



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday, 1 August 2017

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 1 August 2017

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

The SPEAKER read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[Notices of motions given.]

Private Members' Statements

BEAUTY BANK

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (12:13): Last year in this House I paid tribute to the 2016 Cronulla and New South Wales Woman of the Year, Jen Armstrong. She is a true local hero. After Jen was kicked in the stomach when pregnant with her second child, she left home and a violent relationship with nothing more than the clothes on her back. A gift of a small parcel of toiletries from the Dandelion Support Network, which included a bottle of fancy body wash, was all it took to help make Jen feel special and help her to understand that support was there for her.

At that moment Jen resolved when she got back on her feet she would do what she could to help other people in her situation to feel special, to know that someone cares. She subsequently founded the Beauty Bank, a charity that collects donations of toiletries and luxury products, which are then distributed to victims of domestic and family violence—people experiencing the same sense of alienation, desperation and vulnerability that Jen herself had endured as a victim of domestic violence. Last weekend I attended the Beauty Bank's Christmas in July fundraiser. The strong community support for the Beauty Bank, and for the people it works so hard to help, was overwhelmingly apparent on the day. Last year's event raised just under \$5,000. This year, the annual high tea attracted 145 people and raised \$7,000—a terrific result.

It is quite remarkable how much progress the charity has made in a relatively short period. Five years ago, the Beauty Bank was in its infancy. Back then there were no rooms filled with luxury products and teams of volunteers assembled in production lines; it was just Jen wrapping small packages of toiletries in cellophane and ribbon on her living room floor. As time went on, and more and more volunteers became involved, the packs evolved from small cellophane-wrapped parcels to paper gift bags, to zip lock bags, to stylish totes. Each bag of goods contains toiletry and hygiene items such as shampoo and conditioner, body wash, toothpaste and toothbrushes, sanitary items, deodorant and a razor, and additional luxury items like cosmetics, costume jewellery or perfume. An individual gift tag is made for each of these bags of life's little luxuries and is signed by the volunteer who has prepared it. The idea is that the recipient feels pampered, special, and supported.

Just as the donations have transformed over time, so too has the scale of the Beauty Bank's operations. After having to hire a small storage unit in December 2015, one of the Beauty Bank's supporters offered up part of her family business' warehouse at Taren Point to accommodate the charity's growing demand. Jen Armstrong, along with Denise Dolan, the Beauty Bank's hardworking operations manager, has succeeded in growing a small charity that began as one woman's dream into a sizeable operation that has helped literally thousands of men, women and children. Denise became involved after visiting Jen to drop off a donation. Since that time, she has been instrumental in the Beauty Bank's growth and success, and selflessly gives her time to coordinate all the charity's activities.

Denise herself has volunteered an average of 30 hours each week for the past two years. The Beauty Bank, in addition to being the signature charity partner of the Cronulla Sharks, is also a deserving finalist in the community service category of this year's Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. I once again congratulate the Beauty Bank's fantastic team on everything they have achieved. The positive difference that these volunteers have made in the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in our community cannot be overstated.

INGHAM INSTITUTE FOR APPLIED MEDICAL RESEARCH

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:17): I am delighted to see that everyone has returned safely from the winter break. The Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research in south-western Sydney is an outstanding research facility for preventative medical research in this State and this nation. This admired and respected not-for-profit medical research organisation relies on philanthropy and public support to conduct

world-class research that, importantly, benefits not only my community of Campbelltown but also New South Wales, Australia and the globe through cancer research.

Founding benefactor Bob Ingham, AO, wanted to give back to the south-west, and formed the institute through collaboration with the University of New South Wales, Western Sydney University and the South Western Sydney Local Health District. On 23 October 2012 this invaluable facility was opened officially by former Prime Minister the Hon. Julia Gillard. It provides vital resources to tackle a disease that is likely to touch us or one of our loved ones in some way during our lifetime. Human life is of inestimable value; it is our sole greatest treasure and beyond any price. The Ingham Institute adjoins Liverpool Hospital.

In April, I had the privilege and opportunity to visit and explore its state-of-the-art research precinct, which includes a six-storey building that houses research laboratories; a clinical skills and simulation centre; a research bunker that contains the MRI-linac, which is a unique cancer therapy technology and is only one of four in the world; a clinical trials unit; and a biobank. I thank Professor Michael Barton for hosting the other researchers and me. More than 300 researchers, 80 Doctors of Philosophy, Masters of Science, and undergraduate students make up the 35 research groups at the institute. The group leaders are also clinicians in south-west Sydney hospitals. The focus of the medical research program means that laboratory results are transformed into direct health benefits in the form of new treatments and standards of care for local, national and international communities.

The central mission of the Ingham Institute is to enable real clinical outcomes to be translated more effectively from the laboratory bench to the hospital bedside and the community to ultimately save lives. The strategy of the institute for the next five years is to guide the research activity decisions it supports for thousands of cancer sufferers now and in the future. Its main goals are to support high-quality applied medical research, build capacity for the research in south-west Sydney and beyond, and sustain a strong and collaborative profile with a strong interest in the expansion of Campbelltown and Macarthur given the inevitable increase in population in those cities and the opportunities that will bring.

The institute's clinical trials confirm whether medicines are safe and effective to be introduced as new treatments. The clinical trials unit prides itself on producing high-quality data and streamlined research and ethics. The unit specialises in gastroenterology, haematology, injury and rehabilitation, intensive care, neurology, oncology, palliative care, renal diseases, and respiratory and sleep medicines. A standout feature of the institute's clinical skills centre is the high-fidelity robotic mannequin and two simulated operating theatres to enable mock operations. The 3D digital dissection table provides the unique opportunity to teach anatomy in a digital and interactive format to students, junior doctors and nurses. The Ingham Institute's research growth is planned to match healthcare service demands, support recruitment to clinical trials, sustain research and improve the overall availability and delivery of quality health services.

The Ingham Institute plans to expand from its existing Liverpool facility and potentially develop a new facility within or around the Campbelltown Hospital campus, with both developments scheduled to be operational by 2021. The proposed expansion of the institute at Campbelltown will mean that it will be staffed mostly by local clinicians and researchers with some cross-appointments from other south-west Sydney hospitals. The research precinct location provides good proximity for researchers to move to clinical and laboratory settings and the South Western Sydney Clinical School. The benefits will be fantastic. We now know that the average overall best survival rate of cancer sufferers is 65 per cent, whereas in the 1980s it was 42 per cent. It is a great organisation and I know this place is proud to support it.

TRIBUTE TO MARK YOUNGBLUTT

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:22): This afternoon I bring to the attention of the House the career of a recently retired Director of Schools in the Port Macquarie electorate, whom I have had the pleasure of working with since 2011. Mark Youngblutt has been a career public servant and he deserves our thanks and recognition. Mark has contributed significantly to the New South Wales Department of Education in senior executive roles, including School Education Director between April 2009 and July 2013 and Director, Public Schools New South Wales, from July 2013 until his retirement on 9 July this year. Mark studied at the Northern Rivers College of Advanced Education from 1976 and commenced his teaching career with the department in February 1979 when he was appointed as teacher in charge at Gunningbland Public School.

In April 1987, he was appointed as executive teacher at Parkes Public School. This was followed by appointments as principal at Willow Tree Public School, Finley Public School and Westport Public School in 1999. Mark Youngblutt has devoted his entire career to educational excellence and has displayed distinguished and exemplary leadership in all roles that he has undertaken. Through this commitment and dedication to teaching and leadership, Mark has deservedly received the highest respect from colleagues and students.

Mark has demonstrated the values of public education in New South Wales and has proven to be a positive mentor and role model to staff, principals and director colleagues, as well as to members of the wider community. I am certainly not alone in expressing the commendations that Mark so deserves. Lorraine Haddon, principal of Hastings Secondary College, Port Macquarie Campus, has also paid tribute to Mark, especially as a catalyst in the formation of the Hastings Secondary College, which incorporated Port Macquarie High School and Westport High School. She states:

Mark coordinated the many meetings and wide spread consultation involved in the project. In 2014 Mark set up the Steering Committee that started work on the practicalities of the formation of the college including its naming as Hastings Secondary College.

Mark provided counsel and guidance to the committee through the many and often complex decisions including starting times, the structure of the day, sharing curriculum, how travel between the two campuses could work, college values, the college emblem, college promotion and how to engender co-operation between the staff on both sites. All these decisions required consultation with staff, students and parents.

In addition, Mark oversaw the appointment of the college's first executive principal, Dr Wayne Ible.

The college officially started in 2015 with senior students sharing curriculum and the establishment of a genuine spirit of cooperation between the campuses. Under Mark's guidance the college has gone from strength to strength and is another successful chapter in public education in the Port Macquarie-Hastings.

Jock Garven, principal of Lake Cathie Public School, also recognised Mark's work. He states:

As Mark Youngblutt retires, we have had the chance to reflect on the many schools in which he has been a teacher, principal, as a Director and Regional Director and the enormous legacy he leaves for each community he has been involved with.

His leadership in the area of Aboriginal Education has been outstanding from connections with community locally to leadership of schools throughout the North Coast of NSW, helping to connect the community and to raise the achievement levels of Aboriginal students.

Mark is certainly respected throughout the professional teaching community. However, more than that, he is respected as a great person; he is friendly, positive, enthusiastic, intelligent, considerate and strategic. He certainly has had a significant impact on students, families, schools and communities for 40 years.

That is tremendous and justified praise from two local principals. On behalf of all public education students, teachers and support staff, and the broader community, I congratulate Mark Youngblutt on his outstanding career and wish him and his wife, Alison, all the very best for the future. I am also looking forward to working with the new Director of Schools, Graham Small, with whom I am meeting next week. I have no doubt that he understands the very big shoes he has to fill.

NSW STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (12:26): I draw the attention of the House to an extremely popular group of individuals, not only in my electorate but also across New South Wales. I refer in my electorate to the men and women of the Hunters Hill State Emergency Service [SES]. Off the record, they are known as the "men and woman in orange". In time of crisis, the sight of one of these angels in orange is one to behold—one offering comfort and care. Recently I was happy to deputise for my dear friend and ministerial colleague Troy Grant, the Minister for Emergency Services, in attending the Hunters Hill SES annual presentation night. It was an awards evening coupled with a dinner. It certainly was a fun night involving recognition, mateship, stories and camaraderie. The membership of the SES comprises volunteers, so their service is genuine, selfless and unconditional.

On 3 July, I was privileged to present 10 volunteers with five national medals and five New South Wales SES Long Service medals. It is with pride that this member for Lane Cove advises the House that one of those medals was presented to the wife of the local member. Yes, my much better half was recognised for her 10 years with the SES in service to the people of Hunters Hill. In fact, I met Alicia through this unit, and after all these years she still loves the SES. The other volunteers who received the New South Wales SES 10 Year Long Service certificate and medal were Michael Kelly and Russell Evans. I also acknowledge Mark Allerton, Raquel Robichaux, Peter Dadd, and Ian Dear, who all received the New South Wales SES 15 Year Long Service certificate and the national medal. The recipients of the New South Wales SES 5 Year Long Service certificate were Belinda Jackson and Christian Colinard. Christian also received the Donald Oil Award.

We who sit in this hallowed Chamber know there is never suitable recognition of the outstanding work put in by SES volunteers across this State. Over just the past year, the volunteers of the New South Wales SES Hunters Hill Unit have done a wonderful job, giving more than 6,000 volunteering hours helping their local community through storms, floods and other emergencies. The awards I was humbled to present represent a combined total of more than 115 years' service, recognising not only the volunteers' years of service but also their diligence and dedication to the safety of their and my community.

There is obviously a wealth of knowledge in the NSW SES Hunters Hill unit. Unit members meet weekly on a Monday evening for training and to perform other necessary administrative, finance, operational and planning functions. Members might also meet on other weeknights or weekends for additional unit management, training or exercises. The brilliant Hunters Hill unit has well-trained members in the various combat roles, including storm operators, flood operators and swift water technicians, in addition to well-trained operations and support volunteers. The NSW SES Hunters Hill unit is one of 11 units that comprise the Sydney Northern Region. The unit is responsible for the Hunters Hill local government area [LGA], which comprises parts of Gladesville and the suburbs of Henley, Hunters Hill, Huntleys Cove, Huntleys Point and Woolwich. The LGA stretches from Pittwater Road to Onion Point and the confluence of Lane Cove and Parramatta rivers.

The members of Hunters Hill SES have a long and proud history of assisting their community with invaluable emergency responses during floods, storms and other emergencies. There is no question that people within my electorate—and, indeed, across the State—know they can depend on the men and women in orange for help and protection during emergencies. While words can seem inadequate when speaking about the orange gang, let us not forget the constant support of families and employers, without which the proud members of the NSW SES would be unable to fulfil their role.

We in this Chamber know that members of the SES do not volunteer in order to receive awards or accolades. They turn out in times of storm, flood, fire, accidents and myriad emergencies simply because they want to help. They want to bring their expertise to someone who simply needs help at that moment. As a local member of Parliament I am truly honoured to know the men and women in orange who comprise the ranks of the NSW SES Hunters Hill unit. I thank them for allowing me to share the dais at their recent annual presentation night. I give special acknowledgement to the event coordinator, Louise Bertoni. On behalf of the grateful community, I thank all members of the Hunters Hill SES for volunteering and for the time that they put into maintaining an incredibly professional unit that is on call in our communities in times of crisis.

TRIBUTE TO LES JAMES MURRAY, AM

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (12:31): Today I acknowledge the passing of Les James Murray, AM. A true colossus of football has left us. We are deeply saddened by the passing of Les Murray, who forged a distinguished career in sports and in our communities through his sports broadcasting and unyielding advocacy for multiculturalism and refugees. Les was born László Üрге on the outskirts of Budapest in Hungary. Les is a shining example of the Australian migrant success story. He migrated to Australia after the Second World War from war-torn Hungary.

Over the years, Les' tremendous contribution to football and the media earned him the nickname "Mr Football". Mr Football was well known for his devotion to what he loved: sport, community and family. Les' career in sports broadcasting spanned more than 3½ decades and helped shape football in Australia into what we see before us today—"the world game", as coined by Les himself. He anchored the coverage of a record eight world cups for SBS, with the series being broadcast into Australian homes for well over 30 years. We will never forget the dulcet tones and wonderful images of Mr Football. For the past 34 years the football families of Australia have been listening to and watching Les Murray on SBS television. Les began his trade of commentating whilst sitting in the stands watching local football, much to the annoyance of those sitting beside him. Following a stint as a reporter at The Sun, Les landed his first gig commentating at SBS.

Les will certainly be remembered for his onscreen partnership alongside Captain Soccerroo, the late Johnny Warren. Their common love of football and wide admiration of all things Brazilian will long be remembered. The grief expressed by the community is enormous. The Prime Minister, members of Parliament and community leaders have all paid their respects to the late Les Murray, AM. Tonight the Football Federation Australia [FFA] Cup campaign kicks off with all teams wearing black armbands as a mark of respect for the great man. Les was a beautiful man, a true icon and an inspiration to all Australians. One could say that Les Murray was to football what Richie Benaud was to cricket. The football community is mourning the loss of its godfather.

Les had a unique way of making everyone he met feel special; he was a true people person. His passion for helping others and his ongoing advocacy for multiculturalism and refugees stretched far and wide. It is no wonder that so many multicultural communities claim Les as their own. It was his charm that captivated the SBS audiences for 34 years. His passion and charisma put football on the map in this country. I cannot imagine what future World Cup SBS telecasts will be like without Les. There is no doubt that the Soccerroos and Matildas will be feeling the weight of his loss and I am sure social media and tweets will show the magnitude of their grief.

As I said, there will only ever be one Les Murray on our television screens. Who else could pronounce Ronaldo, Rooney, Verón, Suárez, van Basten, Buffon, Xavi, Iniesta, Drogba, Hazard, Tevez, Schweinsteiger and Gerrard without difficulty? The only person who could say those names without a hitch was the legend himself, Les Murray. I note that the Minister for Sport is at the table. I offer our deepest condolences to Les' partner, Maria,

his daughters, Tania and Natalie, his extended family and the football family in Australia and around the globe. We have lost an icon. I say these final few words to a personal and dear friend: Vale Les James Murray, AM.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (12:36): Whilst I have no doubt that many more words will be said about Les Murray, it would be remiss of me as Minister for Sport not to acknowledge the contribution by the member for Fairfield. The word "legend" is thrown around far too often in sporting parlance these days, but there is no doubt that Les Murray was a legend of Australian sport. He is the person who brought football into living rooms all over the country. Les not only made football part of the heart and soul of our dominating sporting culture but also was an unwavering champion for the our most outstanding success story—multiculturalism in Australia. His commitment and dedication to football was tremendous. His commitment to Australia far outweighed it.

HORSERACING INDUSTRY

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (12:37): It gives me great pleasure to be back in this House to talk about the good things that are happening around the State and in my electorate of Bathurst. Today, 1 August, is a special occasion because as Minister for Racing I have the opportunity to wish all horses a very happy birthday, and what an outstanding present New South Wales horses have recently received. Racing NSW has purchased the equestrian property known as Bandanora, which is about 2,600 acres or just over 1,000 hectares in size. I am pleased to note that the property is in my electorate, about 40 kilometres north of Lithgow. This is a win for regional New South Wales, racing and the Central West. Horses on the property will be retrained, rehabilitated or rehomed. They might be retrained for equestrian events such as polo or to become police horses. Some might become a family pet. Others will remain on the property for the rest of their lives.

The property can accommodate up to 500 horses. Importantly, the horses will be afforded the best of care and there will be opportunities to find suitable new homes for them. The property will be used as a location for training future participants in the industry, and as a home for retired champions of the turf. The property will be a weekend destination for people who want to purchase a retrained thoroughbred. The 1890s farmhouse on the property will be converted to bed-and-breakfast accommodation, as will the nine old, authentic shearers' huts. People will be able to visit the property and spend a night or a weekend. They will be able to look at the horses or become involved in other activities in the area. There are great eco-tourism opportunities on the property. Trout fishing, four-wheel driving and trail riding will be established at the property as part of the farm-stay experience. It will be an excellent tourism asset for the Central West and a major economic contributor to the local area, which means many more jobs.

I acknowledge the excellent work of Peter V'landys and Racing NSW on this initiative and the other work that is being done to ensure that New South Wales remains the premier State for thoroughbred racing. Last year, Racing NSW established the Horse Welfare Fund, through a 1 per cent levy on all prize money paid in New South Wales. The fund ensures that all New South Wales thoroughbred horses are cared for after racing, as are those thoroughbreds that never made it to the racetrack. Racing in New South Wales has never looked so strong. The New South Wales Government is very pleased to support racing in this State through tax parity reforms that drive competition with other States, encourage investment and support jobs growth. This year will also see the first running of The Everest, the world's richest race on turf. This is another vote of confidence in racing by Racing NSW and the Australian Turf Club.

I wish all the horses running at Cessnock today a happy birthday. Race 1 will be at 12.55, only about 10 minutes away. I will go through the field, which has some good selections for members of Parliament—other than The Greens, who are opposed to horseracing, gambling, and fun of any sort. In Race 1—the IGA Liquor Plate—members could put a few dollars on Ultimate Decision or perhaps Moment to Test. There is a horse in Race 1 named Terrigal. I wish the horses at Wagga Wagga a happy birthday. The Greens might like to put 50¢ each way on race 4 at 2.35 on a horse called Damn Wicked Left. Happy birthday to all the horses in New South Wales. I wish them all an excellent year ahead. I congratulate Racing NSW on the initiatives it has put in place.

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (12:42): There is no way that I could miss the opportunity to respond on the subject of the horses' birthday. I echo the words of the member for Bathurst and recognise the fantastic leadership that he has shown since taking over the racing portfolio. I particularly recognise the work that has been undertaken by Racing NSW and all of those involved in the industry to ensure that the welfare of horses is paramount to people involved in the industry. I am a passionate advocate for the racing industry. Its capacity to provide employment opportunities throughout New South Wales comes from the fact that people involved in the industry love horses and are involved with them in so many different ways. The development of this estate in the electorate of the member for Bathurst demonstrates once again a very strong commitment to the welfare of horses engaged in racing in New South Wales.

SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (12:43): I bring to the attention of the House the issue of single-use plastic bags. First, I congratulate the many people in our community who have worked so hard for so long to advocate for our environment, and who have put pressure on the two big supermarkets in particular to change their approach to the issuing of single-use plastic bags. Together, we have held rallies, made speeches, marched, written letters, created petitions, made videos and participated in a range of creative actions. Our collective efforts paid off just two weeks ago when Woolworths, Coles and Harris Farm Markets announced they would stop supplying single-use plastic bags.

In our local area, in just a few weeks, more than 1,000 people spoke up and asked the environment Minister to announce a ban on plastic bags. My colleague in the Upper House Mehreen Faruqi has gathered 120,000 signatures in support of her bill to ban single-use plastic bags. That is a great win, a collective win for all of those who have worked so hard for a step forward in this area. I acknowledge the work of Greenpeace, Boomerang Alliance, Clean Up Australia and many other hardworking advocates who care passionately about this beautiful State of ours.

However, let us be under no illusion that the decision by Woolworths and Coles was the result of a sudden attack of conscience. These giant retailers took this positive step because the people of New South Wales, their customers, demanded it. Press releases issued by Coles and Woolworths highlight their customers' demands to end the practice of supplying single-use plastic bags. In just over a few weeks more than 1,000 people in my community spoke up and signed a petition urging the Minister for the Environment to announce a ban on plastic bags. As I said, my colleague in the upper House Mehreen Faruqi has almost 120,000 signatures from people in this State who support her bill to ban single-use plastic bags.

Last week Minister Upton attended the National Meeting of Environment Ministers, which was convened to progress work on threatened species protection, improve the environment for human health and discuss climate change. The Minister had the opportunity to show leadership and take millions of plastic bags out of our natural environment each year, but I am disappointed to say that she did not. We are told that the Government's intransigence on this issue has stopped a ban in Western Australia and Victoria. If the big supermarkets can do it, why can the Government not do it? It is not enough to say that the Government no longer needs to act because retailers have taken steps already. The retailers' actions are voluntary and not enforceable. Despite steps taken by Coles, Woolworths and Harris Farm, at least 10 million bags will continue to pollute our environment each year. Tens of thousands of birds, whales, dolphins, seals and turtles will be impacted and die as a result of their use.

By the time I have finished speaking today nearly 500 more plastic bags will have found their way into our parks, beaches and waterways. Globally, eight million tons of plastics leak into the ocean each year, which is the equivalent of one garbage truck of plastic every minute of every day. It is impossible to overstate the damage that these bags are doing. As we learn more about microplastics it has become apparent that a large majority of all biodiversity could be ingesting tiny particles of plastic that are left behind when plastic bags break down in the sea and sun. On the Great Barrier Reef we now know that even coral is ingesting plastic at about the same rate as it is ingesting food. In the North Pacific an area of floating plastic rubbish is the size of Turkey. This plastic rubbish has come from countries such as Australia and from States such as New South Wales. It pollutes our ocean, and traps and kills millions of fish and animals.

In some species of seabirds more than 60 per cent of the population have plastic in their gut. It is estimated that a large majority of all seabirds will have ingested plastic by 2050. Data across 10 international studies shows that on average 27 per cent of all seafood tested was contaminated by plastic. Plastic has been found in a range of food sources beyond seafood; scientists have found plastic particles in table salt, honey and even beer. New South Wales is falling further and further behind on this crucial issue. South Australia, the Northern Territory, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory have banned single-use plastic bags. The Queensland Government has announced a plan to ban lightweight single-use plastic bags by 2018.

Across the world countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal, China, South Africa, Botswana, Eritrea, Kenya, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somaliland, Tanzania and the United Arab Emirates have banned plastic bags. Many European countries including Ireland, France, Belgium, Denmark, Macedonia and Italy charge a small tax on plastic bags. Changes to plastic bag use in the United Kingdom have seen billions of fewer bags used in that part of the world. Even the National Retail Association calls on the Government to act. The community has made it clear that it wants nothing less than a ban. When will the Premier listen to the people of this State and act to protect our precious environment?

CHRISTIANITY

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (12:48): On 20 July my wife and I had the good fortune to welcome Reverend Paul Sampson as the new rector of All Saints Anglican Church, North Epping. He has assumed this role after a number of years working in Africa. He will be a wonderful pastor to the North Epping community. He arrives at a time when there is a growing perception that Australia is an irreligious nation and that Christianity has not played and will never play a formative role in the constitution of Australian values. It is in this climate that to call yourself a Christian in contemporary society invites both the view that you are intolerant and backward, and a cool dismissal from those around you.

