



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday, 3 August 2017**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday, 3 August 2017**

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

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

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Documents*

### **INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**

#### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** I table, in accordance with section 78 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, the following reports of the Independent Commission Against Corruption:

- (1) Investigation into dealings between Australian Water Holdings Pty Ltd and Sydney Water Corporation and related matters, dated August 2017; and
- (2) Investigation into the conduct of a former NSW Department of Justice officer and others, dated August 2017.

I order that the reports be printed.

## *Visitors*

### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome visitors to the gallery. They are here for the introduction by the member for Orange of the Local Government Amendment (Amalgamation Referendums) Bill 2017.

## *Documents*

### **BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2017-2018**

**Debate resumed from 2 August 2017.**

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (10:13):** My electorate of Pittwater, which I am proud to represent, is situated in outer metropolitan north-east Sydney—a diverse community of villages separated by bushland and beautiful beaches that is also known as a tourist hotspot. Many of the budget allocations for the current year relating to Pittwater focus on the importance of the district to the city of Sydney and also as a place to visit for members of the national and international community. I am keen to see this area of the local economy develop over time. The capital budget headline for Pittwater is the long-anticipated announcement relating to the commencement of work on Mona Vale Road which is well known as one of the major arteries connecting the northern beaches to the rest of Sydney—part of Ring Road 3 which continues on to Ryde Road. Mona Vale Road is one of the major connections between Pittwater and Macquarie Park, which is one of this polycentric city's main central business districts. It is also the main arterial connecting Pittwater to Macquarie University, the convenient local public research university that, once again, has performed well in the international university rankings.

My community is concerned about Mona Vale Road. Sadly, over the past few years many fatalities and a number of motor vehicle accidents have occurred on this road. The steep decline on the eastern section of the road between Manor Road at Ingleside and Foley Street is known to be dangerous and causes tragedies. Only a few years ago a significant truck accident occurred on Mona Vale Road. It is great that this Government is doing the necessary planning works, including making legislative changes to the National Parks and Wildlife Act, to facilitate passage to the road through the national park. It will also ensure that additional land is incorporated into the national parks affected by this important roadwork. A total of \$150 million has been allocated in this year's budget towards the construction over the next four years of that section of road linking Ingleside to Mona Vale. This work is taking place to address road safety as well as congestion. Over the many years that I have been honoured to represent the community of Pittwater, a number of constituents have spoken to me about their frustrations with Mona Vale Road. It is pleasing to know that this road is finally being dealt with in this State budget—an historic event for the Pittwater community.

I appreciate the amount of planning that has been undertaken. The team from Roads and Maritime Services has worked collaboratively with the local community about the design of the roadway and also with community groups such as the Northern Beaches Road Kill Group to ensure there is safe passage for animals in

the national parks intersected by Mona Vale Road. The team has also interacted with local community groups to discuss their concerns about the effect of the road on their properties. I appreciate a number of compulsory acquisitions have taken place as part of this road project, which is always a difficult process for everyone to manage. However, the greater public interest was in ensuring that Mona Vale Road is safe whilst ensuring that the environmental impacts of expanding such an important road are properly accommodated and that the wishes of the community are properly heard and represented in the planning process. This is a particularly big win for the people of Pittwater. I commend everyone who was involved in the struggle to ensure that the road was funded.

I refer to various contributions that have been made throughout the budgetary process to fund a range of community projects in Pittwater. Recently, an announcement was made about the cycling and pedestrian pathway that connects Palm Beach to Manly. It is important to support cycling and walking in an area that is road dependent. Everything we can do to improve public transport as well as get people riding their bikes or walking on pathways should be supported. The public health benefits of physical exercise are well understood. The patterns of development in this community that I am proud to represent were shaped by the motor vehicle, so we must do everything we can to retrofit the built environment to make it easier for people to use other forms of transportation.

The B-Line bus proposal is an important improvement to public transport services on the northern peninsula. This is an issue that people have talked to me about relentlessly over the past 10 years, and it is wonderful to be part of a Government that can respond to the need for better, more modern buses. We need buses that work on simplified routes and that connect as many people as possible. We must try to get people out of their cars and onto buses whenever we can; every additional car we can get off the roads in Pittwater makes life better for everyone. Congestion is a major concern for the residents I represent, so it is wonderful that we can debate, community by community, the best ways to accommodate improved public transport services while also recognising the importance of protecting local character and the local community. It is great to see the budget allocation to facilitate that conversation.

I make special mention of the great budget allocations for local surf clubs, which are such an important part of the community spirit on the northern beaches. The recent grant of more than \$500,000 towards the redevelopment of the Mona Vale Surf Life Saving Club—which, of all the surf clubs within Pittwater, is the one in the most parlous condition—is great to see. The grant, along with the great work of the local council, will go towards improving the club. The club is an important part of local emergency services, because Mona Vale Beach is the first stop at the end of Mona Vale Road for visitors to Pittwater. Many people who visit the beach are not terribly proficient swimmers, so making sure we have the right infrastructure to support rescue services on that beach is imperative.

There are many other things I could speak about in relation to the support that the current State budget is providing to the community of Pittwater. The budget is supporting extensions to Narrabeen Lagoon State Park, and to Ingleside Chase Reserve. It is supporting great community and heritage facilities such as Currawong and the Barrenjoey Lighthouse. The budget also allocates funds to support the great work of our national park staff in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. There is a new soldiers trail that recognises the heritage within the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park and the important role that West Head played during the Second World War in the defence of Australia. The budget provides support to Mona Vale Hospital, as it transitions from a role as a peripheral district hospital to a major community base hospital. It will be a centre of subacute services within the northern beaches community, networked together with the new hospital in Frenchs Forest. All of those services are being provided to support the Pittwater community as part of the State budget.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Bills*

## **CHARITABLE FUNDRAISING AMENDMENT (INQUIRIES) BILL 2017**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Matt Kean, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (10:24):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Charitable Fundraising Amendment (Inquiries) Bill 2017. The object of the bill is to amend the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and to put consumers first by enhancing the existing powers in the Act to inquire into fundraisers. I am pleased to say that the vast majority of charities act with complete integrity, without any concerns of fraud or non-compliance, and continue to deserve our confidence as they provide critical support and service to our fellow citizens, including to our most vulnerable citizens. However, I am sure that

members of this House are aware of a number of high-profile cases in this State and other jurisdictions that have raised significant concerns in the community about the alleged misuse of funds raised for charity. In some of these cases, allegations have been made that are so serious they threaten the integrity of the charitable sector and damage the high level of trust bestowed by the donating public.

There are more charities operating in New South Wales than in any other jurisdiction in Australia and these wonderful charities, run by hardworking and honest people, contribute in such a significant way to the fabric of our community—take, for example, beyondblue, which does so much to promote good mental health. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has estimated that three million Australians are currently experiencing anxiety or depression. Beyondblue gives people the confidence to support others, tackling the stigma and prejudice surrounding mental health. Beyondblue places the community at the centre of its work in order to reduce the impact of mental health conditions and improve access to support and services. In addition, beyondblue consistently rates highly in the AMR Charity Reputation Index.

However, accusations of financial impropriety by charities or persons involved in charities are increasingly coming to the attention of the public. In fact, allegations made against certain former councillors, office bearers and directors of RSL entities, including RSL NSW, RSL LifeCare, and the RSL Welfare and Benevolent Institution (DefenceCare), were so serious that, on 15 May this year, and with the advice and support of my colleague the Minister for Veterans Affairs, I appointed former Supreme Court Justice the Hon. Patricia Bergin, SC, to inquire into those RSL entities. The RSL NSW has long been a highly regarded and respected organisation in our community, and I am sure that all members of this House acknowledge the important work it does to support the men and women of our defence forces—men and women who deserve not only our support, but also our enduring respect for the sacrifice they make for our nation.

Many of us choose to acknowledge the important contribution of those who serve and pay our respects by donating money for the delivery of the most appropriate support programs and services. It is important that the public can have confidence that those who hold fundraising authorities have the necessary governance and oversight of their fundraising activities. We must put consumers first on this issue—and I am talking about both the consumers who donate and those who are in desperate need of the help that comes from donations. We must put them first. If the money we donate is not used to support that organisation's activities, and is instead used to line the pockets of a contemptuous few, then our trust has been well and truly breached.

The New South Wales donating public and the beneficiaries of our charities deserve to be put first. Indeed, with the integrity of such well-known charities in question, there is a real danger that public confidence and trust in all charities in New South Wales has already diminished, and a substantial drop in donations across the charity sector could easily occur after this loss of trust. This could have a disastrous impact on charities that do incredibly important work for people in this State. Take, for example, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the amazing job it does in providing medical services to people who live in rural and remote parts of the country. The service plays a critical role in ensuring that all Australians and New South Wales citizens living in rural locations have the same services and high standards of care as those of us who live in metropolitan areas.

It is vital that the confidence of the public to donate to such a worthy charity is not eroded as a result of the malfeasance of a few in other charities. We need to strengthen the Act to give people confidence that the money they are donating is going to its intended purpose. When I was appointed Minister, strengthening this Act was one of the first things I discussed with my department. I want to make sure people who do the right thing are protected and that consumers are put first. Since that time we have announced the inquiry into New South Wales RSL and related entities under section 26 of the Charitable Fundraising Act to investigate alleged financial irregularities that may involve millions of dollars. While amending the Act was always intended, it is fortunate that that inquiry will be able to take advantage of these new enhanced powers.

The amendments contained in the bill before the House will broaden and strengthen the inquiry powers under the Charitable Fundraising Act, making sure that current and future inquiries of high significance and public importance can be conducted thoroughly and in public. The bill proposes to improve the inquiry powers of the Act by providing an alternative for an inquiry to be held as a public inquiry, providing a robust framework to inquire into cases of importance and of public interest. This is a very important point. It is envisaged that these new powers and protections will be used only for the most serious of cases. The bill also contains a framework of crucial safeguards so that the enhanced powers are used appropriately. The ability to hold a public inquiry will be only where, in the opinion of the Minister of the day, it is in the public interest to do so, and will require the approval of the Premier.

There is truth in the old saying that sunlight is the best disinfectant. By holding a public inquiry, transparency is assured and the public has greater visibility of the conduct of the inquiry and confidence that no stone will be left unturned, and that any issues and behaviour of concern, and the consequences of that behaviour, will be revealed. The powers contained in this bill do not derogate from the existing powers of inquiry in the

current Act. This means that inquiries that do not meet the high threshold of the level of importance required for a public inquiry can continue to be carried out as they currently are.

I will now address the amendments in turn. The amendments confer on the Minister of the day the power to cause a public inquiry into any matter under section 26, including any matter associated with the conduct of a fundraising appeal under the Act. As per the existing powers, these matters would include matters such as the governance of the charity, whether funds raised in an appeal are being applied as represented, and whether those who are associated with the conduct of fundraising appeals are fit and proper persons.

Section 41 (2) of the Charitable Fundraising Act currently allows the Minister of the day to recover the costs incurred by an authorised inspector who is not an employee of the Crown from the person or organisation related to the inquiry. This is an existing power within the Act and the amendments do not seek to extend that power. Rather, the amendments in new section 41 (2A) seek to clarify how the existing power would apply in circumstances where a number of entities are the subject of the inquiry, whether an inquiry under section 26 of the Act or a public inquiry. This will provide certainty to all parties involved.

The amendments seek to clarify how the remuneration and expenses of the authorised inspector, public inquirer or their agents would be apportioned when there are two or more parties the subject of the inquiry by providing that the Minister can direct those costs to be paid in clear proportions. These amendments will improve the certainty of the operation of this existing power. New section 41B will constrain the power to hold a public inquiry to those circumstances where the Minister of the day and the Premier of New South Wales are of the opinion that it is in the public interest to do so.

To ensure that only a person with the appropriate experience, qualifications and capacity can be appointed to undertake an inquiry and use the enhanced powers contained in this bill, the appointed person must be a current or former judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales or any other Australian State, the Federal Court of Australia, or the High Court of Australia. Only allowing the inquiry to be conducted by such an appointee provides assurance to the Government, charities and donors of New South Wales that the enhanced powers are being exercised in a responsible and judicious way. In addition, to ensure complete impartiality and to mirror the prohibitions in the Special Commissions of Inquiry Act, the amendment specifically provides that, despite such experience and qualifications, a serving member of a Parliament cannot be appointed to the position of public inquirer.

The enhanced powers contained in this bill provide the necessary framework for the appointed person to be afforded appropriate powers, immunities and protections to properly conduct an inquiry. New section 41D provides a public inquirer with the same protections and immunities as a judge of the Supreme Court in the exercise of their functions as a public inquirer. Given the importance and public nature of a public inquiry, new section 41E provides the Minister with the authority to require the public inquirer to report on the inquiry, as prescribed in the instrument of appointment. This includes allowing the Minister to table a copy of the report in both Houses of Parliament when the Minister considers this is the most appropriate way of publishing the report under the circumstances. There may be public inquiries where tabling the report will provide the necessary transparency and accountability for the persons or organisations being inquired into.

As I have said, the existing RSL inquiry is one that can benefit from the proposed powers. New section 41C will allow an inquiry already commenced under section 26 of the Charitable Fundraising Act to be reconstituted as a public inquiry when the Minister and the Premier of New South Wales consider it is in the public interest for a public inquiry to be conducted. A number of complaints have been received over the years about alleged misappropriation of funds by persons involved in charitable organisations. Inquiries into those allegations have experienced some limitations. When RSL National commissioned KordaMentha to report on the alleged financial irregularities affecting RSL entities, there were claims by some of those requested for information that certain documents could not be provided. The powers contained in new section 41M will ensure this will not be able to happen in a public inquiry. Those wishing to escape being held to account for their conduct will no longer be able to do so.

It is vitally important that when an inquiry is meritorious enough to be held as a public inquiry the public inquirer has the necessary powers to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents and other things. To ensure the authority of the public inquiry and the public inquirer is respected, new section 41M also provides that those who are guilty of contempt or disobedience with directions, orders or summons of the public inquirer will be able to be punished. New section 41H allows the public inquirer to issue a summons to a person to appear before the public inquiry. Further, new section 41O will allow the appointed person to issue a warrant for the apprehension of a witness who has failed to attend a hearing.

Witnesses who may have information that is relevant to the inquiry must provide all answers, documents and other things deemed relevant. New section 41O provides the ability for the public inquirer to issue a search

warrant if they have reasonable grounds for believing that documents relating to any matter in question are being held in a residence. This will make certain that all relevant evidence can be examined and considered and will ensure that any serious or systemic issues can be properly inquired into and all wrongdoings unearthed. This power will ensure the integrity of the public inquiry is not frustrated by witnesses failing to provide relevant evidence that may be highly probative.

New section 41F also confers the power on the public inquirer to control how the inquiry, examinations and hearings will be conducted. This is an important provision as it allows the judicial officer to create the ideal environment for the giving of evidence. To provide witnesses with representation where it is appropriate, new section 41G allows the public inquirer to allow the affected person to be represented by an Australian legal practitioner or any other person the inquirer considers capable of representing the affected person. This provides fairness in the process and will assist in ensuring that hearings are run professionally and proficiently.

For the same reason, new section 41J allows, with leave, for witnesses to be examined or cross-examined. Leave will need to be granted in accordance with the dictates of procedural fairness. New Section 41J (3) also provides that witnesses will have the same protections and be subject to the same liabilities as if they were being examined by the public inquirer. The bill also puts in place powers that will assist the public inquirer in obtaining the most accurate and reliable evidence possible. To that end, new section 41I allows the public inquirer to take evidence on oath or affirmation.

To facilitate a robust inquiry, the suite of powers contained in this bill allows for the abrogation of the privilege against self-incrimination while including protections for witnesses when the privilege is abrogated and the witness is required to answer the question or furnish the information. Where it is determined that a public inquiry is appropriate, the primary objective is to uncover what is going on, whether the organisation can "clean up the mess" and to restore and maintain public confidence in giving donations for charitable purposes. That cannot be achieved if crucial witnesses decline to answer questions because they are concerned about breaching matters that might be commercial-in-confidence or being potentially complicit in what might be the criminal conduct of others.

New section 41L confers on the public inquirer the power to compel witnesses to give evidence and to provide documents or oral answers, even if the evidence is self-incriminating. To protect witnesses, such evidence is inadmissible in evidence against the person in civil or criminal proceedings, with the exception of offences under the public inquiry provisions or fundraising authority decisions. The purpose of those exceptions is to protect an inquiry's integrity and to ensure that the Minister of the day is able to clean up any charities found to have done the wrong thing by imposing new conditions on a fundraising appeal authority or by cancelling or refusing such an authority.

The Government recognises that the abrogation of the privilege of self-incrimination should be used only where it is necessary and in the public interest to do so. I note that the Casino Control Act 1992, Combat Sports Act 2013 and the Fisheries Management Act 1994 all provide admissibility protections similar to those proposed in the bill. It is further proposed to introduce a new offence provision for failing to comply with certain inquiry requests under the Act. Section 30 of the Charitable Fundraising Act makes it an offence for a person or entity to not comply with a requirement made by a notice in the course of an inquiry. The current section 30 offence provisions will be extended to cover public inquiries.

New section 41Q also makes it an offence to fail to comply with a direction about attendance at a hearing and a direction about preventing or restricting the publication of evidence. And, once again, the maximum penalties for these new offences are consistent with and do not exceed those set out in the Special Commission of Inquiries Act. Finally, I will address the framework provisions contained in this bill that will allow the appointee to undertake their role with the necessary support and resources. The bill limits liability for public servants or other people engaged to assist the public inquirer when performing the functions of the public inquiry in good faith.

In addition, new section 41R provides an Australian legal practitioner who assists the public inquirer, or represents a person, with the same immunity as a barrister appearing in proceedings in the Supreme Court. Finally, new section 41R also ensures that there is no criminal or civil liability, other than under the Act, for a person who complies with any of the public inquiry requirements. The new public inquiry powers contained in this bill will give the community confidence that the Government has the power to properly inquire into wrongdoing in the charitable sector.

I cannot stress how important it is that the confidence of the community in donating to our worthy charities is maintained. People who think they can get away with destroying the reputation of the charitable sector will be put on notice with this bill that if a public inquiry is held they will be found out. People in positions of trust must not take their responsibilities lightly. The provisions in this bill will put on notice those who would

endanger the reputation of worthy charities. Take, for example, the former chief executive of a children's cancer charity who was sentenced to 18 months jail by way of an intensive correctional order for misappropriation of almost \$70,000 which could have been used for the benefit of children with cancer. That action had the potential to ruin 30 years of meaningful and important work in our community.

This Government has built and maintained a cohesive and mutually beneficial relationship with charities operating in New South Wales. The importance of and the need for the hard work that charities undertake cannot be understated. Guide Dogs NSW-ACT is a leading provider of guide dogs and mobility services that assist people with impaired vision to get around their communities safely, providing valuable independence to our vision-impaired citizens. Charities like that should be supported by a robust regulatory framework that includes the power to properly inquire into allegations of misappropriation of charitable funds.

I have asked my department to consult actively with New South Wales charities and their representative bodies to identify innovative solutions to red tape while maintaining the important donor and community protections that put consumers first. NSW Fair Trading continues to work with the Commonwealth Government and colleagues from across the States and Territories to harmonise the reporting requirements for charities, especially for those incorporated associations that are charities registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. This work aims to remove duplication of administrative effort for charities as reports will only have to be submitted to one government agency and shared with regulators through a direct data transfer governed by strict privacy controls.

There is more work to be done. For example, I recognise that fundraising regulation has not kept pace with new forms of fundraising, particularly as online campaigns for funds have grown through the use of third party websites. Futureproofing the regulatory system remains a high priority. The powers contained in this bill establish a futureproof framework for the holding of public inquiries to ensure that non-compliance, malfeasance and wrongdoing are revealed, deterred and discontinued at the earliest opportunity. This in turn will help ensure that the public can be confident in donating to the many worthy New South Wales charities. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

#### *Documents*

### **BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2017-2018**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** Due to the unusual circumstances this morning, I seek leave to have restored my remaining speaking time on the Budget Estimates and Related Papers 2017-2018.

**Leave granted.**

#### *Business of the House*

### **POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS**

**Ms JODI McKAY:** In accordance with Standing Order 101, I postpone General Business Notice of Motion (for Bills) No. 2 [Public Accountability Legislation Amendment (Sydney Motorway Corporation) Bill 2017].

#### *Bills*

### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS (CARE AND PROTECTION) AMENDMENT (AUDITING OF OUT-OF-HOME CARE PROVIDERS) BILL 2017**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Ms Tania Mihailuk, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (10:44):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I introduce the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Auditing of Out-of-Home Care Providers) Bill 2017 on behalf of the Labor Opposition. This is a landmark bill that will significantly improve outcomes for the most vulnerable children in our State and is continuing Labor's proud legacy of being at the forefront of vital child protection reforms in New South Wales. At its essence, this bill will correct a gap that has been identified in our child protection legislation by the Auditor-General and the recent parliamentary inquiry into child protection by introducing a new requirement for the Auditor-General to conduct an audit of contracts

between the Department of Family and Community Services [FACS] and designated non-government organisations that are receiving State funding to provide out-of-home care services.

On 17 November 2016, the New South Wales Auditor-General's report on Family and Community Services recommended "public confidence in government and its agencies would be enhanced if the New South Wales Auditor-General had the mandate to 'follow the dollar' into NGOs", noting that other jurisdictions in Australia provide their respective auditors-general with this power. To understand the critical need for this bill, one must understand the context behind the existing child protection framework in our State. In 2007, following the highly publicised deaths of a two-year-old boy and a seven-year-old girl, the New South Wales Labor Government requested the Hon. Justice James Wood to conduct a wide-ranging special commission of inquiry into child protection with the view of reforming the child protection system to meet future levels of demand.

Justice Wood's recommendation 16.2 was for the Department of Community Services, now FACS, to transfer the provision of out-of-home care services to the non-government sector. In 2009 former Premier Nathan Rees and then community services Minister Linda Burney released the Keep Them Safe report in response to Justice Wood's report, committing to implement 106 of the 111 recommendations made in the Wood report, including the gradual transfer of out-of-home care services to the non-government organisation [NGO] sector. The transfer of out-of-home care services from FACS to the NGO sector commenced in 2012, when the initial contract arrangements between the department and non-government designated agencies were formulated and executed by the then and current Minister for Family and Community Services Pru Goward. In June 2016 the New South Wales Government extended these contracts for a further 12 months until June 2017. These contracts were due for renewal by 30 June this year but have yet again been delayed, possibly until December.

According to the Auditor-General, there were a record 21,145 children in out-of-home care in 2016, with children staying longer in care and fewer being restored back to their families. Since 2012, approximately 57 per cent of children and young people in out-of-home care are currently in the care of and managed by a non-government designated agency, yet there is little to no measurable oversight of the contractual arrangements between the New South Wales Government and non-government agencies. Since the awarding of the last round of out-of-home care contracts shocking details have emerged about children who have been abused and neglected while in out-of-home care. The most prominent of these examples was the tragic case of Girl X, a 14-year-old who was repeatedly abused while in care. Another tragic case is that of 22-month-old toddler Braxton Slager-Lewin, who drowned in a swimming pool three weeks into his placement. The police report into Braxton's death was scathing. It identified:

The pool fence did not comply with legislative standards as it was not a self-latching gate ... the premises were not safe or secure for young children placed under foster care. There were also excessive amounts of alcohol and blister packs with medication left throughout the location and within reach of the children. In May 2016 General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 established an inquiry examining the effectiveness and resourcing of the child protection system in New South Wales. The inquiry focused on the procedures, practices and systems that operate in the area of child protection and received 139 submissions in total. The report of the inquiry was published on 16 May 2017, making 28 recommendations relating to the role played by the Department of Family and Community Services and the NGO sector. Recommendation 12 of that report states:

That the NSW Government make legislative amendments to extend the performance audit function of the Auditor-General to include audits of all non-government organisations who have been provided with state funding to deliver child protection related services.

The child protection inquiry report further stated:

The committee also agrees that currently there is limited independent oversight of the funding directed towards the non-government sector. We therefore fully endorse the Auditor-General's suggestion for additional "follow the dollar" powers which will enable it to scrutinise the performance of all non-government organisations that perform out of home care functions on behalf of the state.

One of the core functions of the New South Wales Government is to provide care for children whose parents are unable or unwilling to care for them. New South Wales is fast approaching the highest rates of children in out-of-home care in Australia, second only to the Northern Territory, with 9.9 per cent of every 1,000 children being in care, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Sadly, many of these children are staying longer in care and fewer children are being escorted back to their families.

