyond their prejudices in relation to drug users and vote for this life-changing bill. It will give terminally ill people a better quality of life. I encourage all members in this Chamber to vote for the bill and to support the people in their community.

**Mr KEVIN HUMPHRIES (Barwon) (11:20):** I speak on the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2017. While I understand the complexity of the issues and the need for compassion, members on this side of the House will do the right thing and not just take a populist approach. In this way, we will achieve a resolution on the use of medicinal cannabis. The jurisdiction to legalise medicinal cannabis goes beyond the New South Wales Government. Our role has been outlined by previous speakers. The responsibility for implementing legitimate access to medicinal cannabis is a complicated issue. To date, the Government has responded to this complex issue in a compassionate and practical way. Through the trials that have been established, people are finding relief through the use of conventional medicines. In partnership with the Sydney Children's Hospital, the Government has established a trial to explore the use of cannabis for children with severe drug-resistant epilepsy. Recently, members were briefed on the progress of this trial.

As a result of a recommendation of the upper House inquiry into the use of cannabis for medical purposes, chaired by the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, adults with terminal illnesses have trialled the use of cannabis for relief. The trial has focused on improving quality of life and treating symptoms such as pain, nausea and vomiting. Adults with chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting where standard treatment is ineffective are also trialling the use of cannabis. The Government has invested \$12 million into establishing the New South Wales Centre for Medicinal Cannabis Research and Innovation to help develop understanding of the benefits and treatment options provided by medicinal cannabis. The Government has also created the Medicinal Cannabis Compassionate Use Scheme. I suggest that members of the Opposition become better acquainted with that scheme. The Government has developed guidelines for police officers on the use of discretion to not charge terminally ill adults who use cannabis to alleviate symptoms. I do not know of any terminally ill person who has been charged for using alternative sources of medicine or of a carer for providing alternative sources of medicine to a terminally ill family member.

The member for Tamworth previously has raised the issue of medicinal cannabis in this House, following his contact with the Haslam family. I congratulate Lucy and her family on the work that they have done and pay tribute to Daniel, who is no longer with us. From the outset, the Liberal-Nationals have championed access to medicinal cannabis and we will have more to say about it in future. I commend the Leader of the Opposition for introducing the bill to the House. It has allowed debate on medicinal cannabis so that a refined bill can be introduced that will legislate access to and the use of medicinal cannabis. The Government does not support the bill for legal and public health reasons and on the basis that pathways have been established to access unapproved cannabis products lawfully. The bill does not include quality control of cultivated cannabis products, which may lead to serious public health and safety concerns.

The first legal cannabinoids were imported to this country last month. New South Wales cannot legislate a regulatory scheme for the cultivation and production of cannabis; to do so would be a contravention of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. The complex issue of the supply of cannabis to the registered patient or carer is left to the regulations and must be thrashed out. The bill limits possession to amounts currently allowed under the Medicinal Cannabis Compassionate Use Scheme but it is silent on quantities that can be cultivated. The medical profession does not support the extension of the scheme to children, and the bill does not incorporate the recommendations of the Legislative Council inquiry. The committee did not recommend decriminalising cannabis for medical purposes, nor did it recommend the decriminalisation or the inclusion of non-terminally ill people. The committee recommended a defence to the possession and use of cannabis by patients with terminal illness and those who have moved from HIV infection to AIDS. A draft bill that was to be introduced by the member for Tamworth is being looked at; more work needs to be done on refining the issues.

At a Senate estimates committee hearing this week, Adjunct Professor John Skerritt, who is from the Federal health department and is in charge of drug regulation, made some illuminating statements on these issues. According to evidence given to the committee, only 150 people in Australia have been given approval to access medicinal cannabis products and there are only 25 authorised prescribers of the drug. Professor Skerritt said that the number of doctors who could prescribe could be increased through an application process. Interestingly, the majority of the 25 doctors who can prescribe medicinal cannabis are in New South Wales. Since the first application in 1992, 89 patients have been given access to a small number of medicinal cannabis products through the special access scheme and another 41 were issued prescriptions by an authorised doctor.

In 2016, the Therapeutic Goods Administration made cannabis a controlled, rather than prohibited, substance for medical purposes. The Federal Government has legalised the cultivation of the drug in Australia as a result of the work done by the New South Wales Coalition Government. At the same time, the Federal Government removed the ability of doctors to prescribe terminally ill patients some previously approved products without the need to seek prior authorisation, under what is known as category A of the special access scheme. Patients now have to use category B of the scheme, which requires prior approval. Professor Skerritt was asked: Is it harder for patients to access medicinal cannabinoids? Professor Skerritt said that the Government was speeding up approvals under category B. He stated:

I think there's a clear pathway for patients to be able to access the products; there's product sitting in warehouses in major capital cities of Australia, and the Commonwealth is taking two days in its approvals.

He also said that patients who were struggling to access cannabis products had to ask their doctor to apply through the special access scheme. The use of cannabis for medicinal purposes is not just about what the New South Wales Government can do. He further stated: There are supplies of the cannabinoid-rich medicines sitting in Australia, sufficient to treat many hundreds if not thousands of children, so they basically have to go through the process. Last Monday on Radio National the professor said, "I often muse that the time spent in complaining about a process, when it is a one-page form with some attachments for applying for access, you'd get the access much faster that way." Whilst New South Wales does have a role to play in supporting access for people and the advocacy for access, a significant amount of legislation needs to relate to those treating patients. Doctors have a pathway into prescribing medicinal cannabinoids to patients, particularly those who are terminally ill. We will work through a process that has been outlined previously following further clinical trials which are in place, with issues around cultivation, safety and probity, and to make sure that we have the right authorised people to distribute the product to those people who want access.

We highlight the fact that doctors can access an authorised scheme currently to prescribe the products in question. I ask members opposite how many of the doctors in their electorates have they spoken to about this issue? I also question the number of patients who have actually raised the issue with them because my advice is that it is quite limited. We will get on with the process. We will come back with a process that is fairer and is right.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (11:30):** I speak to the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2017. In relation to an issue raised by the member for Barwon, one of my constituents has gone through the process to which he referred. He sought a doctor and went through the specialists registers, which has taken months, and the quotation he has been given for the supply of medicinal cannabis is an estimated \$30,000 per year. It is easy for the member for Barwon to say people should go through the process, seek out one of the few doctors who have been approved to prescribe and get, by legal means, the imported product that is estimated to cost \$30,000 per year. This bill is before the House because it is time to implement a regulatory regime around cannabis for medicinal use that goes beyond asking the police to turn a blind eye when it comes to cases of possession.

It is disappointing that the Government has decided not to support this bill. It is disappointing that the Government has decided to abandon the bipartisan approach to addressing this issue. Had the Government not been able to support this bill in its entirety, I would have preferred that the Government sought to amend it rather than vote against it. It is a shame that in his contribution the Minister for Health sought to paint this bill as some form of political opportunism. Constituents in Wollongong look to their political leaders to provide leadership and do not consider this as opportunism; they consider it a necessity. I have raised the need for New South Wales to have a comprehensive regime around medicinal cannabis since before my election. I have done so because people in my electorate and in other parts of the State could benefit from it.

In saying that I acknowledge that steps have been taken towards access to cannabis for medicinal use by both the Commonwealth and New South Wales governments. Recently I was pleased that the New South Wales Government extended the trial of medicinal cannabis to Wollongong Hospital. I note that it is only for assistance with nausea where standard treatments have failed. Nonetheless it is a step in the right direction. At the Commonwealth level we now have medical practitioners who are able to prescribe the imported products that have already landed in Australia. In saying this, I acknowledge the efforts of my great friend and Federal parliamentary colleague the member for Cunningham, Sharon Bird, and her office who have been working on improvements to access to medicinal cannabis for some time, and have helped to deliver improvements at the national level.

But the fact remains that there are only 25 authorised prescribers nationally. Since February only two authorised prescribers have come onto the list and fewer than 150 people have been given access, according to evidence given in Senate estimates hearings earlier this week. There is clearly more to do. Positive steps have been taken but confusion still surrounds access to the use of cannabis and cannabis products for medicinal needs. This bill seeks to do three things. First, it will establish a registration regime for medicinal users of cannabis and

their carers. It will regulate the cultivation of cannabis plants, along with the manufacture and supply of cannabis for the use of registered users. And it protects registered users and their carers from criminal liability. Specifically it lists nine terminal and serious medical conditions a person must suffer from, which includes stiff-person syndrome, which I will come to shortly. I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on introducing this bill. He said:

It is about restoring dignity to people with a terminal illness or serious medical condition who are seeking temporary relief from their pain and suffering. By passing this legislation, we can remove unnecessary hurdles for sufferers of terminal and chronic illnesses.

In my contribution today I will raise the cases of a couple of constituents who have approached me about this issue. At my first community event I was approached by Michael and Ben Oakley. The member for Keira touched on this case earlier because up until the last redistribution they were constituents of his. Ben and Michael Oakley are becoming synonymous with the campaign to have an effective regime in place with respect to medicinal cannabis. Their names were familiar to me as they have become long-term advocates for effective regulation. Ben suffers from stiff-person syndrome. It is a rare neurological disorder that can trigger muscle spasms. He has appeared on numerous television programs during his campaign, and anyone who has seen the footage of Ben during a spasm cannot help but think what on earth they can do to help.

Medical research has not determined what causes the disorder and the treatment focuses on the specific symptoms present in each person. Living with a condition that causes extremely painful spasms is debilitating. Ben was a relatively young and active person—he ran half marathons and was involved in charity bike rides—but stiff-person syndrome stopped him in his tracks. His rare condition meant that it took a long time to diagnose. His parents, Michael and Caroline, were worried about Ben. Michael and Caroline were both nurses so once they had a diagnosis they did a lot of research on treatment options.

Medicinal cannabis looked like an option that would help, and it did. His spasms reduced and he was able to get back to a more normal life. This included getting back to his studies. This is a great success story but there is a lesson in it. His access to the product that restored his quality of life was illegal. He had been receiving the product free of charge but when the supplier was raided she faced criminal charges. Without certainty of supply Ben was at risk of experiencing the extremely painful spasms that had previously crippled him. When one is asked by Ben and his family why this continues to be the case it is hard not to be compelled to look at options to improve the situation, which is the intention of this bill.

A second case in my electorate is that of Sienna Cooper who, at eight years old, suffers from a rare form of epilepsy that causes up to 100 seizures a day. When she was diagnosed her mum, Yvonne, checked to see whether she would be eligible for the trial. Unfortunately she did not have enough seizures each day to be considered eligible. Her mum started an online petition website and within a matter of days nearly 90,000 people had signed up to the petition. Yvonne wants a legal regime for medicinal cannabis. She believes that it may assist Sienna. But she will not access it at the moment out of fear of criminal charges against her or her partner, Daniel. She did not want to risk having Sienna taken from her because she was administering an unprescribed medication and that is a threat that she has faced. All that she wants is a legal regime around access. This bill will help to create that.

A parent buying a small amount of cannabis to help their child suffering from severe epilepsy should never be treated like a criminal. People who are looking for pain relief, who are suffering already, should not have to worry whether seeking some relief will end with a criminal charge. Their carers should not have to live with this worry either. Similarly, a situation where police officers are asked to enforce some laws and not others is a slippery slope. It is hardly satisfactory for those officers who swear to uphold the law and it is hardly satisfactory for members of the Executive Government to ask them not to. The fact that this has been considered the best way of addressing the situation says a great deal about how much work needs to be done in this place to implement an effective and efficient regime with all of the necessary checks and balances. It shows that the current law is outdated, which leaves a couple of options: We either get rid of it or we amend it. I congratulate the Leader of the Opposition for introducing this bill. As I said in my inaugural speech in this place earlier this year, people should not be left waiting and suffering because implementation is time consuming.

It is time to get this right for people like Ben Oakley, Sienna Cooper and the others that suffer in silence. Supporting this bill is the right thing for members of this place to do and I urge them to do exactly that; but if they cannot support it, they should not just reject it out of hand. They should seek to amend it, seek to make it better, and seek to make it something they can support. I understand the Government's claim that action should be supported by science on this issue but I contend that in seeking to have this bill made law, we are introducing a regime that was thoroughly examined and universally agreed as necessary in a 2013 upper House inquiry. Those recommendations were sound then and they remain sound today.

I hope that enough members of the Government will see the sense in getting behind this bill to put in place the regime that we are looking for, to move closer to having secure supplies of cannabis for medicinal users for those who support it, and not simply say that there is a regime in place and that people can seek out cannabis supplies through the few doctors who are able to prescribe it, through the few sources where they are able to implement it, because there is a huge financial cost to that. It also takes a huge personal toll on people who are suffering and their carers. I think it is time that we cleaned up that situation, and this bill does that.

[*Business interrupted.*]

*Visitors*

## VISITORS

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** I welcome student leaders, whom I saw in the theatre earlier, to the Chamber of the oldest Parliament in New South Wales. Today is a private members' day and the bill before the House, brought by the Leader of the Opposition, is the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2017.

*Bills*

## PUBLIC HEALTH (MEDICINAL CANNABIS) BILL 2017

### Second Reading

[*Business resumed.*]

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (11:41):** This is a great opportunity to speak on this private member's bill, the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2017, which has been brought to the House by the Leader of the Opposition. I acknowledge that leadership. I say up front that I believe it is time for New South Wales to grow up and be mature, and to realise that not everything fits wholly and neatly within the traditional framework for treating illness, that is, the traditional medical model. As wonderful as modern medicine is, there are some things that just do not respond to accepted current treatments.

I recognise that the State Government is still undertaking trials on the use of medicinal cannabis but with all respect, and notwithstanding the considered views of the Minister, it does not appear that there is any real urgency about coming to an appropriate conclusion. We have been dragging our feet on this issue for way too long. In New South Wales alcohol is the legal drug of choice and, despite cannabis being legal in some countries; it has numerous connotations with recreational use in our communities. Concerns about the liberalisation of use of cannabis generally would seem to be a factor in some people's opposition to the medicinal use of cannabis. There is a great deal of anecdotal evidence that cannabis oil has beneficial medicinal purposes and a growing body of clinical evidence of benefit for certain conditions.

I have always supported the use of cannabis in medically supervised situations where it can bring relief to people suffering from serious illness, such as late-stage cancer. I believe arguments against the use of cannabis in medical situations are influenced by its illicit use as a recreational drug and run counter to the historic accepted use of opiates, such as morphine and its derivatives, for pain management and other medical purposes which remain central to many treatments now. I do not support the recreational use of marijuana, and I am particularly concerned with its potential for negative psychological effect, including the development of psychosis—something that I have observed significantly over years in my time as a psychiatric nurse.

However, restricted use where medical practitioners agree that it will be beneficial, and where alternative conventional therapies may have failed or become ineffective, is, in my view, sensible, compassionate and reasonable. As we know, this view was shared by the cross-party New South Wales parliamentary committee which investigated and considered the uses of cannabis for medicinal purposes. It recommended in its report that provision should be made to allow the use of cannabis by patients who have been advised by their treating specialists that they have end-stage terminal illness. This view was supported by the likes of the Cancer Council—hardly a radical organisation. It acknowledged that cannabis may be of medical benefit to cancer patients where conventional treatments are unsuccessful. Yet here we are still talking about a way forward.

We are dealing with ill people who are at the end of the road in many instances. We are also dealing with people who have been drawn to the use of medicinal cannabis because other treatments have failed. They have had to do that illegally, acting outside the antiquated laws which prevent them from accessing something they believe delivers them obvious and tangible benefits. I would be surprised if the majority of members in this House did not know of, or have not met, some of those people with chronic illness who have turned to medicinal cannabis as a last resort, and who have achieved positive results or found relief from the relentless pain they suffer. I have met many, and I certainly know of several people who are actively using medicinal cannabis to treat their pain and suffering.

Why would we be so petulant as a society to deny those people the right to a treatment which we know, or they believe, brings them some relief, particularly when other treatments are not working? The former Premier himself said he was convinced that medicinal cannabis was appropriate in some circumstances and I applaud him for at least having the courage to go ahead with the clinical trials which are now under way at various locations throughout the State. Among those is a trial at the Calvary Mater Hospital in Newcastle, which of course serves the many people living in my electorate of Lake Macquarie. I eagerly await the results of that trial, but how long do we wait before we get on with what we know is right?

There is vast support for the use of medicinal cannabis in the community. With knowledge comes understanding, and we as a society are stripping back some of the old connotations associated with cannabis and are seeing that there is a significant benefit from its use in certain circumstances. We must allow that to go ahead in a controlled, regulated and legal way. We are dealing with people who have no other options, and they have expectations that their government will support them; they have expectations that cannabis can help them and should be made available to them. I believe we must give these people and their families the peace of mind that they are craving and we must give them access to something that will take away many of the burdens they carry.

Medicinal cannabis is believed to have a beneficial effect with certain kinds of nausea, vomiting, epilepsy, pain and neurological disorders such as stiff person syndrome, which we have heard described by the member for Wollongong. I too wish to mention the courageous efforts of Ben Oakley, a young man suffering from this bizarre, frightening and life threatening illness, who only gets relief from medicinal cannabis. Yes, all those people can make use of the Medicinal Cannabis Compassionate Use Scheme, but is that good enough? A register that gives discretion to police not to charge users or carers in relation to use or procurement of this drug? Discretion? I do not believe this is good enough for people who feel the burden of risk of perhaps being charged by an officer who does not wish to apply that discretion. If there is to be such a scheme, it should provide unequivocally for immunity from prosecution.

It is time to act. It is time to grow up. It is time to stop treating some terminally and chronically ill people and those who wish to help them as criminals. I recognise the Government for the work it has done so far and for initiating current trials, but I particularly wish to acknowledge the Leader of the Opposition for taking the initiative on this bill. The bill clearly will not pass this House, and that is a shame, but the exposure of the issue in this way has hopefully brought forward the day when people with desperate illnesses that are unresponsive to other treatments can make use of medicinal cannabis in a regulated way, without the risk of criminal prosecution for themselves or for their carers. I commend the bill to the House.

*[Business interrupted.]*

*Visitors*

## VISITORS

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** I welcome school leaders, most of whom are from the Coffs Harbour electorate, who have arrived in the upper echelons of the Chamber, or as they are known, the nosebleed seats. It is private members' day. We are discussing the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2017 brought to the House by the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Luke Foley.

*Bills*

## PUBLIC HEALTH (MEDICINAL CANNABIS) BILL 2017

### Second Reading

*[Business resumed.]*

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (11:49):** I support the Public Health (Medicinal Cannabis) Bill 2017. I speak briefly of the case example of the former member for Newcastle, Bryce Gaudry, who talked at his fifty-second wedding anniversary about love, mortality, pancreatic cancer and cannabis oil. The former member for Newcastle has had to deal with the devastating consequences of pancreatic cancer and its treatment. He has come out publicly to support the use of cannabis oil to highlight the need for research into deadly pancreatic cancer, the lack of progress over the past 30 years in increasing the survival rate, and developing effective treatments for dealing with its symptoms. He has a 3 per cent chance of surviving his cancer and he is using every possible pathway to give him that chance. Bryce Gaudry has used cannabis oil not as an advocate but because traditional medicines have not helped him. He had seven months of chemotherapy. He was in constant pain and had an inability to eat. He also suffered from nausea and projectile vomiting. The use of cannabis oil stopped the vomiting and nausea and his pain decreased. His wife, Barbara, is quoted as saying:

It would be wonderful if cannabis oil was available so that you knew exactly what you were getting, and so you could have the confidence of going to your doctor and obtaining it for system relief.

She said further:

It's given Bryce a quality of life that is so important to us. What was available to help him didn't work.

It is also incumbent upon the health industry, pharmaceutical companies included, to address the desperate needs of cancer patients to give them the best possible chance of survival. It is heartening to see reputable institutions like the Calvary Mater Newcastle and the John Hunter hospitals engaging in cannabis research to help patients with terminal cancer as well as children with epilepsy. I conclude with that very significant case study that is close to my heart. I urge all members to support this important bill, which will go some way to helping people in this terrible situation.

**Debate adjourned.**

### *Motions*

## **REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT**

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (11:52):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Condemns the Opposition for opposing more than \$8 billion worth of infrastructure investment in regional New South Wales since 2015.
- (2) Acknowledges the Government for taking the necessary reforms that have delivered the largest investment program in regional New South Wales in history.
- (3) Considers anything the Opposition does is no more than a political stunt.

It was not that long ago that Labor sat on the Government benches on this side of the Chamber and things were a mess, particularly in regional New South Wales. It is fair to say that the record of the Liberal-Nationals Government's investment in regional infrastructure will possibly go down as its greatest legacy. Indeed, it is the largest regional investment program this country has ever seen. When Labor was in government this State was stone cold broke. We had the lowest business confidence of any State in this nation. No-one wanted to invest in New South Wales, let alone regional New South Wales. When Bob Carr was the Premier he took money out of regional New South Wales to put into urban areas. At first, it was to prop up the Sydney Olympic Games, but he was greedy and wanted it all to come to the city. It is nothing more than pure fantasy for those opposite to say that they will ever put money into regional New South Wales. We do not believe them.

Labor was in government in New South Wales for 16 years too long, and they now want to come back. They are making all sorts of promises—for example, that the money from the sale of the Snowy Mountains Scheme will be put back into regional New South Wales. What a joke. Labor will not do that; it has form. Some of those opposite have not been here long enough to know what happens when Labor is in government, but we were left with a very sorry legacy when they got booted by the people of this State in 2011. As I said, the largest regional investment program this country has ever seen could never have been implemented because the State was broke. Labor had no plan to fix the budget, let alone to find the money as this Government has done. We have fixed Labor's mess. We have been able to deliver more investment to the regions, which in turn allows us to deliver more back into the economy.

Let us look at what would not have happened if Labor had been successful in blocking the Restart NSW legislation. We would not be halfway through the \$4 billion program to upgrade the last 155-kilometre section of the Pacific Highway into four lanes. I acknowledge that the hardworking Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight is seated at the table. We have already surpassed that fake Labor promise by \$1 billion and, importantly, we are now building the roads. How many lives will that work save? Countless lives. How many deaths have we unfortunately seen on our major destination highways such as the Pacific and Princess highways? Far too many.

I acknowledge that the Assistant Speaker has also been an enduring and passionate advocate of the Pacific Highway upgrade. It does not end there. We are spending hundreds of millions of dollars on upgrades to the Newell Highway, which runs through my electorate of Cootamundra—from West Wyalong through to Narrandera. We are spending money on the Cobb, Mitchell, Snowy Mountains and Great Western highways. We are spending money on the Kapooka Bridge on the Olympic Highway, in the electorate of the member for Wagga Wagga; the Tulladunna Bridge on the Kamilaroi Highway; the Bemboka River Bridge on the Snowy Mountains Highway; the Berry Bridge on the—

**Ms Shelley Hancock:** On the Princess Highway.

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON:** I think they are having a walk over the Berry Bridge in a couple of weeks from now.

**Ms Shelley Hancock:** That is correct.

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON:** I encourage everyone to go along to that. We are spending \$500 million to provide Broken Hill with a guaranteed water supply via the biggest regional infrastructure program in the history of regional New South Wales. We also hear in this place how much this Government has invested in health, including hospitals in Byron, Parkes and Bega, seven redevelopments and expansions in other locations, and four new ambulance stations in my electorate. This is all funded by Restart NSW, the program The Nationals lobbied to achieve 30 per cent exclusively for the regions and enforced it when we came to office. This is all underway right now; not after the 2019 election which Labor so desperately wants to win. The New South Wales Budget 2016-17 half-yearly review, under fiscal position and outlook, records total receipts of \$23.1 billion deposited into Restart NSW. That represents an increase of \$6.5 billion since 30 June 2016 and was driven by the receipt of \$5.6 billion, including transfer duty, in proceeds from the successful long-term lease of 50.4 per cent of Ausgrid.

What has that got us? It has got us additional Restart NSW commitments for pinch points and clearways totalling \$393 million; regional multipurpose services health facilities, so vital for country towns, \$196.5 million; regional road freight corridors, planning and reconstruction, \$74 million; visitor experience—Taronga Western Plains Zoo, \$24.5 million; Fixing Country Rail, a fantastic program, \$11 million; and in regional transport—regional road freight corridor, \$2 billion; regional growth roads, \$1 billion; Fixing Country Roads, \$500 million; Fixing Country Rail, \$400 million; Bridges for the Bush, \$200 million; Regional Water Security and Supply Fund, \$1 billion; Regional Schools Renewal Program, \$300 million; regional multipurpose services facilities; \$300 million; and Regional Growth—Environment and Tourism Fund, \$300 million. But the good news does not end there. So much growth, development and infrastructure, which was desperately needed 10 or 20 years ago, is now coming to fruition thanks to this Government.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (11:59):** Here we go again: Thursday morning and it is the Government's chance to do its fake news grandstanding—which is a term we hear all the time. Government members get up in this place and try to rewrite history. They talk about how when we were in government we did nothing at all and that nothing in this State started until they came to government. Apparently there were green fields as far as the eye could see—not a single rail line, not a single road, nothing. Apparently the Greiner Government did not do anything either and nothing happened in this State before those opposite came to government. I move the following amendment to the motion:

That all words after "This House" be deleted with a view to inserting instead:

- "(1) Acknowledges that all members of this House support infrastructure investment in regional New South Wales.
- (2) Acknowledges the Government has implemented reforms that have delivered the largest transfer of public assets to the private sector in the State's history."

We have to this debate in context. Those opposite never mention that when Labor was last in government there was a little worldwide occurrence called the global financial crisis. At a time when—through no fault of Australia's but because of what was happening overseas—our revenue levels dropped through the floor, it was a Labor Federal Government and a Labor State Government that provided the stimulus to protect jobs in this State. By entering the market and providing investment without incurring too much debt, we kept jobs in New South Wales. Government members never talk about that because at present they have the opposite. They have the highest revenue streams this State has ever seen—not because of their good management but because of State housing revenue. Government members say, "We are great economic managers". But it is harder to be a good economic manager in the hard times than it is in the good times.

If one compares our period in government with their period of government, it is clear that our economic management was far better. Let us consider some percentages. It is interesting to note the rhetoric from members opposite. When the Leader of the Opposition promised 100 per cent of the funds from a potential sale of Snowy Hydro, the Government would only commit to 30 per cent. Let us examine Labor's real record in government. In the 2010-11 budget the then Labor Government delivered \$4.7 billion for roads. Of that \$4.7 billion, 73 per cent was committed to regional and rural New South Wales—some \$3.5 billion. Let us forget the rhetoric of those opposite and consider the facts. The Government is giving 30 per cent of record revenue; in hard times, we gave 73 per cent. At the time The Nationals said that 60 per cent should be guaranteed for regional and rural New South Wales. But when they came to government they dropped it to 30 per cent—half of what they said before.

Those opposite can read in *Hansard* exactly what The Nationals said back then. We committed 73 per cent; those opposite said 60 per cent, and then delivered 30 per cent of available funds. At the time, we put \$174 million into steel re-sleepering, upgrade works and bridge renewals on country railway lines. We allocated \$355.4 million for rural and regional private bus services, which was an increase of more than \$30 million on the previous budget. Some \$1.9 million was spent on level crossing improvements. We provided \$94 million for major upgrades at 42 schools and \$55 million for upgrades at 22 TAFE colleges. Those opposite are running down TAFE colleges; we invested in our TAFE colleges. When we talk to people in the street they tell us they do not

agree with the Government's privatisation drive or its cuts to services. When I visited in Orange and the mayor said to me, "You know, it was actually Labor that delivered Orange hospital".

**Mr John Sidoti:** Point of order: How many hospitals can you renovate for half a billion dollars from the Rozelle metro?