Contrary to this fiction, the Christian faith has made unparalleled contributions to the shaping of Australian character, and it has primarily been Christian values that have supplied much of that which is best in our great democracy. Over the past few weeks we have witnessed a number of aggressive and unjustified attacks levelled against the Christian community. Today I rise in defence of the Christian faith, and to bring to light the spiritual capital that the Christian community contributes to the strengthening of our professions and our workplaces, our governments and our legal systems, our health, welfare and educational institutions and, most importantly, the foundation for every society: our homes and our families. Recently, journalist Julia Baird claimed on the ABC:

... the church is not just failing to sufficiently address domestic violence, it is both enabling and concealing it.

It is unfortunate that the national broadcaster would set a new standard for poor journalism in using domestic violence for the purposes of political expediency and sensationalist narrative. Consciously or otherwise, the ABC has made the baseless claim that Christian husbands are more likely to abuse their wives. In fact, it has ignored the body of research that points to the fact that Christian men are more likely to be better and more loving spouses. Parallel with this decidedly anti-Christian bias from the ABC, the Queensland Department of Education recently made the following recommendation to schools:

While not explicitly prohibited by the EGPA (Education General Provisions Act 2006) or EGPR (Education General Provisions Regulation 2006), nor referenced in the RI (religious instruction) policy statement, the Department expects schools to take appropriate action if aware that students participating in RI are evangelising to students who do not participate in their RI class, given this could adversely affect the school's ability to provide a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for all students.

Neil Foster, Associate Professor of Law at the University of Newcastle, makes the point that this "expectation" fails in a number of respects: the recommendation is not supported by legislation, it is discriminatory, it undermines freedom of speech, and it curbs the religious freedoms of students. I mention these incidents as but a few of the skirmishes currently being undertaken by the radical Left against the Christian faith. For more than 200 years we have truly been "the lucky country" because it has typically been Christians who have served on the front lines of our nation in social justice, education and charity. It has typically been Christians who have taken up the fight against poverty, prejudice and ignorance.

I ask those critics of the enormous good afforded by the Christian community: If today the Church abandoned its posts, who would provide the disadvantaged and marginalised with both the physical needs of food, clothing and shelter, but equally the social needs of warmth, friendship and respect? Who would cater to those who have fallen upon hard times? Who would comfort and support those found in the downward spiral of homelessness or those found in the grip of substance or relational abuse? All those people, and many, many more, are helped by countless, unacknowledged and unappreciated Christians who seek no glory for themselves but only the betterment of their fellow man, woman, and child.

The reality of the Christian mission is that of a thousand quiet kindnesses. Christians have lent an eager hand to help and, perhaps more importantly, have offered an ear to listen. Christians have been, and will continue to be, the mediators and conciliators in conflicting factions in Australian history: between capital and labour, between black and white, between men and women, and between war and peace. Our failure to acknowledge, honour and recall our Christian heritage is at our own peril. I welcome Paul Sampson to his new role as the Rector of All Saints Anglican Church, North Epping.

HOMELESSNESS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:53): Living costs are rising and our housing affordability crisis is worsening, while wage growth is stagnant and chronic unemployment and underemployment are a fact of life for many people in Wallsend. Homelessness is rising in our local community. For many facing homelessness, sleeping rough, couch-surfing or living out of their cars, accessing services is incredibly difficult, if not impossible. They may not know how to use the services or how to get access to them. The statistics are sobering. Based on 2011 Census of Population and Housing figures, 105,237 Australians were homeless at that time.

According to Hunter Homeless Connect, the evidence is all too clear that these figures have risen significantly over the past five years. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare says that more than 279,000 Australians sought help from specialist homelessness agencies across the country last year, equivalent to one in 85 people. Many members of this place are all too aware of homelessness as many homeless people visit our offices seeking help. Sixty per cent of those seeking help were female and a quarter were Indigenous, while collectively they received over 22 million days of support and about seven million nights of accommodation, according to data compiled by Hunter Homeless Connect. Shockingly, 275 requests for assistance were unable to be met every day.

Today is Hunter Homeless Connect Day, an annual event that aims to link people in need to vital services. Hunter Homeless Connect is a volunteer group that coordinates Hunter Homeless Connect Day. It aims to help people who are homeless, who are doing it tough or who are at risk of homelessness. The event has been running since 2009. According to Hunter Homeless Connect, services include "accommodation and housing, health and wellbeing, legal and financial assistance" and lots more. In 2017, the theme is "Fresh Eyes". Hunter Homeless Connect says "the day's focus turns to the community and how we see those who are experiencing homelessness or those who are at risk of becoming homeless and how we can help". Today, more than 80 government and non-government services will gather at the basketball stadium in Broadmeadow to offer access to "free health checks, including eye checks and access to free glasses, immunisations, podiatry services, diabetes screening and more". It is great that these services are being offered to some of the most vulnerable people in our community. I volunteer with Rotary Wallsend and all who participate have a wonderful day.

Hunter residents have also donated generously to provide "bedding, clothing [and] toiletry care packs for both women and men", and I applaud those who have donated. I encourage donations for the 2018 Hunter Homeless Connect Day, although I acknowledge that it would be great if we could rid our community of the scourge of homelessness and not need to have this day. Hunter Homeless Connect has also recently published *My Connections Home—Journeys Through Homelessness*. This book chronicles the reality of homelessness in the Hunter, told through nine emotionally charged profiles of Hunter residents who have been homeless and come out the other side.

I acknowledge the chairperson of Hunter Homeless Connect, Peter Di Girolamo, who lives in my electorate, for his tireless work in combating homelessness both through Hunter Homeless Connect and other avenues. I also acknowledge other members of Hunter Homeless Connect's committee, including vice chair Scott Redman, treasurer Sally Hoyle, secretary Tanya Rowney, fundraising officer Mark O'Dwyer and committee members Sally Regan, Deborah Blackhouse, Rudi Vitasz, Alyson Segrott and Andrew Nelson. These people, along with the volunteers who have worked so hard to make Hunter Homeless Connect Day such a success for nearly a decade now, deserve our thanks and gratitude. Homelessness is a scourge on our society, and we must do everything we can to support those impacted by it. We must work tirelessly to limit, if not eliminate, homelessness—and in the meantime we must help people who are in need.

GENDER EQUALITY

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:58): On Monday 3 July in Tamworth a group of nearly 60 women from all walks of life gathered to contribute to the State's first ever Women's Strategy. Their views reflected the diverse experiences, perspectives, strengths and real needs of all women and girls not only in the Tamworth electorate but across regional New South Wales. The workshop was led by the Minister for Women, Tanya Davies, and aimed to improve equality and equity for women and girls in the Tamworth area. We need to be mindful that gender equality is not only a women's issue; it is a social and economic issue that affects everyone. This Government recognises the need to increase gender equality in the workforce as well as in voluntary and unpaid work. Although 57 per cent of women in New South Wales participate in the labour force, 41 per cent of working women are employed part-time—that is, for less than 35 hours per week.

In comparison, men make up 70 per cent of the workforce and only 15 per cent of men work part time. Among full-time workers, men still earn 14 per cent more each week than women. Women are also more likely to be casual workers, with 28 per cent of women in New South Wales employed on a casual basis, without leave entitlements, compared with 21 per cent of men. The workshop in Tamworth—and others across the State—will help the Government implement policies and strategies that address those numbers and other key issues for women in my electorate, including economic empowerment, health and wellbeing, culture and identity, and leadership. Another component of the workshop was how to engage men and boys with issues of gender equality. The Government cannot do this on its own and needs the community at large to support it in championing the cause.

A number of men's groups across the Tamworth electorate are looking to address the issue of gender equality and how to educate men and boys in that area. The outcomes of the consultations will be analysed, along with results from the New South Wales Government's Have Your Say survey. The NSW Women's Strategy will be released later this year. It was great to see the number of people who turned up for the Tamworth consultation,

and I thank those who attended. Their time was greatly appreciated and their input was extremely valuable. I look forward to reporting back to them and to staying connected with them on this very important issue.

WAGGA WAGGA ELECTORATE CANCER AND PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICES

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (13:01): Today I will inform the House about cancer services and palliative care in the Wagga Wagga electorate. A successful program is currently being run called the Palliative Care Home Support Program (PCHSP). Since its introduction in 2013, the PCHSP has allowed 138 people to fulfil their wish of dying at home in the Murrumbidgee Local Health District. During this time, 62 per cent of people who accessed the program and who later died were able to do so at home. Additionally, more than 200 carers in the area have been trained in palliative care as part of the program. The PCHSP provides a free package of 48 hours of end-of-life care for people at home who are in the deteriorating or terminal phase of their illness. Hours can be provided consecutively or in smaller blocks over time, as needed. The care includes overnight care, domestic support, personal care, and basic nursing care.

HammondCare, a national health service provider, runs the program in conjunction with Sacred Heart Health Service and Calvary Health Care Sydney. The program is funded by the NSW Ministry of Health, through a \$35 million New South Wales Government initiative aimed at improving access to palliative care. Funding for the program is guaranteed until 2018. The organisations that deal with the terminally ill—the Little Company of Mary, the Murrumbidgee Local Health District, and the Forrest Centre—have joined to improve the service. Part of the improvement is to build slow-stream bed accommodation for patients who are unwell and are unable to be supported in the home, or who choose to end their final days in hospital. A fundraising program has begun, with \$2 million raised already. The target is \$5 million. The funding will provide up to 10 beds for those who are in need of slow-stream beds and hospital care. It is a great initiative.

The community built the Riverina Cancer Care Centre in partnership with St Vincent's Health, which provided the equipment, expertise, medical personnel, et cetera. The community of Wagga Wagga raised \$3 million in 16 months and \$4 million in 24 months, and built a community-owned facility. The project was auspiced under the leadership of the former member for Wagga Wagga, the Hon. Joe Schipp, and a gentleman by the name of Tony Noun, whose name is synonymous across Australia with the development of cancer care centres. I place on record our thanks to Tony Noun and his team, who partnered successfully with Wagga Wagga. The centre opened in 2002 and delivers chemotherapy services that previously had been delivered in Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. Also in partnership with the State Government and the Murrumbidgee Local Health District, patients can now access the Riverina Cancer Care Centre and receive treatment, including chemotherapy.

This initiative has been so successful such is the need, sadly, for palliative care, chemotherapy and radiotherapy services. In fact, it is necessary to expand the facility, particularly the chemotherapy services, so that people from the region can be treated in a nice environment. I pay tribute to the people of Wagga Wagga and surrounding regions for their fundraising efforts—towns such as Young, Cootamundra, Tumut, Tumbarumba, Griffith and Narrandera all had fundraising committees; I know because I was chairman of a fundraising committee. We need to raise an additional \$3 million to complete the cancer care package.

When the radiotherapy centre was built, accommodation was provided at Lilier Lodge in partnership with the Cancer Council NSW and Can Assist. Again, sadly, that has been a great success as it is full of people wanting to access cancer services. This issue affects us all, as one in three people suffer from cancer. All those organisations have been working collaboratively to improve the lives of those people who are afflicted by cancer. I acknowledge everyone involved and congratulate them. I look forward to seeing the new facility in Wagga Wagga finished.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyn) (13:06): I commend the member for Wagga Wagga for his advocacy on this crucial issue. I know only too well what a good palliative care unit can do for one's community. I had the great pleasure of seeing the establishment of a 20-bed palliative care unit at Concord Hospital in my electorate; it is absolutely phenomenal. I commend the member for Wagga Wagga for bringing this issue to the House because it is important not only to his community but also to the entire State.

SYDENHAM TO BANKSTOWN URBAN RENEWAL CORRIDOR

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (13:07): After an agonising 14-month wait, the Minister for Planning has finally announced the Government's updated plans for the Sydenham to Bankstown urban renewal corridor. Unfortunately, despite the long wait, very little work has been done to address the significant concerns of residents, who will see their suburbs changed forever. The Government plans to add an extra 6,000 units in Marrickville—up from 4,000 in the 2015 plans. Dulwich Hill will see an additional 2,000 units, which is just 59 fewer than the 2,059 proposed in the 2015 draft strategy. This is despite the Minister indicating that the number had dropped by 1,400 units. This claim has been revealed as slippery mathematics at best and downright deception at worst.

These new plans fly in the face of the submissions made by the community to the first set of flawed plans, including 561 submissions from Dulwich Hill alone. As has always been the case, the plans provide no meaningful commitments to new open or recreational space, with only a few civic squares and lineal parks promised to be delivered by developers as "works in kind." As anyone who lives in the inner west knows, developers are unlikely to deliver on these promises and a lot more than just small, narrow parks are required to meet the growing demand for genuine recreational spaces and sporting fields. There are no commitments around extra funding for schools or healthcare services along the line.

In the recent budget no additional classrooms were provided for Marrickville or Dulwich Hill, despite 75 per cent of primary schools in my electorate being either close to or at capacity. There was no commitment around additional funding for Canterbury Hospital, despite the projections for crushing demand on hospital services based on existing building approvals. Shamefully, there has been no commitment in these plans to deliver affordable housing, inclusionary zoning or new social housing. Instead, the rezoning will see the removal of swathes of existing affordable housing, particularly around the rezoned areas in Petersham Road, Marrickville. It is abundantly clear that these plans are designed for developers, not for the community. Perhaps most galling for the people of Marrickville and Dulwich Hill is the fact that the rezoning is predicated on the conversion of the existing T3 Bankstown line for the Sydney Metro City and Southwest project.

The Government promises that this project will transform public transport for the south-west of Sydney, but it has failed at every turn to adequately explain to the community the supposed benefits of the project. Rather than having an open and honest conversation with the community before the attempted rezoning, the Government has arrogantly put the cart before the horse in one of the greatest failures of public consultation this community has experienced. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure has had his eye on other things such as the privatisation of the inner west bus service, which absolutely no-one in my community wants, yet at the same time proposes to convert a train line that is meeting current public demand when that investment could be put to better use in under-served communities, particularly those in Western Sydney.

The Government's failure to explain its project has been met with misinformation and confusion across the community, including the claim that the entire Bankstown line will be ripped up and replaced with an alternative gauge. There are even claims that the line will be replaced with light rail. I do not blame the community for being confused about this project: the Government and the Minister have failed to properly explain the project's benefits. At the same time, the Government is asking the inner west community to accept mass rezonings of 100,000 or more people along the line without the community infrastructure needed to support it. This is a con and goes to the heart of public transport planning under this Government. It is yet another chapter in the relentless privatisation of our public assets, designed to benefit developers and business interests at the expense of local residents.

Labor will always fight to make sure that the train line stays in public hands. We will prioritise investments in public transport so that under-served communities across Sydney are given access to quality and affordable services. We will fight for additional services on the existing light rail in Dulwich Hill, and we will fight tooth and nail to keep inner west buses in public hands. We understand better than those opposite exactly how important community infrastructure is to local communities. The Sydney to Bankstown corridor rezonings are nothing more than one of the greatest con jobs perpetrated by this Government against the people of the inner west. These are plans for developers, not for the inner west.

URBAN PLANNING STRATEGY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (13:12): The issue of urban consolidation and development is a contentious one. While there is a need to provide for a growing population through increasing dwelling densities, particularly in areas close to public transport links, there is also understandable resistance to change. Those with established homes in leafy, quiet suburbs designated for growth can find the changing nature of their suburb difficult to reconcile as trees and open spaces are lost to high-rise apartments. Increasing traffic, people and pressure on established services are some of the implications, apart from the visual, that need to be considered in reaching a fair and reasonable balance.

In the Ku-ring-gai Council area of my electorate of Davidson, an assessment was made in about 2004 of the need to increase dwelling numbers in the context of the NSW Metropolitan Strategy. After substantial community angst and negotiation, it was agreed between council and the then NSW Labor Government that the increase for Ku-ring-gai should be set at 10,000 new dwellings by 2031. This is an agreement that should be honoured and one that I have consistently stood by—despite some, including NSW Labor, wanting to abandon the agreement and increase the number of new dwellings by 2031 beyond that target. Prior to the 2011 New South Wales election, Labor proposed boosting the 2031 target by 40 per cent to 14,000 new dwellings while the Liberals remained steadfast, supporting the agreed target of 10,000. Before the 2015 election, the Foley-led Labor

Opposition indicated it wanted to triple dwelling targets for Sydney's north, which includes the Ku-ring-gai Council area. On 24 February 2015, the North Shore Times reported the Leader of the Opposition as asserting:

The Liberals are letting their North Shore heartland off from taking their fair share of the burden of Sydney's growth. He effectively called for a tripling of new homes on the North Shore. The Premier has correctly stated that the North Shore has done its bit in tackling population growth and that it is very important to protect the amenity of well-established areas. The Ku-ring-gai area is taking its fair share of new dwellings, despite substantial community resistance from some quarters. The agreement for 10,000 new dwellings by 2031 should be honoured by all. The extent of concern about overdevelopment in my electorate is reflected in the results of a recent constituent survey. More than one-third of the roughly 500 responses indicated that overdevelopment was their issue of main concern. There has been some discussion involving the Greater Sydney Commission on increasing new dwelling targets through to the year 2036. Any local dwelling target increase out to 2036 should be preceded by a process involving appropriate community consultation. However, based on available information, I do not currently see a need for further rezoning in the Ku-ring-gai Council area.

The Northern Beaches side of my electorate should also take its fair share of increased dwellings. The Northern Beaches Council is tonight considering rezoning the area around the new Northern Beaches Hospital at Frenchs Forest for an additional 5,360 dwellings. Some of the rezoned area falls within my electorate of Davidson. It is further evidence of Northern Sydney taking its fair share of new dwellings to cope with Sydney's growing population. Importantly, some of these new Northern Beaches Council dwellings are recommended to be contingent on improved transport solutions such as the Beaches Link tunnel that New South Wales Labor wants to trash. Labor refuses to support new infrastructure in my area, just as Labor reneged on its Northern Beaches Hospital and Spit Bridge promises despite advocating huge increases in dwelling targets in the region.

In contrast, the Berejiklian Government is delivering new and enhanced health, education, road, public transport and other infrastructure for my electorate. This reflects the planned and integrated approach the New South Wales Government is taking to increase housing availability and associated infrastructure. In closing, I want to refer to another related issue that has been subject to local discussion: immigration. While migration levels are controlled federally, there are understandably calls for a moderating of historically high overseas entry numbers as they are contributing heavily to higher population growth than previously projected. We need to act responsibly in protecting local areas while allowing for future population growth. That is a challenge.

SOUTH COAST RAIL LINE

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (13:17): Today I will talk about the South Coast train line. To be frank, the extreme overcrowding on the service is becoming ridiculous. I know, as do the member for Shellharbour and the member for Wollongong, that one particular service is of concern: the 3.24 p.m. service from Central Station to Wollongong. I have caught this service many times. Last week, after being inundated with correspondence, material, concerns, emails, and messages on social media, I accessed the service. I arrived on the platform at five minutes to three, half an hour before the train departs from Central Station. At that time, the train was already starting to reach capacity. The users of this train service spend at least 1½ hours for a 90-kilometre trip. It is a difficult journey that they do early in the morning and repeat in the afternoon to return home. These passengers often are unable to get a seat even if they arrive at Central Station half an hour before the train leaves. I spoke to many people who use that train service in order to understand if the crowding that day was unusual or par for the course.

They said this has been going on for too long and that this Government is refusing to listen. They said that just once they would like to see the Minister experience these conditions for an hour and a half as they do. Young women told me that they must sit in the train vestibule and on the carriage stairs. I asked them where they were going and they said that they were on their way to the northern parts of Wollongong in my electorate. It is ridiculous in this day and age that we cannot provide additional services to one of the largest commuter populations in this State.

The figures indicate that about 20,000 people leave our city each day for work. This is a population living close to the city where many labour opportunities are contracted back into our global city. That is not easy to do, and we understand that it is part of the challenge. However, we are not asking for a luxury service; we are not even asking for what our friends in northern Sydney get, which is services every 10 minutes or 15 minutes. We are simply asking that when people get on a peak-hour train to travel approximately 90 kilometres for an hour and half they can get a seat and that they are not crammed into train vestibules.

People should not have to force themselves into a seat or to squeeze into a stairway. Of course, someone with a disability, a physical impairment or mobility challenges should be able to access a suitable place on our trains. It is not 1900; it is 2017. The Illawarra is not some far distant land; it is close by. However, we are telling many people that they do not deserve a seat on a train, which they must use and on which they will be spending in excess of three hours a day to access employment or services in the city. Natalia said it clearly in a message she sent to me:

As a person with a physical disability, I now avoid catching trains at peak hour wherever possible. In a previous journey, I had to stand from Central to Helensburgh, because all seats were taken, including the disabled seats... It is disgusting that people from Wollongong are treated with such disdain & such a lack of care.

I urge the Government to fix this issue now.

ALBURY ELECTORATE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (13:22): I thank the Minister for Mental Health for coming to Albury on 28 July. She arrived at a critical time, following last week's launch of Living Well in Later Life. In Albury, we seek to undertake works to transform key infrastructure to deliver compassionate and professional treatment for those dealing with mental health issues in their lives or in the lives of the people they love. There are two limbs to the renewal in Albury. The first is the Brain and Mind Centre—a project I created in Albury to bring together all the services a person or family needs when dealing with mental illness. I thank the Minister for touring the likely site of the centre—a multistorey complex on the site of the Mercy Hospital set within beautiful established gardens and a health precinct campus. This is a truly exciting step forward, particularly after years of delay and confounding interstate bureaucracy. How can I not quote the Opposition shadow Minister for Mental Health, who in February while in Albury said about the Brain and Mind Centre:

It is obvious Mr Aplin and his government have not done their homework. The mental health needs of the Albury-Wodonga community have now been left high and dry.

They are hollow words from the Opposition as the Government's collaborative vision expands. The second limb centres on the electorate's only acute mental health facility located at Albury Hospital in Nolan House. There have been calls for new infrastructure works at Nolan House for many years. This is one case where we have been gamely hanging on to the tiger's tail only to find we are now being well and truly bitten. As the Minister saw on her visit, the High Dependency Unit has closed because it no longer meets safe practice standards; the necessary supervision of patients to contemporary standards is not possible. As a consequence of the forced closure, any patients requiring the highest level of support are now turned away and sent to the nearest alternative facilities, which are 127 kilometres to 175 kilometres distant.

One can imagine the additional stress this places on families and health practitioners at a time of crisis. Then there is the cost. We have to get the High Dependency Unit back in action, but our excellent and loyal staff cannot work there for workplace health and safety reasons. Of course, it is no better for patients. It is part of a building that was poorly designed. The structure is only 23 years old and I cannot understand how it was ever built this way. First, the shared toilets area is outside the field of visual surveillance by staff and a long way from help should an incident occur. Secondly, a gender safety issue has been recognised by management and this requires infrastructure modification. Thirdly, if staff members are assaulted by a patient they have to get their door key out, put it in the lock and attempt an exit to safety, which is too long. Nolan House needs rapid action, card keys, new locks and a safe room within reach. This is the age of ice methamphetamines, which introduces significant risks of serious physical attack on staff and other patients.

Fourthly, there are no proper consultation rooms in the facility. Consultations with the psychiatrist or with the family must take place in appropriate spaces or literally outside the secured facility. Fifthly, there are too many ligature points from which persons might hang themselves. Let us remove them now. I am not after the Ritz, but Nolan House is a facility well out of time. Its layout is flawed and the safety of patients and staff is compromised. Hardworking staff and good management keep it going. On the issue of funding, I turned to the Minister for Health for assistance. In the budget, New South Wales made a contribution of \$500,000 for remedial works on Nolan House, matching a similar commitment from Victoria. What is apparent is that this will not cover all urgent works. Compliance will require the removal of walls, new doorways, the expansion of rooms, improved and enlarged staff work and supervision centres, bathrooms added to patient rooms, lines of sight created, new locks, additional exits, removal of ligature points, and so on—in other words, a rebuild of the order of \$20 million. In Albury we feel conflicted about spending \$1 million on works that will disappear in the eventual major rebuild.

I first raised questions about Nolan House with the former Government and I will not stop advocating for fairness for the Albury community. I will make representations to bring forward plans for the rebuild. There could be significant savings to plan this work now to fit with the \$30 million rebuild of the emergency department. As Dr England, Clinical Director for Medical Health, said on our visit, Nolan House is a custodial model built to lock up people. That is the primary design focus, as the Minister and I saw on our tour. It is time to construct a facility which, to its very bones, supports modern strategies for patient care, healing and engagement and, pressingly, within a facility that meets workplace health and safety standards. We have wonderful staff who need our support. But lock, stock and barrel, Nolan House—the building—is an antique and must go. This is not a Government of bandaid solutions. There is work to be done.