Non-government designated agencies providing out-of-home care services on behalf of the New South Wales Government received \$2.8 billion in public funding in 2015 and 2016, representing 34 per cent of the family and community services cluster expenses. While the New South Wales Government has directed a significant level of public funding to the non-government sector to deliver out-of-home care services, at the same time it has absolved itself from its inherent responsibility of providing a minimal level of oversight into the non-government sector to ensure transparency, accountability and better outcomes for vulnerable children in care. The Auditor-General's 2016 *Report on Family and Community Services* noted that there were inconsistencies in the contractual and oversight arrangements, which weakened the department's ability to efficiently and effectively monitor services and provide a performance. The Auditor-General's report further notes:

The Department relies on NGOs to collect reliable data on service delivery to self assess performance. Data collected is not timely, reliable and is not reviewed before finance acquittal.

The government of the day must be held to account where there is a failure in its duty of care to protect and care for our most vulnerable children. This bill will implement the recommendations of both the Auditor-General and the parliamentary inquiry into child protection to introduce unprecedented levels of accountability and transparency into the out-of-home care sector in our State. The bill will fill a clear gap in our child protection framework—one that does not exist in other Australian jurisdictions—and enable the Auditor-General to conduct audit reports of contracts between the department and non-government designated agencies.

The bill will insert a new chapter 8, part 8 into the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 for the purpose of auditing publicly funded placement functions provided by non-government agencies. In a nutshell, this bill will create an onus on the Minister for Family and Community Services to ensure that the Auditor-General conducts a performance audit of all publicly funded placement functions exercised by a designated agency involving the placement of children in out-of-home care. This performance audit will determine whether NGO providers are exercising their functions effectively, economically and efficiently in compliance with the Act and will identify ways on how to improve its functions. Audits must be completed prior to the renewal of a contract between the Department of Family and Community Services and an NGO or within three months after the expiry or termination of a contract.

Under the audit report, the Auditor-General may make recommendations to the Minister on appropriate remedial actions to be taken if it is of the opinion that a non-government designated agency could in the future exercise publicly funded placement functions in a more effective, economical and efficient manner. The bill proposes that the Minister would have one month upon receipt of the completed audit report to table the report to the Parliament. The department secretary would not be able to renew a contract with a designated agency to provide placement functions until after the Minister has received an audit report by the Auditor-General and the recommendations for improvement have been considered.

The costs of audit reports will be borne by the NGOs which are in receipt of State funds. The bill further proposes to make it an offence for any person to obstruct the Auditor-General or any other person from conducting an audit report and, if requested by the Auditor-General, a non-government designated agency must produce or cause to be produced any material required for the performance audit and answer any question required for the performance audit. Material that could be audited may include any books, accounts, agreements, vouchers, letters or documents kept or held by the agency relating to the placement of children in their care.

While the New South Wales sector plays a crucial role in supporting the needs of children in care, we need to increase transparency to ensure greater accountability. It is a crucial element required to significantly improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children. The bill does not question the conduct and ethics of non-government out-of-home care providers. Instead, it will implement recommendations made by the New South Wales Auditor-General and the recent parliamentary inquiry into child protection. The vast majority of non-government designated agencies are doing a tremendous job given the complexities of caring for vulnerable children and are working under difficult circumstances and doing their best in delivering the best standard of care for vulnerable children who are at risk of harm.

Labor's bill will simply ensure and prioritise better outcomes for the record number of children and young people now in care across New South Wales. I urge the Government to support this and I extend the offer of bipartisan support for this legislation. Through increased oversight, accountability and scrutiny the Department and non-government providers will be able to work hand-in-hand to deliver better outcomes for our most vulnerable children. This bill is an important step that will implement recommendations made by the Auditor-General and the parliamentary inquiry into child protection relating to increased oversight, accountability and transparency of the out-of-home care sector. There is still much work to be done by this Government to implement the other recommendations made in the child protection inquiry report, including recommendation two:

That the NSW Government provide a specific one off injection of additional funding for evidence based provision and early intervention services including targeted client services and programs that operate in regional, rural and remote areas.

The New South Wales Government is expected to collect more than \$11 billion from stamp duty revenue alone in 2017 and 2018, yet despite this windfall the budget has failed to fulfil this recommendation to support early intervention services in order to improve child protection outcomes.

I understand that General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, which inquired into child protection, sought a response from the Government to its recommendations by August 2018, but given that the most recent phase of out-of-home care contracts are expected to be renewed by December 2017, we cannot afford to delay reforms that will deliver an improvement in the quality of care provided to children in New South Wales. Let us start prioritising bills, such as the one before the House, to improve outcomes for the record number of children

in care. I welcome the robust debate that this bill will bring and I welcome the views of the sector, but ultimately I welcome an outcome whereby we improve the lives of the 21,000 children in out-of-home care in this State.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Business of the House*

**POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS**

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

**Mr NICK LALICH:** On behalf of Mr Ryan Park: In accordance with Standing Order 101, I postpone General Business Notice of Motion (for Bills) No.3 [Securing NSW Steel Industry Bill 2017].

*Bills*

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (AMALGAMATION REFERENDUMS) BILL 2017**

**Second Reading**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (11:01):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I introduce the Local Government Amendment (Amalgamation Referendums) Bill 2017 in this place on behalf of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. I acknowledge those in the gallery today who stridently advocated against forced council amalgamations—the passionate individuals who comprise Save Our Councils. I recognise many of you, too numerous to name, but I thank two notable individuals, Phil Jenkyn and Will Tuck, who tirelessly campaigned for democracy. If this bill is not passed today, then the upcoming Cootamundra by-election will be a referendum on the National Party's inability to stand up to the city Liberals on forced council amalgamations.

The object of the bill is to amend the Local Government Act 1993 to provide that plebiscites are to be conducted to ascertain whether the electors of the local government areas amalgamated during 2016 wish the amalgamations to be reversed, and certain proposed amalgamations of local government areas are not to proceed unless approval for the amalgamation has been given by the electors of each of the areas concerned at a referendum. The bill, if passed, will ensure that council amalgamations, which have plagued this Government, will be dealt with once and for all. More importantly, the bill also will ensure that local residents finally will have a say on their council's future.

It is not often that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has been in lock step with the Opposition, the Christian Democratic Party, The Greens, the Animal Justice Party, and Independents on any particular issue. Therefore, I feel that the bill is a culmination of that collegiate and resolute cooperation, and the consensus is clear: We stand shoulder to shoulder on this important issue. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has opposed forced amalgamations for many reasons, not least of which is that the Government did not give local residents a vote on the issue. The bill will right the problematic wrong created by this Government.

In many cases, councils are the largest local employer in their communities, particularly in regional areas. They play a vital role in delivering a broad range of services and employment opportunities. Without those services, many rural communities would struggle to survive or to attract and retain their local populations. Local government represents grassroots democracy. It is the closest government entity to citizens and it is best positioned to react to their concerns. This bill will ensure that grassroots democracy is protected.

The bill will give every voter across New South Wales the chance to vote on any future amalgamation of their local council, or a vote on whether to remain merged or to de-merge, if amalgamation already has taken place. Across this State, residents in local government areas have been robbed of their right to vote and to decide on the future of their local council. This Government has ridden roughshod, bizarrely in the name of council amalgamation, over the very people who voted for them. We still have not seen the secret KPMG study that prepared cases for about 40 council mergers and alleged that it would save taxpayers \$2 billion—but that has not stopped the Government from waving it about to shield itself from the discontent across New South Wales.

The recommendation of the Government to amalgamate many regional councils contradicts the intentions of those councils in their submissions for the Fit for the Future test. In fact, many of those councils passed the test, yet they were still being forced to amalgamate. I note that in the past week the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government has been running scared at the threat of this bill being debated today. The Government appears to have backed away from court challenges to five city-based councils because, irrespective of the court's decision, this bill would have granted locals a vote on whether or not to amalgamate. The question I ask is: What about the councils that

did not have the resources to challenge the merger in the courts? What about the councils that already were merged?

The amalgamations of Orange, Cabonne and Blayney councils were at the forefront of the Orange by-election last year. People in what was once known as National Party heartland made their voices heard loud and clear, "We don't want our councils merged without a vote." On this matter, The Nationals members of Parliament have been doing what they always do best—blindly follow the city-based Liberal Party in its decisions, even if those decisions are the opposite to what their electorates want. The Nationals have been hiding behind the Liberal Party on forced council amalgamations, but today those members of Parliament will not be able to hide anymore. Every member of the Legislative Assembly who is here today will have a chance to vote on this bill—unless the Liberal-Nationals Coalition tries to stall debate or do whatever it can to prevent a vote from taking place today.

At its very heart, this bill allows the very people we serve a chance to decide on the future of their council. If the Government has nothing to hide and believes that local communities are happy with their forced mergers, then there is no reason why this bill should not pass. When we have a vote on this bill, there are some members of The Nationals whose vote I will note carefully. I will watch closely the member for Cootamundra, who, as we all know, is retiring from politics, but still remains a member of this House. In her electorate there was a forced merger to create the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council and the Hilltops Council. Now, free from the shackles of toeing the party line, she is free to join us in supporting this bill. My upper House colleague Robert Brown attended protests in Gundagai about the forced merger. The white-hot anger in the community is palpable. Does the member for Cootamundra believe her local community deserves a vote?

I will watch closely the member for Dubbo because in his electorate there was a forced merger to create the Dubbo Regional Council. As a fellow former police officer, I have a lot of respect for the member for Dubbo and his resolve. I fear he may be bound to toe the party line on this bill, but the question is: Does the member for Dubbo believe his local community deserves a vote? I will watch closely the member for Murray because in his electorate there was a forced merger to create the Edward River Council and the Murray River Council. Does the member for Murray believe his local community deserves a vote? I will watch closely the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Port Macquarie, and the member for Upper Hunter because in their electorates there was a forced merger to create the MidCoast Council. Do these Nationals members of Parliament believe their local communities deserve a vote?

I will watch closely the member for Northern Tablelands, because in his electorate there was a forced merger to create the Armidale Regional Council. Does the member for Northern Tablelands believe his local community deserves a vote? Finally, I will watch very closely the member for Monaro and The Nationals leader. In the media he has been a vocal opponent of forced council amalgamations, but in his own electorate there was a forced merger to create the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council and the Snowy Monaro Regional Council. This bill will give the people who voted him into office a vote to remain merged or to de-merge these newly created councils. Does the member for Monaro believe his local community deserves a vote?

Residents in regional New South Wales rely on their council for rubbish collection, child care, maintenance of roads and sporting facilities, water and sewerage services, and many other essential services. I have no doubt that forced council amalgamations will impact negatively on the provision of those services, and residents know that. They understand this, which is why they must be afforded the opportunity to vote on their council's future. The present situation in which forced mergers were abandoned in some parts of regional New South Wales was no doubt a direct result of the electoral defeat of The Nationals in the Orange by-election last year. But what about other communities across New South Wales, not just the ones where The Nationals know they are losing support?

I realise that time is short, and I request that all members in this place who wish to speak on the bill keep their contributions short. We need a vote on this bill today. This bill provides the Government and the Minister with a lot of latitude in respect of councils that were amalgamated forcibly in 2016. The onus would be on the Minister for Local Government to use his or her best endeavours to give effect to the vote, should a majority of the electors vote for the amalgamation to be reversed. I hope that Government members in this House give this bill due consideration and find the courage to support it. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers, the Opposition, the Christian Democratic Party, The Greens, the Animal Justice Party and the other Independents—that is, every non-Government member in both Houses—are extending a hand of fellowship to the Government. We are offering a way out for the Government to right a wrong and have this issue laid to rest before the 2019 State election. I commend this bill to the house.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (11:12):** I am glad that the member for Orange is keeping an eye on some of my Government colleagues in this Parliament, because we are keeping an eye on him and what he is

doing in Orange, particularly in relation to the bill that he introduced in the lower House. I do not support the Local Government Amendment (Amalgamation Referendums) Bill 2017, and neither does this Government. To give the member for Orange the benefit of the doubt, the proposals in the bill may have some good intentions. But in practice the bill will be a slug on unsuspecting ratepayers across New South Wales. Was that the intention of the member of Orange all along, or did those who support this bill in the other place not think of the obvious consequences—that is, that someone has to pay for the referenda the bill proposes?

To again give the member for Orange the benefit of the doubt, perhaps those consequences are unintentional. But the cost is not a few dollars; it is more than \$1 million each for many councils across New South Wales. It is not the money of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers, the Labor Party or The Greens; it is the money of ordinary mums and dads across New South Wales, represented by their local councils, who will either have their rates go up or their vital services reduced. Those hell-bent on this poorly thought-out bill should be brave enough to face up to its practical consequences. To make this ill-considered and illogical bill even more silly—and I am being nice by calling it silly—I received a letter, dated 17 July, from the member for Orange in which he makes representations on behalf of Mr Rob Armstrong, a constituent. According to the member for Orange, Mr Armstrong raises:

... concerns in relation to a perceived inequitable levying of rates by Cabonne Council. Mr Armstrong has also asked about the possibility of adjustments to the boundary of Cabonne Council.

I do not understand whether the member for Orange is Arthur or Martha on this issue. Does he want the Government to change the boundary on behalf of his constituent, or does he want what he is proposing today in this House, which is a referendum on that issue? He cannot have it both ways. He should say one and the same thing to Parliament and his constituents—not one thing in Parliament when moving a bill and another thing to his constituents, and in correspondence with the Minister, when it suits his purposes. If he really believed in this bill he could have written to Mr Armstrong and told him of his grand plans for an expensive plebiscite regarding the council for which Mr Armstrong had sought his local member's advice. But no; the member for Orange wants the Government to look at this issue and fix it. He is a hypocrite and a political opportunist.

I will go through the bill in detail. It is a sloppy bill that would put an unnecessary burden on affected communities and indeed on the NSW Electoral Commission, which does very important work across the State on elections in our community. The bill will require the NSW Electoral Commissioner to run plebiscites in each of the 20 merged council areas within one month of assent to the bill, if it were to pass this House. That tight time frame alone puts a question mark over the whole process. It is a very short time frame and plainly impractical—a rush job that will cut corners and has the real prospect of alienating many in communities across New South Wales.

Under this bill the NSW Electoral Commission cannot follow the normal time frame that applies to local government elections, polls and referenda in relation to the plebiscites the bill proposes. I realise that that might be too technical for some on the other side to process, but they must concentrate, listen and understand the implications of this bill and maybe then they will understand the folly of it. Under the Local Government Amendment (General) Regulation 2005, the role of electors for local government election closes 40 days before an election date. The regulation also requires the Electoral Commission to give notice of that fact to anyone entitled to vote in the election. That notice is to be given at least once in the 40 days before the closing date for the election, constitutional referendum or council poll. The time frame proposed under this bill will make the task of the Electoral Commissioner virtually impossible, since the bill gives him only one month from the date of assent to conduct the plebiscites while the Electoral Commission needs more than 40 days to comply with the statutory time frames for elections under the Local Government Act 1993.

I could go into more detail on this, but I will not. It is one element of why this bill is impractical and poorly thought through. It is a hasty bill with hasty provisions, setting out an ill-considered process. If it were to pass, it would produce an outcome that the community could not trust. It would have no credibility, because there is no mandate for breaking apart councils as the result of a poll or plebiscite that is not held in accordance with the regular procedure for local government. I say to those opposite who get excited when these practical things are pointed out to them that they need to have a quick lie down, read the bill again and find out what it is proposing. It does not stack up practically. It will create an issue for communities across New South Wales. I take on board what they are saying and the reason for moving this bill.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! All members will have an opportunity to take part in this debate.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** I say to Opposition members who are getting excited that they should have read the bill. They should realise that there are practical implications for the Electoral Commission because of the time frames required for plebiscites. In fact, any poll that was to be conducted would not have any credibility; it could not be backed in or trusted because it would not have followed the regular protocol and process of a

plebiscite being held by the Electoral Commissioner. Maybe members opposite do not care about proper process. This Government cares about process, which is why it has issues with the bill. The bill has been superseded by events. Last Thursday, the Government made it clear that it wants to end the uncertainty around councils so that ratepayers can go to the elections next month to elect their preferred councillors, knowing that those councillors will have a mandate for the following three years to represent their local communities.

Indeed, instead of talking to their lawyers or going to the High Court, they can focus on what they are supposed to be doing, which is serving their local communities by delivering good infrastructure to ensure that parks, footpaths and roads are in good condition, and to focus on frontline government services in our local communities. The bill adds more uncertainty and more cost at a time when new councils will be elected. Those new councillors will want to reflect the views of the ratepayers who elect them, and they should be allowed to deliver on their promises. The measures proposed in the bill will cause disruption and uncertainty in our local communities. It will unwind the certainty that this Government delivered last Thursday when it announced that it will not proceed with the pending metropolitan mergers.

As a result of amendments moved by The Greens in the other place, the bill will also require referendums for all future merger proposals. Requiring our local communities to hold referendums or plebiscites on mergers or the reversal of mergers is an unnecessary and costly exercise. Our announcement last week created certainty for councils. We now have councils that can focus on what they need to do to deliver services to their communities. That is the position they should be leading up to in the elections next month.

I speak to other provisions of the bill so that all members in this Chamber and everybody in the community understand that the bill is impractical, inflammatory and costly to the communities that we want local councils to serve. The provisions in the bill relating to those 14 metropolitan councils that are no longer subject to a merger proposal have no effect—they serve no purpose. They are defunct, superfluous and distracting. The remainder of the bill is also unnecessary. It too will create confusion, further uncertainty for councils and add additional costs for ratepayers and their local communities. The job of Parliament is to make things easier and better for those communities. My Government thinks the bill fails that important test.

I return to the logistics of running plebiscites within the one-month period. Residents will go to the polls on 9 September in 46 council areas across the State. The New South Wales Electoral Commissioner will be administering 45 of those 46 elections. The bill proposes to require the Electoral Commissioner to administer 20 plebiscites at the same time. The logistics of administering all those local government elections in conjunction with the complicated plebiscite process is daunting, if not impossible to implement, in the short time frame proposed by the bill. It is unrealistic to expect arrangements for those plebiscites to be in place in one month.

It is not a straightforward process because the votes of people in the new council areas will have to be counted as if they voted in the former council area to which they would have belonged if that council area still existed, which is confusing enough. It raises many questions in my mind. Will the Electoral Commissioner need to set up separate electoral rolls for the former council areas in order to ensure that votes are assigned to the relevant former council area? We do not know. How many voting papers are needed to be distributed for each council area? How will all the different voting papers be distributed and electoral rolls prepared with enough time to allow for pre-polling, postal voting and voting at the declared institutions, such as nursing homes and hospitals, in the lead-up to the date of the plebiscite? How can a community information campaign be implemented in time to advise voters of their need to vote in the plebiscite?

These are only some of the questions that need to be answered before the proposed plebiscite can be held. A plebiscite cannot be planned on the back of an envelope; it has to be carefully planned several months in advance. Electoral staff have to be employed, polling booths have to be bought, ballot papers have to be printed and information campaigns have to be rolled out to properly empower the ratepayers and constituents who will vote in the election. Voting will be compulsory for residents for the plebiscites and the referendums, so a failure to vote by a resident may result in a fine. This makes the proposal in the bill all the more unreasonable to hold the plebiscites within one month after assent to the bill. If the bill were to pass, I anticipate many residents across New South Wales will be confused and frustrated because they have received a fine for failing to vote in a plebiscite or referendum.

Residents in a number of council areas already have had delayed elections and irregular voting cycles. The proposal in the bill is not possible; it will only create further confusion. Important processes and steps must be put in place to have a plebiscite that works well, stacks up and has integrity. The bill is unnecessary. The plebiscite or referendum is an expensive and resource-intensive exercise. The bill requires councils and, therefore, ratepayers to foot the bill for conducting the plebiscites and referendums. If a council wants to spend ratepayers' money conducting a poll, it should be a decision it makes in agreement with its residents and ratepayers. The Local Government Act already allows councils to conduct polls on any topic they wish, and voting on such polls

is not compulsory. The bill is a roadblock to all future merger proposals. Let me explain to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and to the people of New South Wales why it blocks future merger proposals.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: As a matter of courtesy, the Minister should indicate to the House, to the people in the gallery and to the people of New South Wales whether she intends to permit this bill to go to a vote today or whether she is going to talk it out?

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

**Mr Michael Daley:** It is a courtesy.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** To whom?

**Mr Michael Daley:** I want the Minister to let us know whether she is going to filibuster or whether there will be a vote?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I have been in the chair as Deputy Speaker for six years and I have never heard that point of order raised in any debate in this House.

**Mr Michael Daley:** You have heard it now.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** It will not be a precedent. The Minister has the call.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** The very practical questions I raised about how the provisions of the bill can be made to work are questions that need to be answered. They have not been answered and they must be answered before a plebiscite can be held. As I said, a plebiscite is not something that we can plan on the back of an envelope because we think it sounds good and it has good political sell in particular communities. It does not stack up. There has to be careful planning for several months in advance, and for good reason. A plebiscite has to have the integrity of a good process behind it so that it represents the views of all ratepayers.

This bill is a roadblock to all future merger proposals. The provision in the bill that requires all future merger proposals to be endorsed by a referendum is unnecessary and may prove to be an insurmountable barrier to any future council mergers. The requirement will apply to all merger proposals, even those requested by affected councils. The merger will not be able to go ahead unless a majority of voters in affected council areas support the proposal. In the Government's view, the proposal in the bill for compulsory referendums is a recipe for future financial failure and is an unnecessary stifling of reform and innovation. It will be a break in improvements in service delivery and in turning around some of the infrastructure backlogs in our local communities.

As everybody knows, the Government created 20 new councils from about 45 former councils. The new councils have been operating for more than a year now, with the exception of Bayside Council, which was created in September 2016. The City of Botany Bay was one of the councils that made up Bayside Council. Last week the ICAC report revealed the toxic financial culture that was thriving in the City of Botany Bay. It was a 100 per cent Labor-controlled council and council staff were found to have used council funds for their own purposes.

Millions of dollars went missing at a time when Labor ran the council. Where were the councillors? Where was the mayor when all this went on? Those missing millions of dollars could have paid for so much, including badly needed equipment and infrastructure services for the local community. The administrator has already revealed the City of Botany Bay vehicle fleet was an ancient relic, with some trucks held together by gaffer tape. I will not allow the bad old days of the City of Botany Bay to return. The new council has integrity and purpose. Under the current administrator things are tracking well. I am extremely pleased that the 20 new councils have already saved more than \$50 million, on their own reporting, which is nearly three times the original target.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Rubbish!

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** The member for Maroubra said, "Rubbish", but that is in the councils' reports to the Office of Local Government.

**Mr Michael Daley:** From your dodgy administrators.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** If the member for Maroubra wants to contest this issue he should take it up with the councils because that is what they are telling the Office of Local Government.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I know there is a lot of feeling about this, but I would like everyone to treat this debate with respect. Everyone will have the opportunity to contribute. Members should listen to the contributions in silence.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** The Government has also given those new councils up to \$15 million from the Stronger Communities Fund, to be used for new infrastructure and new services for local communities. The councils have also had access to a number of financial incentives from the New Council Implementation Fund, to get the systems set up to make sure that councils integrate the operational parts of what they do. The new councils have been getting on with delivering improved services and infrastructure to their communities. The measures proposed in this bill are therefore misguided and problematic, and threaten to undo many of the improvements we are seeing across our community.

I can give many examples of improvements that are being delivered by those new councils in just a few months. Services in the new council areas are being expanded across a wider local government area so that more residents can benefit from good services and good infrastructure. Community facilities have been upgraded and there is new infrastructure that will benefit the broader community. There are many examples of improvements that are making their way through these new and merged councils that are doing what counts—making a real difference to local communities.

Bayside Council reopened the Mascot Child Care Centre following a refurbishment and expanded the centre's services by introducing a zero to two-year-old group—a fantastic initiative. It was something that council was not able to provide before but funding has assisted it to bring the merger together and has enabled the merged council to provide better and important services for local residents who have young children between the ages of one month and two years. These desirable community services are now able to be provided and councils are better serving the local community. Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council opened its general donations program for applications, and for the first time residents of the former Palerang local government area can now apply for donations and for the subsidised hire of council facilities. They were not able to do that before the councils were merged.

Snowy Valleys Council held "Bark in the Park" days in Tumbarumba and Tumut, which provided free dog-microchipping sessions for the pets of residents. It is a great initiative that helps people ensure that their pets are microchipped and can be identified and matched with their owners. It is a great initiative for the residents of those former individual council areas that have come together under the Snowy Valleys Council umbrella. The MidCoast Council migrated the Bulahdelah Library service point to the Bulahdelah Rural Transaction Centre, which was of benefit to the community because it resulted in extended opening hours and greater access by residents to staff. What a great initiative. These days people have busy lives and parents are often working. These extended opening hours will give parents and other ratepayers better access to a community library facility—a great initiative on the ground from the new MidCoast Council.