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

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** When we look back through the real record—and the young people in the gallery should do this; they are hearing a lot about fake news and they should understand they will hear a lot of that from this Government—and previous budgets, we find that New South Wales Labor has a big history of delivering for rural and regional New South Wales, even when the nation was feeling the effects of the global financial crisis and revenues were at all-time lows. What did New South Wales Labor do? We boosted infrastructure with record infrastructure funding.

**Mr John Sidoti:** Point of order—

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** Government members do not like us saying this; that is why they are taking points of order. They do not like the truth.

**Mr John Sidoti:** The member for Wyong is misleading the House. They starved rural New South Wales.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. If the member for Drummoyne continues to take spurious points of order I will call him to order.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** The member for Drummoyne thinks Parramatta is rural and regional New South Wales. Coming from Drummoyne, he would not have travelled on regional roads and so does not know what was going on back then. Labor delivered so many programs—upgrading country bridges and country roads, investing in schools, supporting and building hospitals—in very difficult circumstances. So instead of moving motions that are simply grandstanding, Government members should have a good, hard look at themselves and acknowledge that all governments want to do what is best for regional and rural New South Wales given the economic conditions at the time. [*Time expired.*]

[*Business interrupted.*]

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Before calling the Deputy Premier and member for Monaro, I welcome to the gallery student leaders from across New South Wales.

#### *Motions*

#### **REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT**

[*Business resumed.*]

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (12:07):** It is perfect that the students are in the gallery to hear the difference between those opposite—who like to forget their time in government and do not want to talk about their track record of non-delivery—and members on this side of the House. It is not just the Government talking about its track record; all the punters out there are talking about it too. The students in the gallery have seen the cranes on buildings and the roads, hospitals and schools being built. It is typical of Labor to spend money it does not have. We have the option that the Federal Government will buy our share of Snowy Hydro, which will possibly be worth \$3.5 to \$4 billion to the State of New South Wales. That transaction has not happened, yet those opposite are out and about trying to spend the \$3.5 billion. Those opposite say, "If we get the \$3.5 billion, 100 per cent of those proceeds will go to regional and rural New South Wales." That is fantastic.

Since 2011 the New South Wales Liberals and The Nationals have returned 30 per cent of all asset sales across the State—which is close to \$10 billion—to regional New South Wales. Those opposite talk about giving regional New South Wales \$3.5 billion in two years time—if they get elected. In real terms, they are going to rip \$6.5 billion out of regional New South Wales. People do not have to believe me; they can look at Labor's track record. Every time Labor runs its budget into the red, as it always does—there is always debt and deficit—what does Labor do? It takes the money from regional New South Wales. Labor opposed every single budget measure that gave us the cash surplus to invest.

Labor opposed every single asset transaction that has seen this State embark on a \$73 billion, four-year infrastructure program to grow the economy and create jobs and private sector investment. That is why this State



has an unemployment rate of 4.7 per cent, which is well below the national average of 5.1 per cent. This Government knows how to run a budget, stimulate the economy and invest in assets that make a difference and deliver infrastructure to grow the economy. Labor has put up a proposal that 100 per cent of one sale will go to regional New South Wales but, typically, Labor members stick it on the credit card. They have not even got the money but they are spending it. They are also saying to regional New South Wales, "Wait for us in 2019 when we will give you \$3.5 billion but then we are going to rip \$6.5 billion, at a minimum, out of regional New South Wales." Our track record is clear: We keep delivering.

Labor talks about 30 per cent, not 40 per cent or 50 per cent. The member for Wyong has got it wrong. We have guaranteed that 30 per cent of Restart NSW—that is our asset recycling program—will go to regional New South Wales. The roads Minister, health Minister and education Minister—all of us—are still spending our budgets on top of that in regional New South Wales. More roads are being built in regional New South Wales under this Government. The Roads budget has increased 105 per cent since Labor was in government. That is a fact Labor cannot deny. Labor's track record is debt, deficit, high unemployment and no plan for not only New South Wales but also regional New South Wales. Members opposite always play politics with the future generations of New South Wales.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! I remind members of Standing Order 52. If members continue to interject they will be called to order and the calls will remain in force for the remainder of the day. I warn the member for Drummoyne that if he continues to take spurious points of order he will be called to order.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (12:11):** What a song and dance that was! Members opposite are the biggest bunch of hypocrites. They are selling off \$50 million worth of infrastructure in New South Wales yet they have the hide to criticise Labor. The Government has gutted our TAFEs, sold our ports and sold our poles and wires but Shellharbour has a \$10 million school maintenance backlog. Government members are not the infrastructure kings; they are the kings of privatisation and deceit in New South Wales. Labor members know that regional New South Wales has been ignored by the Government for far too long. The truth is clear. Regardless of the misguided words employed by members opposite, there is no hiding that fact. This is a Government of privatisation.

Let us take the long-awaited and forever talked about Albion Park Rail Bypass. It has been all talk and no action. The chances are that anyone who has travelled along the South Coast—a fantastic area—will have used the Princes Highway through Albion Park Rail. It is a notorious stretch of road that in heavy traffic leads to massive congestion and is also prone to flooding. Cars and trucks move at a snail's pace. Peak periods such as public holidays, school holidays, Easter, Christmas and the New Year are the worst times, but every day of the week people are left stewing in their cars. The stretch of road was identified by the NRMA as being the worst road in the Illawarra. In fact, the Albion Park Rail section of the Princes Highway took out fourth place in the ranking of worst roads across the State for two years running. That is not a prize Government members should be proud of.

I have been actively lobbying the Government since my election in March 2011 for this incredibly overdue piece of infrastructure. However, the Government continues to waste further funding on reformatting the same planning studies and executing a poor attempt at looking busy. It is an embarrassment and is nothing more than paper shuffling. The studies the Government has funded have only reconfirmed the original plans produced for the same road route that was set aside more than 20 years ago. How much money has the Government wasted in getting this project underway? Only two months ago the Government finally called for registrations of interest from tenderers to design and build the bypass, and last year's budget set aside \$15 million to continue planning. I will always welcome any move to push us closer to building this important piece of infrastructure. I like the member for Cootamundra, but I do not know who put her up to moving this motion. It must be the member for Kiama. Where is the member for Kiama? He is usually in the Chamber flailing his arms around like an inflatable man out the front of a car yard.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 74 (2).

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Kiama will come to order or he will be placed on a call to order. Standing Order 74 (2) states:

The Speaker may intervene:

(2) To prevent a quarrel between Members arising out of debates or proceedings in the House.

If the member for Shellharbour continues to cast aspersions on other members of the House she will be directed to resume her seat. The member's time has expired.

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (12:16):** Last week the Leader of the Opposition tabled the Snowy Hydro Corporatisation Amendment (Restriction on Sale) Bill 2017. This bill is nothing more than a shameless political

stunt designed to mislead the people of regional New South Wales. The hypocrisy of Labor knows no bounds. In introducing this legislation the Leader of the Opposition is asking the people of regional New South Wales to accept a funding promise by Labor based on speculation that a sale may occur at some future time. This promise is reminiscent of the gypsy fortune teller at the village fair—the crystal ball suddenly flashes a thought bubble and the snake oil salesman is inspired to spruik a new product. The problem is that the Leader of the Opposition previously opposed the very same idea.

The Government is already working on commitments of some \$8 billion in funding from Restart NSW—funding the Leader of the Opposition opposed yet now he suddenly proposes that regional New South Wales should get somewhere in excess of \$3 billion at some future time. In the Restart NSW fund the Government legislated the most incredible deal for regional infrastructure this country has ever seen. It is worth remembering that we had to embark on this program because the budget and the capital investment in New South Wales was in tatters after 16 shameful years of neglect under Labor. But through Restart NSW we said we would find the right assets to transfer to the private sector and we would use the proceeds to fund new investment and new infrastructure throughout New South Wales.

The vast majority of these assets were from metropolitan areas of New South Wales—from Sydney, the Hunter and the Illawarra. But it did not matter where the funds were raised—funds that are now approaching some \$30 billion—because the Government locked in a deal that would see 30 per cent of those funds invested in regional New South Wales. We all know that Labor opposed this great deal for New South Wales. Not only that, Labor tried to sell Snowy Hydro in 2006. Where was the commitment then for the proceeds to go to regional New South Wales? The truth is there was no commitment. I will tell the House what the then Minister for Finance, the Hon. John Della Bosca, had to say. He said: The sale is good for the taxpayers of this State. It allows the Government to realise the value of its shareholding in the company and to reinvest those funds here in New South Wales. There is not one mention of regional New South Wales. The Leader of the Opposition fails to respect that the people of regional New South Wales know a fake promise when they hear one. Like me, they would love to know the basis for his hypocritical thinking. You can hear the breathless policy on the run as he promises in the *Tumbarumba Times* that a future Labor Government will ensure that billions of dollars flow from the nationalisation of Snowy Hydro back to local infrastructure for the people of New South Wales. What?

Has the member forgotten projects such as: the completed Tumbarumba water supply; the \$3.8 million sewerage treatment plant, which I opened with the Minister for Regional Water last May; the \$9 million rebuild of Mannus Dam; the \$30 million health redevelopment project that is now underway; the \$5 million rail trail project that is underway; and the roadworks, community facilities and showground pavilions that are all operational. The Labor leader is entirely ignorant and unqualified when it comes to regional New South Wales. It is time the Labor Party stopped playing politics with the people of New South Wales and supported real investment now, not later.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (12:21):** I want to ensure that the students in the gallery know they are in Macquarie Street in the Parliament of New South Wales and are watching the Legislative Assembly. They may have been confused for a moment and imagined they were at a comedy club. Government members have nothing to say. The member who represents the regional area of Drummoyne is the lead defender of this motion. He took spurious points of order because he does not understand regional New South Wales. Labor does. We have heard that everything Labor does is a stunt and that Labor members should apologise for not supporting \$8 billion worth of regional projects. But it is the Government that should apologise to regional New South Wales, and not just for the member for Kiama but for blowing out the budget in Sydney by \$10 billion. That money is now not available for regional New South Wales.

I point out that \$500 million was blown on the Sydney Light Rail. That is \$500 million that cannot be spent in regional New South Wales. The Government can add it to the \$9.5 billion blown in Sydney that can now not be spent in regional New South Wales. Another lesson for the students in the gallery is that you can only spend a taxpayer dollar once. When you blow it, it is gone. This Government uses three methods to get the dollars: If it moves, tax it; if it does not move, sell it; and if you cannot work out what it should do, shove it off-budget to hide the real cost. That is the Government's approach. It is interesting that this motion is before the House today. I received a response from the Parliamentary Secretary for regional roads to a question about issues in the Illawarra.

The missive states that the New South Wales Government realises the Maldon-Dombarton rail link has potential. That is great. It has so much potential that Labor will back it. It is in our Illawarra Jobs Action Plan. Labor will put \$50 million on the table to work with the private sector to finish what the Greiner Government stopped. It is about getting products from regional New South Wales to ports and to export markets. That is what generates growth. The Parliamentary Secretary, the member for Tamworth, spoke about Appin Road. He is a good

member who is defending inaction on regional roads. He supported Queensland last night. He will not support New South Wales in the State of Origin and he will not support investment in Appin Road.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 76. The member for Wollongong is wearing the wrong colour tie.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. That is most relevant.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I wore a blue tie yesterday. I was pleased to see last night's result; it was fantastic. Appin Road is an important infrastructure link that connects regional New South Wales to Port Kembla, where freight is loaded on ships to be sold overseas. [*Time expired.*]

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Drummoyne will remain silent.

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (12:25):** By leave: It is a delight to be in the Chamber this morning. It brings back memories of the times when I would be in these debates up to my neck. I could not restrain myself any further while listening to those opposite stuttering and spluttering and yelling the most nonsensical interjections and puerile objections I have heard in my life. It proves to me that they have not left their comfort zones to see what is happening in the regions. I suggest that they come to my electorate. They only have to travel 2½ hours from Sydney and they will be in the South Coast electorate. The member for Port Stephens has clearly never been there.

**Ms Kate Washington:** I holiday in your electorate.

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK:** Then you will stop your puerile, nonsensical objections, your stuttering and your spluttering and you will come to order. Let us talk about the South Coast.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order—

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK:** There she goes—stuttering, spluttering and stammering.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Maitland that she is interrupting the Speaker of the House.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** I am sure it is a momentary lapse, but the Speaker should direct her comments through the Chair.

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK:** I was.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! The member for South Coast has been directing her comments through the Chair.

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK:** She should have listened. Those opposite cannot even listen. They stutter and splutter, and they are deaf as well. Let us talk about just one project in the South Coast electorate, the Burrill Lake Bridge. Labor members do not know where that is.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Is that all you have got?

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK:** If I had more time, I would have another 12. I hate to use the cliché, but what did Labor do for 16 years? Nothing. What is important about this bridge? A very old causeway silts up and pollutes Burrill Lake. What did Labor do about it? Did it do anything about it? Did Labor say anything about it prior to the 2015 election? What did the Federal Labor candidate say? There was no support—not even a sentence to say what a good project it is. There is now \$58 million to complete that brilliant project. What do those opposite do? Nothing. Another project is the Termeil Creek Bridge. Labor did something, but what was it? It talked about it. It had ridiculous plans, no community consultation and then botched the project big time. In 2011 the Liberal-Nationals Government consulted the community and fixed it. The project is now complete.

It has removed some of the most dangerous bends and curves on the Princes Highway. I did not think I would live to see it until this Government was elected in 2011. Something happened in the South Coast at that time. Those who led the Labor Government did not know we existed, and they did nothing. The member for Kiama is going to talk about the unbelievable progress at Gerringong and Berry. Some \$70 million has been allocated for the South Nowra upgrade. Those opposite botched it; they talked about it and never delivered because they did not have a cent for infrastructure. Those opposite cannot claim that they did wonders. The member for Wyong did nothing in my electorate—and he still does not support what is going on in my electorate. Those opposite are hypocrites, stutterers, stammerers and idiots who have made puerile contributions to this debate.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (12:29):** By leave: I thank the member for South Coast for her contribution to this interesting debate. It is a polite debate because we have students in the gallery today,

some of whom, no doubt, come from regional New South Wales and will understand the discussion. They will know where the truth lies.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Kiama that he is already on a call to order.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** It is abundantly clear for those who live in regional communities what the Government thinks of us. We only have to look at the state of our roads and the lack of services and support.

**Mr John Sidoti:** What?

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** The member for Drummoyne, who knows so much about regional communities, is interjecting. I do not accept his interjection. This Government thinks that people in regional areas are worth only one-third of city folk. That is why The Nationals were happy to sign up to a funding deal with Restart NSW which promises that only 30 per cent of income from sold infrastructure will go to regional projects. In contrast, the Leader of the Opposition has announced Labor's policy, which will see 100 per cent of proceeds from the sale of the Snowy Hydro returned to the regions. That is what it means to stand up for the regions. Labor values the important role that the regions play in supporting the State's economy. We value the people who live in regional areas. Government members, including the member for Cootamundra, boast and beat their chests about Government investment in the regions. However, the jobs of local train manufacturers in the Hunter are going to South Korea and Newcastle buses are being privatised. The Hunter has the highest rates of children in out-of-home care and 79 per cent of kids who are identified as being at-risk have not seen a Family and Community Services caseworker.

The entire Hunter region agrees that it needs one piece of infrastructure. Hunter councils, including the Upper Hunter Shire Council, know that the Hunter needs only one piece of infrastructure that will unlock enormous potential, and that is the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange. Last week in this place, Government members refused to support the motion to fund that interchange. Everybody in the Hunter knows it is the most critical piece of infrastructure. The Port of Newcastle was sold off with commercial restraints which prevent diversification of the Hunter's economy. If this is what investing in the regions looks like, I cannot imagine what it must look like when the Government is tightening its belt. The Hunter has the most overcrowded secondary schools in the State. TAFEs are either reducing their course offerings to young people in our community or they are closing down. The Hunter has some of the highest rates of domestic violence, obesity, heart disease and diabetes in the State.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** You forgot the potato famine of the 1880s.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** I note the interjection by the member for Kiama; he does not take these matters seriously. The Government has the wrong priorities. The regions are definitely not a priority. The regions are not worth 30 per cent to the National Party or the Government; we are in fact worth only 10 per cent. In 2015-16, the Auditor-General found that only 10 per cent of Restart NSW funding went to the regions. That is what the Government thinks the regions are worth. It is shameful.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (12:33):** By leave: Being lectured on regional New South Wales by the Opposition is like Hannibal Lecter giving a dissertation on table manners. I am not going to take this from the Opposition. New South Wales was a desolate wasteland when Labor was in office. Its definition of rural and regional New South Wales was everything south of Tempe and north of Gordon. Labor ignored regional New South Wales. I note that the member for Shellharbour is in the Chamber. She is wearing a bright jacket, but if I were her, I would not be drawing attention to myself. The member for Shellharbour talked for years about the Albion Park Rail bypass. Labor had the opportunity to release its infrastructure plan for the entire State at the 2011 election, but, much like the IQ of the member for Shellharbour, it was nowhere to be found. Light travels faster than sound. It is in that vein that some people appear bright until we hear them speak. The member for Shellharbour is sitting on the Opposition benches, waffling on.

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 73. The member for Kiama is casting aspersions on the member for Shellharbour. He should do so by way of substantive motion, not by way of cheap wisecracks.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** Order! There is no point of order. The member for Kiama has the call.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Labor had the opportunity to promise the Albion Park Rail bypass at the 2011 election. Was it in Labor's 10-year infrastructure plan for the entire State? No. Yet the member for Shellharbour talks about it. Labor acts as though the traffic congestion started on 26 March 2011 and that there was no traffic congestion for 16 years when it was in office. The member for Shellharbour could not even win her preselection.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order—

**Mr GARETH WARD:** She had to get the quota up and then she was imposed because no-one wanted her. Not even her own union wanted her.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** Order! The member for Kiama will resume his seat.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Even her former staff member Gino Mandarino did not want her; that is why he left.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** Order! The member for Kiama will resume his seat.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** I was going to ask that the member for Kiama be asked to direct his comments through the Chair. My point of order is now Standing Order 73. The member for Kiama is casting personal aspersions on the member for Shellharbour.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** Order! It is difficult for me to hear the member for Kiama because of the excessive noise coming from both sides of the House. There is no point of order. I ask the member for Port Stephens to resume her seat. The member for Kiama has the call.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I note the member for Port Stephens did not deny any of those aspersions. The shadow Treasurer travels to regional New South Wales. I thought that Potts Point Parky would make a contribution to this debate and tell us what Labor intends to do.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: I am worried about the member for Kiama. My point of order is Standing Order 73.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** Order! The member for Kiama will resume his seat.

**Mr Greg Warren:** The member for Kiama is making irrelevant personal aspersions on Opposition members.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** Order! There is no point of order. The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat.

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order: The member for Kiama should be referring to members by their correct title, not by colloquialisms.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** Order! I uphold the point of order. The member for Kiama has the call.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Labor's record is appalling. This Government is delivering.

**Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (12:37):** By leave: I have listened to this debate, particularly the contribution from Opposition members. I will give members a history lesson. As father of this House, I sat in this Parliament in 1995 and we planned and budgeted for a new police station and courthouse in the Coffs Harbour electorate. We bought the land and budgeted for a new hospital. Labor won government. The first thing that Premier Bob Carr did was put a freeze on all capital works in regional New South Wales. As a result, work on Coffs Harbour hospital, which desperately needed upgrading, was delayed for six years. It was built eventually, but it was built to specifications that were against the recommendations of an independent committee. It should have had more theatres and another ward with more beds. In fact, when it was completed, the beds could not fit in the dialysis ward. The provision of dialysis to patients who needed it badly had to be delayed for six months.

I wrote to every Minister, and I have a sheaf of papers from them, in relation to Coffs Harbour Police Station and Court House, and each and every one of them denied the need for these facilities. In fact, one Labor Minister said, "You're not in a marginal seat, mate" and he apologised. In 2011, construction of a new police station and courthouse started. It is now completed and was opened by me and the then Attorney General, the Hon. Brad Hazzard. This magnificent building, which cost \$73 million, houses the police station and courthouse. During the 16 years of Labor's time in government the Coffs Harbour electorate got nothing because it was regional and it was not marginal. Members who represented regional areas knew a "go slow" sign was put on the Pacific Highway upgrade.

Joe Tripodi installed concrete barriers in Sydney to force people to use the Cross City Tunnel. At the same time, people were dying on the Pacific Highway in my electorate, and the Labor Government would not fund improvements to the Pacific Highway. In the end, the Federal Government came to the party with the construction of the Bonville bypass—in an area where a 21-year-old girl known personally to me, and whose father worked for the Department of Housing, was killed. I chased Joe Tripodi around this Chamber, something

for which I have apologised and I apologise again, but it was the Federal Government that provided \$272 million to start and complete that bypass at Bonville where people were being killed almost on a monthly basis.

A mother and three of her children were also killed there on a wet road. For 16 years, when I sat on the Opposition benches, Labor denied proper service provision for the people of the Coffs Harbour electorate and across the State. The Opposition wants to play politics on this motion today, when this Government is spending 30 per cent of the Restart NSW budget in regional New South Wales. We are now seeing the benefits in our regions. The Opposition should hang their heads in shame. This Government is doing the work that Labor did not do for 16 years.

**Ms Kate Washington:** We are not seeing it. And it is 10 per cent.

**Mr ANDREW FRASER:** I do not accept the interjection. We are seeing a revitalisation of regional New South Wales, and I thank the Government for that.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (12:42):** By leave: Let us be clear, this motion is nothing more than a stunt because this Government has not fulfilled the commitments it made to the people of New South Wales at the last election. It has not spent the money that it promised to the regions. As members have said, the funding to regional areas has been only 10 per cent. The Leader of the Opposition has gone to great lengths to support the regions with his move to make sure that 100 per cent of the funds from the sale of the Snowy Hydro Scheme are injected into regional New South Wales. At its conference last week, The Nationals promised 30 per cent of those funds to regional New South Wales. We know that the regions will be lucky to see 10 per cent of that money.

Government members have two voices. They say one thing in their electorates and something quite different in this House—as we have seen time and time again. They are dismissive to regional areas. The Liberal Party candidate who stood against me in the last election berated me for the supposed 16 "long" years of Labor Government. I say they were the golden years for Maitland. Under this Government, Maitland has been lucky to get a \$51 million spend on a roundabout that does not achieve the aims that were stated by the Government. It was dangerously implemented and the Government has failed to address concerns. My electorate has a \$12 million education maintenance backlog. I have lodged applications under the Government Information (Public Access) Privacy Act because the Minister will not meet with me in relation to two of my schools. The first application will cost me \$540 to get the information and for the second the Department of Education has advised me it does not have the resources to collect the information.

Government members say that they know regional New South Wales. In the past 14 months I have been to more than 21 areas around the State, including Broken Hill, Tweed, Albury, Dubbo, Orange, Wagga Wagga, Wollongong, Central Coast, Goulburn, Queanbeyan, Bombaderry and the South Coast. The people in those towns and communities are suffering. As the shadow Minister for Small Business, I know that the small businesses know the truth. They know that this Government does not support regional communities and small businesses; they know it supports the big Sydney-centric companies, that is, donors to the Liberal Party. I have heard members of the Government talk about their local hospitals. I refer to Maitland Hospital, which is one of the four left in this State that this Government is going to privatise.

Why do the people in Maitland have to fight to retain a public hospital in a community that services 70,000 people or more in the area as well as others from the Upper Hunter? It is an absolute disgrace and a sell-out of the people in our regional communities. The Government has not spent \$1 on Maitland Hospital in the time it has been government. In the last years of the former Labor Government, hundreds of millions of dollars were spent in my electorate. From this Government, we have not received one cent of any meaningful funding. We have a \$6 million sign at Metford for a hospital, the details about which the Government refuses to make public, and a roundabout that does work. That is the sum total of what those jokers on the other side can deliver for regional communities. And that is what I hear when I travel around the State from everyone in the seats held by The Nationals. The Nationals should come and have a chat with me about what their communities are saying because they are not listening. [*Time expired*]

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (12:46):** By leave: I support the motion moved by the member for Cootamundra. I have heard many mistruths spoken by members of the Opposition during this debate. I will concentrate on my electorate of Upper Hunter. The Opposition said that The Nationals, in particular, do not care about regional New South Wales. Since 2011, when this Government was elected, we have completed or projects are underway for roadworks worth \$1 billion just in my electorate of Upper Hunter. The electorate of Upper Hunter was completely and utterly neglected by Labor. Scone, Muswellbrook and Singleton bypasses are now being constructed.

In 2009, Federal Labor Minister Anthony Albanese wrote a letter to the local council stating that the Federal Government was pulling all further funding for the Muswellbrook bypass because it did not think it was

a worthwhile project. The Labor mayor of Muswellbrook never said one word about Labor pulling the money out of Muswellbrook, which prevented the construction of a bypass. With The Nationals in coalition with the Liberals in New South Wales, the Muswellbrook bypass is well and truly underway. The Labor Mayor of Muswellbrook Shire Council, Martin Rush, has never criticised his party for forgetting about Muswellbrook. When I was mayor of Upper Hunter Shire Council, unfortunately, we had to turn off the town water in Murrurundi.

That initiated this Government to bring forward and invest \$14 million in a 40 kilometre water pipeline from Scone to Murrurundi, so that we never ever see this situation again. Opposition members talk about the effects of government investment on their communities. They should face those people who had no water. They would then be unable to say that this Government is not doing anything for our communities. We face our communities and we deliver real outcomes for our communities. It is not just about the roads, the schools, the hospitals or the water infrastructure; it is about the impact on the lives of people which they ignored for so long.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:50):** By leave: I reject the proposition contained in the motion moved by the member for Cootamundra and I support the amendment moved by my colleague the member for Wyong. The motion states that the Labor Party is opposed to infrastructure investment in the regions. I will examine that proposition with reference to my electorate, which is in the Central Coast region. It is a matter of public record that in the lead-up to the 2015 State election both of the major parties—the Labor Party and the Liberal Party—promised close to \$1 billion of infrastructure investment on the Central Coast. Many of the items were the same. For example, both major parties promised investment of \$368 million in Gosford Hospital and the redevelopment of Wyong Hospital to the tune of \$200 million.

Both major parties promised \$100 million towards the Pacific Highway at Ourimbah and \$12 million for a performing arts centre on the Central Coast. It is not the case that the Labor Party is opposed to infrastructure investment in the regions. In my area, we have a unity ticket when it comes to infrastructure investment. The difference is the philosophy behind the funding of the infrastructure. Those opposite made it clear during the election that infrastructure investment would only be made if it was matched by an equal privatisation of public assets. That would mean increased costs to use those public assets by the community after privatisation. In contrast, the Labor Party's promises on the Central Coast were signed off by the Parliamentary Budget Office.

In a world climate when interest rates are as low as they have ever been, those opposite are happy to ignore that reality. They call on the private sector to borrow at higher interest rates to fund infrastructure for which the community will end up repaying double through higher user charges and, having taken the assets away from the public, a lack of income going back to the budget down the track. Government members talk about the Labor Party's position. Let me talk about the Government's broken promises in relation to Wyong Hospital. This infrastructure investment on the Central Coast was promised by those opposite but now that they have been elected they have backtracked. It is a broken promise.