OATLANDS PUBLIC SCHOOL DIAMOND JUBILEE FAIR

Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (13:27): I congratulate Tony D'Amore, the principal of Oatlands Public School, on the school's upcoming Diamond Jubilee Fair on Saturday 9 September. The school is celebrating 60 years of quality schooling at Oatlands. I have had the great pleasure of visiting the school on numerous occasions. I have met with the talented students and seen them perform firsthand at school ceremonies such as Education Week. I have met the hardworking and dedicated teachers, support staff and the many fantastic volunteers. This week I look forward to attending the school's Open Day, which includes a book fair and Future Focused Learning Parent Workshop. I commend the school for its outstanding results and significant improvements over the past four years. I congratulate Kim Gould, assistant principal at Oatlands Public School, who has played an instrumental role in these fantastic achievements. Ms Gould won the executive director's award for Parramatta. Principal Tony D'Amore said he was extremely proud of Kim for receiving this prestigious accolade.

Kim was selected from a number of nominees for this award for innovation and creativity in leading learning towards improved student outcomes—an outstanding achievement. Ms Gould is recognised as a hardworking and passionate educational leader who displays an extremely thorough knowledge of effective teaching and learning practices and who expertly leads teaching and learning in all curriculum areas. Mr D'Amore nominated Ms Gould for the award to commend her for her outstanding leadership in mathematics and numeracy over the past four years. Ms Gould has worked tirelessly over this period to improve student outcomes in mathematics. She has overseen the implementation of high-quality intervention programs and targeted professional learning, mentoring, exemplary collaborative planning and team teaching.

School data supports the outstanding achievement in this area over the past two to three years. The results are a credit to all teachers, but most importantly to Ms Gould for her tremendous leadership in this area. Her outstanding success was highlighted by the appearance of Oatlands Public School in the Sydney Morning Herald in March 2016 for making the NAPLAN high achiever list—a list of 80 New South Wales schools that achieved outstanding NAPLAN results in 2015. Oatlands Public School made the list for numeracy, with average scaled student growth scores at 137.3 compared to 94.3 for New South Wales Department of Education. Average scaled student growth score in the 2016 NAPLAN was also very pleasing at 116.4 compared to 92.6 for New South Wales Department of Education. This is a fantastic achievement. Congratulations go to Ms Gould, and to the hardworking staff and students at Oatlands Public School.

I also note that in 2013 the school re-established a parents and citizens [P and C] association that had been disbanded since 2010. Regular guidance and liaison with P and C members, particularly with the executive, in the first two years of operation has seen the P and C go from strength to strength. The P and C's tremendous efforts in 2016 under the leadership of Julie Fewes raised close to \$20,000. I have often said that an active P and C makes a huge difference in creating a great school community. I recognise all the hardworking P and C members and president Chantelle Jans for their enormous effort and commitment to Oatlands Public School.

The school also does a great job at embracing and celebrating diversity. The school works hard at maintaining a high profile within the local community and involving multicultural organisations in school activities. This has seen the school develop close and genuine partnerships with all parents. It is an approach that has resulted in an increasing number of people becoming actively involved in the school community. This is a win-win for the school and the community. I also recognise Oatlands Public School staff who have done a fabulous job in building a climate of mutual respect. This has enabled issues to be acknowledged and dealt with quickly and sensitively.

Through students, parents and teachers working closely together, relationships are strengthened and confidence in the school is built. The members of the school community respect and trust the staff at Oatlands. The school's proactive approach towards student welfare through the Positive Behaviour for Learning program has been a great success. Oatlands Public School has achieved significant improvements in behaviour over a four-year period, with referrals for negative behaviour down from 227 in 2012 to just 27 in 2016.

I commend Oatlands Public School for building a well-resourced edible school garden. Well done to the students in the Environment Club who meet every Friday to plant, weed and take care of the many fruits and vegetables that are growing in the beds. The school recently purchased a worm farm and has been teaching the students about compost and its role as plants' super food. Oatlands Public School students also learn about environmental sustainability and the positive impact they can have on our planet. The Environment Club has been very busy preparing the garden for the upcoming Diamond Jubilee Fair. All classes in the school have been allocated a garden bed to care for and decorate.

Finally, during the upcoming Diamond Jubilee Fair the school will bury a time capsule. I understand that each class is busily preparing special items for the time capsule. I look forward to contributing this private

member's statement to the time capsule so that in the future Oatlands Public School's great achievements and the hard work of its staff, students, volunteers and Principal Tony D'Amore may be uncovered and recognised for generations to come.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson): I will now leave the chair and the House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery the Student Upstanders who have been participating in anti-bullying discussions today and are guests of the Minister for Education, and member for Pittwater. I welcome Mademoiselle Valentine Huchette, granddaughter of former Mayor of Fromelles Mr Hubert Huchette, OAM, who is accompanied by Warren and Mary Baker. They are guests of the Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services, and member for Castle Hill. I welcome to the gallery members of the Balgowlah-Fairlight Liberal branch, guests of the member for Manly. I also welcome students and their teacher from the Australian Catholic University.

Commemorations

CENTENARY OF FIRST WORLD WAR

The SPEAKER (14:19): In late July 1917, brigades of Australian light horse, New Zealand mounted rifles and British yeomanry were brought together in Palestine to create the Desert Mounted Corps of the British Army. Command of the Desert Mounted Corps was given to Lieutenant-General Harry Chauvel, formerly of the ANZAC Mounted Division and a veteran of both the Gallipoli campaign and the Boer War. The son of a grazier, Chauvel had grown up near Tabulam and had been educated in Goulburn, Sydney and Toowoomba. With his appointment on 2 August 1917, Chauvel became the first Australian to permanently command an army corps. One British Army Brigadier apparently remarked, "Fancy giving the command of the biggest mounted force in the world's history to an Australian!"

A few months later, the Desert Mounted Corps played a critical role in the swift victory at the Battle of Beersheba, which included a mounted infantry bayonet charge by the Australian 4th Light Horse Brigade, history's last great, successful cavalry charge. For his decisive leadership during the battle, Chauvel was twice mentioned in dispatches and was subsequently appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath. Chauvel was described by the official Australian Army historian Charles Bean as a "wise, good and considerate commander", and in 1929 he became the first Australian to attain the rank of General. The legendary victory by the Desert Mounted Corps at Beersheba, meanwhile, was depicted in *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, a popular 1940 Australian feature film directed by Chauvel's nephew, Charles Chauvel. Lest we forget.

Announcements

PRESIDING OFFICERS AND CLERKS CONFERENCE

The SPEAKER: During the parliamentary break the New South Wales Parliament acted as the host for the Forty-Seventh Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference. This event brings together Presiding Officers and staff from every Australian Parliament and most of the Pacific parliaments, and does much to promote the development of parliamentary practice across the region. This was the first time since 1998 that the event was held in Sydney. A great deal of work went into the event from all three departments of the Parliament and the end result was a great success, as everyone who attended agreed. It is particularly notable that this was the first time the new Preston Stanley room was used for a conference, and it proved to be an excellent venue. The papers for the conference are now available publicly on Parliament's website, as are many colourful photographs including the spectacular opening to the conference and the session celebrating the tenth anniversary of the twinning relationships between Australian and Pacific parliaments. I congratulate everyone associated with the event.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I inform the House that the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research will answer questions in the absence of the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing.

*Bills***TERRORISM LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (POLICE POWERS AND PAROLE) BILL 2017****ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (GOVERNMENT TRANSACTIONS) BILL 2017****FIREARMS AND WEAPONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017****MINING AND PETROLEUM LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017****HOME BUILDING AMENDMENT (COMPENSATION REFORM) BILL 2017****CRIMES AMENDMENT (INTIMATE IMAGES) BILL 2017****APPROPRIATION BILL 2017****APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL 2017****EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY BILL 2017****APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL 2017****STATE REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (BUDGET MEASURES) BILL 2017****TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (CLOSURE OF RAILWAY LINE BETWEEN ROSEWOOD AND TUMBARUMBA) BILL 2017****Assent**

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of messages from the Governor notifying His Excellency's assent to the abovementioned bills.

*Governor***ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

The SPEAKER: I report a message from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor regarding the administration of the Government of the State:

T F BATHURST
Lieutenant-Governor

Government House
Sydney, 1 July 2017

The Honourable Thomas Frederick Bathurst, AC, Lieutenant-Governor of the State of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that, consequent on the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), being absent from the State, he has assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

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, 2 July 2017

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.

*Bills***LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (AMALGAMATION REFERENDUMS) BILL 2017****First Reading**

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

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that I have received a written authority from the Hon. Robert Borsak, MLC, advising that the member for Orange will have carriage of the bill in the House. I set down the second reading of the bill as an order of the day for a future day. *[During the giving of notices of motions to be accorded priority]*

*Notices***PRESENTATION**

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. If members continue to misbehave they will be removed on the first day. Opposition members will come to order. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time. I would appreciate the House coming to order when I call for order.

*Question Time***MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN**

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:28): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional New South Wales. Given claims that some irrigators stole hundreds of millions of litres of water from the Barwon and Darling Rivers, what steps has the Government taken to investigate allegations that when the member for Barwon was Minister for Water he gave a room full of irrigators permission to pump water despite a ban being in place?

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:29): I make it absolutely clear that the Minister in the other House, the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry, after seeing the ABC *Four Corners* program, responded by appointing Ken Matthews, AO, to conduct an independent investigation into the accusations raised in that program. Since then referrals have been made to the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] and, as is usual practice, we do not comment on an inquiry being conducted by the commission.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (14:29): My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the New South Wales Government delivering vital transport infrastructure to modernise New South Wales?

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:30): I thank the member for Coogee for his question. I note what a significant milestone he, I and the Minister for Transport enjoyed seeing today in relation to the light rail project in the central business district and the south-east. I will have more to say about that later in this answer, but I am very pleased that during the winter recess so many infrastructure milestones were reached.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Strathfield to order for the second time. The member for Gosford and the member for Londonderry will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Madam Speaker, you, I and the member for Kiama were very delighted to officially open the Berry bypass—

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Shellharbour and the member to Kiama to order for the first time. They will cease arguing across the Chamber.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: A minute has gone and I have barely opened my mouth. We were delighted to open that vital piece of infrastructure, notwithstanding the member for Kiama got in a week ahead of me. But that is okay; he deserved to—it is a wonderful piece of infrastructure that his community is enjoying. I was also pleased to be with both the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight and the Minister for WestConnex when we demonstrated to the community the benefits of the widened M4 between Homebush and Parramatta, which is now providing such relief to commuters. Recently also, the Minister for WestConnex and I were present for a tunnel breakthrough for the new M4 at Concord, noting that tunnelling for that project is 70 per cent complete. It is a sight for sore eyes given the decades that Western Sydney has been promised that infrastructure but only the Liberal-Nationals Government is delivering it.

It is fair to say that those oppose do not support any of these infrastructure projects. On the Sydney Metro Northwest project the Minister for Transport was able to demonstrate a new cable-stayed suspension bridge at Rouse Hill, which is taking shape and giving that skytrain a wonderful visual appearance in addition to putting commuters one step closer to being able to use that service. It is a real shame that those opposite do not support any of our projects in New South Wales; they are way out of step with their communities. I have been doorknocking in some of their electorates.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It was very interesting that when I was in the electorate of Strathfield one person mentioned the WestConnex and that person wanted us to build it faster. He was an engineer—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I have to be accurate: he was an engineer and he was complaining because he wanted us to build stage two and stage three concurrently. There was not a single complaint about that project, but that is not what the member for Strathfield says—she is way out of touch.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I am only providing factual information. This morning another key transport milestone was reached. I was pleased to be there with the outstanding Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and the outstanding member for Coogee to welcome the first of the modern light rail vehicles. We know how much customers and commuters are looking forward to using the CBD and South East Light Rail project service once it is open.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It is disappointing to note that not only does the Labor Party not support our infrastructure projects but also the Leader of the Opposition calls the light rail project a "vanity project". That is shameful.

Ms Jodi McKay: He says it is Gladys' vanity project.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I thank the member for Strathfield for confirming what I am saying. Clearly, the Leader of the Opposition does not care about the 50,000 or so students at the University of New South Wales, he does not care about the staff, visitors and patients who will be attending the Prince of Wales Hospital and he does not care about local residents who have been suffering congestion for decades. He does not care about institutions such as the Sydney Cricket Ground or the Australian Turf Club, which will benefit from this much-needed piece of infrastructure during major events. The hypocrisy of those opposite is breathtaking. *[Extension of time]*

While those opposite knock the light rail project when they are in this place, they turn up to Newcastle, where Crackers had been opposing that project for years—

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of order—

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I withdraw and apologise because what I said was unparliamentary. The Leader of the Opposition turned up to Newcastle, having bagged light rail—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: —and was asked about light rail by the *Newcastle Herald*. He said, "By the way, Labor opposed this project from day one." Then the Leader of the Opposition told the *Newcastle Herald*—thinking no-one down here reads that paper—the Opposition wants to extend the light rail in Newcastle.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: Those opposite talk about opposing light rail, but in Newcastle they want it extended. We do not know what those opposite stand for in terms of the Parramatta light rail, but I know that when we announce a project, we deliver it. We support the hardworking men and women of this State, who under those opposite suffered because they did not build any new roads.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: They did not build any rail, they did not build any infrastructure. We will keep building across the length and breadth of New South Wales because that is what the people of this State deserve. We will build infrastructure, unlike Labor whose budget reply speech axed two infrastructure projects and did not support a single project. Speeches at the Labor Party convention did not support a single infrastructure project. Those opposite are wreckers; they cancel projects. We are builders and we support the workers.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. Members who continue shouting across the Chamber will be removed from the Chamber.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:37): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. Does the Government agree with the claim by the Deputy Prime Minister, Barnaby Joyce, that the agenda of last week's *Four Corners* investigation was to create a false calamity in order to take more water from irrigators?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:37): Let me make this absolutely clear, no State is going to fight harder than this State to get its fair share of water resources for the irrigators and farmers in the Murray-Darling Basin. Our communities deserve the water allocation that allows them not just to survive but to thrive. During the whole process of developing the Murray-Darling Basin Plan over the past six years, this Government has worked with our Federal colleagues to get the best deal for New South Wales irrigators, for New South Wales farmers and for the environment.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Prospect that he is on three calls to order. This is his final warning.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Whilst South Australia will champion and campaign for its share, we will always put forward the rights of our irrigators for our fair share of the water resource. Politicians across the board have a view about the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and national water resources. Regardless of what the Deputy Prime Minister has said, we have made it absolutely clear that we want to see New South Wales irrigators get their fair share of the water resource. In relation to the comments made on the *Four Corners* program, as I have said, the Minister responsible for water has appointed Ken Matthews, who comes with a wealth of experience. He is a former Commonwealth department head with an accomplished career in the Australian public service and has significant experience in water management issues. Through the terms of reference that we have put in place, we have confidence in the review, which will look at how we manage the process going forward. We want strong governance and strong frameworks, both for environmental flows—

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier will resume his seat.

Ms Jodi McKay: I raise a point of order in relation to Standing Order 129. The question related to whether the Deputy Premier agreed with Barnaby Joyce—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier has remained relevant to the question throughout his answer. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The question was about water and the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. We have made it absolutely clear what is happening. As I said earlier, Mr Matthews will provide an interim report by the end of August, which will include a date for the final report. His investigation will also have the ability to address any deficiencies in the current review in relation to compliance and enforcement of water laws in New South Wales. I am interested in the facts. The review is underway, with the Secretary of the New South Wales Department of Industry. I have also referred any other allegations to the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC].

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We are taking this issue seriously. We are going to ensure that we come back with the facts; we will not have a knee-jerk response to what people are saying in the public domain. Any other inquiries related to this issue have been referred to ICAC. I leave it at that.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (14:40): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. How is the New South Wales Government growing business innovation and boosting business confidence across the State?

Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:41:0): What a great question from the member for Tweed; he is always 100 per cent for the Tweed. Small business is important not only for the local economy in Tweed but also for the regional economy and, of course, the State economy. The performance of the budget and the surpluses this Government has delivered have been achieved through the hard work of many small business owners and the risks they take to grow jobs, grow the economy and be part of the thriving business community in this State. The latest sets of data show clearly that business confidence in regional New South Wales is at its highest level in a decade. Small- and medium-sized businesses are feeling confident about hiring new staff,

business profitability, and investing in their businesses. That is because the Government has created an environment of confidence; it has given businesses across the State the confidence to invest.

We are leading through our record infrastructure spend. There is no question that our \$73.3 billion investment over four years in building the enabling infrastructure that serves the community is growing the economy. The ripple effect of that for the small business community is investment confidence. Some 330,000-plus jobs have been created since 2015, because businesses are confident. They are the mums and dads, the small businesses and enterprises, who are prepared to take the risk, mortgage their homes, show courage, and invest in their businesses to grow jobs in this State. The Liberal-Nationals Government is proud to stand side by side with businesses across regional New South Wales and throughout the State.

We know also that businesses are transforming. Innovation and technology are changing the way we do business. Many industries are being disrupted, but through that disruption comes opportunity. That is why a number of weeks ago the Premier and I announced a significant investment by the New South Wales Government in the Sydney Startup Hub. That is a \$35 million investment by the New South Wales Government to establish an environment and ecosystem to create the next generation of entrepreneurs. The hub will have 11 floors in the Sydney central business district covering 17,000 square metres, making it the largest start-up hub in the Southern Hemisphere.

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

Mr JOHN BARILARO: It will have fantastic anchor tenants, such as Stone and Chalk and Fishburners, which will work with the Government to ensure that we create an environment for entrepreneurs and start-ups to thrive. Sydney already has 40 per cent of start-ups in Australia—we are the start-up capital. But by investing \$35 million in 17,000 square metres we are ensuring that Sydney is not only the start-up capital of Australia but also the start-up capital for the region. We are proud of our investment. What is also exciting about the Sydney Startup Hub is that it is not just about Sydney entrepreneurs and Sydney start-ups. Part of it involves the regional launching pad, which will provide an opportunity for regional entrepreneurs to come to a place in Sydney and pitch their ideas. I note the interjections from those opposite, who have done nothing.

The SPEAKER: Order! The members representing the electorates of Cessnock, Swansea and Rockdale will come to order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Recently I was in Bathurst where the New South Wales Government, through Jobs for NSW, invested \$270,000 for the start-up incubator accelerator program and hub in Bathurst. We announced \$12 million through our Boosting Business Innovation Program, partnering with universities in New South Wales and the CSIRO, to create accelerator and incubation start-up space across regional New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Swansea and the member for Tweed will cease talking across the Chamber.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I made an announcement last week that the Government has now added another \$6 million to that program, a total of \$18 million across regional New South Wales. We are working with the university sector, because we know its strength in research and data, to provide an environment for young entrepreneurs to work together and use the data to create the start-ups, the entrepreneurs, the businesses and the small-to-medium enterprises [SMEs] of the future. This investment will go towards environments like the enterprise laboratories at Southern Cross University, the University of New England and Charles Sturt University. In Sydney, we have done significant work with the University of Sydney and the University of New South Wales to make sure we lead the way with new industries. The New South Wales Government is committed to growing jobs and growing the economy. We accept that the industry and the sector is changing and we are putting our money where our mouth is. We are partnering with the small business community, the SMEs and the entrepreneurs of the future to create an ecosystem that allows this sector to thrive not only for today but also for the future.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:46): My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier give this House an assurance that she will immediately release all the exchanged documents, minutes and attendance lists of meetings and teleconferences between Gavin Hanlon and irrigation industry lobbyists?

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:46): One would assume we had possession of such documents to release them.

Mr Michael Daley: So there's no minutes of meetings?

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

Ms Jodi McKay: So nothing was minuted?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: The question was to me, dope.

Mr Michael Daley: You can't come from the North Shore and talk like that, Gladys. It just doesn't wash.

The SPEAKER: The member should not take it to heart.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: In response to the question from the shadow Minister, I refer him to the previous answers given by the Deputy Premier but I also assure him—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: I do not think this is a laughing matter. As has been stated so eloquently by the Deputy Premier, a number of investigations—

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: As the Deputy Premier outlined in his two previous responses, there are a number investigations in hand in relation to this matter—one of them before the Independent Commission Against Corruption and one of them through other independent processes. I assure every member of this House and the community that of course the Government not only will be cooperating with those processes but also has initiated a number of those investigations and we look forward to having the issue resolved.

JOBS GROWTH

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (14:48): My question is addressed to the Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations. How is the New South Wales Government achieving real outcomes for workers in New South Wales and how does this compare to other approaches?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (14:48): I thank the member for Ku-ring-gai for his question. It is great to be back in Parliament. It has been a great few months for the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government. We have been delivering more opportunity, more growth and more jobs than ever before. There are more workers in New South Wales than ever before, 370,000 jobs, we have the lowest unemployment rate in the country, and regional New South Wales is booming. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the state of the NSW Labor party. Over the weekend it had its little jamboree, which was a mass gathering of mediocrity. My delegates from the Left faction were there, and although we compromised on a few things we got most of our crazy ideas through! There was a lot of talk, a lot of ideas and a lot of promises.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time. She will cease shouting, which is offensive. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. I call the member for Londonderry to order for the second time.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: There were a lot of pipedreams, and no way of paying for any of them.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Londonderry to order for the third time. She is on her final warning.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It was an indulgent weekend of ideological fantasies, all sponsored by chop chop tobacco. It is clear that the Labor Party has no idea how to deal with the issues that face the people of this State. There were no economic policies for growth, nothing about keeping the budget in surplus and nothing on creating jobs. The Leader of the Opposition had a second moment in the sun. There were big expectations of him following his budget reply speech, in which every new policy was a re-announcement of something the Government is doing or of things Labor had cancelled in the past. On the weekend he came up with a five-point industrial relations plan—nothing on schools, hospitals or infrastructure, but a plan for industrial relations. It is clear who is running the Opposition's agenda.

This new plan includes new wage theft laws, holding head franchises accountable, workplace inspection audits, and penalty rates. Labor went big on these policies. There was a lot of media and a lot of enthusiasm. The Leader of the Opposition talked them up, although he did not do his homework. Section 26 of the Commonwealth Fair Work Act 2009 specifically excludes the State legislation that the Leader of the Opposition proposed. The reason for that is that under the Rees Labor Government in 2009 the power to make the laws governing private sector employment relations was handed over to the Federal Government. Obviously the Leader of the Opposition missed the memo.

The Leader of the Opposition's proposal on head franchises would be overridden by a bill currently before the Federal Parliament; his proposed workplace audits would fail because New South Wales inspectors do not

have jurisdiction over Federal matters; and his new laws to protect penalty rates would apply only to public sector workers. New South Wales public sector workers currently enjoy an annual pay increase of 2.5 per cent, which is well ahead of every other failed Labor State. Western Australia has frozen its public service wages at 0 per cent. When it comes to looking after public servants, the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government is leading the way, because we have our budget in order and run the State economy well. The Leader of the Opposition messed up his budget reply speech and the State conference. I say: One down, one to go.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Those opposite talk about wage theft, but I know of a business that has offices in every State, every city and every town and a policy of confiscating 50 per cent of people's wages. That business is the Labor Party. It is the biggest wage thief around. [*Extension of time*]

The other big news is that those opposite have suddenly discovered the word "inequality", and they are going to fix it. They will talk a lot about inequality; it is hard to argue with equality. But the truth is that Labor's view of equality is to take more of what you have and give it to other people. On the weekend Bill Shorten said, "I do not begrudge anyone the money they have made." Thank you comrade Shorten for not begrudging people across the State keeping the money they earn.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Those opposite propose fake equality where everyone is equally mediocre.

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

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: This side of the House believes in providing people with the freedom to achieve. What we did not hear over the weekend was any discussion about economic growth because New South Wales is number one. There was no discussion about building infrastructure because New South Wales is leading the way. There was no discussion about unemployment because New South Wales has the lowest unemployment rate in the nation. If we look across the country we see failed Labor States while the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government continues to lead the way.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (14:55): I direct my question to the Premier. Will the Premier explain to the House why the proposal put forward by the former manager of the Department of Primary Industries Strategic Investigation Unit to run an enforcement operation to inspect pumps on the Barwon River was rejected by her Government?

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:55): As the Deputy Premier and I have previously responded to this question, a number of independent investigations are addressing the issue. I say to the shadow Minister for Water: Let those independent expert bodies prosecute the case and form a conclusion, as opposed to raising the matter in this place. I have full confidence in those authorities going through the process and resolving the issues. I look forward to those investigations reaching a conclusion.

EDUCATION WEEK

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (14:56): I address my question to the Minister for Education. Given the fact that this week is Education Week, will the Minister inform the House how the Government is demonstrating its commitment to public education?

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (14:57): I thank the member for Kiama and Parliamentary Secretary for Education for his question. He is irreplaceable and an indomitable supporter of public education in this State. He has been enormously helpful to the Government by assisting in the introduction of the new anti-bullying strategy. I acknowledge and thank all those student leaders in the gallery today, who were mentioned earlier by Madam Speaker. I note that each student leader was acknowledged by their school community as leaders against bullying in schools, which takes courage. The member for Kiama and I had an opportunity to meet with them. Their passion, leadership and bravery provides encouragement to people in this Chamber about the future.