Central Coast Council created an extra 110 parking spaces in the Terrigal central business district and added an additional level to the car park. We know that car parks are at a premium in busy areas across Sydney and the Central Coast, so those extra car parking spaces are of practical benefit to the local community. Those communities across the former councils are now represented by the Central Coast Council. Let me focus on Federation Council—what a great initiative there! There are three new fire stations in Redlands, in Daysdale and in Buraja. Those new fire stations have opened as a result of the initiatives of the merged Federation Council. What a great benefit to ratepayers and to their local communities! Georges River Council completed works to resurface the Hurstville Oval velodrome, making the historic venue a first-class facility for local cyclists and cyclists from outside the area. That initiative has been able to be implemented only since the merger to form the Georges River Council. Again, I congratulate the council on taking up the initiative and providing those benefits to residents and to people from outside the area.

Northern Beaches Council opened the Walter Gors Park in Dee Why. The expanded and improved park is now three times its original size. Parks are valuable to local communities; they are places where people can go to play with their young kids, to play sport and to enjoy a bit of rest and recreation. Those open spaces are at a premium across our metropolitan areas, so the expanded and improved park is of significant benefit to the ratepayers of the Northern Beaches Council. In Cumberland Council there have been significant upgrades to the Auburn Botanic Gardens and Central Gardens in Merrylands. More than \$2.6 million will be spent to raise the profile and usability of the precincts. These are again spaces for ratepayers—people who live in that community—to have an opportunity to relax, kick back with their families and enjoy happy times in new, upgraded facilities, which those communities deserve. I could go on—and I will—but I emphasise that this is just a small sample of the benefits that mergers have delivered to those local communities. They represent the tangible benefits of those mergers to communities and ratepayers. They are improving the quality of life, services and infrastructure in those local government areas.

In contrast, the proposals in this bill will be disruptive and costly to the new councils and to their communities. As I have said, they will create uncertainty and anxiety. The new councils delivering the wonderful benefits that I have talked about—and I have given only a small sample of the benefits of those 20 merged

councils—should be allowed to get on with the business of serving their communities and ratepayers and to focus on the task that is most important for them: delivering for local communities in practical ways that improve the quality of the lives of local ratepayers. The new councils have been busy preparing new operational plans and budgets for 2017-2018 and finalising their financial reports. They are also preparing to go to the elections on 9 September 2017. I say to the Shooters and Fishers, to Labor and to The Greens: Let the new councillors serve their three years in peace. Let them get on with serving their communities.

**Mr Philip Donato:** Point of order: I refer to Standing Order 75. Our party is the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. I ask that the Minister refer to our party by its proper title, because we are the only ones sticking up for farmers in regional New South Wales.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The Minister will refer to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party by its correct title.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** So I say: Let the new councillors and merged councils serve their three years in peace and focus on delivering for their ratepayers, who will have certainty that their councillors will serve for three years and get on with delivering the benefits of the merger packages. As I said, today I have given just a small sample of those benefits. I am very happy to speak to any member opposite and give them further details of additional benefits and more examples of how the State Government has enabled the merged councils to provide better services and infrastructure for their local communities.

The bill will require the Electoral Commissioner to administer plebiscites in all 20 new councils as well as referendums seeking approval for any future council mergers to advance. The bill imposes a plebiscite on the voters in the 20 new councils but does not respect their majority view. Under the proposed provisions in the bill, the majority of electors in a new council area may vote for their council to remain but still face the prospect of their council being de-merged. That is because voting is based on the former council areas rather than the new council area.

If the residents of one of the former council areas votes to de-merge, the bill requires the Minister for Local Government to use best endeavours to give effect to their wishes. That is hardly democratic. It will also mean that the councillors who are democratically elected on 9 September 2017 may need to be removed, depending on the outcome of the plebiscite, as the new council is split again into separate council areas under administrators, pending further council elections. The bill will impose a lengthy, expensive, disruptive and completely unnecessary process on our new councils.

In relation to the proposals in the bill, it may be difficult to be precise about the costs of running the plebiscites or future referendums. However, some indication can be obtained by looking at the costs of the 2012 local government elections and then adding an element of inflation. The NSW Electoral Commission advised in its "Report on the Local Government Elections 2012" that the average cost per metropolitan council of running a council election was approximately \$387,000. The average cost per rural council was approximately \$91,000. The highest actual cost was \$983,431 for Blacktown City Council, with approximately 188,000 electors. The lowest cost for a council with a contested election was approximately \$11,000 for Jerilderie council, with 1,132 electors. The average cost overall per elector was \$6.49.

Looking specifically at the merged council areas that would be required to run plebiscites under the proposals in the bill, the NSW Electoral Commission advised in its report that the costs of the 2012 elections in their former council areas were as follows. For Canterbury-Bankstown Council, Bankstown City Council's costs were approximately \$699,000, while Canterbury City Council's costs were approximately \$544,000. That is more than \$1.2 million in today's dollars. For Central Coast Council, Gosford City Council's costs were approximately \$671,000, while Wyong shire's costs were approximately \$637,000. That is again approximately \$1.3 million in today's dollars. For the City of Parramatta Council, Parramatta City Council's costs were—

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (11:49:1):** This is a shameless and arrogant filibuster that is fooling no-one. I move:

That the member for Vaucluse be not further heard.

We want a vote on this bill today, and so do the people of New South Wales.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! When the bill was introduced the member for Orange listed a number of issues in different electorates. The Minister is entitled to provide her summary—

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: The standing orders provide that once the motion is moved the question is to be put without further debate. You are not entitled to make a contribution, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra continued to speak after he had moved the motion. He seems to object when anyone in this place does anything that does not suit him.

**Mr Michael Daley:** The question is to be put without further debate or contribution.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....34  
Noes .....50  
Majority.....16

**AYES**

|                  |                       |                   |
|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Aitchison, Ms J  | Atalla, Mr E (teller) | 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       | Harris, Mr D          | Harrison, Ms J    |
| Haylen, Ms J     | Hoening, Mr R         | Hornery, Ms S     |
| Kamper, Mr S     | Lalich, Mr N (teller) | Leong, Ms J       |
| McDermott, Dr H  | McKay, Ms J           | Mehan, Mr D       |
| Mihailuk, Ms T   | Minns, Mr C           | Park, Mr R        |
| Parker, Mr J     | Robertson, Mr J       | Scully, Mr P      |
| Smith, Ms T F    | Tesch, Ms L           | Warren, Mr G      |
| Washington, Ms K |                       |                   |

**NOES**

|                    |                   |                          |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 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      | Davies, Ms T             |
| Dominello, Mr V    | Elliott, Mr D     | Evans, Mr L              |
| Gibbons, Ms M      | Goward, Ms P      | Grant, Mr T              |
| Griffin, Mr J      | Gulaptis, Mr C    | Hancock, Mrs S           |
| 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     | Roberts, Mr A            |
| 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      |                          |

**PAIRS**

|             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| Foley, Mr L | Fraser, Mr A |
| Lynch, Mr P | Rowell, Mr J |

**Motion negatived.**

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (11:59):** Before the vote, I was speaking about the council areas that would be required, under the proposal in the bill, to run plebiscites and referred to the costs of the 2012 elections in the former council areas in order to show the House how wasteful these plebiscites are and the financial impact they would have on local communities. In relation to Armidale Regional Council, Armidale and Dumaresq's election costs were \$130,000, or thereabouts, while Guyra Shire's costs were \$27,000. Regarding the former councils in the area of Bayside Council, Rockdale City Council's costs were about \$408,000. The City of Botany ran its own 2012 election and its costs have been reported at an estimate of \$157,000. [*Time expired*]

*Motions***DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (12:00):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the concerns of residents across rural and regional New South Wales regarding the length of the daylight saving period.
- (2) Notes that it has now been a decade since the daylight saving period was extended by six weeks without a mandate of the people.
- (3) Supports those people of regional and rural New South Wales affected by the lengthy daylight saving period in their call to end it a month earlier.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST:** This motion is not about the pros and cons of daylight saving; daylight saving is a well-known fact in New South Wales. This motion is about the length of daylight saving and its impact on children going to school, people going to work, and so on. Daylight saving was lengthened in 2007, without a mandate from the people of New South Wales. I came into this place in 2007 with the belief that I came here to represent my constituents, and I continue to hold that belief. Since coming to this place, no matter where I go in my local area I continually hear that the daylight saving period is too long and should be shortened by one month.

In March, the sun rises at around 7 o'clock and sets at around 5:30 p.m. The daylight hours in March are far too short to have daylight saving. Kids in regional and rural areas have to be at school by about 8 o'clock, which means they are getting out of bed at 5.30 a.m. or 6 o'clock. As parents, we know how hard it is to get kids out of bed and get them off to school. The early start creates a major impasse. Some kids are being dropped off at bus stops in the dark. This place supposedly cares about child safety but we are allowing young kids to be left on the roadside in the dark waiting to catch a school bus. When those kids get home at about 4.00 p.m. or 4.30 p.m., they have less than an hour of daylight left. It is fine down south in Victoria and other places where there is twilight, but in New South Wales, particularly northern New South Wales, there is no twilight.

I spoke against the daylight saving legislation in 2007 and was supported by a number of my National Party colleagues. The extra four weeks in March make the period too long. A number of members of Parliament in this place have said to me that they like daylight saving but the period is just too long. This motion is a groundbreaking chance to bring some common sense to this debate. It is fine for members to talk about lifestyles. Back when daylight saving was extended, Clover Moore, I think, said that it would mean that people had more time to kick a ball, walk the dog, or go for a walk, but, in fact, it is dark in the morning and dark in the evening and they do not have the chance to do those things.

Just on 27 per cent of my constituents work across the border. The extra month of daylight saving causes a great deal of harm to the social fabric of my electorate. The social fabric—keeping families together, being together in the morning and at evening time—is important. The member for Lismore would appreciate what I am saying. All members in this place should support this motion. They should not use it as a political football and oppose the motion. Everyone complains that in the last month of daylight saving we have to get up in the morning in the dark and turn on the lights, and when we get home we turn on all the lights again. So any advantage to the environment through saving power, which was part of the original reason for daylight saving back in the war days, has gone out the window. The daylight saving period is just too long.

Since raising this motion in this place yesterday, I have received countless phone calls from all across the great State of New South Wales. Whether they were in Wagga, the Riverina, Lismore, Broken Hill or Tamworth, they all said the same thing: "Good on you. Finally some common sense is coming to this place." At times, common sense is a rare commodity in this place—and I can honestly say that after having been here just on 11 years. This is a real chance for the House to come together and recognise the issues facing, particularly, young school children. Fancy standing beside a country road in the dark waiting for the school bus. How safe is that? It is terrible that this House permits such a travesty to occur. What about the inconvenience to the mums and dads? What about their ability to share time or play with their kids in the evening? None of that has been considered in this debate.

The sun rises at 7 o'clock. Try as we like, we in this place cannot make the sun rise any sooner or later, and we cannot make it set any sooner or later. As powerful as we may consider ourselves to be, there are other forces in play. Please do not talk about curtains fading and cows not giving milk. I have heard those arguments time and again. This motion is about families. It is about kids sitting on the side of a country road in the dark. How safe is that? How can anyone not support this motion today when young kids are involved? Members should

drive over the Great Divide into our regional and rural areas and they will see what I mean. They should talk to the mums and dads around bus stops and the school gate and they will hear the same complaint, "We do not mind daylight saving but it is just one month too long."

Daylight saving was implemented to create more free time, but I strongly believe that it puts families in regional and rural New South Wales at greater risk. It destroys the social fabric of these communities. We in this place want to keep our constituents young, safe and healthy, and the length of daylight saving flies in the face of that aim. That is why I believe this debate should have precedence. Hopefully this motion will bring some common sense into the debate and we can start looking after families in regional New South Wales. Those families are suffering a great deal. They are getting up in the dark, and young kids are waiting on the side of the road in the dark. How can anyone argue for that? Earlier this year, across the State just on 6,000 people, including groups like the Country Women's Association, went out of their way to call into our electoral offices to sign a petition. Anybody with a regional and rural background has supported this issue. The daylight saving period is just too long. We do not want a debate about daylight saving; we just want the period reduced by a month.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (12:08):** With all the significant issues occurring in New South Wales, none affects quality of life more than the motion moved by the member for Tweed which, if carried by the House, becomes the policy of the Berejiklian-Barilaro Government. Won't that be terrific! The New South Wales Parliament, the House of the people, will carry a motion calling for a reduction in daylight savings. It will be the thin end of the wedge for the abolition of daylight savings. This is a remarkable proposal by this Airbnb government. Every State bar Queensland is locked into a similar time for daylight savings—New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and even South Australia, which is on central summer time. Yet the member for Tweed, on behalf of the Government, wishes to change it.

**Mr Chris Patterson:** Point of order: I make it abundantly clear to the member for Heffron that this is a private member's motion, so it is not appropriate for him to say, "on behalf of the Government".

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Heffron that it is a private members' day and the House is debating a private member's motion.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I am sure the Government Whip will inform me of the standing or sessional order he claims I have breached. If the resolution is carried by the House, in which the Government has a majority, what else can it possibly mean? This is the people's House. This is the House that determines the government of the day. If this resolution is carried, it is the decision of the Government. I understand that the member for Tweed, whose electorate's northern boundary is shared with a Queensland electorate that does not have daylight savings, probably feels more attuned to Queensland than he does to New South Wales. In fact, he can go to Coolangatta and stand with one foot in Queensland at 12 o'clock and one foot in New South Wales at 1.00 p.m., if he so chooses.

Bearing in mind that the member for Tweed has such great affinity with the people of south-eastern Queensland, I would have thought that he would know that the people who live in south-eastern Queensland want daylight savings. They want to join with New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania and adopt daylight savings. When the member for Tweed says he is talking to people within his electorate, he must be talking to people in only certain parts of his electorate. He certainly is not speaking to people within his region. I have heard all the arguments about what is wrong with daylight savings, some of which have not been referred to by the member for Tweed. I sought the assistance of *Sydney Morning Herald* journalist Ray Sparvell, who published a relevant article on 1 October 2015. I could never understand why daylight savings has an impact upon cows and why daylight savings is so bad for cows, but there actually is a reason.

The reason revolves around milking cows being stressed by being awakened in the dark and being required to give milk before they are properly awake. That is the argument that comes from various parts of the National Party—that certainly is the case for the member for Tweed but not for Mr Deputy Speaker, the member for Lismore. The effects of daylight savings are worse for dairy cows because their body clocks get put out again during the second milking of the day. Dairy cows become accustomed to routine and it puts them out to have their routine mucked up. The reason that daylight savings does not impact upon human beings in the way it impacts upon dairy cows is that human beings get themselves caffeinated. Getting up an hour early does not impact upon human beings. Perhaps we should give dairy cows caffeine to make them operate more efficiently during daylight savings time.

I have not been able to figure out the argument about faded curtains, so I checked with an engineer who is a member of this House and asked why people like the member for Tweed and other members of The Nationals say that their curtains fade during daylight savings. After all, there are only 24 hours in a day. The sun first appears in the east and sets in the west, so how does daylight saving affect the fading of curtains? The member was not able to explain it to me. The other issue referred to by the member for Tweed is children getting up in the dark. If

they get up in the dark, they will return home during daylight, and vice versa. So his argument is a lunacy-type argument. However, there are some aspects of daylight savings that are common sense.

In the United States of America, the land of the free and the nation that is so concerned about climate change, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics has reported a 1 per cent energy saving because of summer time. The children who benefit from daylight savings are those who participate in sports. They can train in daylight. The sports clubs do not have to turn on the floodlights, saving them electricity costs, for the children to be able to train in parks. I thought the issues of daylight savings in this State and nation and discussion on the variation of time had been put to bed some time ago. In any event, I will be fascinated to see whether the motion is carried by the House and becomes new government policy.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I extend an invitation to the member for Heffron to visit the northern part of the State and other parts that lie along the State border to acquaint himself with the issues. I would be happy to accompany the member and to introduce him to people who have views on daylight savings.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:16):** I support the motion moved by the member for Tweed and acknowledge particularly paragraph (3), which states:

Supports those people of regional and rural New South Wales affected by the lengthy daylight saving period in their call to end it a month earlier.

I particularly support that part of the motion. I have been listening to the debate, in particular, the juvenile contribution by the member for Heffron. His speech was insensitive and arrogant and showed the member's ignorance of life in regional areas of New South Wales. His speech was classic city-centric bias of the highest order. The daylight savings issue in regional areas of New South Wales is a real concern for those who are affected by it in their work or leisure. For many years, daylight savings has been a regular item on branch agendas. Today I speak on behalf of the many constituents who regularly contact my office—Kevin Tongue, Sonia O'Keefe, Tim Norton and many others—to express their concern about the effects of daylight savings.

In particular, they are concerned that the period of daylight savings is too long and should be reduced to four months, commencing in November and ending in February. Daylight savings in New South Wales is synchronised with Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory [ACT] largely to ensure consistency in business operations with other States. The original purpose of daylight savings was to provide new business opportunities by moving our clocks forward to provide extra daylight hours after normal working hours. The time has come to revisit the goal and to consider shortening the period of daylight savings by a month at the end of the period.

There is no doubt that the period of daylight saving should be reduced. Some will call for it to run from the start of November to the end of February—four months rather than six months. I support the community's push for this in the Tamworth electorate. Daylight saving is a significant problem, because at the end of the daylight saving period it is still dark. That affects the operations of landholders and operations in the agricultural sector. Taking a month off the end of daylight savings is common sense, and it would not upset the consistent business operating conditions currently experienced with other States. I acknowledge the concerns of residents across rural and regional New South Wales, particularly in the Tamworth electorate. I note it has been a decade since the daylight saving period was extended by six weeks without a mandate. I support those in my electorate affected by the lengthy daylight saving period who call for it to end a month earlier.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (12:20):** Thank you, Deputy Speaker, and I commend you on your excellent work and fantastic chairing of this debate. I am hoping the Deputy Speaker will give me a little latitude—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the member for Kogarah to order for the first time.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I am interested in the wording of the motion moved by the member for Tweed. Perhaps this motion should have been moved an hour later so that we could have more time—that was a daylight saving joke. I should wink when I am about to tell a joke so that those opposite can laugh. The motion reads, in part:

Supports those people in regional and rural New South Wales affected by the lengthy daylight saving period in their call to end it a month earlier.

It is interesting that the motion does not say, "We will end daylight saving a month earlier", which is an important difference. It is a phenomenon of State politics—not displayed by you, Mr Deputy Speaker—that The Nationals members of Parliament enter the Chamber, spread some smoke, and offer some cheap talk about how much they care about their communities, and how they will offer wholehearted and fulsome support for their push to end daylight saving. If only they knew anyone in Government! Have they thought about walking down the corridor and seeing the Premier? It is interesting that there are no Liberals in here, apart from the new member for

North Shore—who I presume supports a change to daylight saving—prepared to side with a couple of The Nationals to suggest a change to daylight saving arrangements. The obvious conclusion is that talk is cheap.

I do not know how the Kevin Tongues, Sonia O'Keefes and Tim Nortons in the electorate of Tamworth feel about having their local member say, "I offer you fulsome support, but refuse to utter the crucial words, 'We will change daylight saving.'" It has been argued that The Nationals, both in this place and in the bush, have influence in the Government and that they can walk into the Premier's office and demand changes to legislation. They will have to do a lot better than a motion that says, "We offer you support for these things. Yes, they're important: Keep the fight going." For goodness sake: Go up to the Cabinet, use your influence and change the legislation, because talk is cheap. It is not good enough—

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Work with us, then. Don't fight against us!

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I say to the member for Tamworth: This is his sixth year. I presume he has fronted this motion every year for six years. At some point constituents in his electorate will say, "No more motions! We don't want any more motions. Can you get daylight saving changed or not?" That is what it comes down to. We should not forget that this motion accorded precedence has come at the expense of the Opposition's motion to establish a full judicial inquiry into water issues in the electorates of many of The Nationals. I know The Nationals are as concerned about these allegations as I am, because I have spoken to them privately. I do not under any circumstances question the integrity of many members of The Nationals in this Chamber, but daylight saving is not more important than the theft of water. This motion should not have been accorded precedence over the theft of water in this State. It is a disgrace. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands—Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Assistant Minister for Skills) (12:24):** I support the motion moved by my colleague the member for Tweed and I thank him for bringing this matter before the House. All debates about daylight saving evoke somewhat emotional responses, both pro and anti. Having listened to the previous contributions, I think it is important to distil this motion. It is not about whether or not the State should have daylight saving but about reducing the length of daylight saving from six months to five months.

The motion also seeks to reverse the change made about a decade ago in this Parliament that extended the daylight saving period by six weeks—a month at the end and two weeks at the start. This is an issue that provokes strong discussion and debate throughout country New South Wales. The northern boundary of my electorate of Northern Tablelands is the New South Wales-Queensland border. A number of communities there deal with the impacts of lengthy daylight saving periods. It is not only about schoolchildren having to wait at bus stops in the dark of the morning, although that is a serious issue. In my electorate, which covers nearly 60,000 square kilometres, students travel for hours each day to get to school. In the past 12 to 18 months I have received letters from numerous constituents detailing the impact daylight saving has on their children, particularly primary schoolchildren, trying to get to and from school and to bed in time to get a good sleep for the next day.

To highlight how important this issue is for a number of my constituents, last year 4,492 people signed a petition to reduce the period of daylight saving by a month. In addition there were 752 letters and emails from constituents who did not sign the petition but wrote to me in support of this push. This is an issue that comes up every year and one that people believe impacts on their lives. Although there is a mixture of views—from keeping it at six months, extending it, to getting rid of it altogether—almost all people in country New South Wales agree that the last month is problematic. Daylight saving strikes a good balance, evening things out so that people can carry out their daily work routines with the same amount of daylight, but the last month is problematic. I will finish my contribution by reading an extract from a letter I received from a constituent called Robyn, who said:

I realise that our city cousins outnumber us in the bush—but it doesn't mean our opinions don't matter. Our poor kids are forced to stand at bus stops when the sun is only just coming up. Please, I request that Daylight Saving finishes at the beginning of March as it was years ago.

That sums it up. We are asking for a better balance between the interests of coastal and city residents and those in the far west of New South Wales. No-one is saying we should get rid of daylight saving. The suggestion is that we modify it to better suit the work and lifestyle requirements of everyone in this State.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (12:28):** In reply: I thank the member for Heffron for his contribution. I am very impressed with his knowledge of dairy cows. I also thank the member for Kogarah for his contribution. Those learned gentlemen forgot this debate is about daylight saving. The debate is about the quality of life for our schoolchildren and workers who have to get up in the dark and come home in the dark. In March, the sun rises at 7.00 a.m. and sets at 5.30 p.m. I worry about the young kids standing on the side of the road in the dark. I thank the member for Tamworth for his contribution. He knows the deep effect it has on his community. I thank the member for Northern Tablelands for his contribution. He presented a number of petitions and is responding to his

community. We talk to our local communities. We are their local champions. Our job is to bring their issues forward. We have losses, but overall we have wins for our communities and that is what being a politician in this place is all about.

I cannot get over the fact that the safety of children is put at risk for one extra month of daylight saving. Schoolchildren stand on the side of the road waiting for buses in cold, often inclement weather. They are left to their own devices, which is why everyone in this place should support this motion. We often talk about the quality of life for families in New South Wales. This motion would increase the quality of life for the people of this State significantly. Members opposite spoke of sporting fields with floodlights, which is a ridiculous argument, because once the sun goes down at 5.30 the lights have to be turned on anyway. I have moved this motion as a result of requests from people in the wider community.

This motion is about shortening daylight saving. The sun rises at 7.00 a.m. and sets at 5.30 p.m. so there is no extra leisure time, which is inconvenient and creates a safety risk to school kids in this State. Daylight saving has been in place for a decade. A number of members have spoken against it previously, but unfortunately it was agreed to so the people of New South Wales continue to be inconvenienced. Whether people live in regional or rural areas or in the city, daylight saving impacts on their lives. We should show some common sense and bring the motion to reality. All the people I have spoken to on the political divide agree with me. Whether they like daylight saving or not, they all say it is one month too long.