Those opposite, having promised \$200 million to redevelop Wyong Hospital, are now saying to the community, "You will get the hospital only if it is delivered by a private operator to run it as a private hospital." The Government is effectively privatising the public delivery of health services on the Central Coast. This broken promise negates the proposition put by the member for Cootamundra about investing in the regions because there will be no investment on the Central Coast unless it is private investment and it includes the privatisation of services. I finish with this comment: This is a cheap motion and members have had fun with it, but we could be talking about important issues. In Martin Place, close to Parliament House, there are at least 50 people who have been sleeping rough for months and no-one in this House has said anything about it.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (12:54):** By leave: I am pleased to support this important motion moved by the member for Cootamundra. The motion raises two issues. First, it notes the infrastructure program that is happening right across regional New South Wales, and, secondly, it highlights the ineptitude of the previous Labor Government. Today the old Labor Party handbook has been brought out: say whatever is necessary, mislead the public and do not tell the truth. We all know that the previous Labor Government was the most inept, corrupt, morally bankrupt government in the history of New South Wales. Do not take my word for it; let us see what the Labor Party luminary Frank Sartor said:

We were more morally bankrupt than corrupt...Transport was our No. 1 big sin, and we were very poor at policy, on energy and on delivery.

That is what Frank Sartor said about the Labor Government. Previous speakers from this side have spoken about the infrastructure builds right across regional New South Wales. Under the previous Labor Government, there was a lack of integration, poor planning, inefficiency, unnecessary cost, and budget overruns and projects were seriously delayed or they were announced and not delivered. For 16 years, in the lead-up to every election projects would be announced by Labor and after the election they were axed. Let me examine the Labor Government's failures over those 16 years. During that time the Labor Government promised and axed 12 rail lines. The North

West Rail Link was first promised in 1998 to be delivered by 2010. In 2005 Labor delayed the project and promised to complete it by 2017, even though it had not even been started. The project was axed in February 2008. Unsurprisingly, before the 2011 election it was revived by the Keneally Government, but construction was not going to start until 2017 and commuters would not be using it until 2024. This Government is now delivering the North West Rail Link.

The South West Rail Link was first promised by the Labor Government in December 2004. The project, which was costed at \$688 million, was to be completed by 2012. In March 2008 the Labor Party reannounced the South West Rail Link at a cost of \$1.36 billion. In November 2008, the South West Rail Link was axed under the Labor Government. A year later, in November 2009, the Labor Government reannounced the project but the completion date was blown out by four years to 2016. Three months after that, the Labor Government revealed the total cost had blown out to \$2.1 billion. Under the Labor Government, the South West Rail Link was running four years late, had tripled in cost and ultimately amounted to a total cost of over \$1.4 billion. In 2010 the Keneally Government axed the so-called Western Metro and handed back \$80 million of funding to the Federal Government—another sign of the incompetence of the previous Labor Government.

That created history in Australia, with New South Wales being the first State Government to hand back funding. That happened after Infrastructure Australia panned the then New South Wales Government for the poor quality of its submissions—they lacked detail on benefits and costings. For 16 years the Labor Government played politics with desperately needed transport infrastructure. In 2006 the Labor Government announced a fast rail link between Sydney and the city, the Penrith Fast Rail project. It was axed a year later. It promised the Rozelle Metro, at a cost of \$500 million, without a sod being turned. The Hurstville to Strathfield rail link was promised in 1998. Where is it? It was axed. The Bondi Beach rail link was promised in 1998—axed. Other projects include: the 1998 high-speed rail link to Newcastle and the Central Coast—axed; the high-speed rail link from Sutherland to Wollongong, promised in 1998—axed; and the Sydney CBD to harbour rail link, promised in 2005—axed. All these projects were promised by the Labor Government and axed by the Labor Government. [*Time expired.*]

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (12:58):** By leave: What a sad notice of motion this is. Instead of delivering infrastructure for the regions, instead of making the important investments in our communities, what does the Government do? It attacks the Opposition. I respect the member for Cootamundra, but she knows this. She was a Minister in this Government. She knows only too well what this Government thinks of regional areas. The short answer is that the Government does not think about regional areas at all. For the past six years the Coalition Government in Macquarie Street has ignored the needs of people outside Sydney, convinced that regional New South Wales could be fooled by a deluge of media releases. This Government has disgracefully neglected people in regional New South Wales.

Despite selling off more than \$50 billion worth of government assets and services, this Liberal-Nationals Government has squandered billions of dollars in cost blowouts in their tunnel and road projects in Sydney, while starving regions like the Central Coast of funds. We have been forgotten by this Sydney-centric government, where one northern Sydney Liberal Premier has been replaced with another northern Sydney Liberal Premier who has then been replaced by another northern Sydney Liberal Premier. Only Labor represents regional communities and only Labor will deliver the vital infrastructure we need outside Sydney. That means building hospitals and schools and repairing roads. That means supplying the services that this Government provides for Sydney, but that we want outside the metropolitan area. That is why I have put my hand up today as a representative of regional New South Wales.

Whilst 25 per cent of the people of the Central Coast may work in the big city, down the train line or the expressway, we expect equitable delivery of resources and infrastructure specific to our needs in our community. I repeat, it is the failure to deliver the capital works that we need to enhance social and economic development in regional communities such as mine that has caused me to put up my hand. It is extremely disappointing that the Berejiklian Government has taken more than \$8 billion worth of infrastructure investment from our regional communities in this term. Those on the other side may keep spruiking about their successes but an \$8 billion dollar cut does not spell success; in my eyes accelerating growth, private investment and development in regional New South Wales does.

When we look into the Sydney-centric spending circus we see railways and road networks sucking up our regional development funds, with massive cost blowouts that do not contribute to the economic or social wellbeing of communities outside the metropolitan region. Since this Government came to office we have seen a dramatic increase in unemployment on the Central Coast, jobs taken away from local people, and the arrival of a new State government department with jobs pushed into the Gosford electorate from other regions. We have not seen the investment in infrastructure to create the new jobs we need. We are watching our hospital grow—possibly from the car of potential visitors as they drive around the hospital, only to return home without stopping—and we are waiting for appropriate parking to be developed.



We are travelling to work in Sydney on a commuter train that is slower than the 3801 steam train between Newcastle and Sydney. The Albion Rail bypass was forever promised but never delivered, so I call on the Government to deliver our Woy Woy underpass—six years promised and never delivered. We now have a walkway. I point out to the member for Coffs Harbour that in the past five months we have had one death and one near death—that was only two weeks ago. When will we see a real commitment to infrastructure, economic growth and investment in regional New South Wales from this Government?

**Mr Andrew Fraser:** Point of order: The member for Gosford did not direct her comments through the Chair during her contribution to debate.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** Order! The member for Gosford will take that comment on board.

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (13:03):** By leave: This is a fantastic motion by the great member for Cootamundra. She and I are well aware of this Government's investments in regional New South Wales. When we came to office we were confronted with the \$4.4 billion black hole left to us by Labor. There was no money for metropolitan or regional and rural areas. Under the leadership of this Government we now have a \$3.7 billion surplus, and the news keeps getting better. The electorate of Wollondilly is where the city meets the bush—from Appin to Bowral, out to Warragamba, Picton, Tahmoor and everywhere in between. We are the first among all regions. I am the first to admit that for many years the electorate of Wollondilly did not receive a lot of funding because, as I have said, we are where the city meets the bush. Now under this Government we have had a lot of positive wins, but there is more to be done.

Some of those wins have included putting more police in our police stations; more funding for each school in my electorate; new classes at Wilton and Bowral public schools to cater for the growing population; funding for infrastructure programs of \$73.3 billion over the next four years; more funding for Campbelltown and Bowral hospitals—\$50 million is currently being spent at that hospital; and jobs growth is the best it has been for a very long time. I note that the Minister for Corrections is seated at the table. I am very glad that he listened to my community and ensured that there is no jail in Wollondilly and the Macarthur region. The electorate of Wollondilly had the largest population without sewerage and we have now invested hundreds of millions of dollars into sewerage programs.

The Government has invested \$20 billion in roads funding across this great State, including \$700,000 for the Victoria Bridge at Picton; funding to the Wingecarribee and Wollondilly Shire councils for Drapers Road at Colo Vale, Range Road at Mittagong, the Hume Highway, Wilson Drive resurfacing, and \$52 million for Picton Road. I note that the member for Wollongong is no longer in the Chamber, but he also mentioned Appin Road. I also note that the member for Campbelltown is in the Chamber. I called a road summit with the mayors of Wollongong, Campbelltown and Wollondilly and we got the Centre for Road Safety to do a safety audit and report on what was needed to be done. The Government has spent approximately \$20 million on Appin Road.

I am glad that both sides of politics at the Federal level have committed \$50 million to Appin Road, but this is going to cost many hundreds of millions of dollars. Indeed, as the population continues to grow in this area we will need the duplication of both Appin and Picton roads. I completely support the Maldon to Dombarton rail line mentioned by the member for Wollongong. I give Labor credit: former Prime Minister Gillard provided \$20 million in funding to do a feasibility study along that line. When this Government came to office we provided about \$25 million to undertake the necessary engineering studies and report back. We have asked the industry to partner with us but they have not done that at this stage. We need to invest the whole amount—not the additional \$50 million that Labor has committed—and get this work done. It also needs to be for a passenger line. Although my electorate has done well, many projects still need to be done.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (13:07):** By leave: To be clear—

**Mr Mark Coure:** You look a bit tired. Did you have a big night last night?

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** I watched the debate in the other House about the firearms legislation. In my electorate I have 3,500 registered gun owners, with a total of 18,000 registered firearms. I was very interested in the debate in the other House last night. Unfortunately, I only survived until 2.30 a.m. I then left and withered. At the outset I state that I have the highest regard for the good member for Cootamundra who moved this motion. In the six years I have been a member of this place she has always spoken with considerable eloquence. Having said that, I cannot think of a better word to describe the member's motion than appalling. I contrast that with the beautiful amendment moved by the member for Wyong. We all understand that regional infrastructure is important and as we go along we all make a contribution to it.

It might interest members to know that I recently read the 2011-12 budget again. I was drawn to a particular comment from the then Treasurer who became Premier about how outrageous it was that the New South

Wales Labor Government had been allowing capital works growth to increase at a rate of 10.5 per cent per annum. The then Treasurer clearly articulated in the budget that he thought that type of capital growth and that massive investment in capital was outrageous and that the government of the day was going to rein that right back in. Of course, the Government needed to rein it back in at the time because it needed to fund the \$8.8 billion for the North West Rail Link, which has got nothing to do with regional New South Wales at all but is wonderful for the people in the north-west. To achieve that, we have also experienced the efficiency dividend for the past six years, nearly seven years, of 1.5 per cent.

The point to make about the efficiency dividend is that it has become, essentially, the recurrent budget. Therefore, we have taken 10 per cent out of the recurrent budget. The recurrent budget is spent fairly and equitably in regions and in the city. So if 10 per cent is being taken out of the recurrent budget, then 10 per cent is being taken out of the budget in both the country and the city. On the one hand—and this is the unfortunate ignorance of The Nationals—they are ripping money out of the recurrent budget, which is invested and spent and creates jobs and employment opportunities in regional New South Wales, so that they can build the North West Rail Link in Sydney on the North Shore. The Nationals have stood by and watched that happen. I refer to the relationship between The Nationals and the Liberal Party when it comes to the priority of regional New South Wales and how much investment actually occurs there.

Yesterday the Hon. Peter Phelps in debate in the other place belled the cat on the relationship between the Liberal Party and The Nationals in terms of who is running the House. He seems to have identified that the police Minister, whom he commended and recognised as being a good police Minister, wanted to make an adjustment to the firearms legislation which would be in keeping with the position of The Nationals. However, the Minister was overruled by Premier Mike Baird of the Liberal Party. I have remarked a number of times in this place about The Nationals, with the exception of the good member for Cootamundra, being Libs in tan pants. The reality is that the business model that has allowed any investment in regional New South Wales has been conditional upon the Liberal Party ideology that we sell off every asset that the State owns, which allows some money to be invested back into regional New South Wales. The Nationals might want to crow about that, but it is a fundamentally flawed logic that will come to an end very, very soon.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:11):** By leave: I thank the member for Cootamundra for moving this motion today and I thank Government members for speaking to it. This motion is important because it reminds the community of our track record on infrastructure spending in rural and regional New South Wales—more than \$8 billion since 2015.

**Mr David Elliott:** It is nothing to be ashamed about.

**Mr MARK COURE:** It is nothing to be ashamed about. We are getting on with the job of rebuilding infrastructure not only in Sydney but all over New South Wales. From the beach to the bush we are getting on with the job of rebuilding the much-needed infrastructure that was neglected by Labor over 16 years.

**Mr David Elliott:** Disgracefully neglected.

**Mr MARK COURE:** It is absolutely disgraceful. When Bob Carr came to office in 1995, infrastructure spending had stopped under Labor for the first two or three years in its first term in government. Some infrastructure spending was put into the Olympics, and some was given to ridiculous projects like consultants, but much of the infrastructure spend that was earmarked for regional and rural New South Wales—and I am sorry if I am keeping the member for The Entrance awake—was put on hold by Bob Carr and New South Wales Labor. Those opposite should be ashamed of themselves, each and every one of them—except for the member for Canterbury; I like her. We are spending \$2 billion on the regional road freight corridor program; we are spending \$1 billion on the Regional Growth Roads program; we are spending \$500 million on the Fixing Country Roads program; we are spending \$400 million on the Fixing Country Rail program throughout rural and regional New South Wales; and we are spending \$200 million on turbocharging the Bridges for the Bush program. We started that program immediately on coming into office, fixing the—

**Mr David Harris:** It was already there. You just renamed it.

**Mr MARK COURE:** That is not true. You will have your turn to support this motion and to support people living in rural and regional New South Wales. This Bridges for the Bush program started when we came into office. I have seen many of the bridges in rural and regional New South Wales, I have visited many places in outback New South Wales, and a lot of the bridges are either dangerous or are in desperate need of rebuilding and repair. We are getting on with the job of fixing these bridges that are connecting major arterial roads, that are connecting the paddock to the plate. Mr Temporary Speaker, I ask for an extension of time.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** There is no provision for an extension of time.

**Mr MARK COURE:** I ask members to support this motion.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (13:16):** By leave: I oppose the motion of the member for Cootamundra, but I am more than happy to support the amendment moved by the member for Wyong, because infrastructure is an important issue in the regions, including in the Hunter region, of which Charlestown is a part. Infrastructure is important for jobs in the regions, it is important for our economies and it is important for the identities of people in the regions. Our regions reflect our jobs, what people bring to the regions, the infrastructure that we have and whether we are proud of our areas or not.

This Government has made quite a big deal of its reputation for building infrastructure. The Premier often talks about the number of cranes and the infrastructure that is being built across the State. But it is not happening in my electorate. The investment made in New South Wales over the past five years through the proceeds from the sale of the Port of Newcastle and the lease of the poles and wires has not seen an equivalent return on investment in infrastructure in the region. The people of the Hunter deserve large-scale infrastructure projects to stimulate the Hunter economy.

**Mr David Elliott:** What about light rail?

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** I do not know whether the member for Baulkham Hills has been to the Hunter, but I have to tell him that there is no light rail in Charlestown. I will speak about public transport and the Government's investment in public transport in Charlestown: There has been none. There is a 2 per cent usage of public transport by people getting to and from work within the electorate of Charlestown.

**Mr David Elliott:** Where did that come from?

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** That is shown by statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Another infrastructure project that has been ignored in the Charlestown electorate and the regions is the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange—and I acknowledge the member for Lake Macquarie is in the Chamber. The member for Wallsend constantly raises the issue of the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange, as did her predecessor. The interchange is an essential part of infrastructure that needs to be built in the Hunter. It has been identified in the Government's Hunter Regional Plan 2036, and it is an embarrassment that there has been no funding in recent years from the State Government to provide for the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange.

I have been raising the problem of Hillsborough Road since I was elected. It is a notorious stretch of road that needs to be fixed. In the last 12 months we have had a death on that road resulting from the lack of investment in public infrastructure in the area. Hillsborough Road links Charlestown with Warners Bay, both growing areas. Hillsborough Road is becoming increasingly busy, with major shopping and entertainment facilities on both sides. Indeed, in peak hour residents of Hillsborough constantly spend up to 15 minutes trying to get out of the suburb to get to work. Therefore, they need additional infrastructure support on the road to enable them to get to work and be part of the economy. Residents in Charlestown are sick of the lack of focus on investment infrastructure from this Government.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (13:20):** By leave: I speak as the son of a very proud Hunter Valley family. I cannot believe that the member for Charlestown has just spent her entire speaking time trash talking her electorate. The Hunter Valley is a wonderful place to live. Investment in the Hunter Valley has created great opportunities in that electorate. Over the past decade Newcastle Airport has grown beyond its forecast projection to become one of the busiest regional airports in the country. The Government has made considerable investment in Newcastle, including in sporting venues and the university, which is becoming world renowned. The Honeysuckle Wharf development has become an appealing recreation area for people.

I am delighted that many of the cruising fraternities are using Newcastle as a port. The exploration for and exploitation of minerals, and the presence of one of my favourite industries, the wine industry in the Hunter Valley, mean that the area deserves more than the trash talk we have just heard from the member for Charlestown. However, I digress. I speak to the motion and congratulate the member for Cootamundra on what is essentially a thumping endorsement for Premier Gladys Berejiklian. I am horrified that the shadow Treasurer, the "member for Kensington", is not present in the Chamber for this debate. He knows full well that on the South Coast, his region, there has been fantastic investment from this Government.

I represent the seat of Baulkham Hills. I keep the front page of a newspaper in my electorate to remind me of Labor's failings. It is an article by Bob Carr that boasts that the north-west will get rail. That is now the case and it will open in the next two years. Bob Carr announced that as Minister for Planning in 1985. The Labor Party even had the audacity to come to me when I was the chief executive officer of the Civil Contractors Federation to ask for some earthmoving equipment to be placed at Showground Road during a visit by a Labor member of Parliament so that Labor could pretend it was commencing the construction. This is hype and hypocrisy and

reflects the disgraceful way the Labor Party approaches government. As I have said in the past, Labor cannot be trusted. For 16 years nothing was done in this State. With the exception of an overpriced and under delivered rail network across the northern districts I still cannot find the infrastructure the former Labor Government delivered for the people of New South Wales.

**Mr David Harris:** Come to my area; we had lots; we had heaps—hospital redevelopment, fire stations, ambulance stations, police stations, and I am in a regional area.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** I acknowledge the member for Wyong; infrastructure is being built in regional areas. We have just heard it from the interjection of the member for Wyong. His comments are in stark conflict with those of the member for Charlestown. I conclude by congratulating the member for Cootamundra and saying how horrified I am at the trash talk from the member for Charlestown. I endorse the motion.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (13:24):** By leave: It was not my intention to contribute to this debate because there are other debates to take part in. However, the subject of the debate is very important to the 93 electorates across New South Wales. I acknowledge the positive element of the original motion from the member for Cootamundra and thank her for bringing it to the House. However, the motion could have been more generous in that it starts off with a word too often used by both sides of the House, "condemns". I do not think that is a particularly helpful word but I understand the politics behind it. Individual electorates are important and it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the spend on infrastructure that has occurred under the Coalition Government since 2011. That is a statement of fact.

But there is certainly a strong element of truth in the amendment from the member for Wyong acknowledging that the Government has implemented reforms that have delivered the largest transfer of public assets to the private sector in the State's history. We are probably seeing one of the biggest rollouts of infrastructure in the history of New South Wales and I acknowledge that. It is wonderful. I actually have a different view as to how that could have been funded and whether it could be done by way of borrowings against the value of the assets rather than, to use the euphemistic term, recycling the assets. However, some very good infrastructure is being delivered in our local area. I will defend the member for Charlestown's contribution because the benefits of a number of infrastructure items for the entire area could be shared by the electorates of the members representing the electorates of Swansea, Charlestown, Wallsend, Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Cessnock. They are infrastructure projects such as the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange.

All members, be they Opposition, Government or crossbench, and community or industry leaders, are baffled as to why infrastructure projects like this cannot get a guernsey. Although we understand from very strong rumour that there is a special gilding team that is out working in marginal government seats putting the gold leaf on certain projects, we have some fabulous projects in our area that will add to the great work being done in New South Wales generally. We would like to assist in those endeavours to provide jobs and improve the lifestyle of people across the State. At the same time it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge government expenditure in areas in my electorate. Good money has been spent through Roads and Maritime Services on road projects. I acknowledge the former Premier, Mike Baird, for assisting to deliver sewerage for people in my area, which will be very important for a whole range of reasons.

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (13:29):** By leave: I thank the member for Cootamundra for bringing this motion to the House because it shows the stark contrast between what the Government has done in regional New South Wales compared to what Labor did during its 16 years in government. There is a pertinent story that goes with this motion that goes like this: An old fellow dies and goes to heaven. He is knocking at the gates. St Peter sees him and says, "You are certainly welcome to come into heaven to have a look, absolutely so." The old fellow goes in, has a look at heaven and sees angels, blue skies and harps. It is peaceful and lovely. It is not this place, but it is heaven. It is a very nice place.

But then St Peter says to him, "You are also entitled to have a look at the other place, if you like." He is a bit reticent to do so, but he says, "I will do that. I will go have a look at hell." He goes down and the devil takes him out and shows him this beautiful links golf course. It is a sunny day, there is water, music, dancing and girls. This guy is absolutely loving it. The next day he goes up to St Peter and says, "Heaven was really nice. But I will go to hell." The next day he does go to hell. But what does he see? He sees a barren wasteland. People are in rags and dogs have their ribs sticking out of them. It is like a landscape on the moon. He says, "What happened?" The devil says to him, "Yesterday we were campaigning. Today the election is over." And that is how Labor responds to regional New South Wales.

**Debate adjourned.**

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

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the last question time for the week year 11 legal studies students from Kingswood High School who are visiting with their teacher. They are guests of the Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, Minister for Sport, and member for Penrith. I welcome to the Chamber Mrs Anne Jalandó-On Louis, the Consul General of the Philippines, whose tenure in Australia is soon drawing to an end. She is a guest of the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, Minister for Ageing, and member for Mulgoa.

I acknowledge the delegation from the Kiama Seaside Probus Club, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Education, Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, and member for Kiama. I welcome to the Chamber Emeritus Mayor of the City of Canada Bay Council, Councillor Michael Megna, guest of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Cabinet, and member for Drummoyne. I acknowledge in the gallery year 10 students, accompanied by their teachers, from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, guests of the member for Heffron.

I welcome to the Chamber Sophia and Xanthe Wooldridge, guests of the member for Newcastle. I also welcome Annemieke and Ruud Van der Wal from Horn in the Netherlands, who are cousins of the Parliament's long-term, and much-loved, hospitality staff member, Charlotte Page. I welcome a delegation of young professionals from the Young Australian Chinese Business Connect, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and Infrastructure, and member for Oatley.

*Announcements***DEATH OF KATHLEEN SMITH, FORMER MEMBER FOR GOSFORD**

**The SPEAKER:** It is with great regret that I inform the House of the death on 31 May 2017 of Kathleen Smith, a former member of the Legislative Assembly. On behalf of the House I extend to the family the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly in the loss sustained. This will be the subject of a motion of sympathy on a future day. I ask all members to stand as a mark of respect in remembering Kathy Smith.

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

*Governor***ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**The SPEAKER:** I report a message from His Excellency the Governor regarding the administration of the government of the State:

David Hurley  
GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
SYDNEY

General David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that he has re-assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

Wednesday, 31 May 2017

*Presiding Officers***TEMPORARY SPEAKER**

**The SPEAKER:** By leave: Pursuant to Standing Order 19, I hereby nominate Gregory John Aplin to act as a Temporary Speaker whenever requested to do so by, or in the absence of, the Deputy Speaker and the Assistant Speaker.

*Question Time***HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:22):** My question is directed to the Premier. Why has the Premier missed the opportunity today to introduce mandatory affordable housing targets in new developments?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:23):** They have got to be kidding me. In March this year, Minister Goward and I were able to announce, for the first time in the history of not only New South Wales but also the nation, that a State government has set up a social and affordable housing fund. The market and non-government organisations have responded. We will have 2,200 new dwellings over the next four years. I might have more to say about the Government's housing package on a later day.

**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. I call the member for Londonderry to order for the third time. The member for Londonderry will cease interjecting. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the first time. I call the member for Cessnock to order for the second time.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Not only have we adopted the most comprehensive affordable housing package for new home owners that the State has ever seen, but we also announced phase two of our social and affordable housing fund.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The Deputy Premier has shown me something interesting and I will let him comment on it. Our Government is spending billions of dollars supporting first home buyers. We are supporting people who want to get into the housing market. We are also building the infrastructure that people need to ensure that supply continues. The response from the Opposition was that Sydney is too full—no housing, no concessions, do not worry about it. Not only did Labor say that Sydney was full, but it also did not build roads, rail, hospitals, or schools. Labor only invested in ad hoc development when it suited them. It did not care about first home buyers. It did not care about affordable housing. It did not care about the budget. How on earth would Labor pay for any of it? I am incredibly proud of the package that we have announced today. This Government has invested in current and future generations.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Last year when I was Treasurer, we introduced a foreign investor surcharge. That is a statement of fact. Those opposite spoke against it, including the shadow Treasurer. What did the shadow Treasurer say today about the foreign investor surcharge?

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Apparently at 1.00 p.m. today he said, "I am very glad that the New South Wales Coalition has adopted Labor's policy." We introduce the policy, Labor speaks against it, but today it is suddenly theirs.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I will have more to say about this.

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

#### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (14:27):** My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the New South Wales Government helping young people buy their first home?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:27):** Whilst we might jest, this is a serious issue for many people who are trying to get into the housing market for the first time. I thank the member for Parramatta. I know many people in his community are aspiring to buy their first home.

**Mr Chris Minns:** We have not heard the question.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I am happy to restart the clock so Opposition members can hear the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Restart the clock. Opposition members will cease interjecting. The Premier will be heard in silence. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the first time.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I thank the member for Parramatta not only for his question but also for the feedback he is giving us, especially me, about the aspirations of his community. Parramatta is receiving a lot of infrastructure, but we also know that owning your first home is a huge challenge. We are pleased that this Government has announced the most comprehensive housing affordability package this State has ever seen. Today we announced that the Government is abolishing all stamp duty for first home buyers on existing and new property up to \$650,000, and will implement stamp duty concessions up to \$800,000.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** To put that into perspective, in Greater Sydney, the median price for an apartment is \$700,000. That means half of all apartments in Greater Sydney cost \$700,000 or less, so this is clearly a very comprehensive and generous package. We are also abolishing the stamp duty charge on lenders mortgage insurance which is often required by banks when they are lending to first home buyers, especially with limited deposits, which could save \$2,900 in addition to those concessions we have outlined. As has already been noted, we are doubling the foreign investor surcharge from 4 per cent to 8 per cent on stamp duty and from 0.75 per cent to 2 per cent on land tax. Not only do we want to give aspiring first home buyers a bit of a boost but we also want to make sure they are able to compete when they are bidding against investors.

For that reason we are removing stamp duty concessions for investors purchasing off the plan. Now when a first home buyer wants to purchase off the plan or bid at an auction they will know that they will have a better chance to compete with the investors. I am also pleased to say that we are committing \$3 billion of infrastructure funding to support the extra housing we will build in order to put downward pressure on prices. We will be making greater use of independent panels for councils, but we want to stress this will be done following consultation with the community. We do not want to take away any local decision-making—quite the opposite. We will ensure that as we increase supply communities will have an absolute say in maintaining the local character of their area. This is very important to us and it is extremely relevant. When supply is increased it has a huge impact on putting downward pressure on prices—

*[Interruption]*

Have those opposite been to Chatswood? They did that to Chatswood without any schools, any extra health services and any extra support. That is their way of doing things.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Bankstown to order for the third time. Members will cease shouting. I direct the member for Londonderry to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of three hours.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Londonderry left the Chamber at 14:31.]*

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: I ask that you direct the Premier to direct her comments through the Chair rather than pointing across the Chamber.