This week is Education Week. I think of every week as Education Week but this week is special. It is the sixty-third annual celebration by the community to recognise the incredible work of students, educators and public school communities in New South Wales. It is an opportunity to recognise the transformative impact that public schools have had on countless individuals throughout the history of this State. In 1866, a Coalition government introduced public education. Public schools have been the bedrock and the cornerstone of quality, excellence and prosperity across this great State.

I had the pleasure of joining the member for Mulgoa and Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing in her electorate at Glenmore Park Public School, which is ably led by Lisette Gorick, to launch Education Week 2017. It was the first time the launch has been held in Western Sydney, and it occurred simultaneously with a launch in the Northern Tablelands at Tamworth High School, which is ably led by Daniel Wilson and which I visited recently with the great member for Tamworth. The theme of Education Week this year is "I Learn, We Learn". That is a tribute to the collaboration at the heart of great educational outcomes.

This Government does not see education as a product to be delivered and to be absorbed by passive receptors. Instead, it is a relationship; it is a compact between teachers, students, parents, families and the wider community over time and across space. There is much to celebrate about public education, and that is why this Government is committed not only to its new focus on anti-bullying programs in schools but also to ensuring that our resources are renewed and up to date and that schools have the capacity to allow for iterative change over time to react to and to include new ways to deal with the scourge of bullying across our society. That is also why our great Treasurer announced in this year's budget funding for an additional 1,000 teachers for our public schools.

The budget also provides funds to ensure that, through mentoring, support teachers are engaged in the learning process by reflecting better on how to improve their methods each and every day. This Government is ensuring that schools are a locus of education for all. Education is a joint learning enterprise in which everyone in the school community is engaged. The Government also recognises that schools are spatial. As institutions in our society have fallen away, one constant in our cities, towns, villages and regional areas is our local public schools. They are the cornerstone of all that is good and great about our society, and they are places of equality and excellence. [*Extension of time*]

That is why the budget provided more than \$4 billion over the next four years to ensure that this Government provides great learning spaces. We know that environmental determinism is real, and extensive research indicates that if we create great learning places we will enhance educational outcomes. We know that great teachers can teach anywhere, but we also know that if we respect our communities by recognising the importance of great infrastructure and the built environment to celebrate what is important about education we can improve education outcomes for everyone. That new budget allocation will also provide an additional 1,500 classrooms and 32,000 new places in schools across this great State. This Government recognises not only that education is relational and that it is located in space and time but also that public education is a lifelong experience.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for The Entrance will stop squawking.

Mr ROB STOKES: The member for The Entrance might be interested in this. This Government sees education as something in which we should all be involved every day of our lives. The more we learn the more we are engaged in learning and the more we grow.

The SPEAKER: Order! I place the member for the Entrance on three calls to order. I direct the member for The Entrance to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of three hours. The member cannot keep interjecting when I have told him to stop.

[*Pursuant to sessional order the member for The Entrance left the Chamber at 3.04 p.m.*]

Mr ROB STOKES: I hoped Education Week would be something about which we could all agree.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:04): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. How is the Government building infrastructure to secure the State's future, and are there any alternative plans?

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:04): I thank the member for Seven Hills for his question. It was great to spend time with him yesterday morning at the opening of a number of station upgrades at Pendle Hill and Wentworthville. Additional lifts have been provided to allow vital access to those stations—which have been neglected for decades—by people with disabilities and mums and dads with prams. I recognise his contribution to securing access infrastructure to those stations. It is part of a \$1 billion Transport Access Program that this Government put in place as a result of its fantastic financial management of the State's finances, which is enabling us to invest not only in mega projects around town but also in local infrastructure projects. We have invested and delivered some 350 Transport Access Program upgrades across the network. It is tremendous that we continue to see vital investments across the entire network. As the Premier alluded to earlier, it was pleasing to see the new light rail vehicle at the stadium facility at Randwick, which is part of the central business district [CBD] light rail project.

Mr Michael Daley: Gee, that is going well.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I note the interjection from the member for Maroubra that it is going well. He lobbied me extensively for modifications to the project, which I might go into later. This project will transform the CBD and the commute for many people in the eastern suburbs, particularly those who attend the university and the hospital in that part of town. The metro project is well and truly underway and the north-west project is progressing incredibly well. In particular, the four-kilometre sky train, which has a curved cable stay bridge at its heart, now has 16 cables in place. It is tremendous news for the people of Sydney.

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

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I was interested in a number of instances that occurred over the winter recess, one of which is that the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Transport Minister decided to engage in policy development.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order and cease interjecting.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: Of particular interest last week is that Mr Foley struck a deal with a certain union, the Electrical Trades Union [ETU], to maintain or increase the Government's shareholding in poles and wires. I want everybody to think through what that actually means. If Mr Foley wins the next election—which he will not—he has a policy to buy back the lease on the poles and wires and \$7 billion of that money is going into Sydney Metro.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bankstown will cease squawking.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: At the moment the Labor Party is banging on about Metro West. How the hell will they fund it if Mr Foley buys back the leases on poles and wires? Do we know why he has this policy? Because the ETU donated \$150,000 to the Labor Party during its last campaign and \$500,000 at the previous campaign. This is Luke Foley true to form: a union thug representing union thugs. And it gets better. Guess what else Mr Foley got up to over the winter recess? Members will recall that in this place I revealed a \$206,000 donation from the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU] to the Labor Party—and of course we have heard the Leader of the Opposition ask many questions on behalf of that union. What was interesting was that he did a press conference with the RTBU in the middle of the winter recess when it was complaining to its union boss, Chris Preston, about its industry allowance.

Mr Luke Foley: How would you know?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition is using the same line again.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: I want to explain this. [*Extension of time*]

He was doing a press conference with the RTBU in relation to the industry allowance that drivers receive to turn up to work. And guess what? They did not turn up to work; they decided to go on strike because their union misled them about the industry allowance. I will quote Mr Foley, because what he said at that press conference is quite telling, "When I am Premier of New South Wales," measuring up the terms, "I will pay you back, with back pay, and I will change the law to do it."

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Canterbury that she is on three calls to order. The member is on her last warning.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: So the bloke who gets \$206,000 in union donations is actually going to pay the RTBU back. That is corruption.

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order: The real punchline is that he folded the next day and gave them back their allowance.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

Mr Luke Foley: We have a tough man over here.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. If he does not do so, he will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE: My other favourite highlight involving the Labor Party during the winter recess is when the shadow Transport Minister decided that a policy of the Labor Party would be to tinker with the driving under the influence [DUI] laws. One would have thought, given the Leader of the Opposition's record, those opposite would not play around with the DUI laws. And do you know what they want to do? They want to water down mobile drug testing so that he can enjoy not only beverages but also herbal refreshments behind the wheel. You people are a disgrace!

HOMELESSNESS

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:12): Madam Speaker, the 60,000 people of the Newtown electorate thank you for allowing me to ask a question on their behalf. My question is directed to the Premier. Faced with the unignorable reality of the people sleeping in tents outside in Martin Place in the middle of winter—

The SPEAKER: Order! I would like to listen to this question without any interjections from Government members.

Ms JENNY LEONG: —and given the experts know and the evidence shows that a housing first approach works, will the Premier commit to providing permanent housing to the people experiencing homelessness in our city?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier and only the Premier has the call.

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:13): I thank the member for Newtown for her question because it gives me an opportunity to articulate exactly what this Government has done in relation to that issue. I appreciate that her constituents want to know the answer to that question, as do all of our constituents. First, I can advise the member and this House that, with the great support of the Minister for Family and Community Services [FACS], FACS has attended the Martin Place site 41 times over several months to offer services and accommodation and 60 people have taken up that offer of accommodation and are now in permanent social housing.

No person in Sydney or New South Wales needs to sleep in a tent. There is support available. Any eligible person who was willing to engage with our frontline workers has been provided with emergency and supportive accommodation. The FACS staff have been proactive in offering this accommodation; however, some people have chosen not to engage and not to accept the offer. I need to make that very clear. As a government, we are spending literally hundreds of millions of dollars in addressing the scourge of homelessness. I for one accept that homelessness is a big issue not only in the inner city but also in our rural and regional communities. Yesterday and again today FACS housing staff visited the site to help homeless people to find accommodation. They spoke with the people sleeping in those tents who were willing to engage. I stress that they spoke to those who were willing to engage. Some were not.

I will return to the specific question in a second, but I stress this Government's commitment statewide to address the scourge of homelessness. We invest about \$1.1 billion every year through a number of programs, which we are able to do because we have a strong budget position. Some of our ongoing and new initiatives include that we have provided \$198 million for specialist homelessness services, including critical referral services such as Link 2 Home, and we have provided \$12 million to expand the Premier's Youth Initiative, which specifically targets vulnerable youth, to more locations. We have also provided \$5 million, or \$20 million over four years, for an additional 120 transitional accommodation dwellings and support packages for rough sleepers. Last month our Government announced that up to \$10 million in temporary accommodation would be redirected from low-cost motels to be made available—

Ms Jenny Leong: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. I asked whether the Premier would commit to providing permanent housing.

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

Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN: It disturbs me that the member for Newton does not want to know all of the things we are doing in relation to homelessness. I know the member for Lismore, the member for Tweed and the member for Clarence welcomed our announcement last month of a Rent Choice program to provide subsidies and rental assistance to vulnerable youth in the northern rivers region. It concerns me that people who are sleeping in tents in Martin Place are refusing to get or receive help. I frankly think that is unacceptable. Our staff have been there 41 times. I call on Clover Moore to get rid of that tent city. It should not be there. Anyone who wants to receive help in New South Wales will receive it. I call on her to act because it is the right thing to do.

Documents

INSPECTOR OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 16 of the Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012, I announce receipt of a report of the Inspector of Custodial Services entitled "Prison Greens: The clothing and bedding of inmates in NSW", dated June 2017, received out of session on 29 June 2017. I order that the report be printed.

NSW OMBUDSMAN**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 43 of the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993, I announce receipt of a report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled "Reviewable Deaths 2014 and 2015, Child Deaths, Volume 1", dated June 2017, received out of session on 29 June 2017. I order that the report be printed.

NSW CHILD DEATH REVIEW TEAM**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 34I of the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993, I announce receipt of a report of the NSW Child Death Review Team entitled "Reporting of fatal neglect in NSW", dated June 2017, received out of session on 29 June 2017. I order that the report be printed.

INSPECTOR OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of a report of the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled "Report pursuant to sections 57B and 77A of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988: Operation 'Vesta': Andrew Kelly, Charif Kazal and Jamie Brown Complaints", dated June 2017, received out of session on 29 June 2017. I order that the report be printed.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of a report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled "Investigation into the conduct of the former City of Botany Bay Council Chief Financial Officer and others", dated July 2017, received out of session on 26 July 2017. I order that the report be printed.

MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 17 of the Mental Health Commission Act 2012, I announce receipt of a report of the Mental Health Commission entitled "Towards a just system: Mental illness and cognitive impairment in the criminal justice system", dated July 2017, received out of session on 26 July 2017. I order that the report be printed.

AUDITOR-GENERAL**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 63C of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled "ICT in schools for teaching and learning: New South Wales Department of Education", dated July 2017, received out of session on 6 July 2017 and authorised to be printed.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

The SPEAKER: I announce that the following petition signed by more than 10,000 persons has been lodged for presentation:

Nurse-to-patient Ratios

Petition calling for the mandating of nurse-to-patient ratios in all hospitals, received from **Mr Troy Grant**.

The SPEAKER: I set down discussion on the petition as an order of the day for a future day.

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

Pet Shops

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

Powerhouse Museum Ultimo

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

Elizabeth Bay Marina Ferry Service

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

Ferry Services

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

Social Housing

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

Inner-City Social Housing

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

Plastic Bags Ban

Petition calling on the Government to introduce legislation to ban single-use lightweight plastic bags at retail points of sale in New South Wales to reduce waste and environmental degradation, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

The CLERK: I announce that the following petitions signed by more 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**.

Narrandera Shire Policing

Petition requesting more general duties police officers in Narrandera shire, received from **Ms Katrina Hodgkinson**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The CLERK: I announce that the following Ministers have lodged responses to petitions signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Orange Health Service—lodged 23 May 2017 (Mr Philip Donato)

The Hon. Melinda Pavey—M4 Toll—lodged 23 May 2017 (Ms Prue Car)

The Hon. Anthony Roberts—Affordable Housing—lodged 25 May 2017 (Mr Damien Tudehope)

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Illawarra Public Hospitals—lodged 30 May 2017 (Ms Anna Watson)

The Hon. Brad Hazzard—Hunter Public Hospitals—lodged 31 May 2017 (Ms Jenny Aitchison)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Station Master's Cottage, Ourimbah—lodged 1 June 2017 (Mr David Mehan)

The Hon. Niall Blair—Pig-dog Hunting Ban—lodged 20 June 2017 (Mr Alex Greenwich)

The Hon. Niall Blair—Slaughterhouse Monitoring—lodged 20 June 2017 (Mr Alex Greenwich)

The Hon. Andrew Constance—Pendle Hill Station Easy Access Upgrade—lodged 20 June 2017 (Dr Hugh McDermott)

The Hon. Pru Goward—Inner-city Social Housing—lodged 20 June 2017 (Mr Alex Greenwich)

The Hon. Gabrielle Upton—Haberfield Heritage Preservation—lodged 21 June 2017 (Ms Jo Haylen)

The Hon. Melinda Pavey—Hillsborough Road, Hillsborough—lodged 21 June 2017 (Ms Jodie Harrison)

The Hon. Melinda Pavey—Sydney Harbour Bridge Aboriginal Flag—lodged 22 June 2017 (Mr Alex Greenwich)

Motions Accorded Priority

LABOR PARTY POLICIES

Consideration

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (15:20): This motion should be accorded priority because our community needs to understand the priorities of the Opposition when our State has the best economy, the strongest employment, the best business conditions and the strongest consumer sentiment in Australia. They need to know the priorities of the New South Wales Australian Labor Party [ALP] for our State when this Government is spending record amounts of money on hospitals, schools and infrastructure. The Leader of the Opposition commenced his speech on the weekend by saying that the ALP is the representative of workers, but we all know it is not. The best thing that anyone can do for a worker is to give her or him a job, but Labor is unable to manage an economy that can do that.

The Leader of the Opposition, in his speech at the weekend conference, detailed abuses of workers at 7-Eleven, Domino's Pizza and Pizza Hut, but he forgot to say that those abuses all happened under the Julia Gillard Labor designed and made Federal Fair Work industrial relations system. Do those opposite think we cannot remember? Do they think they can win the next election with the same sort of "Mediscare" campaign that Labor ran at the last Federal election? It says a lot about modern politics that the leader of the Australian Labor Party in this House—the so-called workers' friend—grew up in Ku-ring-gai while the Liberal member for Ku-ring-gai grew up in working-class Newcastle. This group of out-of-touch ideologues have no idea about the working class.

According to a document that I have seen, one of the "top 10 burning issues" at last weekend's Australian Labor Party convention was to attack mobile drug testing by police. Those opposite also want to move Australia Day to a different date, but they cannot tell us which date it will be. Of the 52 motions on international affairs tabled on the weekend, 26 attacked Israel. Not satisfied with almost ruining this democracy, those opposite want to ruin democracies overseas as well. The person who advised the Australian Labor Party convention on electoral reform was Sam Dastyari, the former Australian Labor Party State secretary who wrongly solicited and received a \$200,000 donation from a Chinese tobacco company. That same man of dubious character promoted the Australian Labor Party's idea of policy substance by hosting a Dastyari session on social media memes. The Opposition leader's five proposals for industrial relations reform at last weekend's State conference were all unconstitutional. We need to hear why the Labor Party should never become the Government in this State.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

Consideration

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (15:26): My motion deserves priority because for the past six years farmers, mayors, fishers and Indigenous communities have been screaming that even during rainfall water was not flowing down the Barwon River. They have been told time and time again by this Government that they were alarmists and that they were imagining it. But last Monday night's *Four Corners* program proved that those communities were right all along and that The Nationals have literally sold them up the river. Water policy in rural New South Wales is riddled with chaos, mismanagement and serious allegations of corruption and collusion. The deputy director general met secretly with irrigators and offered to de-badge information so that the true source of the documents would not be discovered. A special investigation unit tasked with policing these cowboys was shut down by the Government.

It is alleged that hundreds of millions of litres of water have been stolen from communities and rivers downstream, with one irrigator claiming that he was told to ignore the ban by—wait for it—the then Minister for Water himself. Is it any wonder that all this was happening when we consider the cartoon characters that have held the Water portfolio since 2011? That brings me to the member for Barwon—Port Macquarie's own Hollywood Humphries, the hardest working man in show business. He stands accused today of conspiring to deny water during a time of drought to residents in his own electorate. Talk about tough love! Last week the member

for Barwon screamed that I had never even been to Broken Hill. While his statement was technically correct at the time, I visited Broken Hill last Friday.

Even though I am a member of the Labor Party who represents a Sydney electorate and who had not been to Broken Hill, I was still more welcome there than the member for Barwon—and it is his electorate. Country people are funny like that: they do not like it when you try to steal their water. I wish the member for Cootamundra well in retirement but before she goes she should confirm that she will be available to answer all questions about her tenure in the Department of Primary Industries. Then again, I would probably hit the road if John Barilaro was my leader. The Nationals used to be led by a country copper; we all knew him. Now we have John Barilaro—Australia's answer to Anthony Scaramucci! This hack is so good at wielding a knife, he would make Sussex Street blush.

Ms Katrina Hodgkinson: Point of order—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cootamundra takes a point of order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Members cannot take a point of order during the debate to establish priority. Look at the state of The Nationals: conspiring with irrigators and denying water to its own communities. What a fraud of a member and what a fraud of a party.

[Interruption]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cootamundra will have the right to raise the matter later. A point of order can be taken provided it is not on the subject matter being debated. The comments made by the member for Kogarah provoked the point of order. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the third time. I direct the member for Port Stephens to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of three hours.

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

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The question is that the motion of the member for Ku-ring-gai be accorded priority.

The House divided.

Ayes47
Noes34
Majority..... 13

AYES

Anderson, Mr K
Barilaro, Mr J
Brookes, Mr G
Coure, Mr M
Elliott, Mr D
Grant, Mr T
Hazzard, Mr B
Humphries, Mr K
Lee, Dr G
Notley-Smith, Mr B
Pavey, Mrs M
Piccoli, Mr A
Sidoti, Mr J
Taylor, Mr M
Upton, Ms G
Williams, Mrs L

Aplin, Mr G
Berejiklian, Ms G
Conolly, Mr K
Crouch, Mr A
Gibbons, Ms M
Griffin, Mr J
Henskens, Mr A
Johnsen, Mr M
Maguire, Mr D
O'Dea, Mr J
Perrottet, Mr D
Provest, Mr G
Speakman, Mr M
Toole, Mr P
Ward, Mr G
Wilson, Ms F

Ayres, Mr S
Bromhead, Mr S (teller)
Constance, Mr A
Dominello, Mr V
Goward, Ms P
Gulaptis, Mr C
Hodgkinson, Ms K
Kean, Mr M
Marshall, Mr A
Patterson, Mr C (teller)
Petinos, Ms E
Rowell, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R
Tudehope, Mr D
Williams, Mr R

NOES

Atalla, Mr E
Catley, Ms Y
Crakanthorp, Mr T
Donato, Mr P
Foley, Mr L
Harrison, Ms J

Barr, Mr C
Chanthivong, Mr A
Daley, Mr M
Doyle, Ms T
Greenwich, Mr A
Haylen, Ms J

Car, Ms P
Cotsis, Ms S
Dib, Mr J
Finn, Ms J
Harris, Mr D
Hornery, Ms S

NOES

Kamper, Mr S
Lynch, Mr P
Mihailuk, Ms T
Parker, Mr J
Tesch, Ms L
Zangari, Mr G

Lalich, Mr N (teller)
McDermott, Dr H
Minns, Mr C
Scully, Mr P
Warren, Mr G

Leong, Ms J
McKay, Ms J
Park, Mr R
Smith, Ms T F
Watson, Ms A (teller)

PAIRS

Davies, Ms T
Evans, Mr L
Roberts, Mr A

Aitchison, Ms J
Hoenig, Mr R
Robertson, Mr J

Motion agreed to.*Personal Explanation***MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN**

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON (Cootamundra) (15:37): By leave: Labor's Water spokesman Chris Minns' suggestion that I make myself available for questions about my time as the New South Wales Minister for Primary Industries is little more than rank political opportunism and must not go unanswered. His attempt to defame my name on the same day I announced my retirement from Parliament, after nearly two decades of service, is both offensive and vulgar. I am proud of my record as the Minister for Primary Industries. Compliance rules were greatly strengthened during my tenure and I oversaw the introduction of national award metering in the Murrumbidgee. I worked hand in glove throughout my time as Minister with the Commissioner of the Office of Water David Harriss, whose competence and honesty are above reproach. I forged a triple bottom line outcome for New South Wales under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, focusing on a balance of economic, social and environmental outcomes for New South Wales. My record speaks for itself. In comparison, Labor's \$2 billion desalination plant debacle speaks for itself.

*Motions Accorded Priority***LABOR PARTY POLICIES****Priority**

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (15:39): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Condemns Labor's weekend conference for outlining plans for more taxes, more bureaucracy and less infrastructure.
- (2) Denounces the Leader of the Opposition's budget reply speech, which rehashed old announcements, copied government policies and cancelled critical infrastructure projects.

I am not going to repeat what I have already said about the Labor State conference, which was held at the weekend. In summary, it was full of attacks on police drug tests, on Israel and on Australia Day and advice from Senator Sam Dastyari on social media memes and electoral reform. The Leader of the Opposition's idea of assistance to workers at 7-Eleven, Domino's Pizza and Pizza Hut was to promote unconstitutional laws. The rousing conclusion to the speech of the Leader of the Opposition at the weekend was to invoke the words of former New South Wales Labor Premier Jack Lang. The people of New South Wales should be very concerned by this. Jack Lang is the only Premier of an Australian State to have been dismissed by a governor for unlawfully defaulting on government borrowings.

If ever this Labor Opposition were in government, it would not only expose our State to sovereign risk but also destroy our economy. The Leader of the Opposition seems to have the same disregard for the law as does the Construction, Forestry, Manufacturing and Energy Union [CFMEU]. Be under no illusion: under a State Labor government, we would be governed by and for the CFMEU. First, the Leader of the Opposition's speech at the weekend attacked the Government's infrastructure program, making it clear that government infrastructure would again suffer if this Opposition were in government. Secondly, the Opposition wants to impose more regulation and bureaucracy on the people of New South Wales. Thirdly, though the Opposition talks a big game on education, the speech of the Leader of the Opposition had no funding detail and, like his budget reply speech, it plagiarised

words from the press releases of the Minister for Education, Rob Stokes, that Labor would have an "unprecedented schools building program".

In this year's budget alone the Government committed to the construction of more new schools and more school upgrades than Labor did in its last 11 years of office combined. In his speech at the weekend, the Leader of the Opposition repeated the folly of his budget reply speech by promising to require 15 per cent of the jobs on government construction projects to be for apprentices, trainees, Indigenous Australians and the long-term unemployed. This was a cut and paste from the member for Blacktown's speech at the Labor 2014 State conference. Not only that, it actually ignored the fact that in September 2016 the Coalition Government announced not a 15 per cent requirement on government construction projects but a 20 per cent target.

In his budget reply speech, the Leader of the Opposition committed to nominating the Royal National Park for World Heritage listing. But the Government had already made a nomination and had issued a press release in September 2013—which, clearly, the Leader of the Opposition had not read. Clearly, he had not done his homework. The Leader of the Opposition also committed to rolling out solar panels on government buildings. But that is a copy of the existing New South Wales government program, which was announced during the 2015 election. Two weeks prior to the budget reply speech, the tender for the rollout was listed on the New South Wales Government eTendering website. This again shows an opposition that does not do its homework and announces policies that are already the policies of this Government.

The Leader of the Opposition, in his budget reply speech, made a commitment to give every child access to at least 15 hours per week of affordable preschool education in the year before they start school. But the Government had already committed to ensuring all New South Wales children have access to 15 hours a week of preschool before they start school through the \$217 million Start Strong program. Given this more than abundant evidence, the Leader of the Opposition should be denounced for his failed budget reply speech and the Labor State conference held at the weekend should be condemned.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (15:44): I state clearly that if members opposite think my colleagues and I will apologise for cracking down on companies and businesses that use wage theft as their business model, we will not. If the members opposite think my colleagues and I will apologise for reforming our tax system to make sure everybody pays their fair share to ensure our communities have the services and infrastructure they need, we will not. If members opposite think my colleagues and I will apologise for making sure we have a tax system that works and that is fair and accessible, we will not. If they think my colleagues and I will apologise for making sure that apprentices, the long-term unemployed, Aboriginals and people with disabilities are given priority to work on government jobs, we will not.