Let us bring some common sense to the debate and support the motion and deliver for the people of New South Wales who taxes and our wages. They expect a certain standard of services to be delivered. We should listen to the people of this State. People deserve to be treated the same, whether they live in regional or rural New South Wales or the city. They deserve to be given the opportunity to enjoy their family time. In this modern technological age, families are being destroyed because of a lack of communication; many of us with kids would agree with that. However, if the length of daylight saving is shortened, people can enjoy more family time and the schoolchildren in rural and regional areas can catch a bus in daylight.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I acknowledge the member for Tweed for moving this motion. Daylight saving is a major issue and it affects the lives of many people in the electorate of Lismore, which was reflected by the number of people who signed the petition. I assure the House that for the people in the Tweed, Lismore, Tamworth and Northern Tablelands electorates, this motion is not about doing away with daylight saving. The question is that the motion moved by the member for Tweed be agreed to.

**Motion negatived.**

### **CAMPBELLTOWN RAIL CARRIAGES**

**Debated resumed from 22 June 2017.**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:33):** Almost six months ago I came to this place on the first sitting day of this year and gave notice of this motion. I did so in the middle of one of the hottest Sydney summers in recent memory. Rail commuters in Campbelltown and Macarthur were being forced to endure unbearably hot conditions every day on trains that were not air-conditioned. Fast forward six months and the problem is the opposite. Every morning Campbelltown commuters are travelling in freezing conditions. On some days the temperature is below zero degrees and they have to sit on cold, hard seats for up to an hour as they commute to work. Campbelltown station is one of the most distant stations in metropolitan Sydney. I say from the outset that I acknowledge that not every train service can be air-conditioned. That is not what this debate is about. The debate is about fairness. This Government is deliberately trying to deceive train commuters in Campbelltown.

If trains without air conditioning must be used, it is only fair that they are shared evenly across the network so that no particular region is burdened more so than any other. However, that is not the case. Data from Sydney Trains shows that, in 2016, more than 27 per cent of trains on the T5 Cumberland line between Campbelltown and Schofields were without air conditioning. By comparison, only 7 per cent of trains were without air conditioning in the Premier's backyard on the North Shore. In 2016, only 0.3 per cent of trains on the North Shore line were without air conditioning. It gets better. In the eastern suburbs—blue ribbon Liberal Party heartland—out of more than 100,000 trains all year, guess how many were without air conditioning? I can count the number on my fingers.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr GREG WARREN:** In 2016, out of more than 100,000 trains on the Eastern Suburbs line only nine trains were without air conditioning for the entire year. There is an upside. We know that when staff members of the Minister for Local Government are giving her media coaching on their commute, they are doing so in comfort.

I know members opposite do not have the best understanding of fairness; that much has become apparent. Even by their standards, this situation is simply unbelievable. In Campbelltown where the summers are hotter, winters are colder and journeys are longer, every day commuters are forced to endure trains that are not air-conditioned. Those on the North Shore and Eastern Suburbs lines are being looked after by this Government and the Liberal Party.

It is a deliberate act of prejudice by this Government. More data from Sydney Trains released under the Freedom of Information Act shows that from 21 January 2017 the Government deliberately changed the timetable to replace six air-conditioned trains with unair-conditioned trains every day. There was no increase in the number of train services or any other justification, only that air-conditioned trains were replaced with unair-conditioned ones. Members should not take my word for it. I share with members some of the comments made on social media by Campbelltown commuters about the inadequate number of unair-conditioned trains they are forced to put up with. One resident said:

All the North Shore line trains roll through with air-con, along comes Campbelltown train and it is a sweat box.

Another local resident said:

I had to get a train home from Liverpool to Campbelltown on one of the 40 degree temperature days and got a non-air-con train. It nearly killed me! I have seen ads in the past trying to encourage people to use public transport instead of driving, why would they when they cop these trains?

In June 2014 during her time as transport Minister, Premier Berejiklian said:

... the days of sitting on a hot train in summer or a cold train in winter are over.

That may be the case in Willoughby and Bondi, but it is certainly not the case for the people in Campbelltown and Macarthur. I call on the Government to put some fairness back into the allocation of trains and to ensure that all regions of Sydney carry their fair share of the burden of unair-conditioned trains.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (12:39):** This motion moved by the member for Campbelltown is so typical of Labor and its lacklustre approach to proper planning in public transport. The member for Campbelltown seems to think no money is spent in Western Sydney or in south-western Sydney or anywhere other than in Liberal electorates. But those opposite have a very short memory. In my electorate there was the Rozelle metro. Imagine how that \$500 million could have been spent to air-condition all the trains, which is what the member for Campbelltown wants.

The member for Campbelltown seems to think that after the haphazard procurement of rolling stock during the 16 years of hard Labor, this Government can just snap its fingers and new trains will magically appear on the tracks. When it came into power in 2011, the current Government found that only 72 per cent of all timetabled services were air-conditioned. Today 97 per cent of all timetabled services are air-conditioned—an increase of 25 per cent. Those opposite want people to believe that things are a lot worse than what they were when Labor was in government which is false and ridiculous. It is a common tactic for Labor members to appear in their electorates and hope that people have forgotten those 16 treacherous years. I think we will be reminded of what Labor got up to when in government with some of the newspaper headlines today.

Sydney's rail fleet is in the final stages of transition to being 100 per cent air-conditioned. Everyone is well aware that our existing network is bursting at the seams. Finally, the people of New South Wales have a public transport system of which they are proud and that is delivering the services they want. People are voting with their feet on this issue. In 2015-16, patronage across the Sydney train network grew by more than 10 per cent. We need to act now to ensure we can continue to cater for demand in the future. We are delivering a comprehensive More Trains, More Services program to boost capacity on the network through hundreds of extra services, better infrastructure, and new trains for Sydney. A key part of the strategy will be adding new trains that will spend less time in maintenance and more time on the tracks. The New South Wales Government ordered 24 Waratah-style trains, which will roll onto our tracks from late 2018. Once the new fleet is in operation and has proven reliable we will be able to scrap the remaining non air-conditioned S-sets forever.

While the new trains are being built, Sydney Trains is working hard to ensure that the S-sets are used in a way that causes the least disruption to customers, while also delivering more services more often. S-sets are primarily used as standby trains during network incidents, and are used to replace trains during necessary maintenance. This helps to ensure the maximum number of trains are in operation for our customers at any given time. Instead of using the trains in these circumstances, Labor would rather cancel services and inconvenience commuters across the network. The reality we face now is that the improved train services the Government is delivering are popular and the number of people using our services is growing significantly. To cater for this unprecedented growth it is vital to fast-track work that will allow us to provide our customers with more frequent and more express services.

Around 97 per cent of our fleet has air-conditioning. We are asking our customers to be patient for a little longer while we update the remaining 3 per cent. The New South Wales Government is doing everything in its power to provide better train services for south-western Sydney customers, including providing more train services to and from the Sydney CBD. In the electorate of the member for Campbelltown, by simplifying train movements and untangling services at Glenfield we will be able to address capacity issues and provide more reliable services for customers. In the morning peak, 80 per cent of customers travelling from stations between the Campbelltown and Macquarie Fields stations are city bound on trains that are overcrowded. This is why, from late 2017, we will introduce an additional 20 express trains each week during peak hours—for which I am sure the member for Campbelltown will take credit—connecting Campbelltown and Macarthur customers with the Sydney CBD via the T2 Airport Line. The member for Campbelltown can put that in his next newsletter.

Campbelltown and Macarthur customers will maintain access to major Western Sydney destinations such as Parramatta by catching the T2 Airport Line and making one easy cross-platform interchange without the need to climb any stairs at Glenfield Station. Our priority is to keep wait times to a minimum and to provide a seamless connection for customers, which is why we are currently examining the possibility of lining up as many services as we can. It is also clear to us that more and more people are catching trains to and from the airport, so we are moving fast and providing more services on the T2 Airport Line to cater for this growth. Of course, if those opposite do not want these services, they should say so.

Customers travelling to and from Sydney Airport will benefit from more than 200 extra services per week in non-peak times on the T2 Airport Line from late this year, in response to a spike in customer demand in recent years. Trains servicing the domestic and international airport stations will double from four to eight services per hour during the day on weekends. That will mean that on average a train will arrive every 7½ minutes compared with every 15 minutes. Extra services will be provided on weekdays and late at night, meaning all trains will run every 15 minutes instead of every 20 to 30 minutes, as they do today. These changes will benefit the growing amount of T2 Airport Line customers between south-western Sydney and the CBD with the services they need now and in the future. We are not just providing extra suburban trains; we are also purchasing new intercity fleet and regional trains. The 2016-17 budget allocated \$130 million for the brand new modern fleet of intercity trains. [*Extension of time*]

The new intercity fleet will be designed with the comfort of the customer in mind. We have consulted with passengers to find out what they wanted and we incorporated a lot of this feedback into the early designs. The first new trains are expected to be delivered in 2019. In October 2016 the New South Wales Government also committed \$50 million to accelerate the planning and procurement of new XPTs, and to investigate opportunities to replace more than 50 Xplorer and Endeavour trains. This investment is in addition to the initial \$35 million commitment. Transport for NSW will undertake an expressions of interest process followed by a tender process later this year. The new XPT fleet is expected to begin coming into service in the early 2020s.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (12:47):** I thank the member for Drummoyne for his contribution to debate on the motion moved by the member for Campbelltown. The Government is thinking about doing something one day to address the issue of overcrowding and non-air-conditioned trains in Campbelltown, which is brilliant and which will be a great headline for whichever candidate the Liberal Party nominates for the Campbelltown electorate in 2019. It will have billboards all over the place stating that it intends doing something one day. Let me take members back in time. A former transport Minister once said:

For too long customers have complained about travelling in trains without air-conditioning. It was the biggest gripe our customers had and now I am pleased that the days of sitting in a hot train in summer or a cold train in winter are over.

They are most certainly not over. That statement was made on 2 August 2014 by Premier Gladys Berejiklian as the former Minister for Transport.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** Order! I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** That statement was made more than three years ago. One day 97 per cent of the trains in Campbelltown might have air conditioning. The member for Drummoyne made a fascinating contribution, read his speech well and delivered the Minister's message. It was an excellent contribution but, unfortunately, he did not resolve this issue. He did not say on what day the Government will deliver on its commitment and its election promise to ensure that all Campbelltown train services are air-conditioned.

It is a simple commitment. This Government should be explaining to the people of Campbelltown—not hiding behind excuses as to why it has taken so long—why, more than three years after this release was issued, people are still travelling when the average temperature in Campbelltown in January this year was 32 degrees. Temperatures were above 40 degrees with the highest temperature during that month reaching 44 degrees. Imagine what it would be like getting on an overcrowded train when the temperature was 44 degrees.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Show us your Opal card!

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** Order! I call the member for Oatley to order for the second time.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** At least when people get on an overcrowded service to the Illawarra they can look at the ocean as the train goes past and get a nice view, but when temperatures reach 44 degrees in a train on the way to Campbelltown it is an awful experience. I spent some time working in Ingleburn where it gets really hot in summer. It gets even hotter on an overcrowded train. This is symptomatic of the Government's approach to transport in New South Wales. People get one of two things: overcrowding or underperforming services. That is what people have in Campbelltown and Prospect and that is what people travelling to the Illawarra experience every day.

This has been the topic of a speech this week by the member for Keira and also a notice of motion from me. On one hand there are overcrowded trains and underperforming services and on the other hand there are budget blowouts. This is where the wheels hit the track on this one. When there is blowout after blowout in transport and infrastructure projects it is not possible to deliver the services that people expect. Worse still, this Government cannot even deliver on its election promises. It promised air-conditioned services to Campbelltown. It has not delivered them but it has delivered overcrowded services and transport budget blowouts—a hallmark of this Government. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (12:51):** What a hard act to follow. When it comes to transport and infrastructure this is a government that delivers, whether it is the Sydney Metro, station upgrades like Narwee and Oatley railway stations, or ferry wharf upgrades such as Chiswick ferry wharf. At the end of the day the problem with Labor is that it had seven or eight different transport Ministers over 16 years and 11 or 12 different transport policies, but it did not build anything. I am advised that today 97 per cent of the rail network is air-conditioned. This Government is investing more than \$1.5 billion over the next three years in More Trains, More Services across the network, which will boost capacity through hundreds of extra services, better infrastructure and new trains for Sydney.

The New South Wales Government has ordered 24 new eight-car trains based on the Waratah trains not just for Sydney but throughout New South Wales. This means that more reliable and comfortable commuter services will begin rolling onto the tracks from late 2018. In December last year a \$1.7 billion contract was awarded to supply the trains and to provide maintenance services for an initial period of 25 years. While the new trains are being built we need also to make sure that we can deliver more services across the network. While those opposite might be dead against building metros and light rail and upgrading local stations—

**Mr Paul Scully:** Not at Unanderra. You have not upgraded Unanderra.

**Mr MARK COURE:** Why did you not do it in the 16 years that you were in office?

**Mr Paul Scully:** We started it. You stopped it.

**Mr MARK COURE:** You had 16 years to do it.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** The member for Oatley will address his remarks through the Chair.

**Mr MARK COURE:** Let us compare this Government's track record with Labor's track record. Labor has no track record when it comes to transport and infrastructure. This Government is getting on with the job of building and upgrading our much-needed rail, road and transport infrastructure—for example, commuter car parks. Recently in the budget we announced a number of commuter car parks across Sydney in addition to station upgrades such as Como and Narwee. It is good that residents in my electorate will be able to use an upgraded Narwee station in the next six months, which will be delivered on time and under budget. Where necessary, when there is an incident or when train fleets are being upgraded, the non-air-conditioned S-set fleet will continue to be operated across the Sydney suburban network to ensure that current customer demand is met in an emergency. We have worked hard to ensure that S-sets are used at times when they cause the least disruption to customers, and that there is minimal use during peak periods. [*Extension of time*]

This is important: The S-sets that are in use will be phased out and retired once the new trains are in operation and have proven reliable. It is very simple.

**Mr John Sidoti:** The best parliamentary secretary this State has ever seen!

**Mr MARK COURE:** Thank you—it was a hard act to follow, with big shoes to fill. The new Sydney Growth Trains will be air-conditioned and have advanced temperature control. I put on record the wonderful transport Ministers and parliamentary secretaries that this State has had over the years. The current Parliamentary

Secretary for Regional Roads, Maritime and Transport is in the Chamber, as is the former Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and Infrastructure—those are big shoes to fill. On the new Sydney Growth Trains there will be high-definition customer information screens to provide journey and safety information. There will also be internal and external closed-circuit television [CCTV] and customer help points.

From late 2017, customers in south-western Sydney will benefit from having access to 10 express train services per hour in peak periods—tick, delivered—connecting Campbelltown and Macarthur customers with the Sydney central business district [CBD] via the T2 Airport Line; another tick, delivered. Train movements will be simplified at Glenfield to increase capacity and provide much-needed relief to customers. I was at Glenfield only four weeks ago with the member for Holsworthy. I must say the people there are excited about the new train service. What a lovely place Glenfield is. I was there for a couple of hours and it was cold.

**Mr Anoulack Chanthivong:** They loved you there.

**Mr MARK COURE:** Yes, they did. I am going to ask for another extension in a minute.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** Order! The member for Oatley does not need any encouragement.

**Mr MARK COURE:** Every person walking past said to the member for Holsworthy and to me, "Thank God you guys are in government. Thank God you guys are delivering for this State. Thank God you guys are delivering for south-west Sydney."

**Mr Anoulack Chanthivong:** Is that one of Matt Kean's numbers?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** I call the member for Macquarie Fields to order for the first time.

**Mr MARK COURE:** All T5 Cumberland Line and T2 South Line services will start and end at Leppington station, giving customers direct access to key Western Sydney destinations. The full program of work is still being finalised but of course it will be provided to everyone. Transport for NSW will now work closely with key stakeholders over the coming months and keep the community up to date as the program progresses. In conclusion, this Government is delivering on train and road infrastructure across our State. Those on the other side do not deliver. They had 16 years to deliver but they failed. They had 16 years to fix this. This problem was not created in 2011 when we came to office; it has been a longstanding problem on which those opposite failed to deliver. Shame on each and every one of them!

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (12:59):** I am pleased to speak in debate on this important motion moved by my good friend the member for Campbelltown. I endorse the comments of my friend the member for Wollongong about this Liberal-Nationals Government's poor record of unfair treatment of people in south-west Sydney. This Government has been overpromising and underdelivering. It would come as little surprise to learn that the member for Campbelltown and I face many of the same issues in our electorates, not the least of which is inadequate and unfair public transport services. We know about those things only too well as we are both regular train commuters to this place on sitting days and for meetings. Further, at our early morning train station mobile offices commuters make clear to us the kind of second-rate treatment they receive from this Liberal-Nationals Government.

For too long commuters in south-west Sydney have suffered, especially in summer when temperatures soar. It is simply unacceptable and totally unfair that after a long day's work or study people are forced to travel for an hour or more in what is essentially a crowded oven. It is inhumane and adds unnecessary stress and discomfort for commuters who have already had a long day. What is the Government's response to this situation? It is spin and excuses. Government members are the undisputed grand spin-doctoring champions. In a press release on this issue as Minister for Transport the now Premier said:

For too long customers have complained about travelling in trains without air-conditioning ... and I am now pleased that the days of sitting in a hot train in the summer or a cold train in the winter are over.

She said that those days were over with such confidence—maybe not. They are certainly not over for the people of south-west Sydney. As Minister for Transport, the Premier said in the same press release that the completion of the rollout meant that 100 per cent of timetabled Sydney Trains services were air-conditioned. Not content with that, she went on to say that the Government was "making travel even more comfortable for all our customers and ensuring 100 per cent of services are air-conditioned." The phrase "100 per cent" is unambiguous; it means all trains will be air-conditioned without fail.

Our commuters can see through this Government's spin and excuses. They know only too well the feeling of being crammed in a crowded, non-air conditioned carriage in midsummer. They know only too well that under this Government there is no solution in sight. Commuters from Campbelltown and Macquarie Fields only ever

ask for their fair share and a fair go. They expect nothing less and they demand nothing more. Adequate public transport services are a right, not a privilege to be enjoyed only by those on the north Sydney or eastern suburbs lines. After a long day of work or study all that our commuters want is to be treated with respect and provided with a more pleasant journey home.

Unfortunately, this Government has lost its way; it picks winners and losers. The commuters of south-west Sydney are certainly the losers. The motion moved by my friend and colleague the member for Campbelltown goes to the heart of this Government's failure. This Government fails at every level to deliver the services the public needs. It does not care about or listen to south-west Sydney residents. It excels at producing press releases that make claims but not at delivering. I commend the motion moved by the member for Campbelltown and call on the Government to help our commuters.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (13:03):** It is a pleasure to make a contribution to debate on this motion. It is unfortunate that the good member for Campbelltown did talk about something positive in his electorate such as Campbelltown Sports Stadium and the great games being played there. I know the member is a fan of that. Unlike the former Labor Government, this Government is making an unprecedented investment in public transport infrastructure. This week I was delighted to host the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure in my electorate of Seven Hills to inspect the easy access upgrades and installation of lifts at Wentworthville and Pendle Hill railway stations.

Those stations had not changed since 1945. I remember them from when I grew up in the area. Nothing changed until this Government took action to undertake the easy access upgrades. At those stations the Minister and I had the opportunity to meet quite a few locals. One lady was quoted in the paper as saying, "Hallelujah!" She was delighted that the easy access upgrade had finally arrived. It is a great improvement. Upgrades to Toongabbie station are also underway.

**Mr John Sidoti:** That's the way a good local member does it.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR:** That is exactly right. The easy access upgrade at Toongabbie station will provide better toilet facilities, better platform facilities and better signage for the people of New South Wales. During our visit I saw the member for Prospect confecting outrage at Pendle Hill railway station.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** Why don't you put the ramps back?

**Mr MARK TAYLOR:** He is confecting outrage again today. There is a picture of him on the front page of the local newspaper with his arms crossed.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** Order! The member for Wollongong will come to order. The member for Prospect will come to order.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR:** He was shaking his head and claiming to be there with numerous local residents. There are no local residents in sight in the picture in the local newspaper.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** Order! I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR:** We can see a couple of candidates from the council, a couple of staff from the office of the member for Prospect and a few sign-wavers standing in the background. Are there any local residents? There are none at all, and that is because local people are happy about the upgrades taking place across the transport system.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** Order! I call the member for Wollongong to order for the first time.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR:** Members opposite can carry on with their confected outrage as much as they want, but members on this side of the House want to get on with it and deliver the things that are needed. Instead of leaving the ramps in place at Pendle Hill, we would rather direct the money towards other easy access upgrades such as those at Rooty Hill station. We are going to get on with it. We are not going to leave ramps that do not comply at Pendle Hill station. To improve the customer experience across the network, this Government will deliver on its election commitment through—as the member for Campbelltown is so keen to know about—the purchase of an additional 24 new Waratah-style trains. We understand that the procurement process takes time but it works effectively. We understand why proper research needs to be undertaken. [*Time expired.*]

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** Order! I remind the member for Macquarie Fields, the member for Prospect, the member for Wollongong, the member for Drummoyne and the Minister that under Standing Order 79 the member with the call will be heard in silence. I will have no hesitation in removing members from the Chamber if they continue to interject.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:08):** By leave: I thank members opposite for giving me leave to speak in this debate. I thank the member for Campbelltown for bringing this motion to the House. I appreciate that he is concerned about his commuters. It is horrible when you are stuck on a train that is either too hot or too cold. It is unfortunate that some commuters have to travel in extreme weather conditions. I am grateful for this opportunity to advise the House of what the Government is doing to help minimise these issues. We should not be in that unfortunate position today. Those commuters would not be travelling in those conditions if the previous Labor Government had invested in a new fleet of trains to resolve the problem in the future. If it had been done then, we would not have to play catch-up now, leaving commuters in conditions that are too hot or too cold.

The Government is trying to make things better, and has committed \$1.5 billion over the next three years to the More Trains, More Services program. That includes an additional 24 new Waratah trains, which will be rolled out onto the network. This investment will help to ensure that our State's commuters can travel across the network in greater levels of comfort. We were able to achieve this only through our strong economic management—something those opposite lack. The More Trains, More Services program will also see commuters in south-western Sydney benefit from more train services to and from the Sydney central business district [CBD] as well as from better access to key Western Sydney destinations such as Parramatta and Blacktown. This initiative means that residents of south-western Sydney will have access to 10 express trains per hour, or on average a train every six minutes, in the morning and afternoon peaks. Additionally, new late-night and afternoon services on the T5 Cumberland line will be introduced to expand services that currently run on weekdays only.

It is important to note that the Government has accomplished local transport infrastructure achievements to help with commuter comfort. I know that the member for Macquarie Fields will appreciate the changes that have happened recently at Glenfield station. I am happy to be a part of the Government that delivered the South West Rail Link, which was opened in March 2015. It is especially important to those people who live in Prestons in my electorate and in Casula. It has made a major difference to them. The project was integral to our local area. It has provided the community with two new local stations—Edmondson Park and Leppington—with 1,250 new commuter parking spaces, which gives residents better access to a station closer to their home. The project has also allowed commuters to have greater access to Glenfield, as the number of train services through there have increased. I am even more pleased to be able to say that this massive project was delivered ahead of time and under budget—something that those opposite can only dream of.

Last year I was able to deliver on one of my key election promises: to increase parking at Holsworthy Station. We know that Holsworthy is an important transport hub in south-western Sydney, particularly for those people who drive to and from the station as part of their daily commute or those who need to connect with the T2 Airport Line. It is awesome to be able to travel to the airport from there. The project included additional parking levels, with a multistorey car park, a new lift and the extension of an existing lift. Through this project we have given a major boost to Holsworthy commuters, with 462 additional parking spaces including 12 accessible spaces available to residents. There are also additional safe lock-up spaces for their bikes. South-western Sydney has benefited from the significant investment in this program. Liverpool Station has also received more than 100 new parking spaces. I am proud of the work that this Government is doing to help our communities.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (13:12):** It gives me great pleasure to speak to the motion before the House. I point out for the benefit of the House that, unlike our predecessors in the Labor Party, the Berejiklian Government has not issued glossy brochures or made statements to the press. Instead, we have delivered thousands and thousands of new services for the people of New South Wales. It would be fair to say that the funding of infrastructure prior to this Government's election in 2011 was somewhat biased. We were promised a rail line—people will remember the North West Rail Line. For decades, that line was promised by our predecessors in the Labor Government but they failed to build it. They failed to give us so much as one centimetre of track or one rail ticket.

Following our election in 2011, construction of the North West Rail Link began—and it is now very close to completion. This now \$20 billion project will link the north-west through Sydney to areas in the south-west. We have not discriminated or been biased one bit in funding services for the people of New South Wales. I am happy to raise issues on behalf of the people of Campbelltown. Some \$350 million was spent on a new hospital at Campbelltown. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested in Narellan Road. The services go on and on. We have added thousands of new public transport services, including buses, to make up the shortfall in services that was left by our predecessors in the Labor Government. This is factual information; I am not making it up.