**The SPEAKER:** The member will resume her seat. The point of order is noted.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Even though we have provided a huge boost to first home buyers on the demand side, we know that supply is the best way we can put downward pressure on prices. We will continue to make sure we keep giving approvals, building housing where it is required and also offering a choice in housing—whether it is units, houses, dual occupancy or town houses. Whether a person is upsizing, downsizing or getting a home for the first time, they want a choice about how and where they live. This Government firmly accepts that proposition.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Cessnock will stop talking to himself.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** We are also providing a boost for extra dwellings for social and affordable housing. *[Extension of time]*

I also take this opportunity to thank Glenn Stevens, former Governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia. When I approached him to give advice on the Government's proposals he agreed to do so. He has watched the housing market for decades. Because he cares so much about this issue he chose to do his work pro bono and, on behalf of the people of New South Wales, I thank him for his contribution. Those opposite showed their absolute failure in government. Their pronouncements to date have been abysmal.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the member for Keira to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of three hours.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Keira left the Chamber at 14:34.]*

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** We are able to invest in supporting first home buyers and building the infrastructure because we know what it is like to bring a budget back into balance. We know what it is like to have the fiscal discipline and the resources to be able to dedicate money to such important issues. I am incredibly proud of the package the Government has put together today. I thank all members for their input. I say to the people of this State that this is a complex and challenging issue but today we have drawn a new line in the sand for people wanting to buy their first home in New South Wales.

### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (14:35):** My question is directed to the Premier. The Central to Eveleigh precinct will result in at least 10,000 dwellings being constructed. Under Labor's mandatory affordable housing target that we announced last Sunday at least 2,500 of those dwellings will be made directly available at a discounted rate to low- and middle-income families. The package announced by the Premier today guarantees not one of those dwellings for those families. Why will the Premier not adopt Labor's policy of mandatory affordable housing targets?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:35):** The member for Maroubra has demonstrated that not only has the Opposition learnt nothing from its time in government but also after so many years in opposition Labor still cannot devise a package that will support first home buyers. The package we have put together today is worth between \$3 billion and \$4 billion, if one takes into account the extra infrastructure and all the other things we are doing. If we are going to invest in infrastructure, provide a boost for first home buyers and get rid of some of the other blockages in the way of first home buyers that is what is required. Our package is in the billions of dollars and those opposite are patting themselves on the back because theirs is a \$300 million package. That will not even touch the sides. It is almost like during the election campaign when they funded 20 per cent of a rail line. They announced a rail line and only funded 20 per cent of it.

**The SPEAKER:** This is my last warning to the member for Cessnock.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** What about the vendor tax?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** As the Minister for Health has reminded me, in government those opposite not only taxed people when they bought a house but also they taxed them when they sold a house. Some of us have been around long enough to remember the vendor duty—you paid record stamp duties to buy a house and then paid a tax when you sold a house.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 129. Some of us disagreed with Michael Egan about that 20 years ago as well. Why will the Premier not adopt a package that targets today?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. That is not a point of order. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time. Members who take any further spurious points of order will be placed on a call.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Those opposite demonstrated in government their absolute incapacity to deal with this issue. They said Sydney was full—no more housing. They cancelled infrastructure project after infrastructure project. All the statistics show that much of the challenge we have in this area is because of the pent-up demand we inherited. That is a statement of fact. I say to those opposite: on a day like today I would be quiet and listen, because this is exactly what the people of New South Wales need.

### REGIONAL HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (14:38):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier advise the House how the approach of the New South Wales Government to housing affordability will benefit regional New South Wales?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:38):** The member for Clarence is passionate about regional New South Wales and in his capacity as Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Planning he understands how to grapple with the issues to make sure regional communities are planning for the future. On this side of the House we know the importance of regional New South Wales and how fantastic it is to live there. That is why today's announcement about first home owners is significant for regional New South Wales. The average price of a home in regional New South Wales is around \$365,000. Yet today we announced a stamp duty exemption of up to \$650,000 for new or existing homes. That makes regional New South Wales an attractive proposition for many of the young people in the gallery today who want to buy their first home.

It is so important that when we deliver homes, we deliver them across the State. This package—the stamp duty exemption and the First Home Owner Grant of \$10,000—is not just for Sydney, but also for regional New South Wales. I am excited to be part of the Premier's vision to make sure that housing affordability and owning your own home is no longer a dream but a reality for so many young people in this State. If people buy a property that costs around \$650,000, the stamp duty exemption is about \$24,000, plus the \$10,000 First Home Owner Grant. That is a significant investment by the Government to help young people get into their first home. That is fantastic.



I look forward to seeing more young people moving to great regional centres such as Goulburn, Queanbeyan, Dubbo, Bathurst, Armidale, Tamworth or Wagga Wagga. Remember "Labor's \$300 million ten-point plan to address the housing affordability crisis"? Today's announcement was \$4 billion to make sure we deal with the supply side and affordability and that we assist young people into homes. Looking at the brochure, I think the same people designed Bill Shorten's jobs ad—the diversity, or lack thereof. Let us have a look at Luke Foley's lack of diversity. It looks like I cannot buy a home under Labor's plan. I would have thought the Leader of the Opposition, as the member for Auburn, would have had more diversity in his brochure.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** We remember this plan: the \$300 million 10-point plan. It says things like, "Labor will examine new models", "Labor will examine new opportunities", "Labor will examine new shared equity models." That is typical of Labor: Those opposite talk and talk and talk, and do nothing. Why do they not do anything? They are never in a position to do anything because they use debt and deficit to invest for the future. Those opposite come to this House at this time and question us about what we are doing for young people in this State.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the member for Bankstown to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of three hours.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Bankstown left the Chamber at 14.43.]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! If the member for Cessnock continues to interject he will also be removed from the Chamber.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Let us be clear, Labor has promised to release 20,000 lots for new houses over the next 10 years. In the past five years the Government has led 63 rezonings and unlocked 37,400 new homes. We have another 35 key rezoning proposals ahead of us for another 21,700 new homes. Dwelling approvals in this State were at an historic high of 73,000 in the 12 months to January. Labor was going to be short by 39,000 homes. Who was going to miss out? It would be a lottery under Labor. But I bet it would be regional New South Wales that would miss out under Labor. We always miss out under Labor. Labor's track record in relation to regional New South Wales is one of contempt for country people.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** The Labor Party said that it would appoint a Minister for Housing. I am going to lend them Robbo. *[Extension of time]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call member for Strathfield to order for the second time. She will resume her seat.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Labor made that announcement like it was something new—"We are going to have a housing Minister". But there was Craig Knowles, Andrew Refshauge, Carl Scully, Matt Brown—remember Matt Brown? Where is Noreen?

**Mr Troy Grant:** Captain Underpants.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Captain Underpants! Remember him? They announced that as something fresh and new—"We are going to have a housing Minister." But Labor had them in the past. Those opposite do not want to talk about Mr Scully because he was supposed to replace Bob Carr. Remember that? He was doing the work; they were wearing out the carpet to his office, lining up the numbers. We remember that Mr Scully was a friend of Jodi's mates Joe Tripodi and Eddie Obeid.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about housing affordability in regional New South Wales and the Minister is now talking about some historical leadership exchange from a time before he was born.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister is talking about housing Ministers, past and present. He remains relevant to the question. There is no point of order. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the second time. She will cease shouting.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** If we look at the Labor Party's past and its track record, we can see clearly that it has had no plan for young people in this State. Those opposite had no plan in relation to supply, they had no plan for affordable housing, they had no plan for first home owners in this State and they had no plan for the next generation of young people to help them buy the Australian dream. They have no plan for regional New South Wales. All they are interested in is coming to this place and playing politics with the future of the next generation. Today's announcement about first home owners in this State has clearly put regional New South Wales back on

the map. I encourage young people to look to regional New South Wales as a place not only to buy their first home, but also to raise their family.

**DARLEY ROAD, LEICHHARDT, LEASE**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (14:46):** My question directed is to the Premier. Will she confirm that before negotiations began with Robby Ingham's development company over the lease of RailCorp land at Darley Road, Leichhardt—

**Mr Gareth Ward:** You got donations from developers.

**Ms JODI McKAY:** If we did that we would be thrown out.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: About half a dozen members from this side of the House are no longer here for making the slightest transgression.

**The SPEAKER:** It is three members who were on three calls to order. What is the point of order?

**Mr Michael Daley:** Three Opposition members have been removed for the slightest transgressions. There have been constant interjections from the Government side as well. With respect, we ask you to apply the standing orders fairly—or is that beyond you? We ask for just a bit of fairness, Madam Speaker. It reflects badly on the House.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat or he will be removed from the Chamber for disrespecting the Chair.

**Ms JODI McKAY:** You are disrespecting every single one of us.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will cease shouting.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Sixteen years of Labor is what you did to us, and you know it.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order.

**Ms JODI McKAY:** Put him on a call to order.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Strathfield will cease interjecting and shouting. The member will ask her question. I will control Government members.

**Ms JODI McKAY:** I have not said a thing; I have not even spoken. Government members are interjecting.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Strathfield will ask the question or resume her seat. Members will come to order.

**Mr John Sidoti:** Publicity deprivation.

**Ms JODI McKAY:** Did you say, "Felicity Duplicity"?

**Mr Andrew Constance:** No, he said publicity deprivation.

**Ms JODI McKAY:** Publicity. I thought you said, "Felicity Duplicity".

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Strathfield to be careful.

**Ms JODI McKAY:** My question is directed to the Premier. Will she confirm that before negotiations began with Robby Ingham's development company over the lease of RailCorp land at Darley Road, Leichhardt, Inghams Enterprises donated \$50,000 to the Liberal Party and that, after negotiations were concluded—with a non-competitive lease extension—Robby Ingham donated a further \$10,000 to the Liberal Party?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:48):** After successive questions over the past few days, I said to my team, "Can you go back and look at my records?" There is absolutely no record of me ever having met with those individuals. Those opposite should not judge us by what they did in government. The likes of Eddie Obeid and Mr Macdonald have never been seen before in New South Wales. Do not use those standards to judge others.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. We will not use those standards; we will use Barry O'Farrell, Chris Hartcher, Chris Spence and Darren Webber and the other 10 who hit the wall in this term of Parliament.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. I place the member for Maroubra on three calls to order. If he continues to interject, he will be removed from the Chamber.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I do not mean to be modest on a day like today, but I am incredibly proud of our record in public transport. If it was not for our vision six years ago to build the South West Rail Link, North West Rail Link, Inner West Light Rail, the CBD and South East Rail Link, to build all those roads and introduce the Opal card, we would not have had a chance to increase supply and reduce household pressures. The purpose behind every decision we have taken in government—whether in transport, roads, health or education—has been to make this place a better State. It was to build the infrastructure that those opposite failed to build, to get the budget back into black and to support the most vulnerable. Those opposite can spread all the fear and smear they like, but the people of New South Wales know that this Government is working hard not for union mates or anyone else, but for them.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will come to order. I remind the member for Cessnock that he is on three calls to order. If the member continues to interject he will be removed from the Chamber.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** This Government is working hard for the people of New South Wales.

### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (14:50):** My question is addressed to the Treasurer. How is the Government delivering for the people of New South Wales in the area of housing affordability?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (14:50):** That is a great question from the newly promoted member for Albury. The member for Maroubra wants fairness. Well, he got a dose of fairness today with the greatest housing affordability package in the history of this State, if not the world. Those on this side of the House are proud to put people first. From the first day of this administration, the Premier said that she was going to tackle housing affordability—an issue that was shamefully neglected by those opposite and their conga line of do-nothing failed leaders for 16 years. Today we say to first home buyers in New South Wales, "We have heard you. We understand the challenges you face. This Government will be right by your side, doing everything we can do to give you a foot in the market."

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Today we have delivered the most balanced, the most comprehensive and the most considered housing affordability package this State has ever seen. This is not just about housing; this is about homes and bringing the great Australian dream a step closer for families across New South Wales. Unlike the failed Labor governments of the past, we have a proven track record in increasing housing supply and infrastructure across this great State.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I think the good Treasurer has bowled up his Fire and Emergency Services Levy speech again. He needs to make the housing affordability speech today.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The Treasurer remains relevant to the question. The member for Cessnock will resume his seat.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Madam Speaker, a day is a long time in politics. We are building the houses that those opposite never did.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We are building the infrastructure they never could because, as the Premier said, of their financial incompetence. We are doing this with money that those opposite never had—their little \$300 million package. The demand-side measures we have announced today are inspired by our values of fairness and opportunity and our belief, as Liberals, that lower taxes lead to better outcomes.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** That is why today we are cutting stamp duty all the way up to \$800,000. This reform will help level the playing field and give the people of New South Wales a fair go. Most importantly, we recognise that people will not just want new homes; they will want access to existing homes, close to communities where they already live. That is why we announced that we are extending the stamp duty—

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order—

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** He is not relevant; he is frustrating democracy.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I have already ruled on relevance. The Treasurer is being relevant to the question.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** I want to draw the Treasurer's attention to the fact that they cut these opportunities in the 2011 budget.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! This is not a debate. The member for Cessnock will resume his seat.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** All they are doing today is returning some of the things that they cut in 2011. I just want the Treasurer to be clear on that.

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

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Cessnock left the Chamber at 14.54.]*

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Our announcement today will be a game changer for first home buyers across this State. It will open up thousands and thousands of new housing options, as the Deputy Premier said, particularly in regional New South Wales. But we are not going to stop. As the Premier pointed out, we will abolish the stamp duty on Lenders Mortgage Insurance, which is currently imposed at 9 per cent—that is a bad tax and a good government is removing that tax. This will make a real difference to the people of this State. Our next reform will also give first home buyers a hand up. Currently, all purchasers, including investors, of off-the-plan dwellings can defer payment of transfer duty by up to 15 months.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time. He will cease interjecting.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We will ensure that our first home buyers can access this benefit. This is a practical way that we can level the playing field. Those opposite should be paying attention as we know they struggle when it comes to practicality. Finally, we are doubling the foreign investor surcharge from 4 per cent to 8 per cent on stamp duty, and from 0.75 per cent to 2 per cent on land tax. We have listened and we understand the community concerns regarding losing out to foreign investors. *[Extension of time]*

We make no apologies when we say that our first priority and primary obligation is to put the people of our great State first—today and always. The great thing, which those opposite will never understand, about having a budget in the black is that we can afford to make great reforms for the people of this State.

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

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** We believe it is important that people with aspirations feel they can get ahead, which is why our policy today focuses on removing obstacles and reducing costs. We know that Labor does not appreciate this policy—as we have seen today. Those opposite are hopeless with money, they are addicted to tax and they have no interest in assisting the aspiring families of New South Wales. They talk a big game about fairness but it is only the Liberals and The Nationals who ever deliver fairness. I compared the policy we announced today with the policy announced by those opposite on Sunday. Remember the Sunday morning call when Luke Foley was on the phone with Michael Daley? "How is your big reform coming along?" He turned over his envelope—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the second time.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** Here is Michael Daley's little housing package, with no detail. That is always the way the Labor Party plays. Today we saw good reform by a great reforming government for the great people of New South Wales.

#### STATE FORESTS LAND REVOCATION

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) (14:58):** My question is directed to the Minister for Lands and Forestry. Will the Minister confirm that in a parliamentary briefing the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party was told, in National Reconciliation Week, that land revocations and transfers to the Forestry Corporation were warranted because they deprive Aboriginal people of the ability to lodge land claims over the lands involved?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (14:59):** I thank the member for Wyong for his question. From time to time in this House there are opportunities for briefings on bills that will come forward for debate. My office continues to raise matters with the Opposition and with crossbenchers appropriately. I have full confidence in my staff and I have full confidence in them when they raise matters across parties—they are professional in everything they undertake. The member slurring my staff in that manner clearly indicates the Labor Party is full of smear and fear.

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. I did not say that; the Hon. Robert Brown said that in the other place.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Wyong has missed the point. There is no point of order. Government members will cease interjecting.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** If the member for Wyong has an issue and he is so gutless as to try to hide by coming into this place to raise it here, he should step outside and say it.

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order: Again, my point of order relates to Standing Order 73. I asked the Minister during debate and he refused to answer in reply.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. Members will come to order. The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** When this issue was brought up today as a motion, the Opposition did not like it and opposed it. There is no need for these surplus Forestry Corporation sites to become Crown land and therefore the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 does not apply. Opposition members should not come into this House and lecture us about forestry because the last time Labor was in government it treated the industry with disdain. The Opposition locked up State forests in this State.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This is a serious question about the extinguishment of land rights by government fiat.

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

**Mr Michael Daley:** I want to know if the Minister will give an undertaking to the House—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra will resume his seat or he will be removed from the Chamber.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Will the Minister give an undertaking to the House that his staff did not make those comments?

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

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Maroubra left the Chamber at 15:02.]*

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** As it is National Reconciliation Week, as the Minister for Lands and Forestry, I met members of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Kogarah will come to order. He will cease interjecting or he will be removed from the Chamber. The member for Summer Hill will come to order.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I will continue to meet, and my staff will continue to meet, with people in a professional and appropriate manner as the need arises.

### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (15:03):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and very Special Minister of State. What is the Government doing to boost housing supply throughout New South Wales?

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (15:03):** The Premier and the Treasurer said that this is probably the best housing affordability package in the nation, and indeed the world. Dare I say, it is probably the best in world history and it is probably the best package in the universe. I can say that our package is much bigger than yours. Thanks to when those opposite were in government, we face an unprecedented housing affordability challenge. But that is not the only challenge we have been left by those opposite.

We face the challenges of rebuilding a damaged economy, fulfilling the promise of infrastructure delivery and creating more jobs. Those on this side of the House have risen to those challenges, and now we are rising to the challenge of housing affordability—a consequence, a natural consequence, of a growing and very successful economy. Today the New South Wales Liberals and The Nationals announced a comprehensive reform package that goes to the heart of why housing is becoming out of reach for so many Sydneysiders, in particular. Every expert, every economist, every investor and every analyst agrees that the problem is supply.

At the same time, our goal is to ensure community amenity is maintained, that infrastructure is provided for growth and that the character of our towns and suburbs is protected. We must do this while not unduly restricting growth to meet this demand. Our mission with this policy is to remove impediments to growing supply

that are not in the public interest: red tape, time-consuming processes and planning impediments. That is why our focus on rezoning is so critical and why we are so committed to helping councils complete their local environmental plans. We accept there will be concerns about overdevelopment—that is only natural. That is why we announced medium-density design codes: to give buyers choice, to give people options, because not everyone wants to live in a high-rise apartment and not everyone wants to live on an acreage.

Providing for much-needed new housing will not be at the cost of local character. There will be some areas, particularly those around centres and transport corridors, that will change. For all other areas, we will use character statements in development plans to understand and document how new development should fit in. We will use urban design principles, like those in the housing codes, to ensure that tree canopies are maintained and that homes are proportionate to the character of the street. Heritage items, which contribute so much to the character of an area, will continue to be protected and considered in the development assessment process.

We are planning for the new growth by zoning the most suitable land around centres and transport lines for urban renewal and at the same time are creating new communities through greenfield rezoning. New housing in existing urban areas will be planned around the investments being made by the Government in faster and more efficient transport infrastructure. Housing will be located close to new rail and metro stations and not within suburban streets. Creating opportunities for new housing is not just about zoning; it is also about providing the infrastructure to create and enhance communities. New zonings in urban renewal areas will use Special Infrastructure Contributions and the Priority Precinct Support Scheme to ensure that investments in State and local infrastructure accompany new development. Zonings of greenfield land use the most up-to-date urban design principles to create new communities with infrastructure, environmental management and sustainability built in.

Our housing delivery focus will ensure that new services, community facilities and great transport are ready when the first homes are being built. The approach we have outlined today is a comprehensive, detailed policy to address housing affordability and the associated infrastructure needed to support a growing population. From time to time in this House we all have a bit of a laugh about various things, and sometimes a bit of a cry. *[Extension of time]*

I know it is tempting to have a laugh at Labor's expense when it tries to announce a policy, and it certainly gives us enough ammunition from time to time. I had a look on the interweb and picked up Labor's policy: eight pages; less front and back covers takes it to six pages; less the really big font, fewer double spaces and fewer photos, leaves two pages; fewer links to the Leader of the Opposition's Facebook and website leaves one page; then subtract the drivel and there are no pages at all.

**Mr Paul Lynch:** Point of order: The Minister is clearly using props, which is inappropriate.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The Minister is not using a prop.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I mentioned the colourful stock photos that took up much of Labor's affordable housing policy for Sydney. Speaking of those pictures, as Special Minister of State our geospatial intelligence unit was able to locate Labor's affordable Sydney housing suburb in question. Where were these stock photos for Labor's affordable suburb? We were able to identify the suburb: it is the suburb of McKellar, a new suburb. Is it in south-western Sydney? No. Is it in north-west Sydney? No. Is it in Western Sydney? No. Is it in regional New South Wales? No. Where is it? McKellar is a suburb in Canberra. That is Labor's Sydney's affordability policy—and it is not even a very affordable house.

**Mr Luke Foley:** Point of order: I have just found the Government's Fire and Emergency Services Levy policy.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** Those losers could not even get the photos right for their policy brochure. *[Time expired.]*

## PLASTICS POLLUTION

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:11):** My question is directed to the Minister for the Environment. Given research showing that small plastic particles, including microbeads and microfibres, are increasingly being found in the food chain, what is the Government doing to address the growing problems around plastics in the environment, including single-use plastic bags and packaging?

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (15:11):** I thank the honourable member for his question and very strong commitment to the environment in his electorate and the environment across New South Wales. I welcome the question. The New South Wales Government is strongly committed to reducing the environmental impact of

plastic waste and litter across New South Wales. We have a number of significant projects in reducing both the health and environmental impacts of waste and litter. I have some very good news to report to the House. We are almost halfway to meeting the Premier's priority of reducing plastic litter waste by 40 per cent by 2020. That is a good thing to be able to report to the House but we do have more work to do. That is why I welcome this question from the member for Lake Macquarie. For those who may not know, microbeads are those tiny bits of plastic that are in our cosmetics and cleaning products.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Gosford and the member for Shellharbour can leave the Chamber if they are not interested in the Minister's answer.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** Microplastics are found in our cosmetics and cleaning products. Everyone would have in their house some microplastics in the products that they purchase. New South Wales led the development of a national voluntary agreement to phase out microbeads in our environment. I thank my colleagues and predecessors Minister Stokes and Minister Speakman for actually pulling this off. We showed leadership. It will mean fewer microbeads in the environment. This is good news. I hear the Opposition asking why should this matter? Let me explain it simply. Microbeads break down our environment, they are eaten by our marine life and our fish, and some of us will then eat that fish. Therefore, we are eating plastic.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Are you going to ban the bag?

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** I will answer that question in a moment.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Port Stephens will listen in silence.

**Ms Kate Washington:** There are turtles. I care.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** What are your colleagues in Victoria and Western Australia doing about plastic bags? I will come back in a moment and respond to the interjection from the member about the important work we are doing on plastic bags. Drink containers, another plastic litter item in our environment, make up 49 per cent of the total New South Wales litter volume. That is why from 1 December we will be introducing a container deposit scheme that will be innovative and groundbreaking and will mean that for every eligible container that is returned 10¢ will be refunded. That is not only good for our environment; it is also good for our local charity and community groups because that 10¢ will be able to be donated to charitable and sporting causes. That is not only a great environmental impact but a great community impact as well. I address the interjection by the member for Port Stephens. We have taken a leadership role on plastic bags.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Port Stephens can leave the Chamber if she is not interested in the Minister's answer.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** The member for Port Stephens might be interested to know that on behalf of the nation the New South Wales Government is looking at reducing the impacts of plastic bags, including biodegradable bags, on our environment. We will report back to the Australian Environment Ministers Meeting, which will be held in July, on research we have commissioned. We have asked the CSIRO to do some important work in this space. It is looking at whether biodegradable bags also contribute to microplastics in our oceans. That is work the Government is doing—work that Labor's colleagues in Western Australia and Victoria are not doing. It is why I am proud to say that as Minister for the Environment this Government has in hand a number of important projects that are reducing the impacts of plastic on our health and on the environment.

## HOUSING SUPPLY

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (15:17):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. How is the New South Wales Government's record infrastructure program supporting a boost to the housing supply?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:17):** I thank the member for this very sensible question. He understands that in order to bolster housing supply it is necessary to have good infrastructure in place. What a week the Government has had in this House. We have delivered a major affordability housing package. It comes at a time when we are investing \$73 billion in infrastructure. This is in contrast to the commos opposite. All they want to do is nationalise the housing market, steal people's homes and drop their rent. It is the type of behaviour one would expect from those opposite. Before question time I was given a prop relating to the leader of the commos—it happens to be Fidel Foley.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will not use props.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I am happy to table it so the member for Liverpool can take it home and stick it on his wall. There is no doubt that those opposite do not understand the need for transport to deliver infrastructure to deliver more housing supply. That is what this Government is delivering. With Labor in government the minimum number of house approvals occurred at a time of high demand from first home owners. This Government and its planning Ministers have bolstered supply. To do this, a government must have its budget in check and be able to deliver the infrastructure alongside the housing projects. The member for Riverstone has carefully watched the progress of the North West Metro project. Over the next 10 years there will be an additional 90,000 people living in that part of Sydney. This Government is investing in infrastructure. There is a \$73 billion program, and \$41.5 billion of that funding will be invested in public transport and roads. That four-year program will continue to grow.

This Government is investing in critical mega-projects as well as local infrastructure in order to deliver outcomes for housing supply, including for first home buyers. The Government will continue its disciplined approach to investment. There are tremendous infrastructure projects such as the Inner West Light Rail. That project has been well patronised. This week I have observed that those opposite have been obsessed about a parcel of land at Leichhardt. There have been several questions asked about it. I went to look at the land to discover for myself what was going on. It is no wonder the Leader of the Opposition has an interest in this land—there is a Dan Murphy's on it.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 73. The Minister has made a personal imputation against the Leader of the Opposition.

**The SPEAKER:** I am not in a position to judge whether that is fact or not. I do not know whether that is a personal imputation. There is no point of order.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** It is where he picks up his roadies on his way home from Parliament to Auburn. There is a drive-through. I am going to franchise his NightRider bus.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 129. The question was in regard to transport and housing affordability. The Minister's answer has nothing to do with the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. I caution the Minister and ask him to return to the question. The point of order is upheld. [*Extension of time*]

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** With regard to bus services, the member for Strathfield has been using twitter to incite people to break the law. The member tweeted, "Give your support and get a free ride". This side of the House is keen to support those who want affordable housing to travel to and from work with fantastic bus services. It is no surprise that those opposite support illegal strike action. I note a special friendship between the member for Strathfield, the Leader of the Opposition, and Chris Preston, union boss of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union.

When the illegal strike action occurred last week the union boss said he could not call it off because he was asleep. This afternoon he has given a press conference about today's illegal strike and said he could not call it off because, "I was watching the Origin". That is the type of behaviour the Government expects from them. What is funny is that Mr Preston was unable to use his website last night to call off an illegal strike action but was able to remind members that union fees would increase today. I say to the union bosses, "Get out of the way and allow the workforce to get on with the job of delivering services to the people of the inner west." This is the party of the workers. Those opposite continue to support illegal strike action, which is disrupting communities.