On this side of the House, we will continue to develop policies that are grounded on fairness. We will ensure we continue to develop policies that encourage economic growth and we will ensure that economic activity is shared. We will make sure every citizen of New South Wales—not only those who live around central Sydney but also those who live in the regions, towns and villages—shares the benefits of economic activity. We will not be lectured by a government that has backflipped more than Nadia Comăneci. We will not be lectured by a government that has wasted millions of dollars of taxpayers' money on advertising campaigns and on reforms that will never happen. We will never be lectured by a government for standing up for hardworking men and women. We will never be lectured by members opposite or by anyone else.

Every day up until the 2019 election, my colleagues and I will ensure that we put the priorities of hardworking men and women first. We will do it through our housing affordability policy, which will make sure that first home buyers get greater benefits than those purchasing their fourth, fifth or sixth property. We will do it through Chris Bowen's or Bill Shorten's reforms to negative gearing which will make sure that people trying to get a foot in the door have a better chance than those who are purchasing their fourth, fifth or sixth property. We will do it through our changes to foreign investment surcharges, which will make sure that Australians who live and work here and pay their taxes get the first opportunity to own a home, over those from foreign countries who are looking to sink money into our strong economy.

We will never be lectured by Government members for standing up for hardworking men and women. One of my proudest times as a member of the great Australian Labor Party was when at the weekend our leader said, "Enough is enough. If you steal from someone earning \$12, \$13, \$14 or \$15 an hour, you are a criminal. When you pay people in pizzas and soft drink, you are a criminal." We will never apologise for standing up for the men and women of the Illawarra, the Hunter Valley, the Central Cost, the south-west, Western Sydney or rural or regional New South Wales who go to work every day simply to do a decent job, to earn a decent wage, and to go home to their families.

We will not apologise. In fact, every day between now and the end of March 2019 we will be showing the community of New South Wales that there are two parties. There are those who think it is acceptable that

businesses run a business model that involves wage theft and who are happy to see people not pay their fair share of taxes for the services and infrastructure we need. And there are those on this side of the House who will work every day to ensure that the hardworking men and women who give their labour for a decent wage are protected every day of the week. I, along with my colleagues, will debate that any day, on any occasion, in this place or in any village, town or community across New South Wales.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (15:49): The other night when I needed something to help me get to sleep I thought I would do some light reading. I found the address to the NSW ALP Annual Conference 2017 by Luke Foley, co-written by some dark shadow in Sussex Street. I thought, "This will do. I'll be able to read just a bit of this and it will put me to sleep." The address talked about the founders of the Labor Party, the interests that Labor represented, and the movement for which Labor members stood: themselves and the unions. The address then included a bit of a spiel about what Labor's first government and first Premier did and also about Jack Lang's government, Bill McKell's government, Joe Cahill's government and Bob Carr's government. There was nothing about the Kristina Keneally, Morris Iemma or Nathan Rees governments.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Were you asleep by then?

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: No, but I realised I had found the right document to put me back to sleep—the delegates at that conference could not hear a pin drop because they were already snoring. The document went on to bash small business. It talked about jail terms for individuals and punishing fines for companies for systematic wage theft. It said, "Theft is theft". I thought, "They thief oxygen. That is theft. They should be charging themselves with oxygen theft." I thought I would keep reading for a little while. After bashing small business and promoting the unions, Labor celebrated three decades of continuous economic growth—made possible by the Coalition Government.

Under the Labor Government, New South Wales—the worst performing State under its watch—was on the bottom rung of the ladder. I thought, "Surely there has to be something about Tamworth, where I live, and regional New South Wales in this document." I flipped the pages and it was not until the end of the document, on page 11, that I found a one-line reference, "And we'll ensure that regional communities get their fair share." It will do this by using the proceeds from the transfer of the Snowy Hydro to the Commonwealth, that is, sucking it out of the Commonwealth. Labor will fund rural and regional New South Wales on that presumption. A few lines from the bottom of the last page of the document states, "But we must earn a mandate from the people." I noted at the bottom, "You are a long way from that. Good night".

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (15:52): It is pleasing to see that for the first time since 2011 the member for Tamworth has woken up because, like his Government, he has been asleep at the wheel for the whole time the Coalition has been in office. We did hold a conference on the weekend. Unlike their conference held the previous weekend, which was paid for by Tony Abbott's Visa card—

Mr Kevin Anderson: We went there and it wasn't us.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I know he said that, but at our conference we did not talk about selling everything in the State, privatising public hospitals, deregulating every industry and record power bills—\$300 more for households and \$900 for small businesses. At our conference, we did not talk about tolls being put on every road or the crowded backflip calendar of this Government. We talked about housing affordability and social housing access. The member for Londonderry spoke about funding TAFE rather than the gutting of TAFE that has happened under this Government. The member for Blue Mountains spoke about building trains in New South Wales rather than building them in South Korea. Heaven forbid that the Government would lead by example.

We spoke about a real plan for steel, not a pretend plan of the sort that this Government is still struggling to come up with. We spoke about an Illawarra Jobs Action Plan, a real plan for jobs in the Illawarra region—something that has been completely ignored by this Government. We spoke about nurse walk-in centres to clear patient backlog and overcrowding in emergency rooms across the State. We talked about protecting the wages and conditions of young workers. We believe in protecting workers; we believe that workers should not be ripped off. If the Government believes that workers should be ripped off, it can go right ahead. It has been sitting on its hands on this issue. It is about time New South Wales had a real plan for protecting workers.

I dare any member opposite to speak to Ashleigh Mounser or any of the workers being helped to recover their wages by Arthur Rorris and the South Coast Labour Council. They are being offered \$10 or \$11 an hour, which is below the minimum wage. We talked about youth wages and about protecting wages and conditions. We should not allow anyone to slip backwards. The members opposite are not doing anything about it. For a long time, they have been exposed. They try to hide behind a constitutional anachronism and say, "It's a Federal Government issue". It is not. Stealing from people is stealing from people. Theft is theft. We also talked about removing infrastructure charges for Catholic and independent schools so that we can tackle the schools crisis that

is gripping the State. We talked about an elective surgery acceleration plan to slash waiting lists. We talked about the future of New South Wales— [*Time expired.*]

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (15:56): In reply: I highlight the great contrast between the bedtime story we heard from the member for Tamworth and the passion of the member for Keira and the member for Wollongong. The problem is that the member for Keira and the member for Wollongong were asleep. They cannot justify giving false hope to workers by promoting unconstitutional laws. They were disingenuousness in what they said because the rip-off of workers is happening under a law put in place by a Federal Labor government. Labor went to the 2007 Federal election saying, "We're going to repeal WorkChoices; we're going to clean up the industrial relations system." What happened? It is significant that the rip-offs of these workers were exposed by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, not by the Labor Party or the unions. These great champions of the workers were once again asleep at the wheel. They did not care to protect these workers, because they were foreign workers who were not members of a union.

Those opposite care only about workers who are in their little club and are members of their unions. The only foreigners they like are the ones who give donations, especially if they are from tobacco companies. Today's speeches by the Prince of Potts Point, the member for Keira, and the member for Wollongong, who still has his training wheels on, were very disappointing. Neither of them could defend the attacks on police drugs testing or on Israel. Nor were they prepared to defend Senator Sam Dastyari giving advice on electoral matters and social media. They were unable to defend those matters, because they are indefensible. They did not talk about shifting Australia Day. Those opposite know that the Labor Party is lurching from extreme to extreme. The Labor Party is so on the fringe that it has even added a fringe program to its fringe conference. It is very interesting that the fringe party now has a fringe wing; it is fringe squared or double fringe. [*Time expired.*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion of the member for Ku-ring-gai be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes47
Noes32
Majority..... 15

AYES

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Anderson, Mr K | Aplin, Mr G | Ayres, Mr S |
| Barilaro, Mr J | Berejiklian, Ms G | Bromhead, Mr S (teller) |
| Brookes, Mr G | Conolly, Mr K | Constance, Mr A |
| Coure, Mr M | Crouch, Mr A | Dominello, Mr V |
| Elliott, Mr D | Gibbons, Ms M | Goward, Ms P |
| Grant, Mr T | Griffin, Mr J | Gulaptis, Mr C |
| Hazzard, Mr B | Henskens, Mr A | Hodgkinson, Ms K |
| Humphries, Mr K | Johnsen, Mr M | Kean, Mr M |
| Lee, Dr G | Maguire, Mr D | Marshall, Mr A |
| Notley-Smith, Mr B | O'Dea, Mr J | Patterson, Mr C (teller) |
| Pavey, Mrs M | Perrottet, Mr D | Petinos, Ms E |
| Piccoli, Mr A | Provest, Mr G | Rowell, Mr J |
| Sidoti, Mr J | Speakman, Mr M | Stokes, Mr R |
| Taylor, Mr M | Toole, Mr P | Tudehope, Mr D |
| Upton, Ms G | Ward, Mr G | Williams, Mr R |
| Williams, Mrs L | Wilson, Ms F | |

NOES

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Atalla, Mr E | Barr, Mr C | Car, Ms P |
| Catley, Ms Y | Chanthivong, Mr A | Cotsis, Ms S |
| Crakanthorp, Mr T | Daley, Mr M | Dib, Mr J |
| Donato, Mr P | Doyle, Ms T | Finn, Ms J |
| Greenwich, Mr A | Harris, Mr D | Harrison, Ms J |
| Haylen, Ms J | Hornery, Ms S | Kamper, Mr S |
| Leong, Ms J | Lynch, Mr P | McDermott, Dr H |
| McKay, Ms J | Mihailuk, Ms T | Minns, Mr C |
| Park, Mr R | Parker, Mr J | Scully, Mr P |

NOES

Smith, Ms T F
Watson, Ms A (teller)

Tesch, Ms L
Zangari, Mr G

Warren, Mr G (teller)

PAIRS

Davies, Ms T
Evans, Mr L
Fraser, Mr A
Hancock, Mrs S
Roberts, Mr A

Aitchison, Ms J
Foley, Mr L
Hoenig, Mr R
Lalich, Mr N
Robertson, Mr J

Motion agreed to.*Bills***COAL MINE SUBSIDENCE COMPENSATION BILL 2017****First Reading**

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Victor Dominello, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO (Ryde—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) (16:07): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Coal Mine Subsidence Compensation Bill 2017. The 1961 Act was the creation of the Heffron Government. The bill was introduced in this place on 15 March of that year. The 1961 Act, as it became, achieved two major reforms. First, it introduced a mine subsidence compensation fund that was financed by the coal industry and not by property owners, as was the case with the original scheme, which dated back to the 1920s. The intention was to ensure that property owners whose properties were damaged by subsidence from historic legacy coalmining would be compensated.

Secondly, the fund provided compensation payments for mine subsidence damage on properties located in any part of the State, as opposed to only the Newcastle area, as was the case under the original scheme. The 1961 Act moved accountability for mine subsidence impacts to mining operators rather than to property owners. The Berejiklian Government's reforms to the Mine Subsidence Compensation Act 1961 build on that. The main purpose of the 1961 Act was to finance mine subsidence compensation through a fund imposing a levy on mining operators and to provide payments to property owners affected by subsidence damage regardless of where their property was situated.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members who wish to hold conversations should do so outside the Chamber.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: The fund was called the Mine Subsidence Compensation Fund. Before 1961, all property owners in Merewether and the greater part of the west ward of Newcastle were required to insure their properties against the risk of damage by subsidence even if their properties were not being and probably never would be undermined. The 1961 Act recognised the injustice to property owners whose properties would not be affected by subsidence damage. Property owners would essentially be paying an annual premium against a risk that was unlikely to occur. The 1961 Act addressed this issue.

The 1961 Act also recognised the need for protection against subsidence damage beyond properties in Merewether and Newcastle. With impacts from historic legacy coalmining becoming apparent across other areas in the State, the risk of subsidence had also extended accordingly. Therefore, the 1961 Act provided that compensation arising from subsidence in any part of the State could be claimed from the fund to ensure fairness and certainty for all property owners. The fund consisted of levy contributions for mining operators. A board was set up to administer the fund, deal with and determine claims and pay compensation. The bill before the House today will build on and strengthen the 1961 Act and introduce a number of significant measures to ensure mining operators that are causing subsidence damage are accountable for those financial and social impacts.

As the House will be aware, a review of the 1961 Act was undertaken and a report was provided to Government late last year. As part of the review, submissions were invited from interested parties on the review's terms of reference. Submissions were received from past and current claimants, community groups representing

residents impacted by subsidence, local councils, the development industry and the NSW Minerals Council. Among issues raised were concerns that the mines subsidence board was not determining suitable compensation fairly or processing claims efficiently and that a better balance was needed between the interest of mining operators and property owners.

The key finding of the review was that the mine subsidence compensation framework was outdated and was not being administered effectively by the mine subsidence board. The legislation had not been subject to a comprehensive review in over 40 years. While the intention of the 1961 Act was to cover costs of property damage caused by legacy mining where liability could not be apportioned to mining operators, the recent claims data shows that approximately 90 per cent of claims for compensation relate to damage from active mines currently in operation rather than historic legacy coalmines. This is a clear disconnect between the original intent of the legislation and the outcome of the legislative framework in practice.

There is also a high level of industry cross-subsidisation. Although all active open-cut and underground coal operations contribute to the fund, only a small number of underground coalmining operators are actually causing the majority of subsidence damage. This inequitable regime provides an unfair competitive advantage to certain mines. In addition to these findings, there was also a clear opportunity to improve the way the Mine Subsidence Board and its officers administered the system. In October 2013 the New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption commenced an investigation into the Mine Subsidence Board. In early 2016 the commission delivered its final report, finding evidence of serious fraud and corruption within the organisation.

The commission made recommendations on changes to financial management, organisational processes, procurement practices and governance arrangements. Furthermore, there was a high level of community dissatisfaction with the Mine Subsidence Board and in particular with the board's ability to process claims efficiently and treat claimants fairly. For example, there was a large backlog of claims when the organisation came into the Finance, Services and Property portfolio from 1 July 2015. There were in excess of 300 outstanding claims awaiting determination, with some claims remaining unresolved for more than 10 years. Overall, the review found that the 1961 Act is no longer fit for purpose and that there is a clear need to improve the mine subsidence compensation framework to restore the confidence of the community.

The Government acknowledges the stressful experience that property owners go through when their homes are affected by mine subsidence, through no fault of their own. The Government also recognises that any changes to the system will impact the coalmining industry. However, the Government is committed to ensuring that the small number of mining operators that are causing subsidence damage are made directly accountable for these impacts, both financial and socially. With this in mind, the reforms provide comprehensive improvements to the mine subsidence compensation process and fairer outcomes for property owners and the coalmining industry generally.

The bill, together with the package of guidelines and regulatory changes that will underpin this legislation, strikes the balance between coalmine operators' and claimants' interests. It ensures an increased level of colliery involvement in the claims management process so that collieries better understand their subsidence impacts and costs while also ensuring claimants receive faster and fairer compensation. Coalmining is a major contributor to the economic development of New South Wales and investment in the State's mining industry is encouraged. Continued development of the State's coal resources, however, needs to take into account the impacts of subsidence damage on the people of New South Wales.

The Government is committed to improving government services, particularly in light of our growing population in regional areas, and this bill will contribute to delivering on that commitment. Work is already underway to give the utmost assurance that property owners affected by subsidence will be well supported by government. The Mine Subsidence Board has been repositioned as Subsidence Advisory NSW and integrated into the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation. Subsidence Advisory NSW is now undertaking a stronger case management role to assist property owners affected by subsidence.

All claims will be allocated to a case advisor tasked with monitoring the assessment of claims and facilitating collieries' participation in the claims management process. The case advisor will facilitate discussions between the colliery and the claimant to resolve compensation claims, ensuring mine operators understand the full impacts of their operations, including the emotional hardship that can accompany property damage from mine subsidence. Since August last year, Subsidence Advisory's strengthened role in case management has seen a significant reduction in the backlog of claims. From August 2016 to the present, the case management team has resolved more than 120 claims, compared with 40 claims per annum on average in previous years.

These results have been achieved through taking a more empathetic approach to claims management as well as focusing on driving outcomes for people so that we can help them move on with their lives. These results are underpinning the development of a new claims management model that puts claimants' needs at the centre. To

ensure the system is more accessible for claimants, an online portal is being developed so that property owners can lodge their claims in a central, government-managed location, with the ability to manage claims online and streamline access to claims documentation and case advisory services. To restore transparency and independence in decision-making, all claims will now be assessed by technical experts from a panel of independent assessors. Subsidence Advisory NSW will manage this panel and oversee inspections, assessments and claim evaluation reports.

This new claims management process prioritises and supports those communities impacted by mine subsidence and places the claimant at the centre of the compensation process. Former Customer Service Commissioner Mr Michael Pratt, AM, has reviewed and endorsed the claims process. The Government thanks Mr Pratt for the work he has done to review the process from the citizen's perspective to ensure that the claimant experience is fair and easy to navigate. There are further improvements to be made. This package of reforms commits us to strengthening the 1961 Act to provide advocacy and support to claimants at every step of the process and a fairer levy framework that will enable Subsidence Advisory NSW to perform case advisory functions and become a more effective regulator of development in mine subsidence histories.

In order to deliver on these objectives, the Government is acting decisively in creating a new Coal Mines Subsidence Compensation Act. The first legislative change is to make mine operators directly liable for subsidence damage caused by their operations. Currently mine operators pay a levy towards the Mine Subsidence Compensation Fund, which effectively absolves them of any liability. The proposed reforms will require mine operators to determine and pay claims for compensation in accordance with independent assessments of damage and costs via a panel of technical assessors. This will provide mine operators with a direct financial incentive to reduce their future subsidence impacts on communities to the greatest extent possible. It will also ensure that operators not only are financially accountable but also understand the full impacts of their operations, including the emotional hardship that can accompany property damage from subsidence.

The proposed changes also provide a more consistent impact litigation model across the mining industry by aligning the mine subsidence compensation system with how other mining impacts such as blasting, noise and dust are directly compensated. Mine operators will be financially accountable for their own subsidence impacts, just as they are for other mining impacts. Overall, this means there will be an increase in mine operator involvement in the claims management process. The Government sees this as an opportunity for mine operators to strengthen their partnership with local communities. It is important to note that government will continue to administer all claims regardless of whether they are caused by active or non-active mines and to provide a dedicated adviser for each claim. Mine operators will be required to be involved at key stages of the claims process and to provide compensation in accordance with independent technical assessments.

The second change I announce today is that the coalmine subsidence compensation levy and fund will be reduced to primarily fund compensation claims arising from non-active mines. All mine operators will continue to contribute to the fund but it will be at a significantly reduced rate mainly to cover claims arising from non-active mines. This returns the legislation to its original intent. The fund will operate on a base levy scenario, meaning that the levy will be payable only when the fund is below a specific base threshold, thereby minimising the financial burden on collieries as much as possible.

Importantly, the Government will continue to administer the levy and draw on the fund to provide compensation to property owners affected by subsidence damage from non-active coalmines or mines where liability cannot be apportioned, but with improved processing and time frames and service guarantees. The fund will also be used to address the backlog of claims and to meet existing claims arising from damage from active mines until the commencement of the new legislation. The cost of transitional arrangements will also be met from the fund in the first five years of the legislation commencing.

As referenced earlier, the third change in this reform package is that claims will be assessed by an independent assessor from a panel of technical experts. To ensure transparency and independence, the claimant will select an independent assessor from a panel of technical assessors to undertake an investigation to assess the damages attributable to mine subsidence as indicated in the claim. The independent technical assessor will typically be a geotechnical or structural engineer with an understanding of mine subsidence, or a quantity surveyor, depending on the nature of the damage. The assessor will prepare a claim evaluation report outlining the damage as well as supporting data, scope of works to repair the damage and cost estimates for repairs. Mine operators will then be required to compensate property owners in accordance with these reports.

The Government will maintain and support the panel of technical assessors to provide expert, objective and consistent assessments of all claims, providing both claimants and mine operators with a straightforward process to assess claims. The fourth change again goes to the issue of independence. A robust dispute resolution process will be introduced, allowing claimants and mine operators to seek an independent review without having to resort to expensive litigation. In the interests of transparency and natural justice, the Government will change

the Act to allow claimants and mine operators to seek an independent review by the Secretary of the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation. The secretary is able to delegate this determination role to an independent body or expert panel.

Claimants will now be able to request reviews of the mine operator's determination as to whether damage has arisen from subsidence, the scope of repairs or amount of compensation, or the means of compensation. Similarly, when claims are lodged in relation to a mine operator's operation, the mine operator may request the secretary to review the determination that the damage arises from subsidence caused by their mine. This new independent, no cost review mechanism provides an alternative to existing onerous and costly litigation options and will improve transparency and fairness in decision-making. The right to appeal against the decision of the secretary to the Land and Environment Court remains where claimants and mine operators are dissatisfied with the independent review process.

The fifth legislative change will ensure that compliance with the Act can be considered when determining whether a mine operator is a fit and proper person under the Mining Act 1992. Compliance with the new Coal Mine Subsidence Compensation Act will be taken into account when applying the fit and proper person test under the Mining Act 1992. This means a mine operator's record of compliance with the Act and their performance in upholding community protections will be considered to determine whether the mine operator is a fit and proper person. A determination that an operator is not a fit and proper person may result in a decision to refuse to grant, renew, cancel or transfer a mining right, suspend operations under a mining right or restrict operations through imposition or variation conditions. This provides a strong incentive for operators to meet their obligations under this Act and treat claimants fairly.

Through this change, the Government is able to undertake compliance and enforcement activities in relation to mine subsidence compensation by utilising the powers under the Mining Act 1992 where necessary. In the interests of efficiency, the Government will improve and streamline development regulation in mine subsidence districts. Development regulation will now be risk based, ensuring mine subsidence districts align with high-risk areas for subsidence-related damage, while development approval processes in low-risk areas will be streamlined. This will refine the approval process and design requirements for development, reducing costs to property owners and providing certainty to mine operators that future liability is being proactively mitigated.

Importantly, protections will be afforded to a property owner where, through no fault of their own, their home is damaged by subsidence and they were unaware that their home was built in contravention of the requirements in a mine subsidence district. In certain circumstances, property owners may lodge subsidence compensation claims as per normal despite the building being an unlawful development and compensation will be determined following the standard assessment process. Property owners and conveyancers can be assured that this avenue will be available for such claims to be lodged. The Government will require compliance with approved procedures for consistent processes in claims management.

Underpinning the bill, a series of approved procedures will provide details on the claims management process, compensation eligibility and dispute resolution. The legislation requires mine operators to comply with the approved procedures when dealing with claimants. This will protect property owners by ensuring that all mine operators compensate claimants consistently and fairly. To ensure claimants are treated fairly, mine operators will be required to deal with claims in accordance with the proposed Act and approved procedures or risk complaints and enforcement action. This bill provides the Government with compliance and enforcement tools to allow it to effectively oversee and enforce compliance with the proposed Act and approved procedures. Authorised officers will be appointed and tasked with monitoring compliance with the proposed Act and will have the powers to carry out necessary inspections, audits and inquiries.

The Government will legislate to disband the Mine Subsidence Board. The Mine Subsidence Board will be retained for an initial 12-month period from the commencement of the legislation. This will allow the board to oversee the transition and to ensure there is continued industry and community visibility over the fund. After the 12-month period, the board will be disbanded in line with the Government's commitment to actively reduce the number of New South Wales boards and committees and as part of the initiative to eliminate duplication, thereby making government processes cleaner and more efficient. Regulatory burdens will be reduced and lines of accountability will be strengthened to improve the delivery of services to the people of New South Wales.

An ongoing advisory group will be established to ensure industry continues to have visibility on how the fund is managed. Subsidence Advisory NSW will manage all claims and sister property owners who are affected by subsidence. The Government will legislate to include transitional arrangements for those coalmines deemed worse off under the reforms. Transitional arrangements will be negotiated with mine operators that are adversely affected by the reforms and deemed worse off. They are deemed to be worse off because their operations cause significant subsidence damage to homes and infrastructure and compensation costs will now be met by those

coalmines. This means that for these mines the costs will outweigh the savings which accrue from the reduced levy.

The Government is committed to supporting industry throughout this time of change, which is why the Government will draw upon the fund to financially support these mines over a five-year transitional period. The transitional period will allow adversely affected mine operators to prepare and put in place the necessary financial and administrative arrangements for the new subsidence compensation framework and minimise disruption to their operations. This bill will better balance mine-operated involvement in the claims management process so that mine operators better understand their own subsidence impacts and costs while also ensuring claimants are treated fairly and respectfully. The package recognises the significant personal impact that mine subsidence can have and provides for a fairer and more transparent compensation framework for property owners. I commend the bill to the House.

TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (AUTOMATED VEHICLE TRIALS AND INNOVATION) BILL 2017

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mrs Melinda Pavey, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading

Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (16:33): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Transport Legislation Amendment (Automated Vehicle Trials and Innovation) Bill 2017. The purpose of the bill is to establish a legislative framework to provide for the safe testing of connected and highly automated vehicle technology in New South Wales. The bill also seeks to provide an additional function for Transport for NSW to conduct research, develop policy and test applications of innovative, automotive and digital technologies to meet future challenges and opportunities that increased automation in road vehicles has the potential to offer. Amendments are proposed to the Road Transport Act 2013 and the Transport Administration Act 1988.

Members would agree that the New South Wales Government has embraced technology and innovation. The New South Wales Innovation Strategy aims to position New South Wales as an innovation leader by being more open to new ideas and approaches and capitalising on research and development to drive social and economic value. Emerging technology, and how humans respond, has the potential to revolutionise how our cities, towns and the New South Wales transport system works. To shape the most customer-centric, innovative, digitally enabled transport system in the world, the Government must test, trial and adopt new world-class technologies as they emerge.

International standards classify automated driving into six levels: from no automation through to level 5, full automation, where the system performs all aspects of driving. Level 2, partially automated vehicles, are those where the system can steer and accelerate and decelerate but the human driver performs all other aspects of the driving. These vehicles already are operating legally on New South Wales roads. Level 3, conditional automation, are those vehicles where the system performs all aspects of driving and the human driver intervenes when requested. At level 4, high automation, the system performs all aspects of the driving task, even if the human driver does not intervene when requested. Industry expects that by 2020, vehicles with level 3 automation will be available commercially in Australia.

Experts insist that self-driving vehicles have the potential to significantly reduce the road toll because 90 per cent of collisions involve human error. While partially automated vehicles currently are available in the Australian market, vehicles with higher levels of automation, including driverless vehicles, are yet to be approved for use on public roads. Transport for NSW already has received expressions of interest from companies seeking approval to conduct on-road trials of automated vehicle technologies. Although there is work being done in the university sector, including in the field of robotics, there are no local manufacturers of connected and automated vehicles in New South Wales. There is evidence that the widespread introduction of these vehicles would boost the State's economic performance through the creation of new business and employment opportunities in areas such as software engineering, digital innovation, robotics and artificial intelligence, data analytics, smart infrastructure and next-generation telecommunications.

The rise of connected and automated vehicles is likely to spur growth in the entire automotive industry, ranging from vehicle manufacturers to component suppliers. The New South Wales Government launched the NSW Innovation Strategy in November 2016 to manage the transition from traditional jobs to new industries by focusing on education and training from primary and tertiary levels. The Government's approach to embedding

innovation in our planning and service delivery strategies opens up huge opportunities for how we approach and implement transport that will revolutionise the way we live, work and travel. Within that mix, above all we are committed to ensuring the safety of customers across the entire New South Wales transport network.

If I may, I will take members on a journey back in time to the year 1885 to the birth of the modern motorcar by Karl Benz. His Motorwagen was nothing more than a single cylinder, two-seat, three-wheeled tubular framed marvel. Back then they could not have imagined how far motor vehicles and the technologies in them would evolve, let alone advance to the level we see today. What seemed like only science fiction a handful of years ago is now reality. We have features available to us in cars today to allow a vehicle to self-park, operate in adaptive cruise control, and utilise automated emergency braking that warns the driver of a risk of collision and applies the brakes, if needed.

The Government recognises that automation and innovation are drivers of change—change that the Government must embrace if it is to be better equipped to tackle complex economic, environmental and social challenges, stimulate economic activity and drive shared prosperity for the people of this State. We need to lead across industry and the community to assist in the delivery of integrated transport systems that ultimately make New South Wales a better place to live and do business. By putting New South Wales at the forefront of adopting new and emerging technologies we are shaping the future of transport.

The Government's Future Transport Strategy is the new approach to planning transport and engaging the people of New South Wales as our customers. It is a 20- to 40-year strategy focusing on customer needs and the technological, economic and social changes ahead, with connected and automated vehicle technologies identified as a key pillar of the strategy. The strategy builds on the New South Wales Government's integrated Long Term Transport Master Plan launched in 2012, and meets the commitment to review the plan after five years. The Future Transport Strategy kicked off in 2016 with the first Future Transport Summit. The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure welcomed more than 500 guests for the two-day event headlined by Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak.

Input from industry, thought leaders and customers who attended this and other collaboration events last year was refined into the Future Transport Technology Roadmap published in April 2017. The roadmap is another milestone in the New South Wales Government's journey that forecasts the use of innovation and emerging technologies as the key to the delivery of better transport services in New South Wales. The roadmap identifies the major technology trends that are shaping the future of transport and, through future transport scenarios, looks at how people respond to them. Five technology strategies have been developed to meet the objective of unlocking the full value of our transport networks and customising and personalising transport services to create a better experience for our customers. One of the strategies is to enable connected and automated vehicle platforms.

Work to develop a national approach for the consistent management of highly and fully automatic vehicles is currently being progressed by the National Transport Commission and Austroads at the direction of the Transport and Infrastructure Council. In November 2016, Australian transport Ministers agreed to a phased reform program so that conditional automated vehicles can operate safely and legally on our roads before 2020 and highly and fully automatic vehicles, including driverless vehicles, from 2020. A phased approach is being adopted to ensure that the reform agenda remains flexible to address evolving technologies and market developments.

In early 2017, Austroads published its research report that identifies and assesses key issues that need to be addressed to enable the safe operation of automated vehicles on the road network, including registration and licensing and compulsory third party insurance arrangements. The National Transport Commission has released a series of discussion papers since February 2016, including the development of national guidelines to support on-road trials of automated vehicles, clarifying control of an automated vehicle and options for an automated vehicle safety assurance framework. The National Transport Commission and Austroads published the national guidelines for trials of automated vehicles in Australia in May 2017. As a matter of policy, New South Wales will adopt these guidelines to support the bill as an added measure to ensure that trials are conducted safely and consistently with other jurisdictions in the country.

The New South Wales Government will continue to contribute to the national development of standards and regulatory settings to create an optimal and safe environment for undertaking testing and trials of automated technologies. Ultimately it is hoped that when these technologies are ready for mass deployment in the future, nationally consistent laws will have been developed for use by the public. However, New South Wales must position itself as an innovation leader, able to test and trial emerging automotive technologies in this State while maintaining public safety. It is crucial that automated vehicles are trialled in order to demonstrate the capability of the technology while increasing awareness and understanding and, most importantly, building trust and confidence in the public, who are the users and beneficiaries of the mobility revolution.

The New South Wales Government has established the Smart Innovation Centre as a new research and development hub for emerging transport and road technology. The Smart Innovation Centre is New South Wales' hub for collaborative research and development of safe and efficient emerging transport technology. The Smart Innovations Centre's mandate to be a world-class innovation incubator brings government together with industry, academia and investors to test and develop technology to deliver improved transport outcomes, including trials of driverless cars. The bill delivers on the Government's continued commitment to ensure an efficient, safe and technologically advanced transport future by amending the Transport Administration Act 1988 to provide additional functions for Transport for NSW. This amendment affirms the agency's leadership role in research, policy development and testing the application of innovative, automotive and digital technologies.

The further amendments within this bill to the Road Transport Act 2013 provide for the removal of barriers so that the likes of car and automotive parts manufacturers, specialised robotics and information technology [IT] software companies are encouraged to bring their business to New South Wales. Whether it is a local start-up or a global company, industry is assured that emerging technologies can be tested in New South Wales to assess their safety, reliability and performance against real-world challenges. While the majority of larger manufacturers and tech giants are based overseas, inviting them to New South Wales to test new technologies will bring increased opportunity to generate and grow local technology industries and increase jobs in areas such as software engineering, digital innovation, robotics and artificial intelligence, data analytics, smart infrastructure and next generation telecommunications. This, in turn, will continue to improve and diversify the New South Wales economy. It is a win-win for all parties involved.

Turning now to the details of the bill, schedule 1 provides for amendments to the Road Transport Act 2013. This is the insertion of a new part specifically for trialling automotive technologies, including highly and fully automated vehicles. The objects of this part are to enable the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight to consider and approve trials, by order published on the New South Wales Legislation website, of highly and fully automated vehicles on New South Wales roads. Automotive technology means technology related to advances in the design or construction of motor vehicles. This includes technology related to the use of connected and highly or fully automated vehicles.

The objects of this part also ensure that adequate insurance is in place to cover any personal injury or property damage that may arise during a trial. It also provides for the modification of references in law to the driver or person in charge of a vehicle that is highly or fully automated. The new provisions allow an applicant, the approved person, to apply to the Minister to use a trial vehicle on the road in circumstances that would not otherwise be lawful. Trial approval sets out where and when the trial vehicle may be used. The approved person must ensure the trial vehicle is not used except in accordance with a trial approval. Failure to do so is an offence and attracts a maximum penalty of \$11,000. The Minister may also suspend or revoke trial approval if any trial conditions are not met. Flexible provisions allow the Minister to determine registration conditions for a trial vehicle including whether it is to be exempted from registration.

The Minister may also direct Roads and Maritime Services to register the vehicle or to issue an unregistered vehicle permit for the use of the vehicle if needed. This arrangement reduces administrative barriers to creative development and allows for a range of trial methods and solution outcomes. As a safeguard and to ensure that any road user injured by an automated vehicle will not be any more disadvantaged than if they were injured by a human-operated vehicle, trial approval is conditional on the trial vehicle being covered by compulsory third party [CTP] insurance or on arrangements being made to indemnify the nominal defendant against a claim that may arise during the trial period as a result of the trial vehicle not being an insured motor vehicle. A public liability insurance policy of at least \$20 million or such larger amount as the Minister may require in a particular case is also needed to cover damage caused by or arising out of the use of a trial vehicle. The Minister is required to suspend or revoke trial approval if any such insurance requirements are not met.

Trial approval is also conditional on a vehicle supervisor being in the trial vehicle when used during the trial, unless the Minister determines otherwise. The vehicle supervisor must hold a current unrestricted driver licence that is of an appropriate class having regard to the trial vehicle type and approved by the Minister. The vehicle supervisor must be able to take control of the trial vehicle at any time or to stop it in an emergency or if required to do so by an authorised officer. As a further safeguard the approved person is required to notify the Minister of certain incidents occurring during an approved trial including collisions involving the trial vehicle and other accidents or incidents that have or could have caused significant property damage, serious injury or death.

The Minister may determine how references in laws to a driver or person in charge of a vehicle are to be understood in the case of a highly or fully automated trial vehicle as part of an approved trial. This means that the Minister may specify that any such reference is taken to be a reference to any one or more of the following: the vehicle supervisor, the approved person, the owner of the trial vehicle, no person, or a person prescribed by regulation. This clarifies who is responsible for the trial vehicle, including a driverless trial vehicle, which is

critical for police and insurers to determine liability for offences and insurance claims if the need arises. An offence, with a maximum penalty of \$11,000, is created for a person who hinders or obstructs the movement of a trial vehicle or interferes with a trial vehicle or any other equipment being used for the purposes of an approved trial. This sends a clear message that the New South Wales Government is serious about protecting the physical safety of people in and around trial vehicles. It also extends to protection against cyber security threats and breaches of privacy.

In accordance with the national guidelines for trialling automated vehicles in Australia, trialling organisations will also be required to collect and provide certain information related to the event and the performance of the automated driving system to the Smart Innovation Centre or to Roads and Maritime Services to assist with record keeping, incident management, and the evaluation of the trial. This information will be available online to inform the people of New South Wales of the progress that is being made in understanding this technology, how safe it is, and how it can be used to deliver better transport outcomes for the community. The Government understands the importance of the type of data this sort of technology is capable of capturing and is mindful of the need to manage privacy issues, including commercial sensitivity and the value of intellectual property.

Authorised use of de-identified data available from a vehicle's black box can be invaluable for research and planning. In a future where numerous black boxes are coupled with big data capabilities, the ability to solve congestion and scheduling issues are enhanced exponentially. Proper use of such data could also help police with pinpointing the exact time, weather, road, and traffic conditions in a crash. New South Wales is committed to working with other States and Territories to maintain consistency and to ensure the administrative burden of trial applications is minimised. Traffic travelling on Australia's east coast must travel through New South Wales. Therefore, to reduce administrative effort in assessing the merits of any similar trial seeking approval to operate in New South Wales, the Minister may take into account approvals of trials for automated vehicles granted in other States or Territories in determining whether to grant a trial approval.

This bill is not intended to support large-scale commercial deployment of automated vehicles, such as the sale of vehicles to the general public. There is still much that we do not know in terms of how the mass deployment and commercial uptake of these vehicles will impact or influence the use of our road network. However, this bill is sufficiently flexible to enable the Minister to permit a single vehicle or class of vehicles to operate under trial conditions for a trial period for any number of years on any road in the State. For example, the Minister could authorise a car manufacturer to operate a fleet of trial vehicles on any road in New South Wales for any number of years, subject to the car manufacturer continuing to comply with the trial conditions of operation, including compliance with the trial guidelines, insurance arrangements, provision of data from the trial vehicles, and safety management plans.

New South Wales could also conduct a heavy vehicle platoon trial under these arrangements. For example, automated vehicles can interact with each other and drive very closely as a platoon, which could reduce the total energy consumption of road transport by 4 to 25 per cent, because vehicles that follow closely behind each other face less air resistance. This bill will confirm to industry and to the people of New South Wales that our State is an innovation leader open to new ideas and approaches that can capitalise on research and development to drive social and economic value. As needed, the Minister may delegate functions under the proposed part to Transport for NSW or to Roads and Maritime Services. Statutory rules may also be made for approved trials to support future developments.

In developing the framework for the proposed amendment, the South Australian law has been referenced to ensure consistency in intent and outcomes sought from trialling automated vehicle technology. However, the New South Wales framework has been refined to include additional insurance safeguards, consideration of arrangements in place to conduct trials in other jurisdictions, and additional penalties to deter the use of a trial vehicle outside trial approval. Furthermore, this bill makes clear that New South Wales is not limited to short-term trials of a limited number of vehicles. As we learn and build confidence, and as technology advances, this bill is flexible enough to allow for more advanced and widespread trials of connected and automated vehicles for an extended period under specific conditions.

The proposed amendment is also consistent with approaches that have been adopted overseas for trialling automated vehicles, based on global industry advice, and accords with the National Transport Commission's approach, including the use of the commission's guidelines for automated vehicle trials in Australia in New South Wales. Transport for NSW has worked and continues to work in close consultation with the commission and interstate counterparts in examining required legislative, regulatory and road design changes to ensure road safety is prioritised as new technology is made available. Under this bill, industry will have enormous flexibility in the type of trials that can be run. By addressing key issues such as a clear scope of operations and a safety management plan that addresses risks and appropriate insurance, industry can get on with what it does best.

With our unique range of urban, regional and rural road environments, combined with our transport infrastructure boom and the diversification of industry and jobs, New South Wales is positioning itself as the preferred test bed for automotive technologies in Australia. The bill opens the way for the Government to advertise to local and global industry that New South Wales is the place to do business and that we are committed to ensuring that the people of New South Wales benefit from automated vehicle technologies and the opportunities they create. Technology is not just for the big city. This Government recognises that much of regional New South Wales' public transport focuses on getting people to and from Sydney. We have listened when many people in regional communities have told us they want more transport options for shorter journeys like getting to work, going to school, visiting family or seeing the doctor. This includes getting to a nearby regional city.

I am pleased to see bipartisan support from the Opposition leader, as well as the shadow Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation for her recent push for driverless car trials in New South Wales. We believe that by focusing more on connecting regional cities to surrounding regional towns and centres we can improve the amenity of our regional communities and make life easier for the people living there. Trials of automated vehicle technologies will enable new transport technologies which could provide public transport options for rural and regional communities, allowing for opportunities for greater social inclusion. By improving the convenience of commuting through automated technology, long distance travel by road from rural and regional centres becomes more attractive and safer as it no longer puts a burden on the driver, providing greater and longer use of the road network.

Technologies such as automated vehicles can support the needs of regional customers by providing greater access to cost-effective transport service options and by better prioritising roads for freight transportation and provision of goods and services in regional areas. Where public transport services in rural and regional areas right now may be too marginal, the efficiency of new technologies may allow for more or different public transport services. Automated vehicle technology has the potential to improve accessibility and mobility for a range of groups that are currently unable or unwilling to drive. Greater access to mobility would improve social inclusion and access to essential services and economic opportunities.

New South Wales is already leading the world in trialling connected and automated vehicle technology with the Cooperative Intelligent Transport Initiative that has been running for several years. This trial is a regional success story worthy of mention. Connected technologies are being tested between freight vehicles and on buses around the Southern Highlands, Port Kembla and Wollongong. It is the biggest trial of these technologies in the world right now. Trials of automated vehicles in rural and regional New South Wales will also provide an opportunity to gain insight into how these vehicles will detect animals, in particular, the iconic kangaroo. Volvo has recently indicated that the kangaroo has been identified as a real challenge for the vehicle's detection system. As it turns out, the unusual way that a kangaroo moves completely throws off the car's detection system and it is unable to determine how far away it is. This underpins the need to trial technology in local conditions and environments.

Emerging connected and automated vehicle technologies also offer new opportunities for regional research bodies and collaborations with regional business. These regional collaborations are supported by the New South Wales Government. For example, the \$12 million Boosting Business Innovation program has been designed to accelerate innovation by supporting collaboration between local research organisations and business. The programs delivery partners include Charles Sturt University, Southern Cross University and the University of New South Wales.

Charles Sturt University will also develop an innovation ecosystem, including the establishment of collaborative workspaces for start-ups, programs to assist small and medium enterprises to improve innovation and technical capacity, and the establishment of research partnerships with small and medium enterprises in Central West and southern New South Wales. Southern Cross University will establish the Lismore enterprise laboratory, a cutting-edge collaborative workspace for students, researchers and small and medium enterprises. The enterprise lab will foster collaboration to tackle key challenges and opportunities and accelerate innovation. The University of New England will establish the SMART Region Incubator in Armidale and Tamworth. The incubator will provide a collaborative workspace for small and medium enterprises, offer them access to the university's research data and facilitate their connections to regional, national and international innovation networks.

As members will be aware, the New South Wales Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety inquired into driverless vehicles and road safety and published its report in September 2016. The committee made three recommendations: that a national regulatory framework is required for the successful introduction of the technology; that pending the introduction of a national framework, the conditions under which automated vehicle technology can be trialled and tested on New South Wales roads should be published by the New South Wales Government; and the New South Wales Government examine a range of additional issues related to automated

vehicle technology that have been presented in evidence to the inquiry. The additional issues raised by the Staysafe committee's inquiry into driverless vehicles relate to benchmarking the safety of self-driving and human-driven vehicles, automated vehicle systems failure, Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems security and the impact of automated vehicle technology on current risk-taking behaviour.

The New South Wales Government is working on addressing these issues, particularly within the context of national regulatory frameworks, and will continue to provide input into work currently undertaken by both the National Transport Commission and Austroads to identify and address issues that may currently impede the safe and reliable introduction of automated vehicles on Australian roads. The Staysafe report, Government response to recommendations, additional issues raised by Staysafe and a formal response to each issue from the New South Wales Government are all published on the Parliament of New South Wales website. While a detailed review of the understanding of the full implications of automated vehicle technology for drink- and drug-driving laws, additional issue 4, has not yet been undertaken, this bill is proof of the Government's commitment to delivering the committee's recommendations.

This bill supports the phased approach envisaged by the committee's recommendations and findings. Over time, we will see the risks associated with the driving task move from the human driver towards the automated driving system, and our regulatory framework must be able to accommodate this change. A phased approach allows for trialling automated vehicles in a real-world context to identify risks that can be mitigated through the introduction of countermeasures, including the design of a safety assurance framework to determine how the safety of automated vehicles should be assessed before they can operate legally on our roads. Trials will also enable us to establish legal obligations for automated driving system entities as the driving task moves away from the human driver.

As I have already stated, while it is not intended that this bill will support the broad commercial deployment of automated vehicles, it is feasible that trial vehicles could operate as a fee for service in New South Wales. When that happens, the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight will determine the appropriate mechanism to operate such a trial to ensure public and passenger safety is maintained. Work has already commenced at the national level on identifying the necessary arrangements to support the broader deployment of automated vehicles. Phasing our approach through the use of trials to ensure that automated vehicle technology can be safely deployed on our roads is prudent and consistent with approaches in use in other jurisdictions here and overseas.

For example, in the United States of America, several individual states have progressively legislated for the operation of automated vehicles to varying degrees. In September 2016, the US National Highway Transport Safety Administration published its Federal Automated Vehicles Policy, giving industry and US agencies broader guidance on safety regulation for automated vehicles. The transition to automated vehicles is likely to be the largest shift in transport history since the transition from horse and cart. The promise of unprecedented mobility and affordability, the creation of new jobs and industries, the economic productivity boost and the reduction of congestion, emissions, injuries and deaths is real but yet to be realised. With much to do before this can become a reality, this bill will ensure that the people of New South Wales are included on this journey and are ready to embrace this technology and all the benefits and opportunities that may unfold as it matures. I commend the bill to the House.

Private Members' Statements

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PRIVATISATION

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:03): I bring to the attention of the House the Government's abhorrent privatisation agenda to line its coffers at the expense of the people of the Shellharbour electorate. Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] chief Rod Sims has recently criticised this Government's agenda of blindly privatising everything it can get its hands on. Despite traditionally being a supporter of privatisation, Mr Sims is staunchly against actions like those of this Government in privatising anything for short-term financial gain with no improvements in efficiency whatsoever.

Mr Sims has criticised the Government's recent privatisation moves, as it has done nothing but increase prices. This is a lose-lose situation. Not only are people losing the services they once had access to, they are having to pay more for services that are not any better. The Government continues with its wrecking-ball approach to New South Wales. First it was TAFE, and then selling off poles and wires to make quick cash. In Shellharbour, we lost the Service NSW office. Shellharbour is the only electorate in the Illawarra that does not have a Service NSW office. We need to ask: What is next? At the rate this Government is proceeding, there will soon be nothing left to sell.

Part of the Government's heartless privatisation agenda includes Shellharbour Hospital. It is nothing more than a revenue-raising exercise on the part of the Government at the expense of Shellharbour constituents. Before the 2015 election, the Government promised a \$250 million upgrade to Shellharbour Hospital. There was no mention of privatisations prior to the election. Instead of carrying out the promised upgrade, the Government decided to sneakily announce the privatisation plans for our hospital. I have said it before and I will say it again, the people of Shellharbour do not want their public hospital to fall into private hands. I have collected more than 12,000 signatures opposing the privatisation of Shellharbour Hospital, and we will continue to fight.

It seems that the Government is finding out the hard way what seems so obvious to others: health care is not a commodity. The Government has had to backtrack on decisions to privatise Wyong, Bowral and Goulburn hospitals due to strong resistance from those communities. I commend the fight put up by my colleagues in the Labor Party and those in the communities of Wyong, Bowral, Goulburn, Maitland and Shellharbour. We will not stop fighting until our hospitals remain in public hands. There is no guarantee nor any precedence that services will be better or the cost of health care lower under a private system. As the chairman of the ACCC said, "Privatisation of public assets has caused the public to lose faith in the supposed benefits of privatisation because all it has done in recent times is increase prices."

The Government has no idea what it is doing. It has been as transparent as mud on this matter, and the people of Shellharbour deserve better. But the Government has not stopped with health care on its wrecking-ball rampage: the push to privatise vocational education and training is an absolute disgrace. The closure of Dapto TAFE has left nothing but a shopfront in place of what was once a bustling campus. How is this fair? To add insult to injury, it comes at a time when the Illawarra has a youth unemployment rate of 12.9 per cent. If the Government cared about employment prospects for young people in the Shellharbour electorate it would not be cutting access to education and training. The cherry on top of the sell-off sundae is the Government's privatisation of poles and wires. Labor voiced its opposition to the selling of New South Wales poles and wires from the start because it knows that privatisation results in higher prices, reduced services and the loss of jobs. The chairman of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission agrees.

People who are already doing it tough are going to be even worse off in the face of rising electricity bills. This Government does not seem to care. It proves that the Government is interested only in lining its own pockets at the expense of the people of Shellharbour. There is a distinct pattern: the Government is unable to deliver any concrete policy so it resorts to selling everything it can to make cash in the short term. I am letting the Government know that we will not stop fighting until Shellharbour receives the services it needs and deserves. We will not stop fighting until our hospital stays in public hands and our young people have access to the TAFE services they need. We will continue to fight against exorbitant electricity prices caused by this disaster of a government.