I give credit to the member for Campbelltown. He reminds me of a former member for Blacktown, Paul Gibson. I remember him well because I served in opposition between 2007 and 2010. Paul Gibson, who was on the Government side, made private members' statements in this place each and every week about the lack of

funding for Blacktown Hospital and the health needs of the people of Western Sydney. Why did I pay particular attention to his speeches? It is because my constituents in Rouse Hill and in Kellyville depend on services at Westmead and Blacktown, and not only at private hospitals but as far away as Hawkesbury Hospital. The fact that then member for Blacktown Paul Gibson stood in this place railing week after week about the failure of his own Government demonstrated clearly that funding was lacking across every area of New South Wales.

As the Treasurer said very recently, Labor electorates have never had it so good; they have never seen so much funding. As a matter of fact, people in Labor electorates would do well to vote for the Liberal Party to keep the Coalition in government after 2019, such is the record amount of funding and investment that is going to those electorates. They have never had better services. There are around 15,000 additional bus, ferry and rail services. We have new, improved, air-conditioned trains. For how many more years will the commuters of Hawkesbury suffer in temperatures of minus five degrees in winter and 45 degrees in summer? I acknowledge that the member for Riverstone knows well the suffering of Hawkesbury commuters on trains that are not air-conditioned. The Berejiklian Government is delivering services, and Campbelltown is one of the places that is receiving them. I will hear no further Opposition claims on this issue because we in the north-west were severely deprived by the former Government's failure to implement the North West Rail Link in a rapidly growing area.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (13:17):** In reply: I acknowledge the member for Drummoyne, my good mate the member for Wollongong and my other good mate the member for Macquarie Fields for their contributions to this debate. I acknowledge also the member for Oatley, the member for Seven Hills, the member for Holsworthy, and the Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services. I appreciate their contributions on this serious issue. However, I do not appreciate some of their rhetoric because it is totally inconsistent with the facts. Where do I start? I will begin with none other than the poor old member for Oatley. He is not a bad bloke; I do not mind him. But, fair dinkum, he is the drover's dog of this Parliament. They dust the poor old son off and drag him down here whenever they want him to get a hiding. He wanders through and is allowed to have a bit of a go. I give him 100 per cent for effort but about 10 per cent for accuracy.

The member for Drummoyne was correct. He was dead right—it was about the only thing I agreed with in his contribution—when he said that this is typical of Labor. I will try not to make this a political issue because it is based on community concern. The points I raised in my opening contribution and that were made by my colleagues the member for Macquarie Fields and the member for Wollongong are based on fact. They are the Government's own figures, which referred to 97 per cent of services. My first point is that that is not the 100 per cent we were promised. Also, clearly the other 3 per cent are coming out Campbelltown way. That is simply not fair; it is not about taking away from somewhere else. I applaud those members who spoke about what is happening in their electorates. I think it is wonderful; I like to hear about the good things that are going on. One member mentioned that he wanted to talk about the positives, and there are many positives. But there is nothing positive about an unfair distribution of government resources for local commuters. The request made by people who board trains leaving from the Campbelltown station—those from Campbelltown, Camden, Wollondilly and surrounding areas—is not unreasonable, but what is unreasonable is the Minister ignoring this issue and the lack of response and lack of action from the Government in this unfair distribution of resources. I do not believe in taking something from one to give it to another. I believe in fair and equitable distribution.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** Order! The member for Oatley will resume his seat.

**Mr GREG WARREN:** Fair dinkum, there was more spin coming from the Government side of the House than in a tumble dryer. Government members have asserted that the Government is getting things done more quickly, but I have been raising issues on behalf of train commuters in Campbelltown for months.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** Order! I remind the member for Oatley he is already on a call to order.

**Mr GREG WARREN:** A three-toed sloth would respond more quickly than the Minister, who wanders around like an arthritic-crippled wombat and is doing nothing about the issues. It is absolutely outrageous.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Point of order: The member for Campbelltown referring to a Minister of the Crown in those terms is unparliamentary.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** Order! I draw to the attention of the member for Campbelltown that the terms are unparliamentary. He should refer to the Minister by his correct title.

**Mr GREG WARREN:** I withdraw my comment. I apologise to all three-toed sloths, who may be offended by being compared to the Minister.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** Order! The member for Campbelltown should tread carefully.

**Mr GREG WARREN:** Some good figures have been raised during this debate, such as \$1.5 billion in funding over three years, which is great. But the point is: Let us distribute the funding fairly. This is not about taking from one to give to another. This is about fair distribution and a fair go for everyone. I urge the Minister—and I note the presence in the Chamber of the Parliamentary Secretary, the member for Oatley—to closely examine the network. I will be more than delighted to work with the Government to achieve a better outcome for commuters in Campbelltown.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** Order! The question is that the motion moved by the member for Campbelltown be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....33  
Noes .....48  
Majority..... 15

**AYES**

|                       |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Aitchison, Ms J       | Atalla, Mr E (teller) | Barr, Mr C        |
| Car, Ms P             | Catley, Ms Y          | Chanthivong, Mr A |
| Cotsis, Ms S          | Crakanthorp, Mr T     | Daley, Mr M       |
| Dib, Mr J             | Doyle, Ms T           | Finn, Ms J        |
| Harris, Mr D          | Harrison, Ms J        | Haylen, Ms J      |
| Hoening, Mr R         | Hornery, Ms S         | Kamper, Mr S      |
| Lalich, Mr N (teller) | Leong, Ms J           | McDermott, Dr H   |
| McKay, Ms J           | Mehan, Mr D           | Mihailuk, Ms T    |
| Minns, Mr C           | Park, Mr R            | Parker, Mr J      |
| Robertson, Mr J       | Scully, Mr P          | Smith, Ms T F     |
| Tesch, Ms L           | Warren, Mr G          | Washington, Ms K  |

**NOES**

|                |                          |                         |
|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 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    | Davies, Ms T             | Dominello, Mr V         |
| Elliott, Mr D  | Evans, Mr L              | George, Mr T            |
| Gibbons, Ms M  | Goward, Ms P             | Greenwich, Mr A         |
| 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            |
| Perrotet, Mr D | Petinos, Ms E            | Piccoli, Mr A           |
| Provest, Mr G  | 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            |

**PAIRS**

|               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| Foley, Mr L   | Fraser, Mr A   |
| Lynch, Mr P   | Hancock, Mrs S |
| Watson, Ms A  | Roberts, Mr A  |
| Zangari, Mr G | Rowell, Mr J   |

**Motion negatived.**

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

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** Welcome to our guests in the gallery this afternoon. In particular, a warm welcome to a delegation of political leaders from the National Diet, Japan, hosted by the Australian Political Exchange Council, guests of the Speaker and member for South Coast. It was very good to meet you earlier in the day, together with the President. We hope you are enjoying your day.

I also welcome student leaders from St Pius X College, Chatswood High School, Willoughby Girls High School and Mercy College Chatswood, who are visiting Parliament to attend the Willoughby electorate school leaders luncheon, guests of the Premier and member for Willoughby.

I welcome Olympic medallist Katie Hill as well as Joshua Maher and Karen Maher, the grandson and daughter of the former mayor of Gosford, Laurie Maher, OAM, guests of the member for Gosford.

I also welcome a delegation of 12 leaders from the Sydney Alliance, in particular the Reverend Bill Crews, who is accompanied by a delegation of six members from the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW.

*Announcements***ACTING CLERK-ASSISTANT, TABLE, AND DIRECTOR, TABLE AND CHAMBER SERVICES**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that on 3 July 2017 Jonathan Elliott was appointed Acting Clerk-Assistant, Table, and Carly Maxwell was appointed Director, Table and Chamber Services. Congratulations, Jonathan and Carly.

*Documents***MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION****Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 17 of the Mental Health Commission Act 2012, I table the report of the Mental Health Commission entitled "Review of transparency and accountability of mental health funding to health services", dated July 2017. I order that the report be printed.

*Joint Sitting***LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY**

**The SPEAKER:** I report the receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Governor:

DAVID HURLEY  
Governor

Government House  
Sydney, 2 August 2017

I, General The Honourable DAVID HURLEY AC DSC (Ret'd), in pursuance of the power and authority vested in me as Governor of the State of New South Wales, do hereby convene a joint sitting of the Members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly for the purpose of the election of a person to fill the seat in the Legislative Council vacated by Mr Duncan Gay, and I do hereby announce and declare that such Members shall assemble for such purpose on Wednesday the 9th day of August 2017 at 3:45 pm in the building known as the Legislative Council Chamber situated in Macquarie Street in the City of Sydney; and the Members of the Legislative Council and the Members of the Legislative Assembly are hereby required to give their attendance at the said time and place accordingly.

In order that the Members of both Houses of Parliament may be duly informed of the convening of the joint sitting, I have this day addressed a like message to the President of the Legislative Council.

I order that the joint sitting be set down as an order of the day for 3.45 p.m. on Wednesday 9 August 2017 as appointed in His Excellency's message.

*Question Time***ONE NATION PREFERENCE ARRANGEMENTS**

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn members that if they behave today as they did yesterday they will be removed from the Chamber. I remind all members that a number of them are already on calls to order. They are the member for Macquarie Fields, the member for Prospect, the member for Wollongong, the member for Kogarah and the member for Oatley.

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:21):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given this social media post overnight by One Nation's New South Wales Senator about Muslims in our Parliament and other parliaments, will the Premier now finally rule out a Liberal Party-One Nation preference deal at the next State election?

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:22):** I have not read the social media post that the Leader of the Opposition held up because I do not follow people I do not respect.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Kiama will come to order. The member for Prospect is skating on thin ice.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** One of the proudest experiences I have had as Premier of New South Wales is visiting communities with people from all parts of the world from non-English speaking backgrounds who have made New South Wales their home. They are loyal and hardworking citizens who can relate to me because that is my personal experience. No-one should suggest that I would in any way not support those values that make our community harmonious, that I would not call out racism every time I see it, and that I would not support the more than 50 per cent of people in this State who have at least one parent born overseas. We on this side of the House have demonstrated day in and day out—not only by our words but also by our actions—that we condemn at every turn those who choose to risk or put at risk the values that make our State not only the strongest State in Australia that supports multiculturalism but also one of the strongest States in the world. I am extremely proud of that.

I say to each member in this place who comes from a non-English-speaking background that they should feel proud and their communities are proud that they are here. We enjoy the support of tens of thousands of people in the wider community. If the Leader of the Opposition found the poster offensive, he should have done something about it rather than trying to politicise it in this place. I say to members opposite that we are about providing good government. Unlike them, we are not obsessed with preferences. We are obsessed with jobs, infrastructure, services and supporting those who are most vulnerable. If members opposite were obsessed with those things, four of them would not be accused of corruption.

**Mr Luke Foley:** Point of order: Premier, repeat after me: I condemn One Nation and will not do preference deals with them.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! What is the member's point of order? There is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Regrettably, the Leader of the Opposition lacks sincerity on this issue. All he cares about is politics and preferences. He does not care about people. He does not care about building infrastructure, creating jobs and providing services. I say to members of the community that we are working, day in and day out. We inherited a mess from Labor. Unfortunately, today four of their Ministers have been found corrupt. Not one, not two, not three, but four of them.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order—

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I have finished my answer.

#### GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (14:25):** My question is addressed to the Premier. What is the New South Wales Government doing to strengthen integrity?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:25):** I thank the member for Parramatta not only for his service to the community but also for raising an issue that is timely in this place today. As I alluded to in my previous answer, I remember starkly what we inherited six years ago when we came to office. We inherited deficit, debt, mismanagement. It is fact.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind members of my earlier ruling. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the first time. I call the member for Rockdale to order for the second time. Members will come to order. Five members were removed from the Chamber yesterday; more may be removed today. The House will come to order. If members do not hear me call them to order, they will be removed from the Chamber without question. The Premier has the call.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I am making statements of fact. We inherited deficit. Go to the budget papers.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order—

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Members opposite cannot handle the truth.

**Mr Michael Daley:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Government inherited a \$6.7 billion surplus.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra did not listen to the question. The Premier has the call.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Everyone recalls that our commitment leading into the 2012 election was to make New South Wales number one again because at that stage it was last. The Labor Party was happy to make New South Wales last, because rather than creating jobs for the community, building infrastructure and providing services, at least four of its Cabinet Ministers were working for themselves, for their own political and financial interest and not for the people of New South Wales. I note that the Independent Commission Against Corruption handed down its findings on Operation Credo today, and guess what? Yet another former Labor Minister has been found corrupt. We already knew about Mr Eddie Obeid, Mr Ian McDonald and Mr Tony Kelly. It is no surprise that Mr Joe Tripodi now joins them. Unfortunately, this gang that ran the previous Labor Government—and most members opposite were serving alongside them—

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** It is true. It is a statement of fact that many of the Opposition members were serving alongside them.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Many of the members opposite were in Cabinet, in government or backbenchers while those four were in Cabinet. That is a statement of fact.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Today's findings demonstrate that rather than being focused on the things that matter to the community, they were focused on lining their own pockets.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** This was confirmed by the findings handed down today.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73, the personal reflections of the Premier that liken members on this side to somebody—

**The SPEAKER:** No reflections were made on individuals. The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat. Order! I call the member for Campbelltown to order for the first time. When I make a ruling the member will sit down.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** It is a statement of fact that the four of them sat in Cabinet and were part of the decision-making process of the former Government. It is also a statement of fact that many of them were on the backbench. Members opposite cannot pretend that Joe Tripodi, Eddie Obeid, and Ian Macdonald did not get them pre-selected.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129 and Standing Order 73—

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier has not made personal reflections about any individual. Order! I call the member for Maroubra to order for the first time. I call the member for Bankstown to order for the first time. I have asked for the shrieking and interjections to stop. It is offensive.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The member for Maroubra should know that every Liberal identity who was also part or subject to this investigation was cleared. Members on the opposite side of the House cannot accept the truth, because that culture of self-interest is why they were part of such a horrible government and why it has taken us so long to clean up their mess.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! It is my prerogative to wait until the interjections cease before I take any point of order. I call the member for Kiama to order for the first time. I call the member for Kiama to order for the second time. The member for Strathfield will not have any rights shortly. I call the member for Strathfield to order for the first time. I call the member for Kiama to order for the third time. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. She has just lost her rights with her interjections and display.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I clearly struck a chord on the opposite side, but members need to deal with the facts, because unless they accept the depth of that culture, nothing has changed in those opposite.

**ONE NATION PREFERENCE ARRANGEMENTS**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (14:34):** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Lakemba will ask his question in silence. I do not want to hear arguments across the table. I ask the member to not become distracted and to not respond. The member for Maroubra will stop telling me how to do my job. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the second time.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** Given Senator Brian Burston's deeply offensive and divisive Facebook post, which named me and other Muslim members of Parliament, will the Deputy Premier rule out a preference deal between The Nationals and One Nation?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:34):** I thank the member for his question. I represent the electorate of the Monaro, which many would refer to as the melting pot for multiculturalism off the back of the Snowy Hydro scheme. I am the son of Italian migrants who migrated to Australia in the 1960s, together with people from all different nations, who worked shoulder to shoulder with others to build one of the greatest engineering feats this nation has ever seen. The heritage of the past 50 years will be built upon with Snowy Hydro 2.0, as proposed by the Federal Government. My community is one rich in culture because of migration and because of the people within it who come from all different walks of life. The Queanbeyan community is made up of large populations of Macedonians, Yugoslavs, Italians, and Irish, who all travelled across the globe. I have spent many Australia Days representing not only my Australian values, but also the many migrants who choose Australia Day to become Australian citizens.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The behaviour of the member for Canterbury is outrageous. If she continues to behave in that manner she will be removed from the Chamber without further warning.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** I grew up in a time when I was called a wog and a dago because of my Italian heritage. As a young man, that racism played hard on my heart. Those Opposite want to come into this House to play politics with racism. What a member of a political party may or may not say—

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Point of order: I greatly appreciate what Mr Barilaro is saying; however, the question was—

**The SPEAKER:** I direct the Minister to remain relevant. The member for Lakemba will resume his seat.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** The first thing is that we are not in any election cycle and there is no election until 2019. The second thing is that One Nation is not even registered in New South Wales. That Facebook post is about an individual who is a racist; it is not about an individual who has anything to do with politics. It is about a racist.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** The real issue is that there is racism in this nation. I have lived through it and my parents have lived through it. We have seen, time and time again, racism used as a political football, but I know, as a member of this House, a member of The Nationals, and a member of the Coalition Government, that I will spend every single day in this place stamping out racism. I have seen the impact it has on individuals and communities. I stand here today as an Australian, but also as someone who is proud of my Italian heritage and of the sacrifices my parents made to come to a new nation, like many others. Regardless of our faiths, our religions, the colour of our skin, or the country of our birth, we are all Australians, and, of course, will uphold Australian values.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Racism is built upon fear in the community, because there is always a minority that wants to disrupt the strong, multicultural nation that we are. Australia is a nation that celebrates heritage, faith, and religion and is the nation that our forefathers fought for—our freedom and democracy. That is the nation in which we live. Those are the values that we uphold on this side of the House.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister is not answering the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I have already ruled on that matter. There is no point of order.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** When it comes to values, those are the values for which we stand. The Labor Party in Orange did a dirty deal with the Shooters to get the member for Orange elected. When we talk about preferences—a party that wants to get rid of gun laws in this nation—

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** —that is the deal that those opposite did with the Shooters.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. This Minister benefited the most from the situation in Orange. He is now talking about his ambitions.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The member will resume her seat. I call the member for Maitland to order for the second time. I call the member for Maitland to order for the third time. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the third time. Members who are on one or two calls to order are now deemed to be on three calls to order. The member for Rockdale is skating on thin ice.

### GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (14:42):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. Will he update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to ensure integrity in relation to matters in regional New South Wales?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:42):** I thank the member for Clarence for his question.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** It is great to see the member back in the Chamber. He had a bit of a health scare over the winter recess so it is great to see him back fighting fit, looking fresh and ready for this next parliamentary session. The member for Clarence is a fantastic member who represents his electorate and makes sure that it gets its fair share of the service delivery and infrastructure spend as a result of the fantastic budget delivered by this Government. In recent days Opposition members have questioned Government Ministers about their integrity, especially relating to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

I thought this would be a good opportunity to talk about what is in place—the governance procedures that are in place to crack down on any illegal activity relating to water. In any given year 500 investigations are carried out under the Water Management Act. Currently 47 water regulation officers in the Department of Primary Industries [DPI] and another 69 officers in WaterNSW are engaged in compliance activities. Since 2010 investigations have resulted in 27 prosecutions, 369 penalty notices, 377 stop-work orders, 30 remediation notices and 140 advisory letters. It is clear that this Government is serious about water.

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

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Rockdale left the Chamber at 14:45.]*

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** From July 2016, 341 alleged breaches have now been finalised in everything from advisory letters to stop-work orders. There are substantial penalties supporting our water regulation officers to make sure we send a clear message to those who break the law that we look at water as a resource that is important to the vibrancy and survival of our regional communities. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition came into this House to try to link a series of events and drag good names through the mud. He used coward's castle—he would not dare say it outside. He said it in this Chamber under parliamentary privilege to try to drag the names of good farmers in regional New South Wales through the mud.

More importantly, he made an attack on a receptionist in my office. The closest he gets to water is when he cleans the fish tank every week. He chose to come into this House and to make allegations relating to donations. How dare he come into this Chamber and talk about donations when the Labor Party in this State is facing issues involving \$400,000 in illegal donations from Chinese companies—the Labor Party donation scandal. Opposition members refer to legitimate donations to the Liberal Party and they want to throw rocks. Opposition members should look at today's Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] recommendations concerning former Ministers Obeid, Tripodi and Kelly and former Minister Macdonald.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Cessnock to order for the first time.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Those opposite talk about integrity but their actions reveal who they are. As the Premier rightly said, many of them are here today because those factional warlords have been found to be corrupt.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Port Stephens will remain silent.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Members should not forget that just before the 2011 election Labor prorogued Parliament to stop a debate. Labor prorogued Parliament at a quarter to midnight so it could flog off the gentraders and sack the boards. Treasurer Roozendaal did that at the time so that Labor could flog off the generators, which says a lot about its integrity. Roozendaal is the person who formed Country Labor. Last week a story in the newspapers revealed that Country Labor is \$1.68 million in debt.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Cessnock to order for the second time.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** What do those opposite try to do? Head office was going to pay the debt, contrary to the Electoral Commission guidelines. Head office now has to loan money to Country Labor to cover that \$1.68 million debt. Bob Hawke once said, "If you cannot govern your party you cannot govern the nation." My line is, "If you cannot govern Country Labor you cannot govern regional or country New South Wales." Those opposite and their candidate for Monaro, Bryce Wilson, President of Country Labor, who sat on a \$1.68 million debt— [*Extension of time*]

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Cessnock from the Chamber under Standing Order 249 for the rest of the day.

[*The member for Cessnock left the Chamber at 14:47 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.*]

**The SPEAKER:** I call the Opposition to order.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** This says a lot about the Labor Party. On the same day that the \$1.68 million Country Labor debt was revealed our good mate Shanghai Sam, who has made a few mistakes and accepted many donations, admitted to it and accepted it. That is the culture of the Labor Party and those opposite. All these facts are available in the media for anyone to read. After Labor members took hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations and had their credit cards paid for by some big Chinese donors, they have now seen the light.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Kogarah from the Chamber under Standing Order 249 for the rest of the day.

[*The member for Kogarah left the Chamber at 14:48 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.*]

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** It was fantastic to watch the Labor Party conference on the weekend. When a Labor official put out a release that said, "There is no big Chinese country guy here to help bail them out," he was referring to the debt of Country Labor. It is clear those opposite do not understand the word "integrity". That has been clear in the ICAC findings today and in the way in which they conducted themselves in the dying days of the Labor Government.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Prospect from the Chamber under Standing Order 249 for the rest of the day.

[*The member for Prospect left the Chamber at 14:48 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.*]

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** That is the way in which they are dealing with the member for Wallsend. She has been charged but she is still an Opposition backbench member. When accusations have been made about Liberal members those people have been stood down.

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order: My point of order is relevance under Standing Order 129. It has been ruled in the past that it is not proper for a Minister to debate the question.

**Mr Adrian Piccoli:** That is not a point of order. Sit down.

**Mr David Harris:** It is a point of order. It is in the book.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition was caught in a photo with the member for Orange from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. [*Time expired.*]

#### NEWCASTLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (14:49):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Given that one month after assuming the operations of Newcastle public transport the private operator has underpaid many of its workers by hundreds of dollars each, will the Minister advise whether this is what he meant by greater efficiencies under privatisation?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:50):** What an interesting question to ask on what is probably the blackest day in the Labor Party's history. In response to the question, I am aware of the issue. Keolis Downer has made the union and the workforce aware of the issue and is going to rectify it.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Strathfield is on her final warning.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** There has been a combination of both overpayments and underpayments. The workforce is aware and I expect that the situation will be rectified as quickly as possible.

#### STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (14:51):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Given the findings of today's report from the Independent Commission Against Corruption, will the Minister update the House on any risks to the State's \$41.5 billion infrastructure pipeline?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (14:51):** I thank the good member for his question. He is very interested in infrastructure projects. In fact, he opens them before they are due to be opened and builds them himself singlehandedly. He spent one night on the side of the road giving his Facebook followers some real-time viewing of the opening of the Berry bypass. The member for Kiama knows the importance of infrastructure to local communities. It keeps us connected, it keeps the economy growing and it gives people access to jobs. Our local infrastructure and mega projects such as the Sydney Metro have not happened by accident. I draw to the attention of the communities across the State to the fact that it is not a new norm to have one of the world's largest infrastructure programs in place. But there is a clear and present danger to this program, and guess what it is? It is members opposite. Today the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] delivered more proof that NSW Labor is the most corrupt party in the country, if not possibly the world.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 73.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister has made no personal reflections on individual members in the Chamber. There is no point of order. The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** That reminds me of a saying out of the United Kingdom Parliament: It is like being savaged by a dead sheep every time the member for Campbelltown gets up. The fact is that the best indicator of future conduct of the Labor Party is past behaviour. Luke Foley's Labor Party is yet another generation of shysters willing to put their hands in the till. They were on the take then and they will be on the take now and in the future. It is the same old Labor with the same old danger because members opposite are the same people who sponsored Obeid, Macdonald, Kelly and Tripodi. We only need look at where members opposite were at the time. Luke Foley was in Sussex Street running the joint. The member for Keira was a chief of staff. The member for Maroubra was a Cabinet colleague.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** And, of course, Joe Tripodi picked Guy Zangari as his replacement.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Campbelltown against taking the same point of order. I direct the Clerk to stop the clock.