#### *Committees*

### **COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Inquiry**

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON:** As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development has resolved to conduct an inquiry into support for start-ups in regional New South Wales, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

### **PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES**

#### **Membership**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I move:

That:



- (1) (a) James Henry Griffin be appointed to the Legislation Review Committee in place of Gregory John Aplin, discharged.
- (b) A message be sent informing the Legislative Council.
- (2) Felicity Lesley Wilson be appointed to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services in place of Gregory John Aplin, discharged.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Business of the House*

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: APPROPRIATION BIL AND COGNATE BILLS**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended:

- (1) On Tuesday 20 June 2017, to:
  - (a) provide for the following routine of business prior to 2.15 p.m.:
    - (i) at 12 noon, the Speaker takes the Chair;
    - (ii) introduction and second reading speech on the Appropriation Bill and cognate bills; and
    - (iii) the Speaker to leave the Chair until 2.15 p.m.
  - (b) permit the giving of General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) at the conclusion of Government business.
- (2) On Thursday 22 June 2017, to:
  - (a) interrupt the business before the House at 11.00 a.m. to permit the Leader of the Opposition to speak on the Appropriation Bill and cognate bills; and
  - (b) permit the consideration of General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) to continue until 2.00 p.m.

**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:

**Pig-dog Hunting Ban**

Petition requesting the banning of pig-dog hunting in New South Wales, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

**Slaughterhouse Monitoring**

Petition requesting mandatory closed-circuit television for all New South Wales slaughterhouses, 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**.

**Pet Shops**

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

**South Coast Rail Services**

Petition requesting an hourly service from Kiama to Bomaderry station connecting with trains to Sydney, received from **Mr Gareth Ward**.

**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**.

### **Social Housing**

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

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

### **Station Master's Cottage, Ourimbah**

Petition requesting that the Government stop the demolition of the Station Master's Cottage at Ourimbah and preserve it in the same way as other heritage buildings, received from **Mr David Mehan**.

### *Committees*

## **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 38/56**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:29):** I thank the House for the opportunity to speak about the Legislation Review Committee's digest No. 38/56. The committee reviewed six bills and one regulation in the sitting week commencing 22 May 2017. The committee identified issues in relation to those six bills: the Crimes Amendment (Intimate Images) Bill 2017, the Electronic Transactions Legislation Amendment (Government Transactions) Bill 2017, the Firearms and Weapons Legislation 2017, the Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, and the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Amendment (Criminal Charges and Convictions) Bill 2017. The committee also identified issues with the Holiday Parks (Long-term Casual Occupation) Regulation 2017.

I outline some of the observations of the committee. The Crimes Amendment (Intimate Images) Bill 2017 introduces a series of offences to address the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. The bill makes it an offence for a person to intentionally record or distribute, or make threats to record and distribute, an intimate image of another person without that person's consent. The committee noted that the bill seeks to regulate the property rights of the recipient of an intimate image by restricting the distribution and management of that property. However, because this property has been distributed in circumstances that a person would reasonably expect to be afforded privacy, the committee considers that introducing criminal consequences for certain actions relating to the management of intimate images is appropriate.

The Electronic Transactions Legislation Amendment (Government Transactions) Bill 2017 makes amendments to various Acts and regulations to provide for the electronic service and publication of documents and the use of electronic forms, and amends the Road Transport Act 2013 to provide for a trial of digital driver licences. The committee noted that the bill permits the digital driver licence trial to end after 12 months, or on any other day specified by the Minister. The committee generally prefers legislation to provide certainty for persons to which the provisions apply. However, as the participants of the digital licence trial are still required to carry their physical driver licence throughout the trial period, the provision is reasonable and the committee makes no further comment.

The Firearms and Weapons Legislation Bill 2017 amends various Acts to make further provision in respect of the categorisation of firearms, firearms and weapons amnesties, ammunition controls, licences and permits, and administrative arrangements. The bill gives effect to the recommendations of the joint Commonwealth and New South Wales review to update the technical elements of the National Firearms Agreement following the Martin Place siege in 2014. The committee notes that clause 2 of the bill provides that the Act is to commence on a day or days to be appointed by proclamation. Given that the bill provides for new offences, the committee prefers that certainty is provided as to when those new laws will come into effect.

The Home Building Amendment (Compensation Reform) Bill 2017 amends the Home Building Act 1989 and other legislation with respect to insurance and alternative cover in relation to residential building work, licensing of insurers and alternative indemnity cover providers. The bill establishes a new framework for home building compensation. One of the issues that the committee identified is that schedule 1 [42] enables the regulations to make provisions about when claims may be lodged that may be inconsistent with the principal Act. The committee prefers not to have inconsistent provisions or ill-defined powers. The committee draws this inconsistency to the attention of the Parliament.

The Mining and Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 amends the Mining Act 1992, the Mining Regulation 2016, and the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991 to enhance environmental protections, strengthen compliance and enforcement powers, and improve the rigour of the titles administration framework. One of the issues identified to the committee is that schedule 1 [2] prohibits the unauthorised carrying out of designated ancillary mining activities but provides for the regulations to make exemptions. The committee considers that exemptions to a legislative scheme are more appropriately included in the principal legislation so that the Parliament can properly scrutinise those exemptions.

The Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Amendment (Criminal Charges and Convictions) Bill 2017 makes amendments to provide for the disqualification from receiving a pension if the person is charged with, and convicted of, a serious offence after ceasing to be a member. The committee noted that clause 3 of the bill prevents the requirement in the principal Act that the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal approve the amendment. This removes the review function of the tribunal. Given the object of the bill, the committee makes no further comment.

The Holiday Parks (Long-term Casual Occupation) Regulation 2017 will repeal and remake, without substantial amendment, the Holiday Parks (Long-term Casual Occupation) Regulation 2009, which would otherwise be repealed on 1 September 2017 by section 10 (2) of the Subordinate Legislation Act 1989. The committee noted that the parent Act provides a standard agreement which outlines what happens at the end of every occupation agreement. This agreement does not anticipate the powers of the park owner outlined in the regulation. The committee refers to Parliament whether this is reasonable in the circumstances. That concludes my remarks on this digest. I thank the committee staff and members for their assistance. I commend the digest to the House.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:35):** On behalf of the Opposition, I make a brief contribution to debate on the Legislation Review Committee's digest No. 38/56. The digest records the committee's work for this parliamentary week. The committee examined six bills and one regulation. Our deliberations are recorded in the digest. The committee also continued its discussion on the proposition put to the committee by Mr David Shoebridge, "That a review of the committee's work over the past two parliamentary terms confirms it is not an adequate substitute for a bill of rights." We continued our discussion. The discussion turned to whether it was appropriate that the committee should initiate an inquiry into its work. I welcome the continuation of that discussion and the further continuation of the discussion as to the ways in which the committee can help this Parliament improve the quality of legislation. I thank the secretariat for the support it provides to the committee.

**Report noted.**

*Matter of Public Importance*

**THYROID DISORDERS AWARENESS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (15:37):** I raise this matter of public importance about thyroid disorders. It is essential that we have a conversation in this place and the wider community about the prevalence of thyroid disorders to address the chronic under-diagnosis of this disabling condition. The thyroid gland, which is located in the front of the neck, if underactive or overactive, can cause a wide range of symptoms. It is estimated that more than one million Australians are suffering from an undiagnosed thyroid condition. It means that those people are likely to be suffering from symptoms such as weight gain, weight loss, increased levels of sweating and depression without knowing the cause. A thyroid disorder can cause an iodine deficiency in pregnant women, thereby affecting the development of the foetal brain, which can cause a wide range of problems for the child later in life.

Women are particularly affected by thyroid cancer, which is three times more common in females than in males. Thyroid cancer is the second most common cancer for people aged between 15 and 24 and the fourth most common cancer for people aged between 25 and 59. This year, May was National Thyroid Awareness Month. The aim of the awareness month was to educate and inform the wider community about the signs and symptoms of thyroid disease. The Australian Thyroid Foundation is running the campaign "It is not you, it's your thyroid" to increase the diagnoses of thyroid conditions. It is crucial that we continue to support the Australian Thyroid Foundation in its pursuit to increase the diagnoses of thyroid disorders and to ensure that those who suffer from the condition obtain the appropriate treatment. The efforts to increase diagnoses of thyroid conditions must be led by doctors and patients.

Currently, many of the effects of thyroid disorders are being misdiagnosed and thus remain untreated. One of the most common and debilitating symptoms of thyroid conditions is fatigue. When an individual suffers from an underactive thyroid gland, they do not produce sufficient hormones and they are constantly tired. The theme "It's not you, it's your thyroid" is an apt one. All of us in this place lead busy lives and I am sure we all at

times feel like we are constantly tired. But we, like everyone else in our community, have to stop ignoring the symptoms of thyroid disorders and consult with our doctors to get to the root of the problem. Doctors must be more vigilant in identifying the signs and symptoms which could be caused by a thyroid disorder and likewise we as patients must monitor our health for signs of a condition. One of the leading endocrinologists in Australia, Professor Creswell Eastman, recently outlined the complex psychological and physical symptoms caused by thyroid disorders. He said:

There is very low understanding about the psychosocial impacts on patients of living with overactive or underactive thyroids or thyroid cancers, which often leads to an over-reliance on the results of function tests alone.

I recognise Dr Eastman as someone who has made a great contribution to this nation and the wider region with his advocacy concerning thyroid disorders. He was worked extensively throughout Asia in China, Tibet, Indonesia, Vietnam and Laos to reduce the rate of thyroid-related conditions in the continent. His efforts in rural China led to him being dubbed "the man who saved a million brains". He is particularly concerned about the effect iodine deficiency caused by thyroid disorders is having upon the development of Australian children, particularly Indigenous children. I share his concern. I know when I was growing up in a community where the nearest coast was a three-hour drive away we did not have a high level of iodine in the salt, which was a real concern. My mother, who grew up on the South Australian coast, was constantly giving us salt with iodine to help us.

We must increase the rates of diagnosis for thyroid diseases for the sake of the sufferers of those conditions. But we must also do it for the countless numbers of children whose foetal brain development is being placed at risk by iodine deficiency. Like Dr Eastman, we in this place have a responsibility to lead the public debate and use our positions of prominence to highlight causes that are not being adequately championed. I hope that all of us in this place will take action this month to increase the rates of thyroid condition diagnoses in our electorates.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (15:42):** I welcome this opportunity provided by the member for Maitland to talk about thyroid awareness and to raise that issue in the community. Malfunction of the thyroid is a very common problem, more common than often realised, and is responsible for a number of symptoms. The thyroid gland is the master controller of metabolism. It plays a key role in our health and wellbeing. It makes, stores and releases thyroid hormones into the blood, thus regulating metabolism. These hormones are essential for the proper functioning of all bodily tissues and organs. The many causes of thyroid disorders include iodine deficiency, autoimmune disease, viral and bacterial inflammation, familial disorders, and more. As we have heard, there are two main dysfunctions of the thyroid gland, hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism. Hyperthyroidism, or an overactive thyroid, is when the gland releases too much thyroid hormone in the blood, speeding up the body's metabolism. Hyperthyroidism tends to run in families, occurring most commonly in young women.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! Members of the Government should show some respect for the member for Riverstone and remain silent.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** Hypothyroidism, or an underactive thyroid, is a common condition. It is caused when the thyroid gland does not produce enough thyroid hormones. This under-production of hormones slows down the body's metabolism, often leaving patients feeling cold, tired and depressed. One of the most common causes of thyroid disorders is iodine deficiency. A low iodine diet can cause hypothyroidism, an enlarged thyroid gland, a goitre, and can affect fertility, pregnancy and neurodevelopmental disorders in newborns. There had also been a general re-emergence of iodine deficiency in the 20 years prior to fortification, possibly related to decreases in iodised salt use and lower iodine levels in milk and water.

Thyroid dysfunction is very common throughout the world, especially in women. Why women are more at risk than men is not fully understood, but they are not only more likely to have thyroid problems, but also to develop them earlier in life. Certain times in a woman's life make her more vulnerable to thyroid problems. They include: during puberty and first menstruation, during pregnancy, within the first six months after giving birth and during the menopause. Mandatory iodine fortification was introduced in 2009 with the objective of improving population iodine status for the general population, but particularly for young children and women of child-bearing age.

Currently NSW Health promotes the importance of dietary iodine for pregnant and breastfeeding women and women considering a pregnancy. There is a range of resources, including *Having a Baby*, a publication that is distributed free to all pregnant women accessing antenatal care in public health organisations. This publication is also available online. There are a number of websites that NSW Health supports that include advice about healthy eating and iodine intake. These are the Raising Children Network website, and the Pregnancy, Birth and Baby website. The National Antenatal Care Guidelines include a recommendation for health professionals to advise women regarding the need to take iodine supplements.

In addition, NSW Health funds specific maternity and child and family health services for Aboriginal families. The Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Health Service and the Building Strong Foundations for Aboriginal Children, Families and Communities program provide education and support to women and their families during pregnancy and early childhood. These services include information regarding maternal and infant nutrition. It is important that the community is aware of the high incidence of iodine deficiency and potential thyroid malfunction. Symptoms like being cold or sweating, tiredness, depression and a person's general malaise could well be linked to thyroid malfunction, and a doctor should be consulted.

The good news is that it is possible to treat and manage these conditions better than ever before. Getting the right dose of thyroid medication can make a huge difference to a person's quality of life, and the outcomes of newborns and young children. Clearly we should take up those opportunities by seeking appropriate advice when the need arises. If in doubt, people should consult a doctor and make sure they get the right answers.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (15:46):** I am pleased to contribute to this matter of public importance brought to the attention of the House by the member for Maitland. I endorse the comments of the member for Maitland and the member for Riverstone in relation to this matter. This week is International Thyroid Awareness Week and I am pleased to raise awareness about thyroid disorders and what can be done to minimise the effect they can have on the health of those affected by a thyroid disorder. According to the Thyroid Foundation, women are 10 times more likely to have a thyroid disorder than men.

The thyroid gland is in the front of the neck below the voice box and is shaped like a butterfly. Every cell in the body depends on thyroid hormones for regulation of the metabolism. Thyroid disorders are a common problem and can cause the thyroid to produce too much hormone—hyperthyroidism—or not enough hormone, hypothyroidism. I have a close friend, Ronnie, who has been affected by Graves disease, which is the most common cause of hyperthyroidism. It is triggered by the immune system producing antibodies that stimulate the thyroid gland to increase the size of the gland and produce excessive amounts of thyroid hormone.

About a year and half ago she become quite unwell. She had all the classic symptoms—weight loss, sweats, heart palpitations, hand tremor, tiredness, weak muscles, racing heart rate, anxiety, goitre, which is an enlarged thyroid, and protruding eyes. She had been sick for several months until a lung specialist realised she had thyroid issues. She was referred to an endocrinologist immediately and the specialist was shocked she was still alive because her body was under so much pressure she could have had a heart attack. Ronnie still battles with this issue today but she has come a long way and is getting better and better each day. She is so grateful for the support she has received from her endocrinologist and her family and friends to get her feeling like herself again.

Who would have thought the butterfly-shaped gland in the base of her neck could affect her life so much. Ronnie said that if only someone had noticed her protruding eyes or enlarged goitre she may have sought treatment for this disease earlier. Hopefully by sharing her story and others here today, we can raise awareness during this important week. If a person thinks they might have these symptoms, they should check with their general practitioner, or indeed, if people notice someone with these symptoms they should advise them to see their doctor. This is an important health issue, particularly for women, and I thank the member for Maitland for bringing it to the attention of the Parliament as a matter of public importance.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (15:49):** In reply: I thank the member for Riverstone and particularly the member for Lake Macquarie. I acknowledge the member for Wyong, who was going to speak on this motion but knowing the member for Lake Macquarie's wish to speak, he gave up his spot. It is great that so many of us in this place are committed to ensuring an increase in the rates of diagnosis of thyroid disease in the community. Improving the health of citizens of this State is essential. As I outlined earlier, there are over one million people in Australia who are suffering from undiagnosed thyroid conditions and it is not very well understood as a condition.

I was very lucky when I was having my children and suffering the signs of fatigue, like a lot of new mums, my doctor did the tests for thyroid disease. They told me to slow down; that did not work; but it was good that they were actually onto it. If we have better diagnosis, the one million people who are suffering from fatigue, depression, anxiety, excessive sweating, weight gain or weight loss, or symptoms such as tremors and palpitations, which were mentioned by the member for Lake Macquarie, will have more chance of having their issues addressed. These symptoms can have a devastating impact on one's health and quality of life. Suffering from depression, anxiety and fatigue alone can be a terrible combination. These symptoms affect people's ability to make a living, to enjoy recreation and to enjoy other aspects of their lives.

Impaired foetal development, of course, is a huge concern, because we want to give every child who comes into the world a better chance to learn and prosper at school and to live a meaningful and fulfilling life. No child's health should be placed at risk because of an undiagnosed thyroid disorder. I encourage all members to

work with the Australian Thyroid Foundation and share their resources and their message in whatever way they can to increase the rates of thyroid condition diagnosis in this State, so that members of their communities do not suffer needlessly. Let us follow the lead of Dr Eastman, who I mentioned before, and pledge to do everything we can to spread the word about thyroid disorders. I thank everyone in the Chamber and particularly those members who spoke on this matter, and hope that we can all work together to ensure that all cases of thyroid disease are diagnosed.

### *Rulings*

#### **COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (15:53):** Yesterday the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee discussed at length the giving of community recognition statements. I have been in the chair on many occasions when members have made their community recognition statements. Members should remember that community recognition statements are an opportunity to commend individuals in their electorates or to raise important issues relating to their community. If members of the public witnessed the way in which some community recognition statements were delivered they would be embarrassed, as I was last week. Members are allowed one minute to deliver their statement. I ask members to deliver their statements in a coherent manner so that members of the public and Hansard can understand them.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **TAREE BLOOD DONOR CENTRE VOLUNTEERS**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:54):** I inform the House that Taree Blood Donor Centre volunteers were recognised in National Volunteers Week, which ran from 8 May to 14 May. The centre has a number of volunteers who give up their time to welcome donors, manage files and provide that all-important blood donation—people like Kerrie Weber who has volunteered at the centre for 18 months and Heather Dennes who has had a long association with the centre, notching up over 100 donations. She has volunteered for over a decade. Australian Red Cross Blood Service volunteers play an integral role in the service that is provided. They are the warm welcome, the friendly faces and the unparalleled milkshake makers that donors come to know and love. It is fantastic that here in the Myall Lakes, and across New South Wales, we have people who are willing to go the extra yard to help our communities.

#### **LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL SORRY DAY**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (15:55):** Today I recognise the Liverpool City Council Sorry Day held on 26 May this year at Liverpool Regional Museum. An acknowledgement of country was given by elder Auntie Norma Shelley. Apart from speeches by Mayor Wendy Waller and me, there were present Councillors Kaliyanda and Shelton together with representatives of the Gandangara and Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Councils. There were also present members of the stolen generation, local elders and community members. The master of ceremonies was Iorma Burrows. This was of course the twentieth anniversary of the Bringing Them Home report. John Howard infamously refused to apologise because he said he did not believe in the black armband view of history. As historian Henry Reynolds has perceptively noted, that attitude is held by people who themselves wear a white blindfold. Acknowledging our history, such as recognising the truth of the Bringing Them Home Report, is crucial to who we are. Recognising truth is essential to moving forward. Moving forward means closing the gap, reducing Indigenous incarceration rates, and constitutional recognition as a bare minimum. I congratulate the organisers of the event.

#### **CJ MCALISTER WINTER LONGBOARDING FESTIVAL**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (15:55):** I bring to the attention of the house the upcoming thirtieth C. J. "Snowy" McAlister Winter Longboarding Festival which will be held at Manly from June 10 to 12. Charles Justin "Snowy" McAlister is the father of Australian surfing who nurtured the sport for over 70 years. In 1962 Snowy became a founding member of the Australian Surfriders Association, an organisation that today is the recognised governing body of surfing in this country. There are over 10 categories this year for men and women of all ages and the festival's organisers are expecting over 140 surfers to take part. I acknowledge Lynden Riley, the president, and my friend Cam Gray, the vice-president, who have continued Snowy's legacy in celebrating the value of surfing and longboarding to new generations of Australians. I wish them all every success for the upcoming festival.

#### **DANCE FOR CANCER**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (15:56):** This Saturday night I will be in the audience as 14 Illawarra professionals swap their business attire for some dancing attire for the annual Dance for Cancer dancing with the stars night, raising money for the Cancer Council at WIN Entertainment Centre. I am not

involved but Graham Lancaster, Jared Constable, Maje Saba, Nathan Brown, Deb de Santis, Adele Fiene, Isabel Foye, Jim O'Shea, Grant Barlow, Andrew Pearson, Natasha Pearson, Holly Sassall, Lili Cosic and Rima Elhage will be involved. Of course, the great disappointment this year will be that the wonderful Tanya Brown, from the University of Wollongong, will not be defending her title as the people's choice award winner, after her tap-tastic performance last year, although her son, Nathan, will be trying to seize the mantle and I am looking forward to a great night raising some money to combat cancer.

#### **TRIBUTE TO HAZEL O'HALLORAN**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (15:58):** Today I pay tribute to an amazing determined woman, Hazel O'Halloran, a local from Mt Colah, who ran from Hornsby to Manly in an effort to raise money for the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai women's shelter and the Manly women's shelter on 23 April. Hearing about the shocking realities of domestic violence on the news can be extremely sad and disheartening for many in the community, and after hearing about a number of female deaths resulting from domestic violence, and knowing a number of people close to her that have been affected by this issue, Hazel felt compelled to do something to raise money for women's shelters in the North Shore area to help support women in vulnerable positions. Hazel has raised upwards of \$3,000, which is absolutely outstanding and shows how the community can really come together to support such a good cause when someone shows the initiative to create a fundraising event. I commend Hazel for her remarkable achievement and for raising so much money. I am sure this money will make a real difference for the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai shelter and for the women who seek shelter there. I thank her for her amazing efforts and I commend her work in supporting such an important cause.

#### **MUNMORAH POWER STATION**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (15:59):** Recently in the Swansea electorate we witnessed the end of an era with the demolition of the Munmorah Power Station stacks. Built in 1967, the two 155-metre high chimney stacks featured prominently in the Lake Munmorah skyline for 50 years. For many, they represented what was once the lifeblood of the Lake Munmorah community. During its prime in the 1970s, the power station supplied up to 40 per cent of the energy supply of New South Wales. In the course of its 45 years of operation, this flagship power station provided a crucial source of employment for hundreds of families in the local community. It is remembered with pride and fondness by its former employees and the communities who relied on it. At moments like these we should take the opportunity to look to the future for cleaner sources of energy and refocus our efforts on tackling climate change.

#### **ST FLORIAN'S DAY RURAL FIRE SERVICE AWARDS**

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (16:00):** Each year St Florian's Day, also known as International Firefighters' Day, is celebrated on 4 May. St Florian's Day gives us reason to pause and recognise the dedication and sacrifice of our uniformed personnel who serve as firefighters in New South Wales. On this day the Rural Fire Service holds its annual bravery and service awards. This year Deputy Captain Rachel Hessenberger of the Sussex Inlet Rural Fire Brigade received a certificate of commendation for her actions during bushfires in Tasmania in February 2016. Deputy Captain Hessenberger, along with fellow Sussex Inlet crew member David Harris and their Tasmanian Country Fire Service crew, came across an upturned fire tanker with five fire service volunteers inside, two with serious injuries. Using her experience as a former nurse, Deputy Captain Hessenberger began to triage the crash victims and monitor their condition until paramedics arrived more than 45 minutes later. I congratulate and thank Deputy Captain Hessenberger, the Sussex Inlet Rural Fire Brigade, and all our firefighters across New South Wales.

#### **RURAL FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTEERS**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (16:01):** I recently had the pleasure of attending the New South Wales Rural Fire Service volunteer appreciation service at Doyalson. Among those honoured was Neville Koch, currently the captain of Mandalong Rural Fire Service Brigade, who has served on local brigades for 39 years. I have come to know Nev and his wife, Sandy, well. Our community would be much poorer without their unwavering voluntary service and interest in community. Nev and Sandy have served for days on end during bushfire emergencies. They have manned the trucks and hoses to save countless homes, property and lives. During the 2015 storms, Nev and Sandy were among those volunteers who left their own homes in the cold and dark while they tended to the problems of others. They spent a week helping others despite considerable damage to their own small acreage. And in the recent flooding emergency on the North Coast, Neville Koch was amongst the first to volunteer to help. His commitment to community is extraordinary, and even more so as Nev lives with but refuses to be cowed by Parkinson's disease. The community is much better off for the likes of Nev and Sandy and I thank them both for their service.

### MITTAGONG LIONS RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (16:02):** I commend the Mittagong Lions Rugby League Football Club for implementing a new program this year to bring international players group 6 here. The senior club are looking for eligible businesses, families and community groups to assist with accommodation and regional work for a small number of players. As they strive to increase standards, the club has invited a number of international players to relocate to Australia to experience life in the Southern Highlands community. Upon completion of 88 days of rural work, the Department of Immigration will allow the players to stay and work in Australia for a further 12 months, with the potential to stay long term. The club has a new coach this year, Dan Beardshaw, and I wish him and the club a successful year and I hope that this new initiative will come to fruition.

### CYNTHIA WALKER MEMOIR

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:02):** Cynthia "Cindy" Walker spent 22 years living in the Rainbow Lodge, first in the Hawkesbury then in the Blue Mountains' beautiful Woodford. This was a time when people with disabilities were institutionalised, shut away from the world with few opportunities. But with the Richmond report reforms, Rainbow Lodge was closed and Cindy left to live independently. At the age of 42, this was scary for her but she is a resilient woman who approaches life with passion, dignity and a sense of humour. Recently I launched Cindy's memoir entitled *Every Picture Tells a Story*. It was a moving occasion. The event was attended by many who love and respect this remarkable woman. I encourage all members in this place to read this fabulous book—it will have them laughing and crying. I acknowledge the wealth of support provided to Cindy in the production of this important book, in particular, Sister Marie O'Shea, Laurie Woods and Alan Walsh, who assisted Cindy to achieve this important milestone. Congratulations to Cindy and her editor, the wonderful Sue Withers.

### LIVERPOOL THEATRE ON ICE

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:03):** I congratulate Liverpool's Theatre on Ice team, part of the Liverpool Catholic Club's ice skating club. Last month the team competed for the first time against teams from all over the country in the Jack Lee Trophy competition on the Central Coast, and took out the title. This dedicated team consists of 20 skaters between the ages of seven and 25. They train tirelessly at the Liverpool Catholic Club ice arena in Prestons, and hope to compete internationally in the next two years. I commend the team for its endless determination and team work. Now a group of vastly different ages competing and working together can be challenging. This team is not only about competition, it is almost like a family. I again congratulate the Liverpool Theatre on Ice team on their achievements nationally. I wish them luck in their future competitions and I hope to see them succeed on an international level.

### ITALIAN REPUBLIC DAY

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:04):** On Sunday 28 May I attended the annual Italian Republic Day celebrations, otherwise known as Festa della Repubblica, held at Club Marconi, Bossley Park. As usual the festival was attended by thousands of members of the local community from south-west Sydney. Many were Italian Australians but there were many from other cultures. All had come to enjoy the festive spirit, friendly atmosphere and the traditional—and not-so traditional—Italian food on offer, complete with stage performances and rides for the kids. Italian Australians represent the fourth largest ethnic group in this country, with many families having moved here from the old country between 1947 and 1971. Italian Australians have played an important role economically and they have enriched us culturally. My thanks go to Vince Foti, Joseph Carozzi, Nicholas Care and the organising committee for their invitation to attend this wonderful celebration of Italian culture and contribution. A happy and peaceful Republic Day, which is tomorrow, to all my Italian friends and constituents.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. According to Standing Order 52, members will be given the opportunity to be heard in silence.