NORTHERN RIVERS LIVESTOCK EXCHANGE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (17:08): I have a good news story. I inform the House of the wonderful announcement made last week by the Premier on her visit to Casino. The Premier was very warmly received when she visited Casino last week, where she announced a \$7 million grant to complete the \$14 million upgrade to the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange. The Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange [NRLX] is a critical piece of infrastructure, not just for the Richmond Valley but also for the northern New South Wales cattle-growing industry. It is the largest cattle selling centre between Tamworth in New South Wales and Dalby in Queensland and was ranked the top priority by the community in a survey carried out a couple of years ago. In 2015-16 it was ranked fifth in the State. It provides a very significant financial return to the region.

Last financial year, the NRLX's gross turnover totalled \$88 million, while in the first seven months of 2016-17 it has already grossed more than \$55 million. Its importance to local employment is evidenced by the fact that the Northern Co-operative Meat Company is the Northern Rivers' single largest employer, with up to 1,000 workers. As a regional infrastructure project, the upgrade of the NRLX is the Richmond Valley Council's number one priority. It is estimated that it will cost \$14 million and create more than 200 new jobs. All members know the importance of regional jobs in sustaining rural communities. It is further estimated that the upgrade will deliver a \$50 million boost to the local economy. The beef industry is one of the largest employers in the region, and this investment will ensure that it continues to grow and to prosper.

Stage one of the project is due to commence mid this year and will cost \$7 million. To achieve this development, the council has matched a \$3.5 million Federal Government grant with local government loans. Stage one entails improvements to the livestock receivables and sales areas, including the roofing, soft flooring and yard design. This will deliver greatly improved animal welfare results and better yields for producers and buyers alike, as evidenced by the new and/or upgraded saleyard investments across not only New South Wales but also this country in recent times.

All of this, including preparing for a future in which live internet selling at the NRLX will be a reality, will further underpin Casino as our beef capital and strengthen its existing role as a regional centre that is delivering best practice in livestock auctions. The council needed a further \$7 million to complete the full upgrade and was working closely with the New South Wales Department of Industry to put a case for consideration by the Government for dollar-for-dollar funding. A contract has been let for design and construction with Wiley and Co., which recently constructed the new Dalby Saleyards in Queensland.

As part of the design and construct contract, Wiley and Co. has completed project designs for the full upgrade, which will enable the project to be completed by the end of 2018 now that the \$7 million grant has been announced. I was heartened by the Premier's words when she first got the top job: she said she would govern for all of New South Wales. She has certainly honoured her word, and it was wonderful to see her in Casino listening and talking to country people and delivering \$7 million for the community's number one project. I know that Richmond Valley Mayor Robert Mustow was ecstatic about the announcement. He hugged the Premier with excitement, and he still cannot wipe the smile off his face. I thank the Premier for visiting and for honouring her promise to represent country New South Wales, as she did in Casino last week.

LIVERPOOL LOCAL BUSINESS AWARD RECIPIENTS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (17:12): I congratulate all participants who were recognised in this year's Liverpool Local Business Awards. The awards pay tribute to and reward the local community's best and most innovative businesses. They also aim to grow and to strengthen the bonds between businesses and the community, thereby improving local business standards. The awards recognise local businesses, and local residents are invited to cast their votes. They provide an opportunity for local businesses to promote their business and its strengths, to display their range of products and services, and to provide in-store displays of their local business awards success. They bring together businesses, the local community and award sponsors to celebrate excellence and quality.

The Holsworthy electorate was proudly represented in the awards, with many different businesses winning in their respective categories. I acknowledge in particular GY Dance in Prestons, which won the Dance Studio category. I was also happy to see that of the seven finalists in this category six were from my electorate. We have some amazing dancers in our local area, and I especially love seeing their performances at end-of-year concerts. Octave8 Music Academy in Moorebank won the Education Service category; Oxigen Fitness in Casula won the Fitness Services category; Freedom Furniture in Casula won the Home Furniture and Furnishings category; Atlas Jewellers in Casula won the Jewellery Store category; Fit Clinic in Prestons won the New Business category, and I wish that business all the best; Pro Logistics in Moorebank won the Service and Trade category; and Chief Fluid Systems in Chipping Norton won the Specialised Business category.

I also note Euphoria Florist in Hammondville, which won the Best Florist category. This business is run by Betty Plessas and her daughter Kath, who are a dedicated and passionate mother-daughter team. They are located close to my office and I often purchase flowers, gifts and wreaths from their shop. I am not surprised that they won this category. Their customer service and attention to detail is second to none. I am pleased to have them as my neighbour. Congratulations to Betty and Kath; they deserve this win after so many years of hard work. It is nice that they are acknowledged every year.

The Business Person of the Year was awarded to Adam Anderson. It is not the first time I have mentioned him in this House. Adam runs the Minuteman Press in Liverpool and last year won the New Business category. Adam is also the director of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce and is a proud sponsor of the Liverpool Police Citizens Youth Club and the Ingham Institute. As a strong and fervent advocate for business in Liverpool, I am happy that Adam was recognised for his hard work and dedication in growing his business and also for his assistance in growing business across the Liverpool region. I recognise the winner of the Business of the Year category, Chief Fluid Systems, in Chipping Norton. I could go on about how this business won this award through having the best customer service, the best marketing tactics and the best technical skill, but I believe it deserves this award as a result of its understanding that businesses should work with and support the local community.

Earlier this year, Chief Fluid Systems hosted a World's Greatest Shave event in honour of people they love and who have battled blood cancer. It brought our local community together by working with other local businesses, customers, suppliers, family and friends to raise a staggering \$23,400 to help make a difference by providing funding for research that will help more people survive blood cancers. In fact, this year it ranked 17 out of the top 48 fundraisers in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. They will be running this event again in 2019. I hope to join them in their festivities when it next occurs. It is a monumental effort and I am glad that this business was recognised as Business of the Year and for helping to create a much stronger community. Small business is at the heart of our economy and our community. I am proud to be part of a government that supports them. I once again congratulate the winners and finalists that were recognised in this year's Liverpool

Business Awards. They should take pride in their achievements and I wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

LAKE MACQUARIE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:17): On Saturday 22 July, I was pleased to join a packed house at Belmont 16 Footers Club to celebrate businesses in my area at the 2017 Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards. The aim of the awards is to recognise businesses operating in the city of Lake Macquarie that provide exemplary products and services. The nomination process is extensive and can assist businesses in ongoing growth and development. From world-class product developers to digital innovators, accounting firms to manufacturers, the award finalists showcased the diversity of businesses thriving within the city of Lake Macquarie. Almost 40 businesses from various parts of Lake Macquarie contended for awards across 15 categories as part of the 2017 celebration of business excellence and success. Sixteen Charlestown businesses were recognised as finalists and demonstrated the strength of Charlestown's business sector.

The Business of the Year award was received by Charlestown business JettProof. JettProof manufactures calming sensory clothing which has the ability to positively transform the lives of children and adults living with autism sensory processing disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and anxiety by helping them regulate their body temperature to stay calm and focused. JettProof clothing was created by a caring and concerned mother for her adorable child, Jett. JettProof clothing aims to minimise meltdowns and aid in social situations and is proudly 100 per cent Australian made. JettProof clothing was also awarded Excellence in Branding and Marketing and Excellence in Innovation and founder Michelle Evan won the Excellence in Entrepreneurship category.

The Young Business Person of the Year was awarded to Charlestown constituent and business owner Ryan Bennett. Ryan is the co-founder of Zimpleweb, which provides all website services under one roof, from design to search engine optimisation. Blake Bennett, also a co-founder of Zimpleweb, was recognised with the Excellence in Young Entrepreneurship Award. Business Person of the Year was another Charlestown business owner, Amber Moncrieff from Hunter Plastic Surgery, who won the category for the second year running. Hunter Plastic Surgery was also awarded Excellence in Customer Service by the Whole Business for the second year in a row, and Jessica Laing from Hunter Plastic Surgery was awarded Excellence in Customer Service by an Individual.

Centre for Hope, an organisation I have been proud to talk about in this place on numerous occasions, was the deserving winner of the Excellence in Not for Profit/Charity category. Centre for Hope assists both Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people who are considered to be in need of intervention to improve their educational and life outcomes. The centre's vision is to empower young disadvantaged Australians to respect themselves, to connect to the wider community and to live an inspired life. Centre for Hope has created several highly successful programs such as student mentoring, Wheels for Hope, The Drop drop-in centre, a homework centre at Windale Library, and the Supporting Families program.

Other finalists from the Charlestown electorate included Precision Taxation Accounting and Management; Charlestown Golf Club; Inspired EC, which provides early childhood consultancy; Mega Save Chemist; Liftango, a groundbreaking rideshare app linking employees with free trips to and from work; Electromotive Force [ELMOFO], which supplies and uses components from zero emission racing and motoring; HCF; The Place: Charlestown Community Centre; The Esplanade Motel, Warners Bay; Charlestown Caring Group; Street Appeal Garden Solutions; The Green Room, a performing arts studio; and Michael Nolan Vocal Studios. The majority of finalists coming from the Charlestown electorate is proof that businesses do not have to be based in large metropolitan cities like Sydney and Melbourne to be highly successful. It is also proof of what a business powerhouse Charlestown is.

In its sixth year, the 2017 Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards demonstrated once again that there are many businesses in Lake Macquarie which have achieved and continue to achieve excellence. The awards were created and run by Lake Macquarie Business Growth Centre in Gateshead and are sponsored by Dantia, SafeWork NSW, the University of Newcastle, St George Bank, PDH Accounting Services, Turnbull Hill Lawyers, Nationwide Super, Zimpleweb, ATUNE Health Centres, Thurnham Teece, Garaty Murnane Insurance Brokers, Lake Macquarie City Council, and Dynamic Business Technologies. The gala dinner was a celebration of these achievements. It was certainly pleasing to see so many business people and workers come together on the night to support their colleagues. Congratulations to all the finalists and winners. Their dedication to business and the pursuit of excellence is truly inspiring.

CANOWINDRA INTERNATIONAL BALLOON CHALLENGE

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (17:22): I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Canowindra International Balloon Challenge, which is a significant event for the township of Canowindra and the electorate

of Orange as well as for New South Wales and Australia. The event is recognised internationally, receiving foreign participation from various countries. Canowindra has a long history of and association with hot air ballooning and is referred to by many as the ballooning capital of Australia. The district has many attributes which attract balloon pilots and enthusiasts to launch their craft into the clean, unpolluted blue skies over the rolling fields of a vast colour palette—a mosaic of paddocks of various shapes, planted in assorted foliage.

Canowindra previously hosted the annual event, Marti's Balloon Fiesta, which ceased operating in 2006. The absence of the well-established and long-running calendar event did nothing to quell the interest of those who appreciated the festival and the unique sporting event. Local balloon operators Graham and Jan Kerr grew restless with the loss of the iconic event. In 2010, the Kerrs responded by establishing a new event to reinstate Canowindra as the Aussie balloon headquarters. The new event was christened the "Canowindra Balloon Challenge". Unsurprisingly, the first event was a complete success and the Kerrs engaged their community to participate in growing the event through a coordinated effort for the benefit of Canowindra and the surrounding districts.

In 2011, Canowindra Challenge Incorporated, a community-based organisation comprising seven directors and a membership, was formed to administer and coordinate the exciting event. The Canowindra Balloon Challenge is now included in the Australian National Balloon Championships sanctioned by the Australian Ballooning Federation. In recent years the event was also granted the sanction for a category 2 international balloon competition by the Federation Aeronautique Internationale, the world governing body for aviation sports. This year the competition was held over six days and involved 16 balloons from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States and France. An additional eight balloons participated in the fiesta.

The event is held in the second week of the April school holidays—a time of year that provides ideal weather for balloon flying, with calm wind currents, cool overnight temperatures, sunny days and a low chance of rain. The school holiday period also encourages visitation from families. Visitors who rise early can witness the amazing mass launch of the competitive balloons at dawn each day or participate in balloon joy flights. The Balloon Glow at night is a light show like no other and a visual spectacle to accompany the variety of food and wine for which the region is well known. It is the highlight of the week-long festival. The 2017 event attracted 9,000 visitors to the Balloon Glow and approximately 11,500 over the entire event. Demographic data from attendance figures demonstrates that 22 per cent of visitors were from the Central West, 6 per cent were from Sydney, 68 per cent were from elsewhere in New South Wales and 3 per cent were from interstate and overseas.

The event provides a significant financial injection into the local economy. This year approximately \$1.5 million was spent on accommodation, at restaurants and cafes, in shops and on tourism services. Supported by the Cabonne Shire Council and Destination NSW, which has identified the Canowindra International Balloon Challenge as a regional flagship event, the future of this event is secure for the foreseeable future. It is a permanent fixture on the State calendar. I applaud Graham and Jan Kerr, the Canowindra Challenge Incorporated, their team of keen volunteers who assisted in organising the event and Cabonne Shire Council for uniting to provide the Orange electorate, New South Wales and beyond with a unique and iconic event for all to enjoy for many years to come.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (17:26): On 12 May 2016 Bankstown City Council was forcibly merged with Canterbury City Council. Despite overwhelming opposition from Bankstown and Canterbury ratepayers, this decision has yet to be reversed. The merged entity, City of Canterbury Bankstown, is the largest local government area in New South Wales, with a population of more than 350,000. The Department of Planning and Environment expects the population within the merged Canterbury Bankstown local government area to rise to between 500,000 and 550,000 by the year 2036, which would be greater than the population of Tasmania. Unlike every other council in metropolitan Sydney, Bankstown City Council was forced to merge despite being determined by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal as being financially fit for the future and having the required scale and capacity to remain a standalone council.

Last week's shocking—it was not really shocking; it was predictable—backflip by Premier Berejiklian to scrap her Government's unpopular policy of forced council amalgamations was a slap in the face to every Bankstown and East Hills resident who was corralled by the Government into an unwanted marriage with Canterbury. The Bankstown community deserves the right to unwind this Government's failed policy of forced council amalgamations. It is a complete shambles. Premier Berejiklian has stepped in to save her north shore and eastern suburbs-voting heartland while forcibly merging Bankstown with Canterbury. Hunters Hill will survive with 13,000 residents while Bankstown Canterbury will have more than 350,000 residents. One ward alone in the Canterbury Bankstown council has a population greater than Hunters Hill, Lane Cove and Mosman councils combined. In fact, a ward in Canterbury Bankstown has a greater number of residents than each electorate in New South Wales.

"Local" has been completely removed from the concept of local government in Bankstown. It is clear that this Government has one rule that applies to the north shore and another that applies to Bankstown. This is no more apparent than in planning where the New South Wales Government is using the conversion of the T3 Bankstown line between Sydenham and Bankstown to justify dumping more than 35,000 units along the rail corridor between Sydenham and Bankstown. To date, the Government has refused to allocate up-front capital works funding to upgrade social infrastructure between Sydney and Bankstown—that includes schools, roads, hospitals and open green space—prior to the conversion of the heavy rail line to a metro. In Bankstown alone, the Government has proposed 6,000 additional units to be constructed within 800 metres of Bankstown station. While our community would have to live through this rampant overdevelopment, the Greater Sydney Commission Draft North District Plan has set Mosman council a target of 300 additional households in the next five years and Hunters Hill a mere 150.

In the meantime, the Bankstown community had already lost access to the entire inner west train line when the Liberals scrapped that train line back in 2013, and the community will shortly live through the chaos of the Bankstown line being shut down for months on end over the next five years. The real agenda of the Liberals is clear with respect to the metro and Bankstown council being so hastily merged with Canterbury: the lobbyists in New South Wales need work. The people in only one half of Sydney have had their voices heard, while the people in the other half of Sydney have been completely neglected and ignored by the Government, which has deliberately waited too long to hold a plebiscite on 9 September. Labor has already made its position very clear: it will allow communities that have been subject to a forced merger, like Bankstown, to hold plebiscites to exercise their democratic rights to determine their own futures.

To add insult to injury, a black cloud will be hanging over the heads of residents ahead of the local government elections on 9 September. On 15 July 2017, an article was published by *Sydney Morning Herald* journalist Kate McClymont detailing an admission by the administrator that an Independent Commission Against Corruption investigation into Canterbury Bankstown Council is on foot. The Premier's backflip is the proof of the pudding that forced council amalgamations have been a failure from start to finish. All communities, irrespective of their postcodes, deserve the right to have their voices heard and their wishes respected by the New South Wales Government. Bankstown ratepayers have never supported an amalgamation with Canterbury. The Bankstown community deserves the right to unwind this Government's failed policy. Let the members of our community have their say. Let us de-merge.

FIRST WOMEN LIFESAVERS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:31): As the member for Terrigal, I can say that not a day goes by when I am not proud to represent my constituents. This is one of those times that I feel that pride. Recently I was made aware of the efforts of Ms Cathy Cole, a current member of the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club, who is working to ensure that a group of 20 amazing women receive recognition for being the first female lifesavers during World War II. Nearly 75 years later, the search is on to find their families—and possibly even some of the surviving women themselves—after Surf Life Saving Australia agreed posthumously to recognise their achievements by presenting them with bronze medallions.

Cathy has spent the past 18 months poring over archived newspaper reports from the 1940s to identify who these women were and to research their extraordinary stories. The club always knew about these women and had little snippets of information. With Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club coming up to its 100th anniversary, Ms Cole set about finding the definitive account of Australia's first female lifesavers and tracking down their descendants. She felt that these were not imaginary people; they were real people whose stories had to be told.

In a time of war, during an era when a woman's place was deemed to be in the kitchen, a group of brave young women bucked authority and started the Commonwealth's first all-female lifesaving patrols. With World War II raging, 72 of Terrigal's 76 patrolling surf club members had enlisted in the Army, Air Force or Navy. With just four male members left, there were not enough lifesavers to man patrols, so their wives, girlfriends, sisters, daughters and female friends took over lifesaving duties. They were trained by chief instructor Harry Vickery before being assessed by Central Coast Life Saving inaugural president Dr E. A. Martin. An accredited member of the board of examiners since 1933, Dr Martin was reported in a newspaper at the time he adjudicated a simulated rescue and resuscitation exam. The paper reported:

"Their discipline and beach work were excellent and at least equal to any Bronze Medallion squad I have ever examined," he said. "These young amazons are a bonnie band of girls who, in discipline, general drill and resuscitation equalled, if not bettered, the ordinary men Bronze Medallion squads with two months training." Despite this endorsement, Surf Life Saving Australia refused to award them bronze medallions or acknowledge their patrols. The women faced enormous community and social resistance. People did not like being told what to do by a woman. The women forged ahead regardless and went on to patrol Terrigal for two seasons in 1942 and 1943. To this day, nobody has drowned in the patrol area of Terrigal Beach. The women made their own swimming costumes and uniforms out of sheets, curtains and parachutes. Footage of their work was shown in cinemas in the United

Kingdom and United States. The girls are credited with at least one documented rescue: they saved 17-year-old Rodney McDonald who was knocked unconscious when his boat capsized in rough seas.

To put their efforts into perspective, Surf Life Saving Australia did not allow women to become surf life savers until 1981, almost four decades later. Surf Life Saving Australia now has more than 61,000 female members. Ms Cole has tracked down the families of nine of the 20 women already and, amazingly, four of them are still alive and well into their nineties, including Joan Sloman and Muriel Dibben. Throughout this process of discovery, Ms Cole learned that Joan and Muriel live in the same nursing home at Wyoming on the Central Coast. Muriel Dibben, who married Terrigal surf life saver Ron Dibben in 1943 when he came back from the war on leave, said she was in genuine fear all the time of Japanese bombers reaching the coast.

You could hear the (Allied) planes flying overhead, but you would always think it's not as bad as it could be for someone else, or the boys overseas.

Ms Cole is still in the process of trying to track down the families of the 11 women and also wants to hear from anyone with memories or stories passed down through generations of the female life savers and their exploits. The women found currently are Joan Sloman, Muriel Dibben, Nola Compton, Tricia Walters, Dot Berry, Beth Berry, Joyce Burgess, Jean Payne and Mary Fogarty. Ms Cole is still searching for "Dinkie" Olive Campbell, Noreen Walsh, Joyce Speers, Norma Speers, Muriel Ogden, Louise Cambourne, Olive Kirkpatrick, Dot Crick, Mary Kirkness, Gwen Moore and Bessie Campbell. I also acknowledge the great work done by the *Express Advocate* and its reporter Richard Noone in running this great story for the Central Coast. I will supply all of the families of the surviving members of this group with a Terrigal Parliamentary Medallion in honour of their great service and in addition to the bronze medallions that have been presented to them by the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club. This is a wonderful story of women making a great sacrifice during a very tough time. I compliment Ms Cole and the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club for their outstanding work.

TRIBUTE TO DIANE BENNETT, OAM

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (17:36): I am delighted to take this opportunity to inform the House of the dedication of Diane Bennett, OAM, to our NSW Rural Fire Service Association [RFSA]. Diane was recently awarded life membership of the organisation during a presentation in Penrith. Life membership is the highest award the association can bestow. It is presented sparingly and only to those who have made a significant, quality and sustained contribution towards the growth and success of the association above and beyond the normal expectations of any position in which they have served.

Diane is a resident of Clarence Town and an active member of the Dungog and Lower Hunter branches of the RFSA. She is currently secretary of the Lower Hunter branch of the NSW Rural Fire Service Association. Diane first joined the Clarence Town Rural Fire Brigade in 1991 and has since had a distinguished career encompassing many positions including firefighter, function and fundraiser organiser, community engagement officer, secretary, deputy captain, senior deputy captain, and captain of the Clarence Town Fire Brigade. It should also be noted that Diane performed the captain's duties for eight years prior to taking on the stripes.

Diane also volunteered in many community engagements. She attended State conferences and regional and State workshops and served as community safety facilitator and community liaison officer. She became involved in community education and introduced fire safety programs into schools in the Dungog district. She introduced fire safety presentations to residents of towns in the Dungog shire, including winter safety talks to the elderly. She mentored Rural Fire Service members throughout the Lower Hunter district so they could deliver the school fire safety program. Diane formed the Dungog District Committee and took on the position of major projects coordinator. Over the years Diane has also attained certification as an instructor with the Rural Fire Service, instructing courses from basic firefighting to crew leader.

Diane instructed in the use of a fire extinguisher and basic firefighting support courses for staff at Mobil Australia, NSW Fisheries, Maitland Timber and Hardware, the New South Wales Surf Life Saving Association, the New South Wales Coastal Patrol and the Eaglereach Wilderness Resort, to name just a few organisations. Diane also attained Rural Fire Service assessor certification. In 2007 Diane became a delegate to the Rural Fire Service Association [RFSA] State Council and held that position until 2010. Due to ill health, Diane stepped down from that position but remains an active and enthusiastic member of the branch. At the awards in Penrith, the chair of the Honours and Awards Committee, Scott Campbell, said that Diane has always publicly represented the views of her fellow volunteer firefighters. He said:

Without her involvement, the RFSA within the Hunter, Manning, Great Lakes and Gloucester Districts would not be as structured and resilient, or have the capacity to advocate for its membership as it does today.

The RFSA president, Ken Middleton, said Diane always leads by example. He went on to state:

She was awarded an Order of Australia (OAM) for her contributions to the NSW RFS, RFSA and the community and as such is a worthy recipient of the RFSA's highest honour and the Association congratulates Diane on her recognition and achievement.

The RFSA Division 3 chair, Glenn Wall from Gresford, also praised Diane for her support of the volunteers:

Diane constantly displays the highest level of excellence in RFSA participation and has made exceptional contributions to the Association's programs and projects ...

He went on to state:

Diane is meticulous in ensuring that any policy frameworks that have been identified as representing key issues that have operational or strategic importance to the future of the Rural Fire Service in NSW have been presented, discussed and commented on by RFSA Members, at times most vigorously.

The award of Life Membership to Diane is commendable given her involvement regarding the NSW RFS and RFSA and her dedication and commitment in support of volunteer firefighters is exemplary.

As the member for Upper Hunter, I am extremely proud to have a volunteer of Diane's calibre in the Upper Hunter electorate. Her contribution to the community is outstanding. I congratulate Diane on her much-deserved recognition and on being presented with life membership of the New South Wales Rural Fire Service Association.

EDUCATION WEEK

GOULBURN BUSINESS AWARD RECIPIENTS

Ms PRU GOWARD (Goulburn—Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (17:41): As we mark Public Education Week in New South Wales, it is appropriate that I begin my private member's statement by celebrating the long-awaited opening of the Goulburn West Public School's new administration block. This might not be exciting for most members of this House but for the people of Goulburn it has been a fantastic achievement. It was funded by the New South Wales Government and it has been a long time coming. Staff and students spent 17 years in a less-than-perfect demountable, which makes the new building so much more appreciated. Many times I have been in that collection of demountable buildings and lamented with staff and parents the terrible conditions under which we were asking people to work.