**Mr Greg Warren:** There are certain standards that you cannot walk past. My point of order relates to improper motive under Standing Order 73. I am going to keep on going. You can throw me out if you like.

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

**Mr Greg Warren:** It is improper for the Minister to accuse members of this place—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Campbelltown from the Chamber under Standing Order 249.

*[The member for Campbelltown left the Chamber at 14:52 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]*

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** As I said, the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Maroubra and the member for Keira were all there. The Legislative Council got rid of Ian Macdonald and Eddie Obeid and replaced them with Walt Secord.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** The question was about infrastructure and transport. I am keen to hear about that, given I am the shadow Minister.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The question was about threats to infrastructure. The Minister remains relevant.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The only thing we can take out of the Labor conference on the weekend is that its plan is to funnel more taxpayer dollars into the unions. We saw not only a plan to rip up rail tracks and buy back poles and wires; we also have Luke Foley telling his union mates that he is going to pay them back, whatever it takes. He got an endorsement by Graham Richardson on the weekend. I mean, what is that? Instead of building hospitals and schools he will use taxpayer money to fill union slush funds.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** That is the Labor way: Steal from the many to benefit the few. Ho Chi Minns, Luke Foley's successor who just got booted out, is running a Chinese Communist Party lobbying business out of his electorate office. What is that? If that is not corruption I do not know what is.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Oh, hello.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Hello. That is the first time you have ever spoken to me.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Stop the clock.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** I know you have ruled against points of order taken previously under Standing Order 129 but this cannot be relevant to the question.

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

*[Extension of time]*

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: I take this point of order under Standing Order 73 on behalf of every member of this House. It is one thing to accuse people who have been found to have engaged in corrupt behaviour by ICAC or the courts. That is fair sport on both sides. However, the Minister just accused a member on this side of the House not inadvertently but expressly of corruption. I believe the words he used were, "If that is not corruption I do not know what is." That cannot be allowed to stand or it will set a new standard of behaviour in this place and all members will wear it. I ask the Minister to withdraw that comment in good faith.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I have some sympathy for that point of order. I caution the Minister.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I am happy to be counselled on that by you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Withdraw it.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I am happy to withdraw it, but the fact is a lobbying business is being run out of the Labor Party and its biggest client is big daddy tobacco out of Beijing. Where is the \$200,000 going to be spent? This is Labor to the core, is it not? One thing I do know is that we are going to have to build more jails. The Minister for Corrections will have to add another wing at Cooma—we will call it "Camp Cooma". It is great that Country Labor is back; it now has a well-established branch at Cooma. There will be more of them at Cooma because, true to form, past behaviour is a good indication of what will happen if Labor returns to the Treasury bench in the future. I will leave members on this note.

Given all the infrastructure that Labor plans to cancel, we have done some sums. Those opposite plan to cancel \$20 billion worth of infrastructure. That is some 50,000 jobs. There is the next election campaign, and we will fight it on every street corner to make the point that we are looking after communities—unlike those opposite who corruptly look after themselves. What a black and shameful day for NSW Labor with the release of the ICAC report this morning.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Canterbury is on her final warning.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Shame on every single member opposite because so many of them were there.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Canterbury from the Chamber under Standing Order 249.

*[The member for Canterbury left the Chamber at 14:59 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warned the member for Canterbury. She did not hear because she was interjecting. I warned her again but she continued to interject.

### PRISON POPULATION

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (15:00):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs. Will the Minister update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to address the rising prison population, and any related matters?

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (15:01):** I thank the member for Ku-ring-gai for his question. For the benefit of people in the gallery, I am the prisons Minister. I am here to thank the Labor Party, as it is now my best customer. I could not survive without it. Unfortunately, I will have to go back to Treasury next week because, on top of the \$3.8 billion that I have for new infrastructure for the current prison population, it appears that due to the number of Labor members of Parliament coming my way there will be a review and a massive expansion to ensure that we can deal with the corruption of those opposite. This morning the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] recommended that charges be laid against Eddie Obeid once more. This is a man who put most of those opposite into Parliament; a man whom they all espoused and wanted as a mentor.

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

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** Joe Tripodi is also heading my way. For the benefit of those in the gallery, I used to be an industry association president. I had a great deal of difficulty —

**Mr John Robertson:** And you weren't very good at it.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** I was very good at it, as the member for Blacktown well knows. When I was an industry association president I could never get access to Joe Tripodi. I am very much looking forward to having a direct line of communication to the newest prisoner in New South Wales, should the courts in this State make the correct decision. Labor members of Parliament are dropping into our jails faster than the Government can build them. I am very grateful for that because it makes my job all the more stable.

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

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** Alongside Milton Orkopoulos, there is the friend of the member for Cabramatta Phuong Ngo and Ian Macdonald—who helped every left-wing Labor member get here, including the Leader of the Opposition. Let us not forget that the Leader of the Opposition took Ian Macdonald's place—that is proceeds of crime; give it back, Luke! Tony Kelly is on his way.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Government members will come to order. I cannot hear the Minister.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** I had to remind the Leader of The Nationals that Tony Kelly, who is on his way to court, started Country Labor. They are on their way. The Leader of The Nationals is on the money. But there are now so many former Labor members in the New South Wales prison system that I have had to comply with the Labor Party Constitution and create two branches. The way Labor's factional system works means that we must have a left-wing branch and a right-wing branch. I am going to create the Rex Jackson wing. For those in the gallery who do not remember him, Rex Jackson is a former Labor corrections Minister who went to jail. So we will create the Rex Jackson wing.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. I cannot hear the Minister—and I would like to.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** If I build it at Long Bay the member for Maroubra can stroll down the road, visit his branches and get his numbers right. We in this State are building our prison system, and I am delighted that the Labor Party have complemented me in this task. We take prison welfare very seriously; I take it very seriously. So today I accepted a call from Sam Dastyari—that is right, Shanghai Sam. He suggested that, with all the new Labor members coming, I should move catering to the Golden Century Chinese restaurant in Sussex Street. He says that that is the only food those members will eat. He also suggested that I send the bill to the Chinese Communist Party—that is right, the Chinese Communist Party will be paying the bill. I look forward to reading about all this in Sam Dastyari's next book, which I understand is going to be called "In Bed with Obeid".

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Remaining Opposition members will be removed from the Chamber if they continue to interject.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** We should not worry because what has happened at ICAC today is proof positive that those opposite are unfit to govern at any level of government. I am delighted that ICAC has shown Labor bad, Liberal good.

## STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE VEHICLES

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:06):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Will the Minister commit to State Emergency Service volunteers and to communities across the State that funding for the essential replacement of SES vehicles—vehicles that the service has relied on to keep our community safe more than 35,000 times in the last financial year alone—will be maintained?

**Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (15:06):** I thank the member for Ballina for her question and for giving me the opportunity to again update the House on the commitment and hard work of our State Emergency Service [SES] volunteers and the support that the New South Wales Liberals and The Nationals in government provide to every unit across our State. This morning I met with the NSW SES Volunteers Association to clear up some misinformation on this important issue raised by the member for Ballina. I am glad to have been given the time today in this Chamber to update the House more broadly on what I said to the volunteer association and on the Government's commitment to resource the State Emergency Service. On this side of the House we have a proud record of investment in our volunteer units and of working in close partnership with them to ensure that they can provide a reliable, prompt, safe and consistent response to their local communities in times of flood, storms and other emergencies.

The New South Wales SES recently finalised a major five-year program to refresh and centrally manage its operational vehicle fleet that was previously the remit of local councils. The commencement of the project involved moving that burden from local councils so that it could be better managed by the State. The operational vehicles provided by councils were, I am advised, often of varying standards and ages. In many cases, they were not suitable for volunteers to undertake their statutory roles. The Government has committed additional funding of more than \$46 million over the past five years for the procurement, maintenance and control of the New South Wales SES operational vehicle fleet. This funding was part of a \$96 million Strategic Disaster Readiness Package announced by the Government in response to the 2011 Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry. Of this amount, \$24.5 million was allocated to the purchase of new vehicles in a transition from the existing vehicles over a five-year period.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** Where are they?

**Mr TROY GRANT:** I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Blue Mountains, who asks, "Where are they?" I am happy to inform the House that the New South Wales SES has delivered 181 new vehicles, which include: 73 light general-purpose utility vehicles, 42 light storm vehicles, 25 medium storm vehicles, 12 medium rescue trucks, and 11 community first responder vehicles. In addition, hundreds of vehicles have also been transitioned from the local council to the New South Wales SES and are being operated, maintained and managed by the SES. I congratulate the New South Wales SES on the successful completion of this program, which has brought the vehicle fleet up to approximately 636 vehicles. I am advised that the maintenance budget of the existing fleet is fully built into the current New South Wales SES operations budget. That is a very important point of distinction.

However, there has been some scaremongering throughout the community and by some members of this House on this issue that has caused some confusion. I acknowledge that that does not include the member for Ballina. I wish to allay that confusion today. The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that volunteers have the resources they need, and that commitment is ongoing. Funding for the maintenance has been secured and is in the budget. This Government will never walk away from volunteers' safety in relation to the vehicles they use. The Government is ensuring that the New South Wales SES continues to work with bodies such as Infrastructure NSW, the Treasury and the Department of Justice to develop the next stage of its operational fleet, which will include the new vehicles that will add to those I have mentioned.

As the Minister—and this is the commitment that I gave to the NSW SES Volunteers Association—I absolutely support volunteers and give that commitment in finalising all that work, which is critical to ongoing success. So the answer is yes, the fleet replacement program has been successful. It is vital that it should continue and I will ensure that it does. Members of this Government, unlike Opposition members, do not sign blank cheques, make promises, and then break them. We put rigorous requirements around business cases to ensure that every funding program is not only successful but also sustainable. When I inherited this portfolio I made every one of the associated agencies aware of my disappointment that the business case was not finalised to the appropriate standard in sufficient time to allow for announcements of the procurement to be made at budget time. However, that work must be done, and it will be completed shortly. I have made it very clear to all involved that we must work together and that I am not happy there is any confusion or fear on the part of volunteers about the future strategy. I promise all volunteers that it will be sorted out shortly.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (15:11):** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. Will the Government commit to giving the residents of Gundagai, Cootamundra, Harden and Young the opportunity to vote in a plebiscite on the day of the Cootamundra by-election either to endorse or to reject his forced council mergers?

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (15:12):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question relating to local government. Nobody in this House ever will have to guess my position in relation to local government now or in the past: This Government has brought certainty to local government, which is the most important thing we can do for the community.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maitland and the member for Swansea will cease making noises.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** I cannot help laughing.

**The SPEAKER:** Is that laughing?

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Yes.

**The SPEAKER:** That is unfortunate. I direct the member for Maitland to remove herself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249.

*[The member for Maitland left the Chamber at 15:13 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]*

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** The most important thing the Government can do for all regional councils is to bring certainty in relation to service delivery and infrastructure. The Government needs to provide services to regional communities that will enable those communities to get on with meeting everyday community needs. When the former Labor Government merged councils in 2004, there was no plebiscite; it was done by fax. In those days, it was not done by email but by fax. The former Labor Government sacked councils and put no money on the table, yet the Labor Opposition wants to lecture this Government about our processes for Fit for the Future. It is clear that 9 September is an important date for merged councils because it will be an opportunity to return democracy to elected councils and to their communities. That is the focus of the Government and my focus as the Minister for Regional New South Wales, and it was the focus of this year's State budget in forming regional growth funds. This Government wants to work with local councils to deliver the infrastructure and amenities that are so important for regional communities to be able to grow.

Local government is important. I am a former councillor on Queanbeyan City Council. Many members of this House have probably spent a bit of time on local councils. We know that local government is where most community residents look when they look to government. In real terms, local government is the face of all levels of government. It is important to have a strong, sustainable and viable local government sector. Let us not lose sight of the fact that in 2012 local government under the 2036 plan looked to the New South Wales Government for support to plan for the future by making councils sustainable. On 9 September the Government will face local council elections. The people of Cootamundra, Gundagai and the Monaro as well as other regional areas across the State will go to the polls. They will have the opportunity to elect new councils to get on with delivering for those communities. That is the most important part of this process.

Earlier this year when I became the Leader of The Nationals I had the opportunity to stop the outstanding council mergers that had become stuck in the courts. Why did I do that? I wanted to bring certainty to the affected communities so that this Government could get on with delivering services. I have been to the outback in the Central West and I recognise that we need to work with those councils. There are councils in New South Wales that are still struggling financially because they do not have an adequate rate base or financial capacity to be sustainable. This Government will work with those councils to ensure that it continues to deliver services across the board. It is ironic that in the House today a bill was presented by the Shooters—the member for Orange, who represents the Shooters—

**Mr Philip Donato:** Point of order—

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** The bill was presented by the Shooters Party.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party—is that the point of order of the member for Orange?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** The shooters and hunters party—I am sorry, the Shooters Party.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! It is the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. Is that the point of order of the member for Orange?

**Mr Philip Donato:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 75. I ask that the Deputy Premier—who, by the way, benefited from the Orange by-election—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Orange will not argue the point.

**Mr Philip Donato:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 75. I ask that the Deputy Premier refer to my party as the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers [SFF] Party because we are the only ones who are sticking up for the farmers.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Orange will cease arguing. His remarks should be the subject of a call to order, but I will restrain myself.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** The member for the SFF—I think the party starts with the word "Shooters"—says that his party stands up for the farmers. Yesterday he was caught in a photo doing a deal with the Leader of the Opposition. I remind members that the Leader of the Opposition stated in his speech in reply to the budget, "We are returning to the bad old days of land clearing." That is the Leader of the Opposition's view of farmers. The Leader of the Opposition does preference deals with the Shooters party. The member for Orange says he represents the farmers of this State, but the truth is that there is only one party that represents farmers in New South Wales, and that is The Nationals.

#### INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION OPERATION CREDO

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (15:16):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State. Will he update the House on the latest findings by the Independent Commission Against Corruption, and related matters?

*[Interruption]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister has not started his answer, yet Opposition members have begun interjecting already. The member for Swansea will come to order. I direct the Clerk to stop the clock. Opposition members—those members who have not been removed from the Chamber; the remnants of the Opposition—who seek to erode the Minister's time by interjecting continually will be removed from the Chamber. The Minister has the call.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (15:17):** I thank the member for Albury for his question and acknowledge his keen interest in this topic. Let me make one thing absolutely clear: Government members take no joy in the findings presented today by the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC]. We take no joy in this.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Government members are not helping.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** We are not celebrating the fact that a further three Labor Ministers have been found to have been corrupt. Indeed, we are angry: angry at the time we spent in opposition, screaming from the rooftops that there was a foul smell emanating from the offices of Tripodi, Roozendaal, Kelly, Obeid and Macdonald, and angry that they were hidden in rotating portfolios and given promotion after promotion. Even as we prepared briefs and wrote letters to the ICAC requesting that it investigate the constant stories of malfeasance that haunted the previous Labor Government, Tripodi, Roozendaal, Kelly, Obeid and Macdonald were allowed to keep their political influence and to organise the political assassination of anyone who dared question them. We even campaigned in 2007 about the allegations. Members on the Government side of the House are angry.

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

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Ms Kate Washington:** I do not know the relevant standing order for confected anger—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Port Stephens from the Chamber under Standing Order 249.

*[The member for Port Stephens left the Chamber at 15:18 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]*

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** How is "Operation Colthorpe"? Has the member for Port Stephens been interviewed or investigated yet? That is interesting.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will proceed with his answer.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I am angry that it was only after we came to government that the investigation was commenced in earnest. We are angry about the time the investigation took. We are angry that when the independent investigation turned to us that our members made sacrifices and were sent to the crossbench while they waited to be cleared. I have to say that it is great to have you back, Brooksy. While our members sat on the crossbenches, on the other side of the House they continued their corrupt dealings.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Newcastle will cease shouting.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** In all likelihood, they are continuing those corrupt dealings now.

**The SPEAKER:** I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Newcastle from the Chamber under Standing Order 249. The member may return to the Chamber in 24 hours.

*[The member for Newcastle left the Chamber at 15:20 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]*

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I will come to the member for Newcastle. I will come to you, mate. Has he rolled over yet on the housing investigation.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The clock will be stopped every time there is an interruption.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** We are angry because our Premier took an honourable course of action. When confronted with a mere failure of memory on what ICAC found to be a benign matter, he resigned. Imagine how different a State we would have lived in if even one Labor member had the moral fortitude of Barry O'Farrell. There was, briefly, one. We all remember the prophetic words of former Premier Nathan Rees:

Should I not be Premier by the end of this day, let there be no doubt in the community's mind, no doubt, that any challenger will be a puppet of Eddie Obeid and Joe Tripodi.

The release of the Operation Credo report starts the end of this sad chapter in this great State's history. It also raises a question—one final question that only the Leader of the Opposition can answer—what kind of leader is he; is he like Bob Carr, Morris Iemma or Kristina Keneally? Will he kowtow to corruption in the name of political expediency? Will he appoint these kinds of people? Or will he be like Nathan Rees or Barry O'Farrell and make the ultimate political sacrifice to maintain the integrity of his party?

My message and that of this side to the Leader of the Opposition is that he can start by apologising to the people of New South Wales for the corrupt behaviour of his former colleagues. It is not good enough for him to thank the ICAC for exposing this corrupt practice on the part of the Australian Labor Party [ALP]. These corrupt characters should not have been present in his party in the first place. As we all know, the behaviour that you walk past is the behaviour that you have accepted. There is a member of this place who should be on the crossbenches while the proceedings brought by the NSW Electoral Commissioner take their course. It is what those opposite demanded of us, and it is what we demand of them.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. Every member in this House would think that the member for Wallsend is one of the most decent people in this place. The Minister's comments are disgraceful.

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

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I am not saying that the honourable member has done anything wrong, but there are allegations. Just like the Opposition told our people to go to the crossbench, the standards they walk past are the standards they accept.

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

**Mr Luke Foley:** Point of order: Three-quarters of your faction were thrown out of Parliament and the member for Holsworthy was convicted in the courts. So don't start, mate.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. The Leader of the Opposition should be very careful.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** Talk about double standards: They are the only standards those opposite have. They have not learnt anything from the conviction of the member for Kogarah's close personal mate Clements. Unfortunately, there is a silent bias amongst the elite media commentators of this State where our side of politics is held to a higher standard, and we always have been. We are punished for our smallest sins more harshly than those on the Left. *[Extension of time]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Blacktown to not join the rest of the riffraff on his side.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** John Robertson—another victim of Obeid and his mates. It is good to see he is still standing.

**Mr John Robertson:** I threw them out.

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

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** This is why I despair to see history being repeated.

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

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** It is quite simple, the smell has not gone away. On that side of the House, cash from dodgy Chinese tobacco companies; a member running a Chinese export business; associations with foreign political influence. And we cannot forget the protection and cover-up by the NSW Labor Party of that depraved piece of filth Orkopoulos and how those opposite drove out that brave campaigner Deirdre Grusovin because she dared blow the whistle on satanic paedophile rings in the ALP. The ALP has an entrenched pattern of behaviour, a culture of corruption and cover-up. Will it take another 20 years for the smell from the Labor benches to be identified, or will Luke Foley act like O'Farrell and Rees—

**Mr Luke Foley:** Point of order: Tell us why you sacked Megan Latham when she looked at the Liberal Party? Tell us why you sacked the ICAC commissioner when she started to look at all of you.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** When is the Leader of the Opposition going to act with honour and integrity? I hope he stands up for the people of New South Wales against the corruption and cover-ups in his party. One final thing that comes to mind; it is just an observation. I believe we all share the thought that whilst the member for Coffs Harbour may not have caught Joe Tripodi, ICAC certainly has.

#### *Documents*

### **VARIATIONS OF PAYMENTS ESTIMATES AND APPROPRIATIONS 2016-17**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** In accordance with section 24 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I table the Variations of the Payments Estimates and Appropriations for 2016-17 flowing from the transfer of functions between agencies, dated 27 June 2017.

In accordance with section 26 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I table the Variations of the Receipts and Payments Estimates and Appropriations for 2016-17 arising from the provision by the Commonwealth of Specific Purpose Payments in excess of the amounts included in the State's receipts and payments estimates—Department of Industry, dated 28 June 2017.

In accordance with section 26 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I table the Variations of the Receipts and Payments Estimates and Appropriations for 2016-17 arising from the Commonwealth receipts and transfer payment to non-government schools and local government in excess of the amounts included in the State's receipts and payments estimates, dated 25 July 2017.

#### *Committees*

### **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

#### **Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 40/56**

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN:** As Chair: I table report No. 40 of the Legislation Review Committee, entitled "Legislation Review Digest No. 40/56", dated 3 August 2017. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN:** I also table the minutes of the committee meeting regarding Legislation Review Digest No. 39/56, dated 20 June 2017.

#### *Petitions*

### **PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

#### **Pet Shops**

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

#### **Inner West Bus Services**

Petition opposing the privatisation of inner west bus services, received from **Ms Jo Haylen**.

### **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**.

### *Matter of Public Importance*

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (15:28):** I am pleased to pay tribute to local government in New South Wales, particularly during Local Government Week, which provides the community with the perfect opportunity to promote the importance of councils to residents, ratepayers and businesses. It is often said that councils provide invaluable services to local communities. It should occur in practice, but councils are referred to as the vital third tier of government in the community. A couple of hundred years ago councils used to provide services such as roads, rates, and rubbish collection. Today they provide a broad range of services. They are the only point of government contact on a daily basis.

As well as collecting people's rubbish during the week, councils provide a range of other community services and multicultural activities. They are chiefly responsible for town planning, engineering, road construction, libraries, and sporting fields and they manage nearly all Crown land holdings throughout the State. Councils are governed by democratically elected councillors who are not much more than volunteers. In fact, it is those to whom the House should pay tribute. The House needs to appreciate that councils create a sense of community. They are the glue that holds the community together. It is their day-to-day activity that creates a sense of community, wellbeing and community interaction.

Councils do far more than any tier of government to remove prejudice. Local governments in democratic countries led the world in climate change before it became a worldwide concern. Through sister city programs, councils allow various countries to have good relationships. This Government is paying the political price for council mergers. Like previous State governments that have attempted council mergers, it is finding it extremely difficult. People have a sense of ownership and community about their councils. When an issue is raised in a local government area, the elected councillor usually lives around the corner and knows the streets and the problems. They know the impacts of development applications and of allocating sporting fields, and they know the impact on local businesses when bureaucrats make decisions. They are the people on the ground who understand what is occurring in communities.

When councils are expected to merge under the guise of efficiency, it takes away people's influence and control of their local areas. That is why this Government is paying the political price for merging councils, just as previous governments have paid severely for it. This House has a number of members who have served in local government and who know what they are talking about. This Government must amend the Local Government Act to make it easy for "volunteer" councillors. I do not advocate paying them more. In my view, they are probably overpaid. It is a voluntary function but this House should value those who serve this tier of government, which is essential to this State.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (15:33):** It is my great pleasure to speak on this matter of public importance relating to local government, which has been put forward by the member for Heffron. I am one of many members on this side of the House who has served in local government. I acknowledge the member for Seven Hills, who was a councillor, and the new member for Manly, who has a long history in local government, as does his family. I acknowledge the member for Myall Lakes, who is also a former councillor, as well as many of my colleagues on this side of the House. I served on Shoalhaven City Council for 8½ years as well as on the Local Government Association and then Local Government NSW. I have been part of many reforms that have seen enhancements to local government. I have also seen governments of both persuasions attempt reforms that are not necessarily in the interests of the community.

I opposed the move to merge Shoalhaven and Kiama councils, and I remain opposed to that merger. I stood alongside my community and made it clear to my side of politics that I did not wish to see it happen. The Government listened to my cause but, most importantly, to my community. I concur with the member for Heffron that local councils are the voices of local communities. They are connected in so many ways through the services they deliver. We simply could not do without many people across the local government sector, including those

involved in waste management through to the most popular local government service, which is libraries. They are well regarded by all those who engage with local government services. I take this opportunity to commend the councils in my region: Wollongong City Council, Shellharbour City Council, Kiama Municipal Council and Shoalhaven City Council. I commend the councillors and their staff who work hard to deliver important services for the front line of our communities.

I touch on the code of conduct that was introduced by the previous Labor Government and has continued under this Government. The code of conduct has concerned me for some time and I believe it should be scrapped. The reality is that quasi kangaroo courts are established. Complaints are brought, often maliciously, by people who are politically involved in order to pressure councillors on one side of the council or the other. I was frustrated recently to see a vexatious complaint brought against Councillor Joanna Gash, who, as a former member of Parliament for 7½ years and mayor, had to apologise for a so-called misdemeanour that was insignificant. However, the nature of the complaint cost ratepayers thousands of dollars. We are seeing more of this. We used to have a basic code of conduct and any issue with the behaviour of a particular councillor would be resolved in the Local Court. Members of Parliament have a code of conduct that we must abide by, but there is a different set of rules for local councils. It is time for that to be reconsidered.