### TAREN POINT PUBLIC SCHOOL FLASHING LIGHTS

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (16:05):** Today I acknowledge the wonderful students at Taren Point Public School for going to school an hour early to watch school zone flashing lights be installed outside their school. On 16 May 2017 the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, the Hon. Melinda Pavey, and I visited Taren Point Public School where we announced that an additional 104 schools will receive flashing lights, including lights on Holt Road and Toorak Avenue at Taren Point Public School. Of the approximately 90 students enrolled at that school, 13 got out of bed extra early, put on their best school uniforms and braved the cold morning to see the installation of these lights near their school. I commend the following children who dragged their parents out of bed to watch the installation: Vasily Iagunkov, Miro Iagunkov, Lara McCrone, Anna McCrone, Jack Wyld, Jessica Vanderwoude, Isabel Vanderwoude, Dane Baldan, Charlotte Arthur, Jaisurya Trembath and Lachey



Balden. I also thank teacher Erin Stephens who organised the children and supervised the morning. I once again thank the Taren Point Public School students. I am proud that these flashing lights will keep them even safer.

#### **OPTIONS THEATRE COMPANY**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:06):** On Friday 26 May I attended the first of two performances by the Options Theatre Company of their adaptation of the musical *Grease*. I acknowledge the fantastic work of the Options Theatre Company and its highly successful program that casts people with a range of disabilities in performances. The Options Theatre Company takes pride in reflecting diversity in mainstream arts, media and the community. It knows that it is crucial for an equitable, vibrant and authentic society. The well-acclaimed performances took place at the Art House in Wyong. Both were well attended by many locals who gave the performance rave reviews. I am extremely proud that this musical was performed in my electorate and I look forward to future performances by the Options Theatre Company. I also acknowledge two of my former students, Nathan and Kala. Nathan starred in the show as Danny and Kala played one of the T-Birds. It was great to catch up with those two wonderful young people whom I taught in the early 1990s.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Kiama and the member for Terrigal will cease talking or they will be asked to leave the Chamber.

#### **TRIBUTE TO ERROL HOSKINSON**

##### **TRIBUTE TO PETER SINCLAIR**

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (16:08):** It is with much sadness that I inform the House that in the past fortnight the wonderful community of Temora has lost two true country gentlemen, Mr Errol Hoskinson and Mr Peter Sinclair. Errol and Peter made a lasting contribution to their community, each in their own special way. Together with their lovely wives, Maxie and Ailsa, they were also proud lifelong members of the National Party. Most recently, Errol was an enthusiastic and active supporter of the fight for a group home facility at Temora, to help provide housing and respite care for local families caring for a disabled relation. In the same week that Errol was laid to rest, Temora Shire Council, through Pinnacle Community Services, sublet premises to three local clients with disabilities.

Errol would certainly be cheering. Peter was an extraordinary quiet achiever involved in many local organisations, including a number of years as president of the Temora Show Society. On behalf of the community of Temora, I place on record my gratitude to Errol and Peter for their tremendous sense of civic responsibility and pride, and for their loyalty and service to the National Party. They will be remembered for their warm hospitality, sound advice and good-humoured selflessness. May they rest in peace.

#### **MARRICKVILLE WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL FLASHING LIGHTS**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:09):** For almost 10 years, Ms Ruth Bradfield Ling, principal of Marrickville West Public School, has been fighting alongside parents, students and neighbouring residents for a second set of flashing lights outside the school on Beauchamp Street, Marrickville. The Beauchamp Street crossing is an extremely dangerous crossing and has been putting kids at risk for several years. I am thrilled that the Minister for Roads has announced that the flashing lights will be installed before June, and I pass on the thanks of a very grateful school community. Friday 19 May was National Walk Safely to School Day—a reminder of the importance of promoting pedestrian safety for kids and parents. While we celebrate the victory at Marrickville West, I also acknowledge the safety concerns raised by parents at Marrickville Public School, Haberfield Public School and other schools across the inner west. Safer pathways to and from school are vital if we are to encourage walking, which reduces congestion and promotes healthier lifestyles for our kids. I warmly congratulate Ruth and the entire school community at Marrickville West Public School.

#### **MURRAY FARM PUBLIC SCHOOL CRACKER NIGHT**

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (16:10):** The beginning of June means one very special public holiday for the people of New South Wales, a holiday that recognises the birthday of our gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. At this time we see temperatures plummeting, and in my electorate of Baulkham Hills we are again holding the very special Murray Farm Public School cracker night. The cracker night festival will feature market stalls, international foods, rides, white elephant stalls, games and a fireworks display that is sure to light up the sky to commemorate the birthday of our Queen. Students are certain to look forward to the teacher dunk tank that was debuted last year and was an absolute success. Teachers are excited to see the Murray Farm community come together again to celebrate Her Majesty's ninety-first birthday. I thank cracker night convener Deborah Sherwood for her fantastic work in revitalising this magical tradition. I also thank the emergency services who volunteer to make the night run safely and smoothly.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! I remind members to not disrespect the monarch in the House.

### **GREEK FESTIVAL OF SYDNEY**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (16:11):** The Greek Festival of Sydney recently celebrated its thirty-fifth anniversary. I commend the work of the Greek Festival of Sydney committee, particularly the chair, Nia Karteris, who has done a fantastic job. I thank her and the many volunteers who spend many months of the year organising this very important festival that not only invests in our local community but also creates a number of jobs. I also thank the many individuals in the Greek community who are involved with the Greek Festival. I thank Harry Danalis, the president of the Greek Orthodox community, for his stewardship of the festival. The Greek Festival of Sydney is held in Darling Harbour and every year it gets better and bigger. This year it has a packed program.

### **NORTH SYDNEY RED SHIELD APPEAL**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:12):** Last Sunday I attended the Salvation Army's annual Red Shield Appeal in North Sydney. The appeal involved doorknocking North Shore locals and requesting donations to support the Salvation Army's many outstanding community-minded programs, which include helping to provide shelter for people who are homeless. On the day I was joined by students from two local schools in my electorate, North Sydney Girls High School and North Sydney Boys High School. In groups of four, students from those schools went out to collect money for the appeal. I acknowledge their work in putting this day together to raise money for the Red Shield Appeal. The successful operation of the appeal also relied on volunteers from the Rotary Club of North Sydney Sunrise and the Rotary Club of North Sydney, in particular Tony Durbin. I also acknowledge and thank the Australian Catholic University's North Sydney campus and also my local Federal member for North Sydney, Trent Zimmerman, who also helped out on the day.

### **CENTRAL COAST RED SHIELD APPEAL**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:13):** I congratulate all our community members who joined the army of volunteers across Australia to collect donations for the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal last weekend. This act of logistical genius, harnessing the energy of more than 60,000 volunteers in an effort to raise \$8 million nationally, is led on the Central Coast by our fundraising coordinator, Marie Fletcher. Congratulations to all our local team coordinators, including Jackson Tumpey from the Umina-Woy Woy district, and Ava Bourke from Avoca Beach. I had the pleasure of joining local volunteer Neil Thompson and his colleagues, who were supported by our StarFM team, to stop motorists at the edge of Brisbane Water Drive. They collected a total of \$20,731. Roadside collections across our community netted a very generous total of more than \$48,000 from seven sites. I commend the great work of the Salvation Army and thank its volunteers and paid employees for continuing to give a helping hand to the most vulnerable and marginalised people in Australia. I would also like to wish Austin Anderson, our Corps Officer at Umina, and his wife all the very best for the birth of their first child, who is possibly arriving today.

### **OAK FLATS ALBION PARK GYMNASTICS AND ACROBATICS CLUB**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:14):** The top South Coast gymnastics club enjoyed amazing success at the recent inaugural Las Vegas international competition, with 18 acrobats in six groups among the leading teams. I congratulate the following representatives of the Oak Flats Albion Park Gymnastics and Acrobatics Club: Emily Caunt, Kalila Stanley, Koffi Brookfield, Emily Apostolovski, Caitlin O'Neil, Mikayla Gumm, Jenna Irish, Sophie Edwards, Molly Jewiss, Lauren Farquhar, Taylah Doosey, Maja Moore, Shaeli Hall, Ellyse Willets, Kelsie O'Neil, Alexis Edwards, Annabelle Gibson, Kelsey Taylor, Kayla McCoskery, Charlotte Gumm and Jemima Clarke. Their Level 9 trio in 2016 also won the Australian National Group of the Year and will receive their prestigious honour at an awards ceremony during the 2017 National Championships. Congratulations to the Oak Flats Albion Park Gymnastics and Acrobatics Club on its outstanding achievements to date.

### **ST MARK'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, GRANVILLE, 135TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:15):** Last Sunday I joined the congregation of St Mark's Anglican Church in Granville to celebrate the feast of St Mark and the 135th anniversary of the founding of the church in 1882. The Archbishop of Sydney, Glenn Davies, joined Reverend Canon David Wong in conducting the bilingual service in English and Mandarin. The incredibly beautiful neo-gothic church was one of the last designed by former colonial architect Edmund Blackett, who died in 1883 and his son Cyril took over the project, which was completed in seven stages. Its sandstone windows were carved by William Orlando Jones, an atheist who is thought to be the only person in the history of New South Wales to be jailed for blasphemy a few years prior to carving the church windows. The western windows contain a record of all those from Granville who served in World War I and are an official war memorial. When services began at St Mark's there was only one held each

weekend in English. Today this has grown to four: two in English and one each in Cantonese and in Mandarin. I congratulate St Mark's on its 135th anniversary and wish the church well for many more years to come.

#### **CHELTENHAM RECREATION CLUB**

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (16:16):** Last Friday, I visited the Cheltenham Recreation Club to examine its newly resurfaced tennis court, made possible through the Local Sport Grant Program. Thanks to local club members John and Reg, who had a hit of tennis with me and kept me on my toes during our rallies, I can personally attest to the quality of the finished project. Figures on a paper do not always tell the full story. Only those members who go into their communities to see the locals will realise the true utility of projects such as those afforded by the Local Sport Grant Program. Cheltenham Recreation Club represents the heart of the community. It is a place where the community can come together, make friends over coffee and, to top it all off, have a great game of tennis, bowls or croquet. I particularly thank the Minister for Sport for his continued endorsement of initiatives such as the Local Sport Grant Program. I also thank the club's president, David Allan, for the enormous work he puts in to bring the club to the exceptional standard that it has become renowned for. What a fantastic result from the New South Wales Government.

#### **RIBUTE TO JOHN BARTHOLOMEW**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:17):** I draw the attention of this Parliament to a longstanding community campaigner against WestConnex, Mr John Bartholomew. John has volunteered his considerable skills as an artist and sign-writer, encapsulating key themes in his wonderfully wrought, hand-painted posters and placards. Some of his more memorable slogans include "WestConnex—there's no plan, it's just a scam"; "Motorists against Tollway Extortion say WestConnex will fail so build more public rail"; and "WestConnex—up to twice as fast as walking". Some members may have seen John's work with the White Elephants, protesting WestConnex outside this Parliament. While I know that some members in this Chamber may not appreciate the huge, growing community opposition to WestConnex, I am sure all members will appreciate that individuals like John act with a genuine concern for their community about the decisions that will impact on their lives. On behalf of our community, I thank John for his wonderful signs and for his tireless work in fighting for better transport solutions than WestConnex.

#### **FIVE LANDS WALK**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:18):** This year the Five Lands Walk will be held on Saturday 24 June. This community-run event is a 10-kilometre walk starting at Macmasters Beach, moving on to Copacabana, Avoca Beach, North Avoca Beach and ending at Terrigal Beach via some of the Central Coast's most stunning scenery. The event has grown to become a must on the calendar of many locals and visitors to the area. In its inaugural year 12 years ago, Five Lands Walk attracted 500 people. This year the organisers are preparing for as many as 20,000 participants and it is expected to contribute more than \$2 million to the local economy. Central Coast Local Health District is supporting this year's event, hoping that it will provide the catalyst for a healthy lifestyle change. The event is timed to correspond with the peak of the northerly whale migration. The walk is designed to connect participants with the local Aboriginal community, five beachside communities and ethnic communities. I commend Con Ryan and his outstanding team of local community volunteers, who made the Five Lands Walk a premier event for the Central Coast.

#### **RETIREMENT OF ROSS CLEARY**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (16:19):** After 39 years in the public education system and a career that has spanned some 12 schools, Mr Ross Cleary, Principal of Greenacre Public School, officially retires tomorrow. I have known Mr Cleary from the days when we worked together as two local principals and have admired his excellent work in guiding the Greenacre Public School community. Yesterday I attended a farewell assembly in his honour. What was very clear was the respect and high esteem in which Mr Cleary is held. I have been to the school many times before, sometimes as a principal and sometimes as the local member.

However, this time I saw the school's heart through the genuine enthusiasm the school community had for Mr Cleary. That cannot be faked. Respect comes from earning trust, from being sincere, from giving one's very best and from putting first the best interests of everyone—students, staff and parents. Mr Cleary's attitude to the role of schools as local hubs was best summed up when he said, "I always wanted to open the school gates to the community." Our public schools are incredible and the role of a principal cannot be underestimated. It is a difficult task. I wish Ross and his family all the very best for life after the final school bell rings, and hope that his golf handicap improves.

### NEW SOUTH WALES WOMEN'S RUGBY LEAGUE SQUAD

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:20):** I inform the House that Kylie Hilder was named in the New South Wales women's rugby league squad that played Queensland on Sunday 23 July at WIN Stadium in Wollongong. It was before the St George Illawarra—Manly Warringah National Rugby League fixture and was expected to be televised on Fox Sports rugby league channel. Hilder, 41, from Forster, was co-captain of the New South Wales country side for the inaugural clash against city at North Sydney Oval. She was not sure what position she would be playing for New South Wales. She was halfback for the country team. Holli Wheeler from Old Bar and Hilder both played with country against city in their recent representative fixture. City won the game 20-8 after leading 8-0 at the break. Country performed strongly against their more experienced opposition, particularly in the first half. It was an impressive game and country have promised to pour more resources into the country team, which is wonderful news for rugby league girls in the bush.

### SKETCHLEY PIONEER COLLEGE AND MUSEUM

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:21):** In Raymond Terrace we are fortunate to be able to catch a glimpse of our convict past. Sketchley Pioneer Cottage and Museum is a rare convict-built timber slab farmhouse built around 1839. It is now furnished and presented in the style of an early settlers home. Recently the cottage was opened to all for its "Voices of the Past" event. On display was old farming equipment, clothing and household items and a working blacksmiths shop. I was moved by reading war letters, which brought home the stories of local people whose lives were turned upside down or lost. The Raymond Terrace District and Historical Society has cared diligently for Sketchley Pioneer Cottage and Museum since the 1990s, proudly linking yesterday with tomorrow. It is continually reviewing the large number of diverse items and transforming what is on display. I thank all members of the society, including President Ken Barlow, Vice President Boris Sokoloff, Secretary Laraine Brown and Museum Curator Moira Saunderson for all their hard work preserving and sharing this important historical treasure. I am sincerely honoured to be their patron.

### GARIGAL NATIONAL PARK LAND TRANSFER

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:22):** I warmly welcome the New South Wales Government's decision to transfer 10 hectares of environmentally valuable bushland to the Garigal National Park. The Government-owned ecologically significant land adjacent to the former Belrose Waste Management Centre was surplus to requirements and has been transferred to the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The transfer is a great win for the environment and the community. I have been lobbying hard for years to have this surplus land transferred and I know that many community members will be delighted at the announcement. It will preserve native plant species and the ecosystems that support fauna.

The extension of the national park will help ensure conservation and protection of this biodiverse bushland, which is significantly located at the headwaters of Bare Creek and Middle Harbour catchments. I commend Property NSW on its assistance with this project and I welcome the initiative on behalf of the local community. The transfer is a fantastic example of government agencies working together to ensure that underutilised land can be returned to the community. It ensures that the site will be preserved for future generations. It is also wonderful for some local schools, that will now have great access to that native bushland area. It is a great win for the environment and the community.

### MAITLAND AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:24):** This year the Maitland and District Historical Society will celebrate its fortieth anniversary. Since its founding in 1977, the society has aimed to celebrate the "history, heritage and culture of Maitland's rich past." And what a noble aim that is. Maitland has a proud history. We were once the principal centre of the Hunter Valley as our river flats provided an abundant source of water and land for agriculture. However, with the stresses and pace of modern-day life, this important history could fall by the wayside and be lost. It is too easy to be focused on the present and the future without giving much thought to the past. As Winston Churchill once said, "Those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it." Our local historians at the society record and detail the histories of our town. Without them, these details would be lost. I have just joined the society and I congratulate the society on its continuing work and its fortieth anniversary.

### QUEENSCLIFF SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:24):** I had the great pleasure of attending Queenscliff Surf Life Saving Club's Presentation Dinner on the weekend. Queensie is a powerhouse club of the northern beaches and the surf lifesaving movement throughout Australia. I grew up watching the stars of Queensie, including my good friend Matt Poole, who continues to dominate in the Nutri-Grain Ironman Series. I congratulate Sue McGinley, Robyn Henderson and Carla Thornton on their organisation of an outstanding evening. I thank Club President Kevin Harris and all the award winners and attendees for inviting Elissa and me. I look forward to working with

Kevin Harris and Queenscliff Surf Life Saving Club in preparing for what will no doubt be a busy summer in the 2017-18 season.

#### **STRATHFIELD ROTARY CLUB**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (16:25):** I take this opportunity to thank the Rotary Club of Strathfield for the great honour of being nominated as an honorary member of the club. Since I was elected as the member for Strathfield, I have attended many meetings and events hosted by the club and I have been impressed by the commitment of members to our community. That involvement and support for our area includes outreach to young people and to not-for-profit organisations, volunteers and businesses. Rotarians in my community, in both the Rotary Club of Strathfield and the Rotary Club of Burwood, give generously to the community and so I feel privileged to be part of an organisation that is united in fellowship to provide humanitarian service, to encourage high ethical standards and to create goodwill throughout the world. I thank Strathfield Rotarians for their faith in me to uphold the ideals of Rotary and work with them to provide ongoing support to our community.

#### **PUBLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION AWARDS**

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (16:26):** On Wednesday May 17 at Sydney Town Hall, the Public Education Foundation held its "Celebrating Excellence in Public Schools" night, which the member for Kiama attended. This event recognises the hard work and dedication of students and their teachers, as well as principals, whose commitment to public education is displayed each and every day in our local schools. At these awards I was pleased to see three students from my electorate in the South Coast acknowledged. Amika Cater from Nowra Public School received a Public Education Foundation Primary Scholarship, which provides support and encouragement for public school students entering year 2 in 2017 throughout their time at primary school. Holly Perkuhn and Ebony Tibbitts from Ulladulla High School both received the Harding Miller Education Foundation Scholarship, which provides practical support to lift educational outcomes and career aspirations of high-potential girls. I say well done to all recipients and to their teachers. It was a great night and a fantastic achievement.

#### **ROTARY INTERNATIONAL 2017 MODEL UNITED NATIONS ASSEMBLY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:27):** I was pleased to host Rotary International's 2017 Model United Nations Assembly [MUNA] in District 9675 on Saturday 20 May in the Legislative Assembly Chamber of the New South Wales Parliament. The purpose of MUNA is to encourage young people to learn about other nations and to understand and appreciate the workings of the United Nations while they develop debating skills and gain self-confidence in public speaking. The resolutions debated were based on some actual debates by the United Nations as well as some proposed by the teams. The debates reproduced genuine United Nations debates, often with a fine flow of rhetoric, points of order and motions of dissent. MUNA is a United Nations initiative and a variety of MUNAs are held throughout the world. I congratulate past district governor of District 9675 Graham Wilson, and the organisers and students for a fantastic MUNA 2017.

#### **BEROWRA RSL SUB-BRANCH YOUTH CLUB BAND MEMBER ANTONE SMITH**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (16:28):** I take a moment to recognise the achievements of 16-year-old Antone Smith from Berowra Heights, who was awarded the Anne Cosler Perpetual Trophy for his dedication to the Berowra RSL Sub-Branch Youth Club Band. Antone has been a member of the band for nine years and has shown tremendous growth as a musician and also as a leader within the brass section. The band was established in 1998, so Antone has been an important and committed member for close to half of its existence.

The band director, Grant Hughson, has praised Antone's positive attitude and his willingness to take up a leadership role for younger musicians just starting up in the RSL band. By demonstrating his commitment to band rehearsals, performances and showcases and by consistently turning up with a smile on his face and a desire to improve, Antone has formidably led by example. It is no wonder that he was the 2016 recipient of the Anne Cosier Perpetual Trophy and was acknowledged as the member who has made the biggest contribution to the band as a whole. I wish Antone all the best in his future endeavours and I hope he carries his love for music and performance with him for the rest of his life.

#### **ONE LOVE IN CHRIST GROUP**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:29):** Last Saturday I joined the volunteers from One Love in Christ to feed the homeless in Prince Alfred Park, Parramatta. One Love in Christ have been supporting homeless people in Parramatta every Friday and Saturday night for the past few years. Restaurants Spice of Life, La Mono and Bakers Delight support the service. The volunteers prepare incredible meals for the homeless people who gather in Prince Alfred Park, often feeding up to 70 or 80 people at a time. The food is delicious. Some of the volunteers

cook meals that take hours to prepare. In this way they give their love and support to the homeless people in Parramatta. It is a delight to see. They are special and they deserve our congratulations.

*Petitions*

**ORANGE HEALTH SERVICE**

**Discussion**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (16:31):** I thank the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research for being in the Chamber. On this historic day I speak in this place on behalf of 10,221 people in the Central West. I speak of the petition before the House today that was initiated by the Orange Push for Palliative group in my electorate. The group was formed in 2014. National Palliative Care Week was held between 21 and 28 May. I am honoured to have the opportunity to raise this issue now. This petition calls for urgent, improved resourcing to reopen the medical ward previously used for palliative care at the Orange Health Service in my electorate.

In 2011 the Orange Base Hospital was closed and the community lost its decades-old dedicated palliative care ward. Community outrage grew, resulting in the formation of Orange Push for Palliative and this petition. Following my election as the member for Orange last year, this issue was raised with me by Orange Push for Palliative and the wider community of Orange. This is an important issue that affects us all. We will all die. Ultimately it is our own mortality and that of those whom we love and care about that motivates us to put in place the best possible care with the option of a dedicated place in our own communities and specialist medical care. Palliative care not only assists people in their final hours of life, but also has a key role in managing chronic illnesses. It affects people of all ages, not just the elderly.

The palliative care focus in these cases is symptom control and improving quality of life, rather than curing the diseases. Four out of five deaths in Australia are from chronic illnesses and this rate is higher in rural communities. I am honoured to have been involved with Orange Push for Palliative in its campaign to establish a designated palliative care ward at Orange Health Service. I am pleased to have met with the Minister for Health to discuss the concerns of more than 10,000 people in my community. But the time for discussion has passed and it is now time for action. Realising this, and in the absence of a Government response, I coordinated a group of stakeholders to form a palliative working group. Its purpose is to provide alternative solutions for a dedicated palliative care facility and hospice that is staffed by an adequate number of specialised palliative-trained practitioners and nurses.

The formation of the palliative working group shortly preceded an announcement by the Minister for Health regarding statewide palliative care roundtable discussions. After considerable effort to participate, I attended the discussion held at Orange. I was encouraged to hear this issue discussed. However, it remains a discussion, and many souls suffer whilst action is delayed. Despite my efforts to date, which include submitting a written question to the health Minister, I do not know whether the palliative care ward at Orange will be restored. I am hopeful that will change following today's debate.

There are many people to thank for contributing to the effort required to debate this issue in the House today. First, I thank the 10,221 people who signed this petition. They represent approximately 25 per cent of the population of Orange. It is significant that one-quarter of the population would personally sign a petition regarding a single and vital issue. The Government would be wise to note this and respond by delivering upon their request. I am their voice, and I make an impassioned plea to the Government to respond by delivering for them a discrete, standalone, dedicated palliative care facility.

I seek sufficient funding from this budget to complete this project. It is a relatively modest amount of taxpayers' money but if directed to the specific aim of this petition it will solve the problem. I wish to acknowledge the tireless efforts of the dedicated individuals who have passionately pursued the goal of this petition including the people of Orange Push for Palliative: president Tracy Wilkinson, vice president Jenny Hazelton, treasurer John McDonogh, secretary Joe Maric, publicity officer Janice Harris, Peter Brown and Helen Brown. I acknowledge Dr Yvonne McMaster, a retired specialist palliative care physician. Dr McMaster remains a driving force behind the Push for Palliative campaign.

I acknowledge Dr Louis Christie, who is at present the sole specialist palliative care practitioner physically accessible to the greater Central West area of New South Wales. Dr Christie is dedicated to his profession and to the many patients relying upon his care. Recently, Dr Christie took a rare break from his work. He was not replaced during his absence and was therefore called upon on numerous occasions for advice during his holiday. I conclude with a question to the Minister for Health, as I encourage him to deliver upon the request of my electorate: Will he immediately restore the dedicated palliative care ward at Orange Hospital and adequately staff it with specialist palliative-trained professionals?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (16:35):** As Minister for Health, I have made it clear that one of the top priorities for the Government is to do what is necessary to provide better end-of-life care and more tailored, community-based palliative care services for patients across the State. As the member for Orange noted, last week was National Palliative Care Week. The theme was, "You matter, your care matters". And it does. In February I spoke about the need to acknowledge that there have been changes in the community around healthcare expectations for palliative care. I reflected on the Grattan Institute report entitled, "Dying well", which was issued in September 2014. It is interesting. That comprehensive report is not political or driven by any motivation other than to do what is right for people who are passing away or in need of particular care.

The report observes that 70 per cent of us, given the choice, would prefer to die at home. The reality is that in 2017 just about 14 per cent of us currently spend our final moments in our home. It is the reverse of what most of us would like. In the Western NSW Local Health District the local community of Orange have had an opportunity to have a say. Orange was the first of a number of roundtable conferences that I implemented on behalf of the Liberal-Nationals Government to look at palliative care issues. In the Western NSW Local Health District the latest figures released by HammondCare at Home show that palliative care home support funded by this Government is a key part of the difference in the numbers of people who die in their home versus hospitals.

Since the program commenced in 2013, more than 7,000 packages have been provided to patients statewide. In the Western NSW Local Health District HammondCare offers these services in Orange, Bathurst, Dubbo, Molong, Wellington, Cowra, Mudgee, Gulgong, Nyngan, Forbes and Narromine. Figures released by HammondCare on 21 May show that, since the program commenced, more than 60 per cent of people accessing care were able to die at home as they wished. The program shows the power of providing choice for people who are approaching the end of their life. It demonstrates the power of partnerships across health services, the community and non-government organisations to provide the kinds of options that a contemporary, caring society should be able to provide.

The "Dying well" report by the Grattan Institute found that most people do not speak up about the way they would like to die. They often experience a disconnected, confusing and distressing array of services, interventions and relationships with health professionals. Over the next quarter of a century, as the demographic bubble of baby boomers enter their senior years, the number of people who die each year in Australia will double. It is a figure that requires us to look closely at how we assist people to pass away when they need that assistance. It was an initiative of this Government to hold roundtable discussions in all of the electorates that I mentioned earlier. We have taken this step because we want to listen to the community's view on what provides a "good death", as it is referred to by the Grattan Institute. We must hear from community groups, the people who provide specialised and generalised end-of-life care.

The roundtable meetings are shining a light on compounding factors such as geographic and social isolation; the need for culturally appropriate services and places of care; the range of settings in which palliative care is provided, including homes, aged care, hospices and hospitals; end-of-life care for people with dementia; and end-of-life care for infants, children and adolescents. This petition is about palliative care in Orange. The first of the regional palliative care roundtable meetings was held in Orange on 1 May this year. The meeting brought together approximately 40 local clinicians, community representatives and health managers. The member for Port Macquarie chaired that meeting as the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health.