As we all celebrated the new office block, the school leaders—Ellie Gorman, Danielle Webb, Bradley Rutherford and Ned Jones—presented me with a beautiful painting to hang in my office. I congratulate the principal of the Goulburn West Public School, Annette Broadbent, on her fantastic school. I also congratulate the small but active parents and citizens association. I thank the association's secretary, Dusty Lasker, and the vice-president, Peter Strange, for attending the opening. As always, I thank them for their ongoing hard work for this wonderful school, which happens to be the largest primary school in Goulburn. I look forward to attending many more events at the school and to enjoying this wonderful new administration block for many years to come.

Similarly, last week I was thrilled to be invited to the Blessing of the Ambo and dedication of the altar in the refurbished chapel at the Sts Peter and Paul Primary School, which also is in West Goulburn. I now know that an "ambo" is a type of pulpit and the term comes from the Eastern tradition. I thank the school's principal, Kathy Neely, for hosting me. It was a very lovely service. I particularly noticed the school's beautifully behaved children. There was not a wriggle in any seat, even from a little boy, through the entirety of the service.

I have also been travelling around my very large and wonderful electorate, as many members have around their electorates, meeting with local chambers of commerce to discuss local business issues and, of course, the recent New South Wales bumper budget. It has been great to spend time with those groups over the past few weeks and hear of their work in our communities. They are very supportive of the new funding opportunities being offered by our strong budget and, of course, the payroll tax exemption for small business. I certainly look forward to working with them and their communities to ensure the maximum benefits to our region, both economic and social.

I thank the Marulan president, David Humphries, for inviting me to address their meeting, and Brigid Kennedy for inviting me to the Fitzroy Falls Cluster and the Moss Vale branch meeting which occurred at the same time. The Boorowa Business Chamber president, Michael Ward, was very generous and invited me to be part of the Boorowa business awards, the first in a number of years. I thank Michael for hosting me at the awards evening and for inviting me to present two awards. I congratulate the award winners. The People's Choice Best Customer Service, Business, went to Boorowa Pharmacy, a fantastic service; the People's Choice Best Customer Service, Employee, went to Amanda Shean; the Business Retail award went to Boorowa Hardware; the Hospitality Business award went to the Town Clock Coffee Shop, a great coffee shop; the Trade Services award went to A L Banks Builders; the Rural Service award went to D and R Hanns; and the overall winner was Boorowa Real Estate.

Unfortunately, I missed the Goulburn business award evening on Saturday night because it clashed with the Boorowa business awards, but I congratulate the award winners. Apprentice/Trainee of the Year was Lille Brown from Southern Tablelands Arts; Excellence in Small Business went to Kelly Boydell from Imaginations

Early Education; Excellence in Customer Service went to Corey Newman from the John McGrath Auto Group; Excellence in Sustainability went to Janine Heat from Harvest Goulburn; Excellence in Innovation went to Warrigal Goulburn; Business Leader was awarded to Andy Divall from Divall's Earthmoving; Young Entrepreneur was awarded to Kelly Boydell; and Employer of Choice and Excellence in Business awards went to Allens Training Goulburn. Business is alive and well and definitely prospering in my electorate, doing what it does best. With the support of a strong State Government, our business community is creating jobs, creating prosperity and giving back to the community in countless ways. It is all part of the great story of regional New South Wales.

CANTERBURY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:46): The Berejiklian Government has released plans to force more high-density development in the suburban streets of the Canterbury electorate. The Government has marked out 15 suburbs as "priority growth precincts", including, in my electorate, Belmore, Campsie and Canterbury. Hurlstone Park and parts of Earlwood will also be impacted. For residents, this means the Berejiklian Government rather than the local community will dictate housing density. The Government's projections show that 15,000 additional dwellings will be packed into Campsie, Canterbury and Belmore alone, in addition to the overdevelopment that is there now. This is suburban overdevelopment on steroids. Local residents are angry and are telling me they have grave concerns about the future of their suburban streets. My colleague the shadow Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has visited the area. I thank him for coming out and listening to people who are worried about the future of their local streets.

Infrastructure is already lagging behind in my electorate. There is a lack of green space, a lack of community space and a lack of local employment opportunities, and our schools are overcrowded. The merged entity of Canterbury-Bankstown owns or manages several important community facilities in my electorate. Among those are Belmore Bowling and Recreation Club, Canterbury Bowling and Community Club and Hurlstone Park Bowling and Recreation Club. Facilities like these should remain in public hands and I, along with our community, will fight tooth and nail to ensure that they remain in public hands. New facilities should be opened and funded to service the needs of our growing and changing local community.

The Government is happy to impose vast new development with its latest proposal. There are three proposals that affect my community but the Government does not have any plans for infrastructure or jobs creation in the area. The Government's plans for local facilities and infrastructure go no further than an unfunded wish list. We need solid, funded commitments, but the Berejiklian Government's 2017-18 budget has provided no extra funding for Canterbury Hospital, no coordinated plan to ease congestion on Canterbury Road, and no funding to address the \$7 million maintenance backlog in our local schools. Our schools are at capacity. As Sydney's population grows, the Berejiklian Government is forcing our area to do more heavy lifting than other parts of Sydney. The Premier's vision is to bulldoze our local communities to build lifeless, jobless dormitory suburbs for the Sydney central business district.

On 24 July, the member for Rockdale, Steve Kamper, local residents and I had the misfortune to attend the Government's drop-in session for the Bardwell Park and Turrella precincts. Part of the Government's new wave of so-called consultation is holding information sessions. Unfortunately planning officials who attend these sessions do not make a note of the concerns that people raise and neither do they present accurate information. I attended the entire three hours of the drop-in session, which gave me an opportunity to witness how terrible these sessions are. It was a public relations exercise, not genuine consultation. The Government provided little information, and the hundreds of residents who turned up for this session felt disgusted as they believed they had been dismissed.

Canterbury Road is of particular concern. The forcibly merged entity of Canterbury-Bankstown Council has just released a devastating 500-page expert report on Canterbury Road that involved Transport for NSW, Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] and the Department of Planning. The report stated that Canterbury Road is a noisy, polluted and harsh environment that is generally unsuitable in its current state for housing. The report made 15 recommendations on zoning, urban design, environmental issues, traffic management, transportation and parking. The Berejiklian Government should look closely at the recommendations of this report and should listen to the people of Canterbury.

I invite the Government to work with me, the council, local residents and the Greater Sydney Commission to improve the quality of life of the growing number of people in my community. I urge the Premier and the Minister for Planning to reconsider plans to cram in even more apartment blocks along Canterbury Road. Thousands of apartment blocks have already been erected along Canterbury Road and more are planned. This report has stated that Canterbury Road is unsuitable for housing. I inform the people of my electorate that I will host a community meeting this Saturday at Ashbury Bowling and Pan-arcadian Federation Club from 2.25 p.m. [*Time expired.*]

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA RECIPIENTS

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) (17:52): Every year our communities celebrate some of our most outstanding citizens who, in most cases, have contributed the better part of their lives to improving society in some way. This year I and many community residents were very pleased to learn of four very special residents of my electorate who have had the great honour of receiving the Order of Australia. It is a true honour for anyone to receive this accolade, and I am thrilled that some of Londonderry's own have had their service and dedication finally recognised.

The first of those to be congratulated is the amazing Mr Allen Cullen, OAM, whose work with the charity Little by Little and the associated Kurrambee School in my electorate is nothing short of a miracle. Everyone who knows Kurrambee is in awe of the work it does. Allen has been recognised for his outstanding service to special needs education. He has dedicated more than 50 years of his life to supporting students with special needs, including as the former principal at the Kurrambee School in Werrington. That is a truly amazing school, and I pay tribute once again to the current principal, Lisa Moffet. Allen also played a crucial role in establishing trampolining as an Olympic sport for the first time at the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000. I thank Allen for everything he does for our community.

The next recipient from my electorate is one of Western Sydney's rugby league legends, Mr Warren Smith, OAM, president of the St Marys Rugby League Club. Warren is nothing short of an institution in the St Marys community. He is a well-known figure, widely known as the president of one of New South Wales' largest and most successful rugby league clubs. When you think of rugby league in Western Sydney you think of Warren, and we have him to thank for making the game what it is in our region today. He does so much to support young players and local schools and he is involved in so many different elements of our community. He has been heavily involved with the Variety bash for more than 10 years. I thank Warren for his service to one of Western Sydney's favourite sports.

I also congratulate John Kinsela from PCYC Mount Druitt. He was on the front line in the Vietnam war, and he is a juror and a former chair of the Circle Sentencing justice group. He is, of course, most well known for his outstanding service to the police citizens youth club. He is such a fantastic role model for so many young people in my community. I thank John. The final recipient is an exceptional, remarkable woman who is known to everyone in north St Marys for her incredible generosity and selflessness. When I tell her story members will understand why we all know and love her. That woman is Shirley Gow, OAM. Shirley has been awarded for her service to children as a foster carer. She has fostered 41 children over her years as a foster parent and has played an important role in their lives. She has made incredible, life-changing differences to so many young men and women from our immediate community.

We all love Shirley, and I am sure members can see why. On top of this, she has been an active servant to the community, in particular, through her service as president of Chifley College Dunheved Campus, and through her tireless work for the Tregear Presbyterian Church. We thank Shirley for her selfless service over the years. I say a big congratulations to Allen, Warren, John, and Shirley. Our communities are, no doubt, so much stronger with people like them. On behalf of our communities in Western Sydney, I say well done, congratulations and thank you for becoming our newest recipients of the Order of Australia.

HOMELESSNESS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:56): I had a very different speech planned for today. Over the past few weeks I have seen some of what makes our communities great. On the Central Coast and around our State, non-government organisations come together to support and provide for those who have little, those who are vulnerable and those who do not know where to turn. They do this work not for money or glory but because it is the right, loving, and human thing to do. Thousands of people give up their time and their lives to help others, in spite of the attitudes of some of the leaders of our State, who are members of this place. Every morning that I have come to Parliament since my election I have seen a tent city of homeless people propped up in Martin Place, the financial and wealthy heart of Sydney. People with nothing but the clothes on their backs go there and share food, company, warmth, and security.

Every day the people who work at our big banks and our media organisations, and even we in this building who make the laws for this State, walk past the tent city. What are the people who have the power and the means to tackle the root causes of this inequality doing? The Premier, and member for Willoughby, says she is concerned that some of the homeless people are not there for the right reasons and that they make her feel uncomfortable. At the same time, it has been reported that some of her Ministers have ordered the Lord Mayor of Sydney to move them on. I am astounded. I welcome the reports that government departmental staff have visited the site more than 40 times and have arranged permanent accommodation for 60 individuals. But this fails to deal with the root causes of why people are homeless and struggling and shows that we need to do more.

Homelessness is not a choice. It is one of the most potent examples of disadvantage in our community and one of the most important markers of social exclusion. Homelessness is not just a result of too few houses and rising property costs. Domestic violence, a shortfall in affordable housing, unemployment, mental illness, family breakdowns, and drug and alcohol abuse all contribute to the level of homelessness in Australia. Whilst it breaks my heart that poverty is a real part of our community, it was great to see so many vulnerable people on the Central Coast accessing the generosity and services provided by coast organisations during the parliamentary break.

I commend the work of Coast Shelter, which every day feeds and supports more than 250 homeless and vulnerable people in Gosford and is celebrating 25 years of successful operations in our community. Coast Shelter is a true development organisation that responds directly to community demand and is continuing to expand its services as, sadly, demand in our community increases. Congratulations must also go to Mary Mac's Place, which, powered by volunteers and donations, offers a delicious meal and shower and washing facilities to approximately 80 people every day in Woy Woy.

Last week I was lucky enough to attend a wonderful performance by local entertainers the Frantastics, who danced and sang all of us in the audience into a cheerful mood, despite the personal circumstances of some members of the audience not always being so positive. We are very busy on the Central Coast working to support those impacted by rising housing costs and increased electricity prices. In the past two weeks the St Vincent de Paul Society hosted three Bring Your Bills Days across the coast, responding to a very real identified need. The society distributed more than \$63,000 in support—its normal budget for three months support of those who often need to choose between feeding their children and paying their bills. The average electricity debt is now \$631, with customers in New South Wales having to pay 16 per cent or an average of \$300 more for electricity in the next financial year.

More and more people are facing disadvantage and more and more organisations are stepping up to make a difference. Bring Your Bills Days are so important because they help vulnerable people in our communities to find savings and reduce the risks they face as pressures rise. With costs increasing faster than the consumer price index and wages lagging further and further behind, more needs to be done. The organisations that I have named are far from alone in their support of vulnerable people in our communities. I thank also the other wonderfully generous church and charity organisations across New South Wales, on the Central Coast and in the Gosford electorate that so generously continue to support our vulnerable and homeless people.

CHILL N GLEN FESTIVAL

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (18:01): Once again it is a great pleasure to bring to the attention of the House the amazing spirit and camaraderie of the residents of the wonderful community of Glen Innes. Whenever the Glen Innes community decides to put on a show or event of some sort, the community rallies and it is all hands on deck. That is exactly the attitude that made the inaugural Chill N Glen Festival, held a few weekends ago, so successful. As many members will know, while the cold winter weather in the New England can be fairly daunting, the Business in Glen [BIG] committee decided to make that weather the star attraction of its new festival showcasing the beauty and wonder of Glen Innes in wintertime. Research was conducted and it was agreed that 22 and 23 July had the highest probability of a weekend of snow—and when it snows in the New England visitors from the warmer climes of the Queensland border region have a tendency to head south to frolic in a winter wonderland.

Although snow was forecast for that weekend, organisers left nothing to chance and hired a couple snow-making machines just to make sure. The irony is that it was too cold in Glen Innes that weekend for the snow machines to produce snow—minus seven degrees apparently is not conducive to these machines producing snow. I was rather disappointed as I was looking forward to seeing Glen Innes and District Services Club General Manager Pat Lonergan tobogganing down the main street. Perhaps I will see him do it next year. Festival organiser and Business in Glen Secretary Kylie Hawkins led the way for the six months it took to prepare for the event. However, she was the first to congratulate the entire community on their support and willingness to down tools and lend a hand.

In fact, as far as I could see, there were very few community organisations that did not get caught up in the excitement of being involved in this winter escapade. The festival opened on Saturday morning with the ringing bells of the traditional town crier, and it was not long before the main street was filled with visitors and locals enjoying the novelty and wares of 47 European Christmas craft stalls. Caledonian Society stalwart Garek Fysch and his committee are to be congratulated on bringing together such a diverse and interesting array of market stalls, which truly set the scene of a winter festival. The response was phenomenal.

As with all community events in Glen Innes, there were lots of activities for the children. European Christmas characters dropped in to surprise and delight. The Glen Innes District and Community Centre's Brenda Beauchamp, with her team of helpers, put together hundreds of "Welcome to Glen Innes" packs for visitors and organised a myriad of children's craft activities. Ruth Sim-Brummel did an amazing job coordinating the family fun carnival. Leanne Hamel was magnificent in organising the street decorations, and local business owners obviously had fun decorating their shopfronts in true Christmas in July fashion. David Williams and Jo Enoch from Art on the Corner coordinated an art exhibition in the town hall which drew crowds and featured many different exhibiting and local artists.

Festival-goers maintained their energy levels at the many food outlets along the street and at Café Zoom, a pop-up restaurant offering European delicacies. Local restaurants joined in the merriment and fun, offering traditional Christmas fare for dinner on Saturday. I particularly loved the ice cream waffles provided by the Country Women's Association, which were absolutely delightful—and perfect for breakfast and lunch on a winter Saturday in Glen Innes. I understand the Glen Innes Pipe Band made an appearance at one venue, piping in the traditional Scottish haggis for everyone to enjoy. There is nothing better than a bit of haggis in Glen Innes! Glen Innes Severn Council grants officer Sheryn Nourse and Visitor Information Centre staffer Sal Molesworth went above and beyond to ensure the smooth running of the festival.

As always is the case of local events, everyone was willing to lend a hand. Council was very supportive, as was the Glen Innes Severn Tourist Association, Destination Glen Innes, the Caledonian Society, local primary and secondary schools and many clubs, organisations and local businesses. The State Emergency Service helped to set up, and Paddy Platypus from the SES was there. Rotary put on the fireworks at the showground on Saturday evening. Heritage expert Graham Wilson took visitors on free one-hour tours to local heritage sites. There was something for everyone. The festival was a veritable bonanza for Glen Innes. Even 19 inmates from the Glen Innes Correctional Centre volunteered their time on Saturday morning to help set up in minus seven degree temperatures. Congratulations, Glen Innes, another wonderful festival promoting one of the best areas of this State.

WYONG HOSPITAL

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (18:06): I am very thankful that after months of community campaigning the Government has decided not to proceed with the privatisation of services at Wyong Hospital. This was a hard-fought and detailed campaign, and the community deeply appreciates that our hospital will remain 100 per cent in public ownership and run by a public organisation. After the initial announcement, various unions planned a strategy with local members of Parliament to fight on behalf of the staff and the community to make sure that the proposed privatisation did not go ahead. I pay credit to Gerard Hayes from the Health Services Union, Brett Holmes from the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, Mark Morey from Unions NSW and Andrew Holland from the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation for how quickly they brought together a team and resources to fight this very important campaign.

We knew from the start that if privatisation was successful in a place like Wyong, every hospital across the State was at risk of moving to a privatised model. We understood how important this fight was—particularly in Wyong, where the Wyong community had a real sense of ownership of the hospital and a history of fundraising for it from about 1956. I have never seen an issue galvanise the community as much as this one did. I recognise the incredible organisers on the ground: Brendan Roberts from the Health Services Union, Nicole Mason from the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, and Damien Lee from the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation. We have become friends. They were always available on the other end of the phone when issues arose with the community or staff and we worked and brainstormed on how to deal with each issue. Every single protest event we organised against privatisation exceeded our expectations in terms of the number of people involved.

The petition tabled on 13 October contained 35,000 signatures and there were almost 3,000 people in attendance at a rally at Wyong Rugby League Club. I thank the leagues club group for hosting that rally and their support of the cause. It is a great organisation. They own eight clubs across the Central Coast and support the community at the board and staff level. On 10 November the parliamentary petition was debated in this House. The gallery was filled with nurses, Health Services Union members and the community. A candlelight vigil held on the side of the Pacific Highway was attended by over 100 people. There was live music at that event. It was a cold night that began with rain, but the community knew we were fighting on their behalf. On 15 June, 300 people attended a community information meeting at Wyong Rugby League Club. Everyone worked together.

I make special mention of Salim Barber from Unions NSW. He is a great campaigner who understands community and knows how to run a campaign. He was the glue that held us together. My colleagues David Meehan, Yasmine Catley, Emma McBride at the Federal level and Liesl Tesch, following the Gosford by-election, all worked very hard on this campaign. It was not about us but about our community supporting the staff at the hospital and making sure that their jobs and conditions were protected. Nearly everyone knows or is related to

someone who works at Wyong and Gosford hospitals. I thank the community members who manned stalls and collected signatures and all the union delegates who are staff at Wyong Hospital. It was a community effort and we achieved a good result.

POPULATION GROWTH

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (18:12): I will speak about an issue that is consistently raised with me by members of my constituency, that is, broadly expressed concern about the loss of environmental amenity, overcrowding and overdevelopment. It is a fear as to what the future will bring in terms of the scale, shape and size of our suburban communities and the metropolitan area of Sydney, the State of New South Wales and Australia as a whole. This issue of population growth is one that has vexed policymakers globally and in Australia. The recent elucidation of the sustainable development goals and the United Nations Habitat III release of a "New urban agenda" focuses on the profound change of humanity going from a rural-based population to a largely urban-based population.

The urbanisation of our society is increasing rapidly and will continue to do so. If unrestrained and not planned for, it has frightening consequences for our communities. It is not surprising that people are uncertain and fearful about what growth without a plan will mean for local communities. I suspect that it is a concern that other members are listening to in their communities. When I look at the history of population growth, it occurs to me that we are frightened about having a national conversation about population policy. I look at the variety of policy instruments that talk about population at a national level: the 1975 population inquiry; the 1994 National Population Council report; and the 2011 release of a "Sustainable population strategy for Australia".

These instruments talked about population in a broad sense, but none went as far as implementing a policy or having a clear national direction about what population we want. There was no mention of our population trajectory nor how we might plan appropriately. Whenever Australian governments have considered the population issue, it has been as a reaction. Population has always been seen as something that governments need to adapt to rather than to act upon.

We are living in a society that sees fit to have a policy on everything, including climate, energy, urban planning, health and education. However, creating effective policy in each of these areas is surely contingent upon having a clear understanding of the community and its shape and size. Surely a pre-condition of effective policy-making on all fronts is knowing for how many people our policies are being developed. It seems that all policy-making in this country is fundamentally quixotic; that is, we have no clear, transparent, easily understood and widely accepted trajectory of how many people will be living in our States, cities and local communities. It is impossible to plan for anything with any certainty without knowing how many people we expect to live in our State in the future.

I know I am not alone in my concern with regard to our level of uncertainty about the future size of this city and this State; my constituents have expressed the same concern. Given the current trajectory, we know that Sydney will have a population of more than eight million people by the middle of this century, and that trajectory is likely to continue into the future. This is happening while huge swathes of the State with wonderful communities, histories and climates remain underutilised. This is the type of imbalance in our population growth that we should be seeking to address with a population policy.

What is the solution? We need policies that encourage and nurture sustainable growth, and that includes population growth. We need to understand what our target is and to be able to plan backward from it. In every area of service delivery—whether it be health, education or transportation—we need to understand what we are planning for to plan sensibly, reasonably and cost-effectively for the future. That is why I believe it is time this nation talked about how many people we want here so that we have a clear understanding of what we are seeking to achieve in regard to sustainable development. We should not be using population as a political football. Nor should we be using population growth as a lazy proxy for economic growth. We should be focusing on growing each individual and maximising their opportunities rather than assuming that bigger is always better. We should have a clear indication of where we want to be as a nation in the years to come.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch): Order! If Opposition members want to have private conversations, they should take them outside.

PENRITH ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (18:17): It is fantastic to be back for the spring session because it provides me with an opportunity to update the House and the people of the electorate of Penrith about the fantastic infrastructure upgrades happening in our community. Everyone in Penrith knows that our city is growing rapidly. One of the challenges that I accepted when I was first elected was to ensure that Penrith got its fair share of the State budget

and infrastructure upgrades. We are now seeing infrastructure upgrades across Penrith. The massive upgrade of the Penrith train station includes new platform staircases, and a new separate bridge deck to take people from the north side to the south side of the railway line without their having to pay to access the concourse.

I am pleased to advise the House that the Government has launched a new app that people can download to understand the fantastic upgrades happening at the station. The app includes details about all future upgrades, and it has a 360-degree virtual tour of the new train station. The new concourse will be supplemented by a significant upgrade to the transport interchange. This is our main transport hub in Penrith. A new bus interchange is being developed, which will have new taxi facilities and kiss and ride areas which will enhance the public transport experience. It is not only Penrith station; plenty of people drive their cars to access Penrith train station and for some time the community has raised with me the issue of car parking pressures. The new multistorey car park which is under construction is now near completion and will be opening this month.

One of the first commitments I made on my way into this place was to create a new Nepean River pedestrian bridge, which is now coming to life before our eyes. The pedestrian bridge will be something to behold. It will not only provide a safe crossing for pedestrians and cyclists over the Nepean River so that they no longer have to walk or ride on a narrow footpath alongside cars, trucks and buses on the 150-year-old Victoria Bridge; for the first time since 1867, people will be able to look down and see the Nepean River as they walk or ride from Penrith to Emu Plains and back. It will be an iconic location. With a span of more than 200 metres, it is the longest pedestrian bridge in the country.

People in my community are also witnessing the development of a large workshop alongside the Nepean River that will allow for the construction of each of the A-frame trusses. A Newcastle-based steel manufacturer is building the truss frames on site in Newcastle, which will then be trucked into Penrith. The final fabrication will take place in the large workshop before each section of the truss frames is pushed out across the river to build the new pedestrian bridge. Many people have asked me about the new workshop. It is important that people recognise it is an investment by the company that is constructing the bridge. The workshop will be disassembled when the bridge is finalised and reassembled at the company's workshop in Newcastle so that it can use Australian steel to build other infrastructure across New South Wales.

A set of lights is also under construction at the intersection of The Northern Road and Andromeda Drive. A fatality has occurred at that site, so it is important to update the people of Penrith about the construction that is happening in that area. The set of lights and upgrade on The Northern Road is supplemented by a safety upgrade that is underway opposite Cambridge Gardens, which is now visible to people who use The Northern Road. It is a success story. This Government, unlike any other government, is delivering the pedestrian bridge, safety road access and upgrades to the Penrith train station for the people of Penrith.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:23, until
Wednesday, 2 August at 10:00.**