Those who are elected to council, as the member for Heffron rightly said, give much of their time while receiving an incredibly low remuneration. They are councillors because they love their communities and want to make a contribution, regardless of what side of the House they come from. To be dragged ignominiously through these committees, often vexatiously and at a great cost to ratepayers, is ridiculous. I do not think ratepayers would appreciate the total cost of conducting investigations and writing reports. When people are elected to civic office, they are expected to engage in a respectful, responsible and professional manner. Whilst I do not suggest for one second there should not be a code of conduct, the model code has ridiculous provisions.

For instance, once a council has adopted a position, all councillors must be seen to support it publicly. Can members of the Opposition imagine if that was a requirement on them how it would impact on politics in this State? Indeed, I would argue that it falls foul of the convention on political communication and discussion established through such cases as Theophanous, Stephens and Lange, and of course the Australian Capital Television case involving the Keating Government. I call on the local government Minister—who is a passionate Minister and who does a fantastic job—to reform this area so that councillors are treated as professionals and that they receive the respect they deserve. I am appalled by the recent action brought against Councillor Gash. She has every right to be angry with the process, as should the ratepayers of the City of Shoalhaven.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (15:39):** I am happy to speak on this matter of public importance, Local Government Week, which was introduced by my colleague the member for Heffron. Local government used to be seen as simply an authority concerned with roads, rates, and rubbish; but today local government is recognised as an essential part of a healthy and vibrant community. Having had the honour of being elected Mayor of Lake Macquarie City in 2012, I know firsthand how councils promote healthy communities and build vibrant cities. The City of Lake Macquarie is one of the largest local government areas in this State, and services more than 200,000 residents.

I congratulate Morven Cameron on recently being appointed as chief executive officer of Lake Macquarie City Council. I worked with Morven when I was mayor and had a good working relationship with her, which I hope to continue and strengthen. I also recognise the amazing work being done by the Newcastle City Council and Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes on renewing the Newcastle central business district. My electorate straddles both local government areas, and what is happening there is truly amazing. Local Government Week is an important time to celebrate the many services and the diverse work that our councils provide—from ensuring that the roads are well maintained and well lit, to maintaining services for water and waste to and from our houses, to planning the way that our built environment looks.

It is a particularly important sphere of government, as councils have immediate connections with members of the local community, and elected councillors tend to be more familiar to their constituents than representatives at any other level of government. Unfortunately, this sentiment and understanding of local government is not shared by everyone. The Liberal-Nationals Government, through forced council mergers, undermined local councils' identities. It now appears that, despite millions of dollars of wasted advertising, the Government has realised that forcing council mergers was the wrong decision for New South Wales.

I thank the countless Labor outfits, the United Services Union, council workers, the shadow Minister Peter Primrose, and, more importantly, community activists for leading the fight against council mergers to enable councils to maintain their local identities. But significant questions remain. What will happen to the councils that have been merged already? Will the Government allow them to demerge? Day in and day out, local government provides invaluable services to our local communities. I thank and commend local councils for their work.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (15:42):** In reply: I thank the members for Kiama and for Charlestown for their contributions to this very important discussion. I share the views of the member for Kiama on the code of conduct, as did the Independent Commission Against Corruption corruption prevention officer in his evidence to the ICAC parliamentary committee. The codes of conduct were meant to be aspirational documents, but as soon as they become punitive documents endorsed by legislation they create a problem. I warned the House and the Minister in recent amendments that this is not the way to go in controlling local government. The member for Kiama is right. As we both observed, it is time that we removed these arbitrary restrictions from voluntary councillors.

The Independent Commission Against Corruption's recent report on the activity of the two financial officers in the City of Botany Bay highlights the importance of the Auditor-General reporting directly to councillors and bypassing council staff, as should internal and external auditors. Councillors, who are effectively volunteers at the beck and call of council's general managers, do not have the lawful authority to bypass them. The reports must go directly to councillors in the absence of council officers. It is clear that the accounting mechanisms in the 1993 Act—for example, the AA27 standard—has caused problems. Prior to the 1993 Act a warrant had to be produced to every council's finance committee, and every item of expenditure had to be produced and made publically available. That material has been removed from the elected representatives, who, rather than having a standard budget, now have no access to the detail.

Reviews of the Local Government Act should create transparency and make it easier for councillors to have external organisations reporting directly to them, rather than codes of conduct that effectively become punitive measures. As I indicated at the outset, local government can sometimes be seen in the media to be the "whipping boy", but it is the most vital third tier of government, effectively governed by volunteers who, right through this State, do an outstanding job and make an outstanding contribution to democracy in New South Wales.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

### **GREAT LAKES COLLEGE CANOE TEAM**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (15:45):** I inform the House that the Great Lakes College canoe team has returned home from the New South Wales Combined High Schools competition as champion school once again. The events, including flatwater sprints, slalom, white-water springs and downriver events, were held over several days on the Clarence and Nymboida rivers in Grafton. The nine students in the team, including two from Forster Public School, all received at least one medal in their individual events. Some competitors were making their competition debut.

Senior campus students Makayla Randall and Alexander Fiebig were awarded champion male and female competitors. All students are to be commended for their efforts both on and off the water. They represented the school in an outstanding manner and displayed excellent sportsmanship to all competitors. It is yet another shining example of how strong Myall Lakes schools are when it comes to water sports. I am sure they will back it up again next time too.

### **MARCHING KOALAS BAND**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (15:46):** Last week I had the pleasure of watching the Hunter-based youth marching band the Marching Koalas perform. The band is made up of school-age children who are internationally recognised and have travelled extensively, including to the United States, Germany, Japan and Italy. They perform at functions where band members get to experience a unique musical performance as they entertain the crowd with music, colour and movement.

The Marching Koalas regularly support community events, performing at fundraisers for cancer awareness, diabetes awareness, and other non-for-profit organisations. I commend the Marching Koalas for their dedication to rehearsing and perfecting their musical routines. I have to say I was extremely impressed and entertained by their outstanding performance last week. The talent that they showed in remembering and playing their music, and also performing the choreography, was absolutely outstanding. I wish them the very best for their trip to California next year.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Marching Koalas visited the North Coast back in the 1980s and were very good. I am aware of them continuing their great work.

### **ALBURY ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA POST EMPLOYEES**

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (15:47):** Mrs Noel McCallum, a Tooma Post Office licensee, has retired after more than 50 years of service. Noel has worked as an employee of Australia Post since 1963, and from 1980s has operated the Tooma Post Office. The family connection with Australia Post will continue, with Noel's nephew taking over the business. I congratulate Noel on a career of great service to the Tooma community. Chris Brown

has retired from the Albury Post Office after 20 years of service in the mail delivery room. Her radiant smile will be missed by all who had the pleasure of collecting their mail at the pick-up hatch, including staff from my office. Chris commenced at the post office as a relief worker before progressing to become a manager in the mail collection area. I wish Chris a happy and well-deserved retirement.

#### **BAYSIDE COUNCIL ARTS FESTIVAL**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (15:48):** On 5 May this year I attended the Bayside Council Arts Festival awards evening at the Stanford Plaza in Mascot. The evening was an exhibition of the artistic talents of the residents of Bayside Council. The indisputable champion of the night was 13-year-old Thomas Zheng, whose stunning landscape of wetlands during the sunset won not only the young emerging artist award, but also the people's choice visual arts award. Thomas has immense talent for a boy of his age. I know he has a very bright future ahead of him. I wish him all the best and one day hope to see his works hung in the Art Gallery of New South Wales or perhaps in contention for the Archibald Prize. On behalf of the House I congratulate Thomas. He and his family ought to be very proud of his accomplishments.

#### **CURL CURL FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (15:49):** Today I recognise the wonderful achievement of the Curl Curl Football Club, which, after 20 years, will return to Manly Warringah Football Association's premier league with the resounding 6-0 victory over Pittwater RSL Football Club. My commiserations go to the member for Pittwater. The club, which has its home ground alongside the beloved Curl Curl Lagoon in my electorate of Manly, won the Football Association's Challenge Cup—the first club outside the premier league to do so. I congratulate coach Anthony Seminara, president David Lavings, captain Paul Nero, the club committee including treasurer Katie Earl, secretary Jenny Roberts and registrar Linda Beugeard, and, most importantly, the players who have achieved such great success. I look forward to watching their future success in the premier league. I am backing Curl Curl all the way and wish them all the best in the upcoming grand final.

#### **PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS' COUNCIL NSW**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Lakemba) (15:50):** On 3 July I was very pleased to attend an event hosted by the Professional Teachers' Council [PTC] NSW here in Parliament. The PTC is the peak umbrella body that provides support and member services to its member associations. It unifies teaching associations and brings together professional interests in education activities throughout New South Wales. For decades the PTC has worked hard to represent teachers from all levels of education, including early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary, and across systems, including all government, Catholic and independent schools and tertiary institutions. I thank Dr Denis Mootz and his team, and all PTC NSW staff for their management of the event on 3 July. I also congratulate the Professional Teachers' Council on establishing a wonderful relationship with former New South Wales Governor Professor Dame Marie Bashir, a woman known to us all as a great advocate for education and for the community. Many thanks and congratulations to the PTC.

#### **AUSTRALIAN GYMNASTICS CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:51):** I congratulate an incredible young local athlete from my electorate. Lucas Engesser of Seven Hills represented our State in late May at the 2017 Australian Gymnastics Championships in Melbourne. Lucas along with his peers in team New South Wales won second place over all. Not only was Lucas a member of the silver award winning side but he also claimed an impressive fifth place all round in his division, with a floor routine that earned him a fantastic score of 10.150 and many top 10 apparatus places, including fifth on vault. Lucas will receive an award from the Premier acknowledging his hard work and successes. Lucas' outstanding achievements are evidence of his diligent attitude towards gymnastics and the many hours of training involved. His efforts are worthy of this House's praise. I congratulate Lucas on a fantastic nationals campaign and wish him all the best with all future competitions.

#### **NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (15:52):** On 1 July the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] rolled out across New South Wales. The NDIS gives people with disability, their carers and their families greater autonomy and choice when it comes to accessing core services. I congratulate each and every disability service provider in the Summer Hill electorate on working day and night to prepare for the rollout. Some of the services I have had the pleasure of visiting recently include Plumtree in Marrickville, the Ella Centre in Haberfield, Sunnyside, the Australian Foundation for Disability and the Summer Hill Centre.

Each of these organisations is run by passionate advocates for the people with disability they serve. I pay tribute to each and every one of them. It is these wonderful advocates who have endeavoured at every turn to help their clients, carers and families navigate the complex process of coordinating NDIS plans. I also take this

opportunity to stress that we must not apply a one-size-fits-all approach to planning for people with disability. The process of developing these plans must be truly consultative and led by experts, families and people with disability themselves. We must leave no-one worse off or without the care they need.

#### **JANNALI HIGH SCHOOL RURAL FIRE SERVICE CADETS**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (15:53):** Today I congratulate the students of Jannali High School who participated in the Rural Fire Service [RFS] Secondary School Cadet Program. On 29 June 2017 I was delighted to attend the Jannali High School on behalf of the Minister for Emergency Services to present graduating certificates to the 11 students who took part in the New South Wales RFS Secondary School Cadet Program, which is designed to teach cadets basic firefighting skills, appreciation of community spirit, the role of emergency services and fire behaviour, as well as fire safety skills, confidence, teamwork and leadership.

I commend the cadets who took the opportunity to volunteer to be part of such a fantastic program: Achavya Sumnima, Bianca Batten, Evan Cluett, Jacqueline McGrath, Aidain McHugh, Kaewkiao Pharaja, Joshua Punnett, Corey Purcell, Brandon Sugden, Katara Talbot and Myles Vilano. Of course, these young people would not have had the chance to participate in this program if not for the committed RFS members from the Sutherland district, including Superintendent Andrew Pinfold, Inspector Scott Deller, Thomas McCabe, Peter Coleman, Ken Forbes, Sam Shaw, Deborah Sharp and Naomi McCabe.

#### **PENDRAGONS ABREAST**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:54):** On Saturday 22 July I had the absolute honour of being invited to attend and speak at the gala fundraising event for Pendragons Abreast. This group of women, all living with cancer or survivors of cancer, are nothing short of amazing. Their bravery and resilience is inspiring and a reminder to us all of the preciousness of life. One cannot help but feel heartened when in the company of this dragon-boating team from across Western Sydney. There was, of course, a strong Blue Mountains contingent in attendance. The camaraderie amongst them, born of shared experiences and stories, provides much-needed support among team members and, above all else, brings joy to these incredible women.

Many of us in the community have been affected by cancer in one way or another, either directly or by supporting loved ones with the disease. The Pendragons team has taught me that, even in the midst of it all, giving up hope is never an option. I will join the team this year for a "give it a try" day. I look forward to trying to resurrect the Paddling Pollies for the annual Dragon Boat Festival in October. Kudos to Sharon Cooper, Angie O'Reilly and Janette Fry for all their hard work.

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I recognise in the gallery Abdullah Sankari from Joseph Banks High School in Bankstown.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **SOUTH COAST SURF LIFE SAVING AWARDS**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (15:55):** On Saturday 29 July 2017 the South Coast Surf Life Saving branch presentation night was held at the Shoalhaven Heads Bowling and Recreation Club. I congratulate the following winners: Surf Life Saver of the Year, my good mate, Josh Douglas from Kiama Downs, who also won Facilitator of the Year; Under 19s Surf Life Saver of the Year, Jake Cleal Cook from Kiama Downs; Assessor of the Year, Trina Jensen from Kiama Downs; Trainer of the Year, Brett Lark, Kiama Downs; Junior Activities Volunteer of the Year, Angela Rowles, Shellharbour; Junior Age Manager of the Year, Scott Case, Kiama Downs; and Competition Official of the Year, Dene Herbert, Shellharbour.

I also congratulate the following competitors who received surf sports category awards, including: Emma Trudgett of Kiama Downs, Alicia Burazin of Kiama, Steven Guy of Kiama Downs, Kaitlin Isabella of Kiama Downs, Jo Helson of Shellharbour, Storm Balmain of Warilla-Barrack Point and Bailey Krstevski of Warilla-Barrack Point Surf Life Saving Club. A big congratulations to all the worthy award winners for the 2016-2017 season from the South Coast Branch of Surf Life Saving.

#### **CLUB TOUKLEY RSL CHEF AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (15:56):** Two chefs from Club Toukley RSL have taken out the top honour at the club industry's most prestigious cooking competition. I am proud to inform the Chamber that executive chef Alex Patterson and head chef Kurt Sonneman were last week named this year's gold prize recipients at the annual Chef's Table event. The duo from my electorate battled it out against 27 other teams in a

MasterChef-style cook-off held at Ryde TAFE last month. The pair was ecstatic with the result and proud to have helped put their area on the map and to have gained it some recognition. Each team was required to design and prepare a three-course menu, with ingredients not exceeding a total food cost of \$22 per person. The criteria for judging included hygiene, interaction between team members, placement of food, visual aspect, taste and texture. I congratulate Alex Patterson, Kurt Sonneman and Club Toukley RSL on this outstanding result. It is the first time any club on the Central Coast has won this. Drop into Ziva and have a meal.

#### SHOALHAVEN HIGH SCHOOL UPGRADE

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (15:57):** Today I thank the students and staff of Shoalhaven High School who, on 19 July 2017, welcomed Premier Gladys Berejiklian, the member for Kiama and me to their school with open arms. It was a remarkable and memorable visit. We all enjoyed it thoroughly. Principal Kem Rakiposki, school captains Josh Wright-Smith and April Rodda, and vice-captains Jayden Kelly and Jessica Usher took us on a tour of the school's facilities. Thank you especially to the library staff, the visual arts students who shared their work with us, and the home economics students who cooked delicious sausage rolls for everyone for morning tea.

I offer massive congratulations to the school on securing an additional \$1 million in New South Wales Government maintenance funding, which was an enormous surprise. I had to keep that a secret for some time. It was a great announcement made by the Premier on the day. That will go a long way towards upgrading a lot of the school's infrastructure. It is absolutely vital that our schools have the facilities they need to provide the high-quality education that our students deserve. It is great that the New South Wales Government is delivering for schools.

#### CABRAMATTA VASSA FESTIVAL

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (15:58):** I recently had the honour of attending the Vassa Festival, also known as the Rains Retreat Festival, at Freedom Plaza in Cabramatta. Traditionally taking place in the wet season, the Vassa is observed by Theravada followers of Buddhism. During the three-month retreat monks and nuns remain in the same place and focus their attention inwardly towards spiritual development and purification. The generosity of the lay people in the local community provides material needs for the monks, such as food to eat. Thus the entire community takes part in the Vassa Festival. Many Buddhist lay people abstain from meat, alcohol and smoking during Vassa. Many thanks must go to the Venerable Satit Thitadhammo; the sixtieth Dhammachai Education Foundation; the Dhammakaya International Society of Australia Incorporated; and all Thai, Laos, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Burmese temples in the Cabramatta community that helped to organise the festival. It was a joyful day for all in Cabramatta.

#### TERRIGAL AWESOME DRIVING SCHOOL

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:59):** Awesome Driving School is a fantastic local business in my electorate of Terrigal that is owned and operated by Jerry van Wyk. Starting in 2004 with just one part-time driver, the small business has gone from strength to strength over the years and now has 13 full-time drivers and several administration staff. It is very worthy of congratulations, having been recently chosen as a new provider to deliver the Safer Drivers Course in the Hunter and Sydney regions. That is great news for the Central Coast community as it means more locations for delivery of the Safer Drivers Course and greater accessibility for young learner drivers. The Safer Drivers Course consists of a classroom session and an in-car coaching session for which each learner driver receives 20 logbook hours for completing. Roads and Maritime Services designed the course to reduce the crash risk for P-plate drivers and to prepare them for decision-making as independent drivers. There is hardly a learner driver on the coast who has not had lessons from Awesome Driving School. I congratulate Jerry and his team of instructors. They are passionate about ensuring the safety of all young people on the Central Coast.

#### TRIBUTE TO REKHA RAJVANSHI

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (16:00):** Rekha Rajvanshi recently launched her sixth book, *Mutthi Bhar Chandni*, which is a collection of 51 beautiful poems in Hindi and Urdu. Rekha is well known for her writing and her commitment to teaching and promoting the Hindi language. She was honoured by the President of India in 1996 and is the founder of the Indian Literary and Art Society of Australia. Rekha is also well regarded for her community work raising money for breast cancer research and domestic violence. I was honoured to attend the launch of *Mutthi Bhar Chandni*, which literally translates to "fistful of moonlight". It is important that writers such as Rekha are recognised by the New South Wales Parliament. As such, I have presented her book to the Parliamentary Library. I congratulate Rekha on all she does for our community and I recognise her important work in this, the oldest Parliament in Australia.

### TRIBUTE TO REVEREND CRAIG ROBERTS

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:01):** I pay tribute to Reverend Craig Roberts, the senior minister of St Augustine's Anglican Church, who has accepted an offer from Archbishop Glenn Davies to take up the role of chief executive officer of Anglican Youthworks. For more than 16 years Reverend Roberts has devoted himself to our church, leaving behind an indelible legacy of selfless dedication and spiritual leadership. This is particularly bittersweet news for me as Reverend Roberts is my local minister and officiated at my wedding. I am sure I speak for the whole of the St Augustine and North Shore communities when I say that he will be sorely missed. I know that Anglican Youthworks will be well served by his servant leadership. His guidance while my husband and I prepared for our wedding and his spiritual advice and support since my election to this place has been greatly appreciated. I congratulate Reverend Craig Roberts on his new role and wish his family including his wife, Libby, and his children, Harry, Sophie and Ruby, the very best of luck.

### GWANDALAN AND DISTRICT ARTS AND CRAFT GROUP FORTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:02):** Last month I was honoured to attend and address the forty-fifth anniversary of the Gwandalan and District Arts and Crafts Group, which held a Christmas in July lunch at Halekulani Bowling Club to celebrate the milestone. Since its inception 45 years ago, the club has made an enormous contribution to the local community. For example, the club has created quilts for the oncology units at John Hunter and Westmead hospitals and has raised much-needed funds for worthy causes and organisations, including the Ronald McDonald Family Room at Gosford Hospital, the Hunter Medical Research Institute, the Cancer Council, the NSW Rural Fire Service and the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Gwandalan and District Arts and Crafts Group provides an opportunity to bring members of the wider Gwandalan community together through members sharing their arts and craft skills and forming new friendships over a cuppa. I congratulate the club on 45 years of outstanding community service. I look forward to the next 45 years.

### RIDE FOR RIGHTS FUNDRAISER

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (16:03):** I recognise the incredible work of young men Cameron Perry, Ben Butcher, Scott Grills, and Taylor Hogan, who are raising awareness for children in India living in poverty with their Ride for Rights. They plan to complete an 8,000 kilometre motorcycle ride around India to support the Indian charity Child's Rights and You [CRY]. The charity centres its work on building schools for underprivileged kids in impoverished areas and on running training programs that have a direct positive impact on these communities. The ride will take in urban and rural slums in India, giving the young men the opportunity to see some of the CRY project areas and meet some of the children the charity supports.

Cameron visited India for three months in 2015, when he first witnessed the effects of poverty on children in India. The desire to help some of those children to accomplish their dreams is what inspired Cameron to return with this project. Cameron, Scott Grills, Taylor Hogan and previous Barker student Ben Butcher, a friend and videographer, plan to film their endeavours and produce a documentary that will raise further awareness of this issue and provide additional financial support for the charity. They will embark on their journey on 24 February. I commend them for their dedication to such a worthy cause. I look forward to watching their documentary and wish them all the best for their ride around India.

### HOLROYD HIGH SCHOOL GREAT DEBATE

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:04):** On 21 July I was delighted to participate in the Great Debate at Holroyd High School, which was a youth panel discussion about participation in sport hosted by Cumberland Council and presented by ABC Radio and the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs. At the event students from three local high schools joined ABC Radio's Shannon Byrne, Bulldogs star Sam Perrett and me on stage for a question-and-answer panel discussion on racism in sport and women in sport. I was especially delighted to speak on the topic of gender equality and women in sport. I particularly congratulate the six students involved in the debate, who offered thoughtful analysis and asked some very insightful questions based on their sporting experiences. They are Shreya Wagley and Melik Ibrahim from Granville Boys High School, Cooper Avery and Atelina Rakuli from Granville South Creative and Performing Arts High School, and Barra Omar and Haida Alikamail from Holroyd High School. I also thank Amy Hopkins from Cumberland Council and Saree Boutros from the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs for organising the event. It was a great success. I congratulate everyone involved.

### ST IVES PRESCHOOL KINDERGARTEN FIFTY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:05):** For quite a few years I have attended the annual Family Fun Day of the St Ives Preschool Kindergarten. On Sunday 13 August I will have the opportunity and pleasure of doing so again. The year 2017 is the fifty-sixth anniversary of celebrating this community-based, not-for-profit

preschool in St Ives. Its excellent director, Julie Harris, has indicated that the preschool wants to use part of the official proceedings to thank the New South Wales Government and Ku-ring-gai Council and particularly acknowledge the significant contribution the Government has made to reducing the cost of preschool education through the Start Strong Funding model. I understand that the operation is rated "exceeding" in all National Quality Standards. I commend Julie and her team for this achievement and for providing a valuable local community service.

#### **RAISE FOUNDATION YOUTH FRONTIERS INITIATIVE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (16:06):** I acknowledge the Raise Foundation, which has been delivering the Youth Frontiers Initiative to students of the Canobolas Rural Technology High School in Orange for the past three years. The aim of the program is to provide one-on-one mentoring to students by volunteers from the Orange community. The program is aimed at students in years 8 and 9 and focuses on developing leadership and civic engagement. The object of the program is to empower students at a critical period of their development to become resilient, capable and connected.