Throughout that meeting, the attendees reflected on the current services provided through the Western NSW Local Health District, which spends approximately \$2.2 million every year on specialist palliative care, including: 27 clinical staff, regionally based palliative care clinical nurse consultants covering the Orange Health Service, fly-in-fly-out specialist medical support, telehealth technology for consultations, and two part-time volunteer coordinator positions that are currently being recruited. The specialist palliative care staffing numbers across the local health district include a total of 20.93 full-time equivalents and 27 clinical staff in a range of locations. The community is debating whether the palliative care ward should be reopened. I point out to the member for Orange that, in the end, it is a recommendation of the local health district, not the Minister. However, I am listening to the community's concerns, and the New South Wales Coalition Government and I are doing all that we can to support the decisions of the local community.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:41):** I support the petition presented today by the member for Orange and support the call of his community for more palliative care services in Orange and across regional New South Wales. I thank all those who have taken the time to sign the petition. To everyone who is listening to or watching this debate online, I thank them for caring about palliative care services; they understand it is important. When considering palliative care in New South Wales, a line is drawn around the urban centres of the State. If anyone lives outside of those lines their access to palliative care services become increasingly limited. I am aware of residents in the Port Stephens electorate who have been required to use inpatient palliative care

services even though they would have preferred to have remained in their own homes while obtaining the same services.

I have many friends who were in the same situation and I know it was difficult for them. It is distressing for people with a terminal illness to move into a hospital setting for their final days. It is an unnecessary burden on them and their families. I congratulate the NSW Cancer Council on its campaign calling on the New South Wales Government to provide additional resources for palliative care, to support 10 additional specialist palliative doctors, 129 extra palliative care nurses, and culturally appropriate palliative care for Aboriginal people. Many people across the Hunter are familiar with the Hunter Cancer Action Network and its spokesperson Barbara Gaudry. Barbara is a passionate campaigner and, as the partner of former Newcastle member of Parliament Bryce Gaudry, is used to fighting for what she believes in. Barbara shared their story for the campaign for better palliative care, stating:

It was only after we got through it that I realised palliative care should have been organised for Bryce. That's the time you need palliative care, when the reality is he has only a slim chance of survival and the treatment is almost overwhelming. But there was nothing. I did not understand at the time that we should have had palliative care organised to give Bryce and I support and help to get through it.

When loved ones are in pain, people ought to be able to access the advice and support that is necessary to keep their loved ones comfortable in their greatest time of need. They deserve respect and dignity until the end of their life, regardless of where they live. I do not understand why palliative care is not funded appropriately by the New South Wales Government. It costs less to provide support in homes than in hospitals and it also relieves pressure in the hospital system. In addition, it allows people to live out their lives with dignity. Once again, I land on the thought that this Government has its priorities wrong. People in the regions do not want to see more stadiums in Sydney; they want their families supported in their darkest hours. I support this petition and I commend those who are pushing for palliative care services in Orange.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (16:44):** I thank the member for Orange and the petitioners for bringing this issue to the House. As has been noted, it is significant that we are discussing this topic today as we have just come to the end of National Palliative Care Week. Palliative Care Australia's campaign this year, "You matter. your care matters." is aimed at drawing attention to the importance of starting a conversation with those we love and care for about their end-of-life wishes. These are important conversations. They are not easy ones, but they are important. I commend the work of Palliative Care Australia for the provision of resources that can help make these conversations a little easier. I would encourage members to direct their constituents to the Palliative Care Australia website. Palliative Care Week gives health and other community services the opportunity to help start those conversations by showing the value of good palliative care.

In Orange, this was underlined by the relative of a patient of the Orange palliative care team who said, "The team came every day to offer advice, hugs, a shoulder to cry on, support to enable me to get the rest I needed, pastoral care for my mum as she faced the reality of death, even talking to my young children so beautifully, and explaining that their grandmother was about to die." The exceptional services and care offered by the Orange team—and by other palliative care staff across New South Wales—is valued and appreciated. As a registered nurse I had the privilege of working with a dedicated and supportive team in palliative care at the Port Macquarie Base Hospital. It is appropriate in the context of this petition that we take a moment to reflect on the needs of patients and their families and also take time to recognise the work of the nurses, the allied health workers, the specialists and the doctors. Whether they are in hospitals, aged care facilities or in the community all of them play a pivotal role in providing palliative care when and where it is needed. This can be challenging and confronting work, but I know from my own personal experience it can also be enormously rewarding.

One of the greatest challenges facing us as a community is how we better support people in executing their wishes to die peacefully in the comfort of their own home. For the majority of us that is exactly what we would wish for. In my new role as Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health, I have had the opportunity to attend a number of palliative care roundtables across the State, including in Sydney, Orange, Lismore, Kempsey, Broken Hill, Tamworth and Griffith. I thank the Minister for his strong support of these important conversations. The palliative care roundtables have helped me on behalf of the Government to gain a much better understanding of the needs of families, general practitioners, health workers, aged care facilities, hospitals and community organisations. They have allowed me to hear firsthand about the gaps that need to be filled to make sure that when individuals and families make choices about their final days they can access the services and support they need. In Orange, a palliative care consultative committee has had a very positive effect on the development of services locally. I was pleased to hear about their work when I visited Orange.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:47):** By leave: I support the petition on palliative care services from the people of Orange and thank the member for Orange for bringing this matter of public importance to this place. We cannot stress enough the importance of holistic palliative care to provide the best quality of life



possible up to the point of death. There is concern about the inadequacy of existing palliative care services across the State but in particular in outer urban and regional areas, such as Orange. Palliative care aims to provide relief from pain and suffering and provide care and support to the affected person to enable him or her to live as actively as possible. At the heart of palliative care is a person-centred approach. Best practice involves multidisciplinary engagement where the team members work with affected persons, their families and carers to achieve a result based on each person's wishes. Many Australian surveys demonstrate that the majority of people wish to die at home in the presence of their loved ones. Unfortunately, far too many people are denied this opportunity, with less than 15 per cent of people in New South Wales able to access the support and care needed to die at home.

The answer lies partly in providing access to adequate and well-funded palliative care. Far too often we are told that there are no resources to provide the level of care that our ageing population requires. Yet a NSW Health report entitled "Fact of Death Analysis" shows that on average in their last year of life a person will spend 40 days in hospital at a cost of \$1 million. For the third or fourth time in this place I acknowledge Dr Yvonne McMaster, who has been working with her palliative physician and data analyst colleague Dr Anthony Ireland to show how an investment in community-based palliative care would provide net savings for the State and at the same time offer dying people the end-of-life care they are calling for.

I cannot take part in this discussion without noting the wonderfully skilled and caring staff in palliative care within my community at the Blue Mountains Palliative Support Service and at Nepean and Blue Mountains hospitals. I pay tribute to the people I met in Orange: Sue Duchnaj, Bernard Fitzimons, Joe Maric, Annette Mears, Robyn Maw, Peter and Helen Brown, Gail Pringle and all other locals for their relentless campaign to secure a designated palliative care unit in Orange. I implore the New South Wales Government to make a direct and targeted investment in palliative care for the long suffering people of Orange and everyone in outer urban and regional areas to ensure better outcomes for the dying and relieve pressure on our already over-stretched emergency departments.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (16:50):** By leave: I make a contribution to the discussion on the petition signed by 10,000 or more persons tabled on behalf of the people of Orange and the greater district by the member for Orange, who is in the Chamber. Minister for Health Brad Hazzard and his Parliamentary Secretary, the member for Port Macquarie, both spoke in this discussion. I believe the member for Port Macquarie is oversighting a series of roundtable conversations that it is hoped will lead to improved palliative care services throughout New South Wales. I will not reflect too much about this issue as it related to Lake Macquarie other than to say that we all share one thing in common. We will all personally and as a community confront the matter of our death. I have dealt with death both in my former profession as a nurse as well as in my family.

A number of deaths have occurred in unsatisfactory situations and they will stay with my family and I for a long time. We must do more to ease that burden at a very important time, the end of life. We must ensure that people in the end stage of life are dealt with sensitively and have a dignified death. Although Orange is far away it is not remote. With a population of approximately 40,000 it certainly does not have an insignificant population. It is an important rural and mining area—the kind of place we want people to move to in order to take the burden off our cities. We cannot ask people to move to regional areas if we do not provide this type of basic service that is so important to them and their families. I am happy to support the petition to improve palliative care services in Orange. I am sure Government members would support it also. We have to step up and commit the funds, because this is about funding. I call on the Government to support this call from the people of Orange for better palliative care services.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **UNANDERRA STATION EASY ACCESS UPGRADE**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:53):** In February 2015—a little over two years ago—a video of three people looking to do something most take for granted, boarding a train, caused a global stir. In itself, a video of people accessing a train platform would ordinarily not raise an eyebrow, except that in this case the three people—one a double amputee dragging his wheelchair, the second an 80-something-year-old internationally recognised playwright, and the third someone who had suffered a stroke—were struggling with the stairs to access the platform at Unanderra station. They were taking on what has become known as Unanderra station's 72 step struggle. After seeing the video, the then Minister for Transport said:

It's distressing to see anyone in the community struggle to access public transport—whether they're elderly, customers with a disability or families with prams.

The Minister went on to say:

I want to see every station on the network accessible with ramps or lifts ...

The Minister then indicated that the Government took an "evidence-based approach" to determine transport upgrades, that Unanderra station was being considered as part of ongoing work, and that she would continue to listen to the concerns raised by the community. Despite it being an election year, the then Minister for Transport refused to commit to funding the lifts. The Labor Government had already committed funds in 2009, and construction had started, but this Government refused to commit funds to complete the lifts. In fact, the Labor Government committed to fund the construction of the lifts during both the 2011 and 2015 election campaigns, but this Government continues to refuse to do so. Because the Government did not field a candidate in the 2016 Wollongong by-election, it still has not agreed to provide the funds. Two years have gone by, and a question asked almost on the anniversary of the release of the video elicited the following response:

An accessibility upgrade at Unanderra Station will continue to be considered as part of this assessment process.

Despite the fact that the Minister for Transport in 2015 is now the Premier, and there is a new transport Minister in her place, I cannot fault the Government's consistency on this issue—it continues not to fund the lift. The handing down of the June budget is the Government's opportunity to fix its woeful record by finally funding the construction of lifts at Unanderra station. Our community already knows that the decision not to provide funds is purely political, because the Government has effectively conceded it. The facts are in on the Government's evidence-based approach to assessing station upgrades. The response to a Government Information (Public Access) request has revealed that Unanderra station ranked above Leura station on the prioritisation criteria in December 2011 and in October 2016, yet the upgrade of Leura station has already been completed. In response to my questions on notice, the Government has admitted that 12 people have been injured using Unanderra station, and two of them required hospitalisation.

Despite proximity to tourist and recreational attractions being part of the ranking criteria in 2011, this criterion has been quietly dumped from the assessment. Well, perhaps it has; it appears to be a source of considerable confusion. The Minister claims that proximity to tourist attractions is not a factor in the assessment, while Transport for NSW revealed to the *Illawarra Mercury* that proximity to tourist attractions is "sometimes" considered. The sceptical among my community suggest that the "sometimes" is used when Transport for NSW need justification to defend the decisions of its political masters. One can only conclude that "sometimes" is when they want to ignore the fact that Unanderra station is the closest railway station to the Nan Tien Temple—the largest Buddhist temple in the Southern Hemisphere—which attracts more than 200,000 visitors a year.

I was heartened to hear recently that a Transport for NSW spokesperson indicated an upgrade for Unanderra station would be delivered, and that concept plans were being developed. I hope there will be a final resolution to this issue, and I look forward to the detail being revealed in response to some questions I have placed on notice. I am still waiting. Ironically, the toilets at the station were upgraded to allow easy access and there are now disabled parking spaces. If people can get to the platform, they can use the easy-access toilet, and if they can get to the parking area, they can use the disabled car parks. However, they cannot use both.

I am determined to see the lifts built at Unanderra station. Let there be no doubt that the Labor Party will fund the construction of the Unanderra station lifts in the first budget of a Foley Government, and for our community that cannot come soon enough. At least the Leader of the Opposition has stopped by to see the difficulties people face every day. I do not think that the bureaucrats who do the priority assessments have ever bothered. If they did, the sight alone of the 72 stairs to get to the platform would surely compel them to act. I hope that the distress the Premier felt when she saw the video of people trying to access Unanderra station is reflected in this year's budget.

Bec Lachlan and Richard Kramer are busily organising another rally at the station on 17 June. All members are welcome to attend, and I would love to see them there. We would especially welcome the Premier or the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure given that the Premier has recently refused a request for the construction of the lift. The elderly, parents with prams, and people with a disability want to use their station. They are asking for nothing more than the return of the funds provided by the Labor Government and taken away by the O'Farrell Government. They are asking for nothing more than better access to their local public transport.

### WOLLONDILLY WOMAN OF THE YEAR

**Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) (16:54):** I recognise Southern Highlands local treasurer, local hero, good egg and a good friend of mine, Rina Hore, who has been recognised as Wollondilly Woman of the Year for 2017. Among her many roles, Rina is a prominent local businesswoman with a distinguished background in sport. Prior to its sale in 2004, Rina was managing director of the BOSCO group of companies. She has since used her skills and experience to great effect in the role of executive director at the Bradman Foundation and Bradman Centre located in Bowral in my electorate.

On the sporting field, Rina represented New South Wales for 17 years as a player, and six years as manager of the New South Wales Institute of Sport's national league team, and was an outstanding advocate for

women's cricket. She has also served as a member of the Women's Reference Group for Cricket Australia and Cricket NSW. Rina is also the former manager of the Australian Youth Team, and was the first woman appointed to the board of Cricket NSW. She held that position for six years. While serving as vice-president of the Women's Cricket Australia Board, Rina played an important part in bringing men's and women's cricket under one body. She was appointed a director of the Bradman Foundation in 2003, deputy chairperson in 2005 and executive director a year later.

Given her business acumen, it is clear that the Bradman Foundation is richer for her contribution. She commands the respect and attention of just about every cricket sporting identity from the Bradman family to Richie Benaud, when he was alive, to every Australian captain. She makes a phone call and everybody comes running. The position of executive director at the Bradman Foundation is very demanding, and requires an enormous measure of commitment and dedication. Rina satisfies these demands with the utmost integrity and aptitude. The foundation is much more than a museum celebrating the incredible history of one of our nation's greatest sportspersons, Sir Donald Bradman. It is also a place which seeks to nurture the history and future development of the great game of cricket—one of our nation's great sporting preoccupations.

Rina's work involves maintaining the Bradman Museum as an important tourist destination, making sure as many people as possible can appreciate its historic significance, while also promoting player development through coaching clinics. Many of these are held on the nearby historic Bradman Oval. Aside from her work with the foundation, Rina continues to lend her energies to the continuing progress of the Southern Highlands region and Wollondilly electorate. I have seen firsthand her involvement with junior cricket, which introduces primary school students with a disability to the game of cricket, with the help of Cricket Australia, Cricket NSW and the Bradman Foundation. She has organised partnering with all the school children to engage with children with disabilities right around the region playing sport—whether it is somebody in a wheelchair, somebody with autism, somebody with significant disabilities and challenges, they too got a place in playing cricket. She is dedicated to making sure that accessibility is there for everybody.

Her involvement with the Destination Southern Highlands Working Group is a fine example. Rina is primarily responsible for the sustainability and development of attractions that drive the tourism sector and help with the economic growth in the region. She also hosts the emergency services cricket game between all emergency services. Last year I got to play for the Rural Fire Service. I am not sure that I made too many runs, but I certainly got a few wickets on the famous Bradman Oval and that was a lot of fun. Rina is among the most passionate, community minded people I have had the pleasure to meet. Her continued leadership in many facets of the Southern Highlands community is not only commendable, but a vital part of the current and future success of the region. She remains passionate about the region, and what it might achieve in the future. Rina is one of those community members you enjoy celebrating with and spending time with and learning from. She has made such a significant contribution to her community and society, and she continues to do so.

It is my distinct pleasure to announce Rina Hore as the Wollondilly Woman of the Year for 2017. I look forward to continuing to work closely with Rina on the future of the museum and the foundation. She has had significant support from the Government in the past and we are looking for more support in the future, and I hope that the future includes securing the long-term viability of such a prestigious sporting and cultural facility in our State. New South Wales should be rightly proud of what it has in Bowral in my electorate of Wollondilly, in terms of our history, our culture and our sporting legacy. Very shortly we will be hosting Premier Gladys Berejiklian in this hall of fame, this great centre, to meet many people from the community, with the assistance of Rina Hore. It is certainly in safe hands with Rina Hore at the helm and I congratulate her once again.

### **COOTAMUNDRA ELECTORATE WATER SECURITY**

**Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (17:04):** Water security for regional communities is absolutely vital. Over the past two years, two groups of local farmers at Caragabal and Colinroobie in my electorate have been working very hard to progress plans to establish new stock and domestic water infrastructure. While these two communities are hundreds of kilometres apart, their mutual need for a reliable water supply is very closely aligned. It is imperative to the future viability of each region that every effort is made to help them to progress their proposals and secure the funding required to get these stock and domestic initiatives underway. Unfortunately, despite their efforts, there are various hurdles that have stalled progress, and I am absolutely determined to see those hurdles overcome.

Caragabal is a village of some 200 people located between West Wyalong and Grenfell, north of Quandialla and north-west of Young in my electorate of Cootamundra. For those unfamiliar with the area, it is fantastic broadacre cropping country. A couple of years ago the agricultural community of Caragabal identified the critical need to find a long-term, sustainable solution to their water security issues to ensure their farms, surrounding businesses and the village of Caragabal can remain viable in the future. The wonderful thing about

this proposal is that it is a community driven project. The project's drivers are putting in the hard yards to see a longer-term solution to stock and domestic water supply issues for the area.

Essentially, this project will increase water security for the Caragabal community, which covers an area of approximately 50,000 hectares, and assist landholders to reduce the impact of drought on their properties and increase agricultural productivity. To help get this project underway, approximately \$3 million in external funding needs to be secured. While the group has been encouraged to take out a low interest loan through the Rural Assistance Authority, these farmers already have enough debt on their plate without having to take on more, particularly when part of the proposal is about upgrading water infrastructure for the village of Caragabal itself.

I regret to say that even the toilets at Caragabal Public School are not flushing properly at present due to the aged nature of the village's water infrastructure. I am sure members would agree that that is just not good enough. Caragabal Water Scheme Inc. welcomes the support of Weddin Shire Council, but one hurdle they have been unable to clear is that, despite the various funding opportunities available, they are not quite eligible. It is imperative that the group receives the best support and guidance from the Department of Primary Industries and WaterNSW in order to progress their proposal, as the future of Caragabal is dependent upon it.

Meanwhile, at Colinroobie, between Narrandera, Barellan and Ardlethan, north of Wagga Wagga, the Colinroobie Hills water users group is also seeking support and funding assistance for a regional stock and domestic water scheme. The hurdle it is experiencing is a significant difference in the advice it has received about the cost of the scheme, with Goldenfields Water determining the scheme would cost \$10 million—that seems to me an extraordinarily large sum of money for this project. The group has since sought the advice of Think Water Leeton, who have quoted \$3.5 million for the delivery of the scheme—some \$6.5 million difference. The Colinroobie Hills water users group is also in desperate need of continued advice, support and assistance from the Department of Primary Industries and WaterNSW. We should be working very closely with local consortia on important water infrastructure matters, especially when water supply is looking relatively positive. This is the time to secure future supply through harnessing opportunities.

It is imperative that the Government provide high-level support to both these fantastic and creative initiatives and not let them go cold. With \$1 billion in the Rebuilding NSW and Restart NSW funding bucket, it makes sense to me to assist these progressive, forward-thinking farming communities in Caragabal and Colinroobie to droughtproof themselves so that they can be secure against future droughts that will occur in line with the dreadful millennium drought that so many of us experienced and had dreadful losses throughout. This will see them free to continue their operations with security and with minimal need for additional government assistance when that time inevitably comes. I commend this private member's statement to the House.

### **SOUTH COAST ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (17:09):** The South Coast offers so much to so many—whether it is the natural beauty of its rolling beaches and landscapes, or the centuries-old farming industry with knowledge and experience handed down from generation to generation. We also have our challenges. However, I am very pleased with the steps this Government has taken to address those issues—mainly issues of unemployment. The Berejiklian Government's significant infrastructure program is not solely restricted to the city. The South Coast region has also been the beneficiary of such investment. This has driven economic growth in the region and created significant employment opportunities.

This Government's record \$1.6 billion investment in the Princes Highway has created countless jobs across the breadth of the South Coast and it has guaranteed the growth of the local tourist industry well into the future. For example, projects such as the \$58 million Burrill Lake Bridge replacement, \$21 million Termeil Creek realignment, \$72 million South Nowra upgrade, \$580 million Foxground and Berry Bypass, \$329 million upgrade at Gerringong, and the \$18 million provided in last year's budget for the planning of the next stage between Berry and Bomaderry. Each project will provide employment for local contractors and subcontractors and thus help to reduce the unemployment rate. Last year the upgraded Princes Highway allowed 10.8 million tourists to visit the area. This saw the injection of \$2.5 billion into the local economy. Our local tourism industry is a major employer—responsible for more than 7,000 direct and indirect jobs. That is why the Government is ensuring the highway continues to meet the needs of residents and visitors and opens up the region to further growth and investment.

Next week I will join the Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier to officially open Nowchem's Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Facility. It is celebrating its fortieth year of operation. Nowchem has grown from a small family-owned business to a diverse chemical manufacturing organisation, and employs more than 60 people. This redevelopment will allow Nowchem to increase output and enter into more export markets and, most importantly, it will create 10 additional jobs. Proudly, this Government has supported that project with a significant grant. I thank the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Small Business, Mr John Barilaro, whose

commitment to Nowchem and the creation of jobs on the South Coast is greatly appreciated. Recently construction commenced on the government-funded, multimillion dollar expansion to the South Coast Correctional Centre. This will create an additional 300 jobs. Preliminary studies of the proposed expansion identified the economic impact of this project as:

... important and positive, providing secure local employment and additional annual local expenditure. The economic benefits during construction will also be significant ... these direct benefits and the associated multiplier of flow-on effects in support industries, the continued presence of a major stable government employer will carry on supporting investor confidence.

Last month I also wrote to the Prime Minister asking that the Federal Government reject the recommendation of the Productivity Commission to abolish the biofuels mandate stipulated in the New South Wales Government's Biofuels Act 2007. Removal of the 6 per cent mandate would have devastating consequences on local jobs and impact the Manildra biofuels plant located in Bomaderry. The plant currently provides regional employment for more than 300 people.

Yesterday the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals Government launched its E10 Fuel for Thought statewide campaign to encourage the use of E10 fuel. E10 is a petrol blend, with 9 per cent to 10 per cent ethanol. This initiative will ensure the protection of the South Coast's ethanol industry and guarantee regional jobs in the future. Other local businesses and employers supported and encouraged by this Government include: Flagstaff Group, South Coast Dairy, Unicorn Cheese and the local oyster industry. Together they provide jobs for more than 500 people. As the member for South Coast, I will continue to deliver for my electorate. I look forward to the State budget being handed down later this month because it will reaffirm the Berejiklian Government's commitment to creating job opportunities in regional New South Wales.

Finally, neither this Government nor I will be lectured to by those opposite or by The Greens. Recent comments by the so-called Greens spokesperson for the South Coast highlight the hypocrisy of a party that time and again talks about unemployment, does nothing and provides no solution. The Greens have failed to create any policy to drive employment; have failed to support infrastructure on the South Coast—in fact, they have opposed it; and they have failed to support local business, the backbone of the South Coast. The Greens constantly talk our region down from the lofty heights of the upper House. I encourage the pseudo Greens member for the South Coast to come down from his ivory tower in Sydney. Rather than politicise unemployment figures and seek a cheap media headline, he should work with this Government, which has delivered for the South Coast, and offer practical solutions that truly represent the region.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:13):** I thank the member for South Coast for bringing the economic success of this Government, particularly in her region, to the attention of the House. Across New South Wales we have had 23 consecutive months of strong economic growth and, as at April 2017, our unemployment rate was 4.7 per cent. Since the 2015 election the Government has created more than 58,000 jobs—many of them in the Wollongong and South Coast regions. Government members support the continuation of strong economic growth. There are a number of infrastructure projects across the State—freeways, roads, railways, railway upgrades and hospital upgrades. Let the good times continue.

#### **TRIBUTE TO KATHY SMITH, FORMER MEMBER FOR GOSFORD**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:15):** It is with sadness that I speak in the House today to celebrate the wonderful life of our parliamentary colleague Kathy Smith. Whilst we are united today in honouring Kathy, in future sitting weeks we will be able to contribute to debate on her condolence motion. It is with great sadness that we mourn Kathy's passing after her long journey with cancer. We send heartfelt condolences to her husband, Peter, her children, Richard and Janet, and her grandchildren, Georgia, Jimmy, Ali and Joshua. Only last week I spoke for the first time in this Parliament when I referred in a private member's statement to Kathy's remarkable contribution to New South Wales. Last night my colleagues and I gathered together and cried after receiving the sad news.

As Kathy is my predecessor, as the former member for Gosford, I had the honour of inheriting her office. However, it was not until last night that I became aware of Kathy's incredible work ethic, generosity and tenacity after I heard the kind words spoken by her colleagues on both sides of this House. It was humbling to watch and to listen to my colleagues speak with reverence and respect about Kathy's hard work and her significant contribution to the people of Gosford and New South Wales. Kathy was highly respected by her colleagues and was a sincere, pragmatic and committed member of Parliament and community leader.

Kathy's legacy as a member of the Central Coast community for many years has had a profound effect on the lives of people in New South Wales. When the Government closed the Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] office at Woy Woy, Kathy began collecting the 10,000 signatures that were needed to present a petition to this Parliament. When it was revealed that the Hawkesbury River rail bridge was dangerously degraded to the point of imminent disaster Kathy fought for action to be taken. It was only when Kathy moved from northern Sydney

to the Central Coast that she realised what living in a regional area meant. She saw an immense need in the areas of employment, health, education and transport.

Kathy, a cancer survivor and chair of Cancer Voices NSW became aware that people with cancer on the Central Coast could not get affordable treatment close to home; they had to travel to Sydney or Newcastle to receive radiotherapy treatment or fork out tens of thousands of dollars for private treatment. Many people could not afford to do that and were forced to leave the region just to receive vital treatment which meant being away from their families and support networks at a time when they needed them most. Kathy could not stand this injustice and in her inaugural speech in this place she said:

I had become aware of an elderly lady who had to travel from Wyong to the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital for radiotherapy treatment each day for six weeks. She travelled by bus and train, and what torture that must have been for her. I was living in Hornsby at the time of my diagnosis and I was fortunate enough to be able to afford private radiotherapy treatment only 10 minutes away from home and my place of work.

Silly or not, I was left with a feeling of guilt knowing that this much older lady was having to struggle to travel for treatment while I could be driven for mine without any effort on my part.

Why should someone by virtue of where he or she lives be able to live longer, better or more comfortably than someone who is living somewhere else? Health care in this country is a right yet an entire community on the Central Coast was being denied access to these crucial services. Kathy worked for years to convince Liberal and Labor governments to make a substantial investment to build a new regional cancer centre. Kathy and another former member for Gosford, Marie Andrews, rallied the community and secured the names of tens of thousands of petitioners to put political pressure on governments to act. It was not until 2010 that the Rudd Federal Labor Government and the Keneally State Labor Government allocated \$55 million to fund the project. So Kathy's voice was ultimately heard and her determination was a critical factor in making that happen.

I have no doubt that Kathy was proud of the role she played in doing something that improved the lives of many hundreds of people. Her work will continue to make their lives better in decades to come. That was a significant achievement and will stand as Kathy's greatest legacy to the Central Coast community. It will never be forgotten. Cancer sufferers now have a local facility to undertake cancer treatment closer to their family and friends. Kathy's time in this place was short, but her dedication to the community was lifelong. There are people alive today who would not be alive without Kathy Smith, and that should be a legacy we all aspire to match.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:19):** I thank the member for Gosford for raising in the Chamber the passing of Kathy Smith last night. I pass on my regards to her husband, Peter, and to her entire family. She was an outstanding member of Parliament, but her track record before coming to this place, particularly in fighting for more funding for support and care for cancer sufferers on the Central Coast, will be her legacy for a very long time. May she rest in peace.

#### **KU-RING-GAI YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (17:20):** Today I again recognise an important organisation in my local community, Ku-ring-gai Youth Development Services [KYDS]. KYDS' primary aim is to provide free, easily accessible, one-on-one, group support and information programs about mental health for 12- to 18-year-olds across northern Sydney. KYDS was established in 2005 as an initiative of Lindfield Rotary Club, with assistance from Ku-ring-gai Council, after the need was recognised for a dedicated youth counselling service in the area.

Mark Northern, as chairman of the KYDS board, Felicity McDonnell, as KYDS business and funding manager, and the whole team do exceptional work for the organisation and the local community. There are numerous other people in my local community also working towards a future without youth suicide. I recognise Ku-ring-gai Young Citizen of the Year David Taylor, who has supported an array of youth mental health organisations, including KYDS. His musical talent and determination to make a difference have enabled him to raise money for KYDS. I commend David for his excellent achievements and encourage him to keep pursuing his passions.

I was pleased to attend a tree-planting ceremony on 18 May for the Jack Luck Foundation. This foundation was established after the Luck family tragically lost their young son to suicide. The tree will provide a future meeting point for the students of Killara High School. My thanks go to the Luck family, who have channelled their own grief into helping the community to minimise youth suicide, including through a recent forum at Killara High School. Youth mental health and suicide is an issue many Australians face. Suicide is the leading cause of death in adolescents aged 15 to 24 years, accounting for one-third of all deaths. It is a shocking statistic and one that cannot be ignored. In the past 12 months, one in four young Australians have experienced a mental health issue of some sort.

We hopefully all have fond memories from our time as teenagers, and some of us even have teenage children of our own. However, we should all be aware of how impressionable and stressful this time in a person's

life can be. It is the time when dreams are born, confidence is found, and morals and values are refined. Many of the things we learn in our youth allow us to become the adults we are today. Our time at high school may have taught us resilience, empathy and determination. As we got older, perhaps during university, we learnt how to look after ourselves and began to contribute to society in a way that was bigger than just ourselves—a reason many of us are sitting in this Chamber today.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics recorded that during 2004-06 there was an average of 266 deaths per year from suicide among people aged 15 to 24. This accounts for 20 per cent of deaths in this age group. That number is far too large. To lose even one young person to suicide is too many. One of the crucial factors for better mental health in any age group is to seek help early. The lack of awareness and the stigma surrounding mental health in adolescents can act as barriers to early intervention. Mental health awareness has become more prominent in Australia, but for a vast number of Australians it can still be a topic of great shame and embarrassment. Trying to balance all areas of life is a juggle for anyone, even without the added pressures that young people face. They are learning to juggle many new responsibilities such as relationships, work and study commitments and starting to have a social life of their own for the first time, all while ensuring that they are getting enough sleep and staying healthy. This can be incredibly overwhelming. As the statistics show, it is during this stage of life when 75 per cent of mental health issues emerge.

For the vast majority of people, this busy life stage will teach invaluable lessons. But for some, the pressure becomes just too much and they feel like there is no escape. Mental health should not be taken lightly. It is our responsibility as leaders in the community to help educate and raise awareness of these issues. This should ensure that no more young lives are tragically lost prematurely. I encourage young people to ask for the help and advice they need when these overwhelming feelings come and to not feel ashamed and alone. It is crucial that organisations and programs are in place that are accessible for people of all ages. I know there are hundreds of wonderful organisations doing great work in the mental health field. Today I have highlighted one, being KYDS. I recognise and thank KYDS for the fantastic work it has done over the past 12 years, and I look forward to its ongoing work with young people across northern Sydney.

The KYDS team have worked tirelessly to raise awareness of youth mental health. They offer countless free services, including confidential counselling, to help with issues that many young people face and support through individual counselling or group programs to help teenagers who are worried about the behaviour of a friend or relative. Their services are not just limited to young people; they also offer a number of ways to help families and schools navigate through the issues that adolescents may be facing in their lives. KYDS run regular parent information forums at a range of community venues. It also offers a series of early intervention workshops for schools. All these services are vital in helping to improve the mental health of young people.

In April KYDS developed a new space in Hornsby with the help of a local community group. It will provide a free one-on-one counselling service two days a week. There is potential to increase capacity as funding allows, which is wonderful given that the KYDS counselling centre in Lindfield has been operating at full capacity for quite some time. It is important to encourage everyone, especially youth and young adults, to reach out and ask for help when needed. There is no shame in speaking up, although it can sometimes take real courage to do so. I encourage KYDS to continue the great work it is doing in helping adolescents.

## **MANNING GREAT LAKES LOCAL AREA COMMAND**

### **TAREE POLICE STATION UPGRADE**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:25):** Today I will update the House on Taree police station and the Manning Great Lakes Local Area Command. According to the latest Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research figures, the Manning Great Lakes Police Local Area Command is doing a fantastic job that is very much appreciated by the community. Commander Superintendent Peter Thurtell leads a great group of men and women who protect our community every day. Over the past few years, they have certainly done a fantastic job dealing with a range of crimes and other issues. One of Australia's most wanted criminals, Malcolm Naden, was arrested by members of the Manning Great Lakes Local Area Command, who were supported by officers from other areas. A police officer was shot at during the search. The command has dealt with murders, attempted murders, drug matters, sexual assault, break and enters, and other crimes. At the same time, it has been pushing down crime. The figures show that crime trends are either going down or are static. That is a testament to the hard work and dedication of those police officers.

The officers deserve to work in an environment that is conducive to good work practices and occupational health and safety. The multimillion-dollar upgrade to Taree Police Station was an election promise, and Taree police and the Police Properties Branch have been working on plans for the new station. I look forward to seeing the first part of that funding in the next State budget, which will kickstart the upgrade of Taree Police Station. I imagine that work will take us through at least two budgets, but I look forward to seeing a significant amount in

this year's budget to begin the upgrade. The planning for the upgrade has not been finalised by the Police Properties Branch, so hopefully we will soon see the final plans and costings. I hope that in this budget there will be a significant amount of money to get the work started.

Taree police do a fantastic job and Taree Police Station just does not fit the twenty-first century. Parts of the police station date back to the 1800s. Every time the police station has been extended, rooms have been added upstairs, downstairs or in a relocatable building attached by another corridor or set of stairs. The station is not fit for purpose or for twenty-first century policing. In many ways, having so many stairs is a danger to those police officers. That they have continued to work in those surrounds when the building should have been condemned and demolished years ago is a testament to their dedication. I am very pleased that the Government has begun working with the police and the Police Properties Branch to ensure that Taree police will eventually have the state-of-the-art, twenty-first century police station they deserve.

This is another election promise the Government is delivering on after 16 years of broken promises by Labor. Like the community that supports our police, we look forward to a significant amount being allocated in the coming budget and the final amount being allocated in next year's budget. We look forward also to seeing the final plans from the NSW Police Force properties branch, which is responsible for planning and delivering police stations, and I look forward to the police moving into their new police station in the near future.

### **HOLSWORTHY ELECTORATE EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (15:29):** Today I acknowledge and thank the Government for the work done in providing the essential localised education funding and services this State and particularly my local area need. I am proud to advise that to assist this cause the 2016-17 budget has provided \$2.6 billion over the next four years to focus on education infrastructure and a \$13.7 billion investment in our education system. That is an increase of \$959 million from the previous year. We are the party of a strong and effective education system, providing initiatives such as "Supported Students, Successful Students", "Quality Teaching, Successful Students" and the introduction of the Resource Allocation Model. In 2017 public schools in my area will benefit from a share of a record \$219 million in additional needs-based funding through the Resource Allocation Model. These extra resources go directly to the schools, allowing principals to utilise these funds to better meet the unique needs of their students and their school community. An amount of \$11,930,547 will be invested into our local school.

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** A handsome sum.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS:** It is a handsome sum, but the member for Rockdale should note that it is an increase of \$2,713,089 from last year. All public schools will see funding increases. Casula High School will receive an increase of \$261,784; Casula Public School will receive an increase of \$413,636; Chipping Norton Public School will receive an increase of \$168,845; Dalmeny Public School will receive an increase of \$178,725; Hammondville Public School will receive an increase of \$100,396; Holsworthy High School will receive an increase of \$168,221; Holsworthy Public School will receive an increase of \$91,253; Lucas Heights Community School will receive an increase of \$84,812; Lurnea High School will receive an increase of \$249,755; Lurnea Public School will receive an increase of \$265,241; Moorebank High School will receive an increase of \$190,750; Newbridge Heights Public School will receive an increase of \$66,705; Nuwarra Public School will receive an increase of \$153,821; Prestons Public School will receive an increase of \$222,619; and last, but definitely not least, Wattle Grove Public School will receive an increase of \$90,545.

On top of this important funding, the Liberal-Nationals Government has vowed to take on the \$1 billion education infrastructure backlog that Labor left it. It is interesting to receive calls from the local media stating that Labor Party members have said the Government is not doing enough to address the infrastructure backlog. Labor left that backlog to us and we are fixing it. In fact, we have already reduced the backlog to \$775 million. Additionally, the Minister for Education has recently announced a \$390 million injection of funding for a blitz on backlog repairs, with an important segment of this funding—around 10 per cent—focused on schools in south-west Sydney. I thank our multiple parents and citizens committees for their work in assisting with fundraising and providing community direction for our local schools.

Recently I attended and officially opened the Wattle Grove Public School Fair on 7 May, which was organised by the school's parents and citizens association. They put out a call for extra help and got a bit of extra support, but my goodness, they worked hard to make sure that the fair went ahead this year. I was pleased to help them to organise a grant through the Community Building Partnerships, and as I mentioned earlier, they received \$11,890 for air-conditioning to be installed in the school hall. On really hot summer days when the temperature rises to 30 degrees and above, the kids need a place to cool off so that they are more comfortable in their learning environment.



I took a stall at the fair, where I connected with people who came up to have a chat with me. I also walked around the fair and spent way too much money at many of the stalls. It was good fun to support local people, particularly by purchasing hand-knitted items, home-made candles and other items. It was a day full of fun and friendship that reflects the camaraderie of the Wattle Grove community, both the school community and those who came along to support the school at the fair. Once again I thank the organisers of the fair. Education is phenomenally important to the future of our State. I am pleased to be part of a Government that recognises this fact and supports education.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:35):** The outstanding member for Holsworthy recognises the importance of public education in her electorate. Schools in her electorate have shared \$219 million in additional needs-based funding through the Resource Allocation Model. We on this side of the House have implemented this model, which is supported by the Federal Government, because we saw the importance of funding schools. The schools that have benefited in the community of the member for Holsworthy include Casula Public School, Chipping Norton Public School, Hammondville Public School, Holsworthy Public School, Leumeah High School, and the list goes on. The Resource Allocation Model funding ensures that resources are directed to where they are needed. The funding will be used to employ extracurricular teachers and fund additional educational resources. This will lead to huge improvements in public education where those improvements are needed. Funding will also go towards attacking the backlog of school maintenance left by those opposite when they were in government.

### KOGARAH NEW CITY PLAN

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (17:36):** I express my absolute disgust at the New City Plan amendment to the Kogarah Local Environmental Plan 2012 that was gazetted on 26 May 2017 and to inform the House of the contempt with which the people of the former Kogarah City Council have been treated by this Government. In this Chamber tonight is a fellow member of Parliament from St George, who I would expect to share my opinion of the plan. On Monday 4 April 2016 the former Kogarah City Council held an extraordinary meeting following a significant backlash from local residents during the exhibition period of the amendment to the Kogarah Local Environment Plan 2012, known as the New City Plan.

This meeting had such widespread response from the public that it had to be held at the Venus Reception Centre, with more than 500 residents of the former council area showing up on the night to have their voices heard. As a result of this overwhelming feedback in opposition to elements of the plan, a number of amendments were moved by the elected councillors, led by former councillor Nick Katris, to amend the more overbearing parts of the plan. These amendments, which had the overwhelming support of the local community as well as the backing of the elected councillors were entirely reasonable, and relatively minor amendments to a major and significant change to the Kogarah LEP.

Unfortunately, more than a year later, the planning department has come back and rejected every one of these amendments, once again demonstrating this Government's total contempt for residents of local councils such as Kogarah, as well as democratically elected representatives. Suburbs like Beverley Park in my electorate, which currently consist of one- and two-storey houses, will be overshadowed by bulky 21-metre towers, with inadequate public transport and road infrastructure to cope with the accompanying increase in population. St George is not the dumping ground of Sydney, and I am absolutely furious that the Government has treated us like this. When I spoke at the extraordinary council meeting, I did not seek to provide blanket opposition to the development of our area.

I recognise the need to build new homes for our growing population, and I will not shy away from that. I raised at that meeting that some of the proposals in the draft local environmental plan [LEP], which the councillors agreed to change, were simply not in line with good planning principles. Beverley Park is a suburb with a real sense of community; it is home to one of the largest populations of residents over the age of 65 in the former Kogarah Council area, as well as one of the largest populations of residents aged 85 and over. It is a significant distance from our local rail lines and is not well serviced by public transport. That will only get worse following the announcement of privatisation of bus region 6. In addition, the rezoning of Carlton on the other side of the Princes Highway to a similar height will see an unattractive gun-barrelling effect along the main road and will create more congestion on this already overburdened corridor. In short, this is simply not an appropriate place for this Government to dump more development.

When this Government was first elected in 2011 it promised to clean up the planning system. How can the people of New South Wales have any faith that they will be afforded due process when even after the community has overcome the hurdle of convincing their councillors to alter a proposed LEP they are dismissed out of hand by a faceless bureaucrat in the Department of Planning, and all under the nose of the Minister? Residents in Kogarah made a genuine effort to engage with the process in a constructive manner to provide their local knowledge to curb the new city plan where it was excessive and to accept development where it was most appropriate, even if they did not like it. This deplorable move by this Government has shown the people of

St George that their opinions are meaningless to the New South Wales Liberals. The people of the former Kogarah council area should have received better treatment from those opposite, and I am sure that the Coalition will be punished at the next Local and State elections as a result.

#### **PARRAMATTA COUNCIL ADMINISTRATOR AMANDA CHADWICK**

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (17:41):** Epping was divided for many years into the two local government areas of Hornsby and Parramatta councils. At best, this was an unworkable arrangement, with the pervading view among local residents that Epping was oftentimes an afterthought compared to the respective town centres of Hornsby and Parramatta. Epping has recently faced an unprecedented amount of change arising from the delivery of the urban activation precinct. Since the beginning of the amalgamation process, my priority has been to see the Epping town centre fall under one local government area in order that we might be better prepared to address these challenges.

Thankfully, this is an outcome that has been delivered. It is one year from 12 May since the new Parramatta Council was created. To oversee the transition process, an administrator, Amanda Chadwick, was appointed. Since taking on the role, Amanda has proved herself to be incredibly capable. She has been an invaluable source of advice and support not only to me but, more importantly, to the residents of Epping. Amanda has shown a strong desire to well use the time that she has and to leave the council in a better position than when she found it. On 23 December 2016 she wrote to me in the following terms:

Since day one of the amalgamation, council's main priority has been to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of services to residents across the expanded local government area [LGA]. To assist in this process, transitional service arrangements are in place with neighbouring councils and the transfer of assets between councils is almost complete.

Throughout this time, council has been strongly focussed on getting to know our entire community, understanding their needs and expectations, and seeking their input on the vision and priorities for the future of the City of Parramatta. At the council meeting of 12 December 2016, the vision and priorities statement for the City of Parramatta was endorsed for the purpose of further engagement.

With council elections in September, Amanda will be finishing up in her role as Parramatta Council Administrator. I take this opportunity to thank her. She has been very generous with her time to all the people of Epping, and I believe she has gone above and beyond what she was required to do. She will leave a positive. I thank Bruce Mills, Lily Wang, Sue Weatherly and staff members of Parramatta Council for their efforts in helping to deliver some of these outcomes. Amanda will leave a legacy of improved consultation and big picture planning in Epping. With Amanda, I have facilitated community consultation meetings, visits to areas where residents have expressed concern, engaged with local community groups, and held conversations pertaining to issues in Epping with the appropriate Ministers, the departments, and the Greater Sydney Commission.

I recall one particular meeting that took place in December last year. About 300 locals turned up to a hall in Epping to hear from Amanda, council staff and me. Had the venue been able to accommodate more people, I am sure that we would have had even more community members show up to contribute to the discussion. This meeting is indicative of the level of interest that Epping locals have in their community, and I am encouraged that we have been able to spend so much time engaging with them, listening to them and addressing together the challenges facing Epping. The challenges most pertinent to Epping include traffic and parking, improving infrastructure such as our local schools, and, as much as possible, delivering the types of development that are in line with community expectations.

This brings me back to one of Amanda's greatest achievements. Amanda was able to find the time, the will and the resources to undertake studies across the Epping town centre. These studies included a review of commercial space, as there has been significant concern among business owners and residents. A traffic study that looks at traffic across the entirety of the town centre is underway. Additionally, a review of the heritage zoning of certain areas has been undertaken, as this has been another cause of significant community concern. Finally, Amanda has conducted an audit of social infrastructure to ensure that Epping has sufficient community facilities to cater for the expanding community.

One expression that Amanda uses, which I also embrace, is that she wants to ensure that Epping "has a heart". The results of these studies are due to be released and signed off in August before the new council is admitted. These studies, along with feedback from the community, will serve as the foundation upon which a new council will move forward to positive outcomes for the community. The timing of the completion of these studies is impeccable, and there is no doubt that Amanda will finish her role knowing that she has developed the best outcomes in full. Needless to say, there is still work to do between now and September. I look forward to continuing to work with Amanda on delivering for Epping. I take this opportunity to thank Amanda Chadwick for all the time and effort she has invested in the people of Epping.

### LONDONDERRY ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (17:46):** This afternoon I speak about an issue that I comment on often in this place—the sensational public schools in my electorate of Londonderry. I am biased, of course, but they are the best public schools in the State. Across New South Wales our local public schools are the epicentres of our individual communities. Each and every day that I am out and about in my community I see the real transformative power of education and the work that goes into changing the lives of boys and girls across Western Sydney. I put on record once again that our teachers do a terrific job. Schools are at the heart of our communities, and one school that is very close to my heart is Willmot Public School.

Members may be aware that we recently secured a grant for an air conditioning upgrade for Willmot Public School through the Londonderry Community Building Partnership, and I will forever be proud of the work that we did together on that. Willmot Public School, through its amazing teachers, volunteers and everyone in the community, now operates a community room where families can collect food and clothes and be connected to services they may need. Willmot Public is only one example of where real and lasting outcomes have been delivered through Gonski funding. That is why I was so disheartened—and, frankly, angry—that the Premier of this State has failed to stand up to the Federal Government's cuts to the Gonski model. These cuts will hurt every school in my electorate and rip \$360,000 out of Willmot Public School, one of the most disadvantaged schools in my community and indeed the State.

The cuts by the Prime Minister will hurt schools right across New South Wales. The cuts will be particularly felt in Western Sydney, where schools are struggling with overcrowding, demountable classrooms, lack of air conditioning and funding uncertainty. It is unacceptable that the Premier has broken her promise to ensure that her Federal Liberal colleagues honour the so-called Gonski funding agreement. Under this Premier's watch, the Federal Liberal Government is getting away with slashing more than \$846 million from public schools across this State. In the Londonderry electorate alone, public schools will stand to lose a staggering \$13 million. This includes more than \$1 million being cut from Bennett Road Public School, Cambridge Park High School, Cambridge Park Public School, Colyton High School, Lethbridge Park Public School and St Marys North Public School. More than \$500,000 will be cut from St Marys Senior High School, Werrington Public School, Emerton Public School, Mount Druitt Public School, Madang Avenue Public School, Oxley Park Public School, Tregear Public School and Whalan Public School.

Thousands of dollars will also be cut from Orchard Hills Public School, Castlereagh Public School, Penrith Valley Learning Centre, Kurrambee School—which is for students with high-needs disabilities—Halinda School, Putland Education and Training Unit, Londonderry Public School, Llandilo Public School, St Marys South Public School, St Marys Public School, Ropes Crossing Public School, Werrington County Public School and Claremont Meadows Public School. A shockingly long list of schools will receive funding cuts. If Malcolm Turnbull or Gladys Berejiklian knew anything about the amazing work these schools do every day, they would know that the cuts are damaging to our students, our teachers and our communities. I am using my private member's statement to call on the Premier to stand up to the Federal Government and ask for a reversal of these cruel funding cuts to our public schools.

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (17:50):** I thank the member for Londonderry for bringing the topic of education in her electorate to the attention of the House. We all share her passion. This Government was the first to sign up for Gonski funding. Yesterday, on behalf of our Premier, the Minister for Education joined with the shadow Minister for Education, The Greens and the president of the NSW Teachers Federation to call on the Federal Government to support the Gonski funding agreement this Government signed up for. If the member had been here yesterday she would be aware that we are leading the charge on education.

### GRAFTON CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (17:51):** The new correctional services facility in my electorate will be extremely significant to Grafton and the Clarence Valley. I thank the Minister for Corrective Services for announcing that Clarence Valley will be the location of this new regional jail. With 1,700 inmates, it will be the largest jail in Australia. It is great news for Grafton and the Clarence Valley because it will bring jobs to the region and boost the local economy through the initial capital cost of construction estimated at approximately \$650 million as well as the additional employment and affiliated services that will be required to run the jail. It is mooted that the new jail will create approximately 600 jobs.

Jobs in regional New South Wales are difficult to find and this will be a terrific shot in the arm for people looking for a job in the Clarence Valley. I congratulate Northern Pathways on its successful bid to build and operate the new jail. I commend it for engaging with the community by creating a community committee to discuss issues arising from the construction and operation of the jail. Given its magnitude, allowing the community a say

on how the significant project is constructed and operated is fundamental to the company's corporate responsibility.

Grafton is a jail town and has been for more than 100 years. It welcomes the new jail and the opportunities it will bring. With its 1,700 inmates and 600 staff, the new jail will essentially be the fourth-largest community in the Clarence Valley. Whilst we appreciate the opportunities this will bring to the area, we also recognise there will be significant challenges. A substantial number of support services such as justice, health, education and counselling will be required to deal with the specific challenges that come with a jail of this size. Difficulties arise in providing health services to inmates. Whilst I understand that most of the inmates in the new jail will be treated in a purpose-built health facility on site, from time to time some inmates will require treatment in the public health system. This poses a problem as the inmates are taking up space in an already crowded hospital. They do not have a Medicare card, so the hospital has to carry the cost of the treatment. In addition, there is a requirement for two guards to be on duty whilst ever an inmate is in the hospital. This causes crowding and concern for the public patients being treated and their families.

In a recent incident four inmates of the existing Grafton Correctional Centre chewed through a fluorescent tube and required hospitalisation. They were in hospital for a number of days and required 24 Corrective Services staff to guard them for each 24 hours they remained in hospital. Local public patients had to be referred to a nearby hospital because of the disruption. I am aware that the Northern Local Health District is concerned at the age and capacity of the Grafton Base Hospital and that the new jail will increase pressure on the hospital. I urge the Minister for Health to give consideration to a total rebuild of Grafton Base Hospital, given its age and the additional demand for public health services that will arise as a consequence of the arrival of the new jail. As I mentioned earlier, it will be the fourth-largest community in the Clarence Valley. I understand that the Northern Local Health District has identified the total rebuild of Grafton Base Hospital as its highest priority after the upgrade of the Tweed Heads Hospital.

Since the 2011 election the primary focus of the NSW Nationals has been to deliver jobs to regional New South Wales. Jobs are the major concern for people living in regional areas and the Liberal-Nationals Government has delivered for the people in my electorate. Whilst I thank the Minister for Corrective Services for the great opportunity he has afforded the electorate of the Clarence, I call on the Government to recognise the health challenges posed by the new jail and to commit to the total rebuild of the Grafton Base Hospital concurrent with the construction of the jail. I recognise the Liberal-Nationals Government is delivering for regional New South Wales. It is boosting our local economies with more infrastructure and jobs and increasing confidence in our communities. I thank the Government for the significant public investment in my electorate.

#### MANLY ELECTORATE

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:56):** A key point I made during my inaugural speech in this place was the importance of strengthening and diversifying the local economy of Manly, which includes the light industrial area of Brookvale. Manly has an enviable reputation as an amazing town for tourism, and rightly so. However, it is also home to a wideranging mix of businesses—from retail, to consulting and financial services. Today, Brookvale is witnessing a resurgence as a hub for all manner of businesses. Retailers in Manly are currently experiencing a tough time. Data provided by Manly information centre Hello Manly shows that Manly ferry traffic has reduced and was on average 17 per cent down per month for the first quarter of 2017 in comparison with 2016.

Furthermore, the visitor information centre has experienced a dramatic decline in sales in the last quarter of between 15 per cent to 20 per cent when compared to 2016. There is a silver lining when investigating the data as sales do align with 2015, perhaps demonstrating that 2016 was an exceptional year. The past 10 years have been tough for local Manly retailers. In 2007 Manly was home to 78 retail stores, of which 49 have closed, eight have since sold, two have relocated and 19 are still trading. However, 50 per cent of those 19 stores are chain stores with interstate head offices. Unfortunately, the worst performing retailers were the small, individually owned boutiques that are spread throughout the laneways of Manly. I am pleased to report that the Manly Chamber of Commerce is in the final stages of its destination management plan.

This plan contains clear action items on how to boost and activate the precinct. The Northern Beaches Council continues to roll out the next stage of upgrades to the laneways, encouraging visitors to venture beyond The Corso. Next week I will welcome the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation to Manly. We will tour one of its leading start-up hubs and I will show him how Manly is strengthening and diversifying its economy. There is a lot that can be done between Manly and Brookvale to revitalise not only our retailers but also other businesses, as well as improve the opportunity for investment in Manly. The role of public transport and improved roads is important in challenging the perception—and it is a perception, not reality—that Manly is a long way away from the central business district or that if we work in Manly or Brookvale we cannot service major corporate or multinational clients. That thinking is simply wrong.

I will continue to work with those key stakeholders to determine how we can encourage business big and small to either consider Manly as a destination for their office space, or see Brookvale as a desirable space for their manufacturing operations. The knock-on effect of this will be fewer cars on our roads, fewer people on our ferries and buses and a multiplier effect of local business activity. Unfortunately sometimes perception is reality, but when we consider the rental space becoming available as the nature of retail changes, we should look beyond the current disruption and plan for what may come next. As the member for Manly, I will continue to fight hard to ensure that this Government, wherever possible, supports people who are willing to have a go, invest, and own and operate their own businesses in the electorate of Manly. It is important that government gets the policy settings right.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** I wish the Manly-Warringah Sea Eagles the best of luck on Saturday when they play the Central Coast Crusaders because they will need all the help they can get.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:00 until  
Tuesday 20 June 2017 at 12:00.**