The civic engagement element of the initiative this year involved a project that supported a local charitable organisation that the students chose themselves. The students created care packs and built a sandpit for a new crisis accommodation facility, providing participants with a sense of community spirit. With the help of their mentors, the students identified their personal strengths. I applaud the students who participate in this fantastic program. I thank the volunteer mentors for their support and the Canobolas Rural Technology High School for embracing this program. I also thank Katie Wallace of the Raise Foundation

#### **CENTRAL COAST AND NEW ZEALAND SURF LIFESAVING PARTNERSHIP**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:07):** It is a little bit cold to be at the beach at this time of year but Surf Life Saving Central Coast chief executive officer Chris Parker and president Stuart Harvey recently visited their lifesaving colleagues in New Zealand. They were very lucky to be given an insight into how New Zealand's lifesavers operate. Interestingly, in Auckland the marine police, the coastguard, lifesavers and rescue helicopters all work from the one centralised operations centre. Our Aussies were able to observe how in moments of crisis all services operating out of the one facility can enhance cooperation so that each service works effectively with the other. It is very sad that during the 2016-17 lifesaving season there were 33 coastal drownings in New South Wales. I hope that through partnerships like this we can work hard to decrease the number of drownings as much as possible. It was great to see that this international exchange of best practice will potentially help both countries' lifesavers work better to keep our community safe. Once again, I commend the work of Surf Life Saving Central Coast and wish them well at Saturday night's awards.

#### **WYOMING PUBLIC SCHOOL CAREERS EXPO**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:08):** Last Tuesday I had the pleasure of attending the Wyoming Public School Careers Expo. Wyoming Public School is a fantastic school in the south of my electorate that does an excellent job providing children with a first-class education and is a credit to public education on the Central Coast. The aim of the event was to expose students to the wide variety of careers that might be available to them on the coast in the future. I attended the expo not only in my capacity as the member for the Entrance but also as a former geologist. I took along some tools of the trade such as old maps and some minerals and rocks to engage with the students on how geologists help with the building of infrastructure and homes in the community. I offer my special thanks to principal Rebecca Wild for inviting me to the expo and to Lisa Matthews for organising the event.

#### **HOLSWORTHY HIGH SCHOOL BREAKFAST CLUB**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (16:09):** I recognise and congratulate the students of Holsworthy High School and the local social and youth workers who have been volunteering their mornings to prepare breakfast for students. Over the past six years the school has held a breakfast club as part of the Youth Clicks project. This involves students volunteering their mornings to serve breakfast to their classmates. The breakfast club commenced in 2011, with 40 students attending. Since then it has increased to around 230 students. The breakfast aims to increase social inclusion, develop life skills and give the students a balanced meal.

I thank the non-for-profit organisation The Junction Works for providing the equipment and produce needed to make the breakfast successful. I also recognise the many students from Holsworthy High School including Morgan O'Hanlon, Maddy Cram, Cara Baker and Kyle Cropper, who volunteer at The Junction Works after school and in their vacation program. Many of the students who volunteer for the breakfast club say that it has increased their confidence and leadership skills. Once again I congratulate Holsworthy Public School, The Junction Works and the breakfast club on providing nutritious meals to students.

### MAKE RENT FAIR CAMPAIGN

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:10):** I draw the attention of this Parliament to the fact that it is time to make rent fair and acknowledge a community campaign supported by more than 70 organisations across New South Wales calling for an end to no-grounds evictions. The Greens stand with them in this call. After being on the front line and helping tenants to fight unfair evictions, unreasonable rent increases and poorly maintained homes, the Tenants Union is coordinating this Make Rent Fair campaign. They want to make it clear that it is not fair that a landlord can evict a family from their home for no reason whatsoever. The Make Rent Fair campaign is gathering stories from people across New South Wales to illustrate the stress caused by being evicted for no reason.

Congratulations to all the organisations involved in this huge grassroots campaign. If I had more than a minute I would list every one of the 70 or more groups, but I do not back myself to speak so quickly. I acknowledge those in the electorate of Newtown: Community Legal Centres NSW, the Australian Services Union NSW, the National Tertiary Education Union, People With Disability, Counterpoint Community Services, the Older Women's Network and many others.

#### *Visitors*

### VISITORS

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** I acknowledge Mr Digby Hughes in the gallery, a guest of the member for Manly. I also acknowledge Mr Bruce Dent, a guest of the member for Terrigal.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

### NAIDOC WEEK DEBUTANTE BALL

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:11):** I inform the House of an event that took place as part of the National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee [NAIDOC] Week in my electorate. The event was a debutante ball. It has been the dream of two very strong women in the Myall Lakes community for some time now. Over the past 12 months these ladies have worked hard towards making this night happen with the support of the debutante committee and Homebase Services. I congratulate Margaret Donnelly and Sarina Kapeli on their hard work in making this magical night come true.

Fifteen ladies made their debut on Friday 7 July at Club Forster. Traditionally this event would be for young ladies coming of age but due to this being our community's first ever debutante ball, the event was left open and all local Aboriginal women were invited to participate. The night was all about everyone coming together celebrating in unity both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members for NAIDOC Week. Let us hope we can keep this spirit alive and move forward together as one. The traditional Elders Dinner was also incorporated into the night's event. On behalf of my community I recognise those who came together to make this night possible. I thank Club Forster and the Returned Servicemen's League Social Dance Group, which gave dance lessons on a weekly basis to the debutants.

### OUT OF THE ILLAWARRA ART EXHIBITION

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:13):** I congratulate the Illawarra Association for the Visual Arts on its exhibition *Out Of the Illawarra*—an exhibition of contemporary art that is currently on display in the Fountain Court gallery. I encourage everyone who walks through the gallery, rather than rushing through, to lift their heads and to look at the great works that have been put together from the Illawarra. It is a collection of art, paintings, drawings, photography and printmaking. These committed artists have been able to bring the viewpoint of the Illawarra to Parliament. I encourage our visitors in the gallery to stop, take a moment and check out those great works once they leave the Chamber. I congratulate the curators, Kathryn Orton and Janine Sager. I also congratulate Liz Jeneid, whom I have run into regularly over the past couple of days. This exhibition is a fantastic submission of great art for the Illawarra that brings the Illawarra closer to Parliament. It is proudly supported not only by me but also by the member for Keira, the member for Kiama, the member for South Coast and the member for Shellharbour.

### WESTMEAD PUBLIC SCHOOL CENTENARY

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:14):** I acknowledge the upcoming Centenary of Westmead Public School. Over the past century the school has had many incarnations as the Westmead Teachers College, Westmead Junior Boys Technical High School and Westmead Demonstration School before becoming Westmead Public School, as our community now knows it and loves it today. However, one thing has never changed: Westmead Public School has always been committed to the education of young people in the heart of Western Sydney. I was fortunate to attend Westmead Public School from kindergarten to year 6 in the 1970s.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time there, particularly in year 1 when my mother said I was one of the best recorder players she had heard in her life. It was our family school back then and it now serves all the hardworking families in the south-east corner of the Seven Hills electorate, particularly those who encourage their children to have the best education possible. I am sure that all members will join me in congratulating the staff, parents and pupils both past and present on this momentous occasion for public education in Western Sydney: the centenary of Westmead Public School.

#### **LAKES COLLEGE, BLUE HAVEN**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:15):** Recently I was pleased to visit the young people at Lakes College, an alternative education setting run by Father Chris Riley's Youth Off The Streets at Blue Haven. As a former primary school principal and teacher, I am passionate about education and the future of young people. The kids had prepared questions for me on a range of topics, including whether politicians are allowed to have tattoos, which I thought was rather interesting. I said that they are, but I do not have one. I realise that not all young people are suited to mainstream education. Some young people need a specialised service that caters to their specific needs. That is where independent schools like the one offered by Youth Off The Streets comes in. It was fantastic to meet with those young people who had not been to school for a long time and who were completing their secondary education. I congratulate Father Chris Riley's organisation and the Lakes College on the job that they are doing in supporting young people in the Wyong electorate.

#### **MANLY ROTARY**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:16):** I congratulate the new co-presidents of Manly Rotary, Susie Morgan and Doug Miller. Manly Rotary has done and will continue to do very important work for the community of Manly and beyond. I also thank immediate past president Richard Schroeder. Richard did a wonderful job as president and I wish him all the best. Under the leadership of Susie and Doug, I look forward to working closely with Manly Rotary in the years ahead.

#### **RUSSIAN-CHINESE HERITAGE ASSOCIATION FIRST ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:16):** Recently I was afforded the privilege of being invited to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Russian-Chinese Heritage Association. I acknowledge the continuing efforts of Mrs Aga Ge and her team. The association shows great pride in its cultural heritage. I commend the project it is undertaking in making an aural account of the culture and history of its community so that memories of the Russian-Chinese in Australia and their lives in Europe and Asia may live on through the generations. The association plays an important role in the community by helping the elderly, providing activities for seniors and keeping social isolation, mental illness and depression at bay. I congratulate the Russian-Chinese Heritage Association on the fantastic job that it does in making up an integral piece of the rich cultural tapestry of Cabramatta. I take this opportunity to wish the Russian-Chinese Heritage Association much success in the future.

#### **ILLAWONG MENAI CRICKET CLUB JUNIOR CHAMPION**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (16:17):** I acknowledge Liam Bissett of Illawong for being the 2017 Illawong Menai Cricket Club Junior Champion. Liam started playing cricket for St Patrick's Cricket Club when he was eight years old. While he did not enjoy the game at first, after a little convincing from his mum he quickly fell in love with it. He then went on to join the Illawong Menai Cricket Club, where he helped win the 2014 14Bs premiership. In his last year as a junior cricketer, Liam captained his 16Bs team, scored his first half century and finished the year with 68 overs, 15 maidens, 12 wickets, four catches and four stumpings. It is clear that his love of cricket also runs in the family, as Liam and his twin sister, Lauren, took out an impressive nine wickets between them when they had the opportunity to play together this year. I congratulate Liam on his hard work and dedication to the game and extend my best wishes for his cricket-playing future.

#### **LIFELINE CENTRAL COAST STEEL MAGNOLIA AWARD RECIPIENT**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:18):** The Lifeline Central Coast Steel Magnolia Award is an annual award that is given to a woman who has faced great adversity and who goes on to make a significant contribution to her community. I acknowledge this year's winner, single mum Wendy Malonyay. Her daughter, Kate, was murdered by a former boyfriend in Sydney in 2013. Mrs Malonyay has shown amazing courage to overcome her pain and now dedicates her time to supporting homicide victims. Wendy works with the Homicide Victims' Support Group and is fundraising to build Grace's Place, a world-first trauma recovery centre for children and young people affected by the homicide of a loved one. She also speaks to trainee police officers and detectives on the impact of homicide from a family member's perspective. Ms Malonyay was selected from six finalists by an independent judging panel for Lifeline. Three of the finalists were from the Gosford electorate: Marie Andrews from Ettalong, Peta Ralph from Point Clare and Ingrid Scott from Somersby. I commend the work of Lifeline on

the Central Coast, all the nominees and Wendy for her ongoing work to raise awareness and improve lives across New South Wales.

#### **KIAMA SERVICE NSW CENTRE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:19):** On Friday 14 July 2017 I was very pleased to join with staff members of the Kiama Service NSW Centre to celebrate their fourth birthday. The Kiama Service NSW Centre was officially opened on 5 July 2013. On that occasion I attended with former Premier Barry O'Farrell, who formed the concept and brought it to Parliament. Kiama was the first location in the State to receive a new Service NSW centre, with the site being the model for other one-stop shops to follow. Service NSW continues to be a game changer for how people interact and transact with government, making it easier, quicker and simpler to use government services.

That the Service NSW model remains largely unchanged since its rollout in Kiama is testament to the professionalism and dedication of the local team. Impressively, the Kiama team has served more than 140,000 customers, with a satisfaction score of 99 per cent and a wait time of around five minutes—which is one of the best in the network. I acknowledge staff members, acting manager Matthew Cottrell, Vicki Anthony, Temega McKenzie, Mikail Astew, Lindal Leszichec, Lane Kashev, Tess Drivver and Melissa Stock for their great work at Kiama for New South Wales. [*Time expired.*]

#### **TRIBUTE TO JAMES DING, OAM**

**Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) (16:20):** By leave: I congratulate James Ding on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the General Division on the Queen's Birthday 2017 Honours List. I recognise in this Parliament, which is the oldest Parliament in Australia, his outstanding service to Chinese-Australian relations through the academic organisations with which he is associated. I thank him for the support he gives to a range of Chinese Australian community organisations, including the Federation of Australian Suzhou Association and the Australian SuSang Business Association. James Ding is a fine Australian. I congratulate him and thank him for the work he does in our community.

#### **BURCHER SERVICES PROPRIETARY ADVISORY FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (16:21):** By leave: On 21 July 2017 I was honoured to join the Ulladulla community to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Burcher Services Proprietary, or BSP, Advisory. BSP Advisory is a successful local accounting and finance business that was established in 1967 but that now employs 14 people in the region, has offices in Melbourne and Brisbane, and employs two staff in the Philippines. Over the years the company has also made significant contributions to many community organisations, sponsoring groups such as the Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club and Ulladulla cricket teams. BSP Advisory is a true success story and, under the leadership of its director, John Nevin, I am certain that it will continue to go from strength to strength. It is small, family-owned businesses such as this that are the backbone of regional economies. I congratulate both John and all the staff of BSP Advisory on their hard work and on the difference they are making in the Ulladulla community.

#### **WESTCONNEX**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:22):** By leave: On Saturday 22 July I joined other local Labor Party members to participate in the Stop WestConnex Lantern procession, which was organised by the many community resident action groups that are opposed to the project. I met in Haberfield with local activists, including Sharon Laura and Vincent Storm, and the former Mayor of Ashfield, Lucille McKenna. We walked the length of the proposed route through Leichhardt and Annandale to the Camperdown Memorial Rest Park.

The procession was community activism at its best—passionate local residents united in creative protest against the Government's polluting toll road. Activists and residents also walked from St Peters and Newtown, coming together to draw attention to the destruction that this road is causing for inner west communities. We were joined by the former Mayor of Leichhardt, Darcy Byrne, and the former Mayor of Marrickville, Sam Iskandar, as well as by other local representatives. I congratulate all those involved in coordinating the lantern procession. I commend them for their hard work in bringing to light the failures of this project.

#### **TRIBUTE TO COUNCILLOR PETER ABELSON**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:23):** By leave: In Local Government Week, I pay tribute to Councillor Peter Abelson, who is retiring as the Mayor of Mossman. Councillor Abelson first joined the council in 1979 and was first elected mayor in the 1980s. After a 25-year break, he won back the mayoralty in 2012. He has served the Mosman community for 13 years. Peter will be remembered for his tireless advocacy for the Mosman community, particularly in recent years when he provided staunch support for Mosman to remain independent. Last week when I caught up with him, he was very happy with the Government's decision not to

proceed with the proposed local merger. Peter's service and dedication to our community deserve our thanks. I wish him the best for his future.

#### **WOMEN'S ELECTORAL LOBBY**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:24):** By leave: I acknowledge a reception I attended last night at the Sydney Town Hall to recognise 45 years of Women's Electoral Lobby [WEL] action. "Making Women Count" was hosted by Councillor Jess Scully. To the delight of those in attendance, Susan Ryan, AO, and Wendy McCarthy, AO, were in conversation. From those early days in 1972 until the present, the Women's Electoral Lobby has recognised the exhilarating power of women coming together. We have used this passion, solidarity and energy to harness the tools of democratic politics. Together, we have forced governments to take actions that have changed women's lives. The Women's Electoral Lobby most definitely is a force to be reckoned with. It is important that I recognise in this place the late Helen Leonard and Joan Bielski, Cate Turner, Anna Logan, Eva Cox, Meredith Burgmann and Dr Anne Summers as well as young, new WEL activists, such as Kaitlyn Birkett. [*Time expired.*]

#### **AUSTRALIAN SCOUT MEDALLION RECIPIENT FREYA SCOTT**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (16:24):** By leave: The Australian Scout Medallion is the highest award that can be attained in the scout section, with only 1 per cent of scouts nationally achieving this prestigious honour. It encompasses a multitude of tasks involving leadership, community service and a hike in unknown territory. Today I recognise the adventurous spirit, determination and courage of 14-year-old Freya Scott from Berowra, who has become one of the remarkable 1 per cent to attain the Australian Scout Medallion. This feat in itself is incredible, but the dedication and hard work she put in to receive this award is extraordinary.

Freya completed a scout leadership course, organised a canoe excursion, completed a first-aid course and got her amateur radio licence. Additionally, Freya also completed all the scouting proficiency levels, including Pioneer, Adventurer and Explorer, and was involved in teaching and leading other scouts with these skills. She also went on to lead a 30-kilometre bushwalk near Eden on the South Coast without any adult supervision and organised an Aboriginal cultural heritage camp. Freya has demonstrated great initiative, drive and leadership, all of which make her more than deserving of the Australian Scout Medallion. Not many other 14-year-olds can claim to have shown such admirable qualities. I congratulate her on attaining such a rare accolade. I am certain that she will continue to succeed in whatever she does in the future.

#### **LAKE MACQUARIE INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S GAMES ATHLETES**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:26):** By leave: Last month the Lake Macquarie community farewelled our local team of young athletes as they set off to participate in the International Children's Games held from 4 to 9 July. The team consisted of 12 children who competed in swimming and track and field events in Lithuania. This was a fantastic opportunity for our local young people to compete internationally. It also offered them the chance to meet new people and experience different cultures. The team as a whole made Lake Macquarie proud, winning gold in the 800 metres track event. I know that great things await these talented athletes beyond the International Children's Games. I wish them the best of luck in their athletic endeavours. I acknowledge Brew Austin from the Belmont Christian College, who made the final team. This year's team definitely has put Lake Macquarie on the international stage. Well done!

#### **MANNING RIVER DRAGON BOAT CLUB**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:27):** By leave: I recognise the Manning River Dragon Boat Club. Three members of the club were selected as part of the team to represent Australia in the 2017 International Dragon Boat Federation World Nations Championships, which took place between 27 and 30 July in France. I am sure the House congratulates Alistair Adamson, Sean Page and Jade Page. The trio worked with other paddlers who were selected from across Australia. They flew to Geneva in Switzerland to continue team preparations and raced at Divonne le Bains in France.

The world nations championships included races over 200 metres and 500 metres as well as two kilometres. Alistair, Sean and Jade will race in mixed, women's and open teams, with Alistair and Sean in the under-18 team and Jade in the under-16 team. For Sean, this will be the second time he has represented Australia in the Auroras after a successful campaign in Canada in 2015. I pay credit to Alistair and Sean, who are also completing their Higher School Certificate at St Clare's High School in Taree this year.

#### **TRIBUTE TO TREVOR HENRY WHOLOHAN**

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (16:28):** By leave: I pay tribute to and recognise the life of Mr Trevor Henry Wholohan,

who passed away recently. Trevor was a giant of sport in the Penrith community and was affectionately known by many people as "Mr Cricket". His contribution to cricket across New South Wales was nothing short of profound. His long-term commitment to cricket across the State, whether it was playing crickets for the Cumberland team in the first grade competition or his long-term love for the Penrith Cricket Club, is renowned. He represented the State as a Sydney Cricket Ground trustee. There is absolutely no doubt that his loss will be felt by many people, not just across the Nepean and Penrith districts but also across the cricket family in New South Wales. Rest in peace, Trevor.

#### **LINDFIELD FOOTBALL CLUB SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:29):** By leave: On Saturday 12 August 2017 the Lindfield Football Club will celebrate its sixtieth anniversary. As part of the evening cocktail event at Roseville Golf Club, I feel privileged to be presenting a number of awards. As well as celebrating 60 successful years of the club, the event will raise money, in particular for six defibrillators it has purchased. I thank all those who have contributed to the club over its 60 years and the current executive and team led by president Clive Solari, including vice president Phil Killen, treasurer Glen War and secretary Mark Pittman. Thousands of young and older football players have been the beneficiaries, including several of my sons in the past. May it continue to prosper for many years and keep contributing to the local community.

#### **RADIO STATION 2SSR BROADCASTER JOYCE MCKENZIE**

**Ms ELANI PETINOS (Miranda) (16:29):** By leave: I congratulate Joyce McKenzie on her 28 years of volunteer broadcasting on Sutherland shire's community radio station, 2SSR. Joyce decided to answer an advertisement for a community radio station in 1989 due to her love of music, born from playing the banjo-mandolin and singing as a girl. Over the years she has presented a three-hour show, from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m., on Tuesday and Thursday and has been one of the station's most popular broadcasters. When Joyce started her show there was a popular song by Bobby McFerrin called *Don't Worry, Be Happy* to which she took a liking and it has since become the theme of her show. Joyce believes community radio brings people together, and this has been the aim of her show over the decades—bringing smiles and laughter to her hundreds of listeners. I commend Joyce for the 28 years she has dedicated to community radio across the Sutherland shire and thank her for her efforts in bringing people together through music and laughter.

#### *Petitions*

#### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

##### **Discussion**

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (16:30):** In 2016 the Prime Minister spoke of the advantages of the 30-minute city. The concept of the 30-minute city had previously been promoted by the former Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Anthony Albanese, at a National Press Club address in 2014. A bipartisan approach to the delivery of residential opportunities in close proximity to where people work is a goal that has now been adopted by the Greater Sydney Commission in its draft plans for metropolitan Sydney. Travel times to and from work have a direct impact on the quality of family life. Extended periods spent travelling eat into quality family time.

We urgently need to embrace ideas that improve quality of life, particularly the need to improve public transport and the need for this Government to deliver affordable housing options—which it is doing. Affordable rental housing is intimately connected to the concept of the 30-minute city. It is inappropriate that our nurses, childcare professionals, teachers, police officers, businessmen and businesswomen, and people who work in essential services are required to travel hours each day to reach their place of employment. For instance, a nurse living at Campbelltown who is employed at the Royal North Shore Hospital could estimate that she would spend an hour and 20 minutes every day travelling from home to work, and the same amount of time travelling from work to home.

The Government has invested significant sums in improving public transport opportunities within the metropolitan area. After 16 years of Labor transport failures and a suffocating lack of transport options, this Government is taking countless steps towards delivering a world-class transport network. High-density development close to railway stations, in particular, is designed to ensure that more people have the opportunity to use public transport. With the increased value of these properties adjacent to railway stations, there is an opportunity for the Government to ensure that affordable rental housing is provided as part of a solution to the affordable housing crisis and to deliver on the expectations of the 30-minute city.

I thank the St Vincent de Paul Society for recognising the growing inability of people to afford to purchase properties close to their place of employment. Often these employees are struggling to save the deposit

to purchase a property. It is important, however, to recognise that the Government is taking measures to help first home buyers, including abolishing stamp duty on new and existing homes up to \$650,000; providing stamp duty relief on new and existing homes above \$650,000 up to \$800,000; providing \$10,000 grants for new homes up to \$600,000; abolishing lenders mortgage insurance duty; increasing foreign investor surcharges on stamp duty from 4 per cent to 8 per cent and the land tax surcharge from 0.75 per cent to 2 per cent; and removing the ability of investors to defer stamp duty when purchasing off the plan.

The petition being debated today calls upon the Government to deliver a target of 15 per cent of all floor space in new developments to be made available for affordable rental housing. The target is laudable, though it should be accompanied with a word of caution that, however the modelling is calculated, this target should not be achieved in a way that stagnates the supply market. Inclusionary zoning, as suggested by the St Vincent de Paul Society in its petition, is one model. It is similar to the scheme adopted in New York, where it was introduced in the 1970s. It is not without fault and, with more than 40 years of experimentation, some states in the United States have questioned the practicalities of this approach.

There is no silver bullet for the problem of housing affordability. Increasing supply is one practical approach. The Government has made, and will continue to make, those decisions that mean people have a home to call their own. Responsible governments, in addressing issues of the nature of affordable rental housing, must do so against a background of ensuring that there is minimal impact on supply. Against this background, the Greater Sydney Commission has recommended targets of between 5 per cent and 10 per cent to be provided for the purposes of affordable rental housing.

I close with the following observation: I am grateful to the members of the St Vincent de Paul Society for the opportunity to present this petition. The Government is listening to them and is very receptive to improving social and affordable housing opportunities. The New South Wales Government is committed to delivering new social, affordable and private housing, and to using social housing as a vehicle for breaking disadvantage, ensuring that we are the biggest State with social housing building programs in the country. I thank the St Vincent de Paul Society for the opportunity to speak on this issue.

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (16:35):** The House is considering a petition from certain citizens requesting legislation mandating that a percentage of all new residential developments be set aside for affordable housing. I note at the outset that the many thousands of signatures on this petition have, by and large, been gathered by volunteers from the St Vincent de Paul Society, many of whom are in the gallery today. I welcome them and thank them for their work. For the sake of full disclosure, lest I be accused of a conflict of interest, I disclose that my family and I do some voluntary work for the St Vincent de Paul Society in our parish, particularly at Christmas time, although far from enough.

The leadership of the St Vincent de Paul Society came to see the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and me some months ago, pushing us on the question of adopting targets for affordable housing in New South Wales. The case was so compelling that we have adopted its policy, and we have gone a little further. I am proud that the Labor Party has committed to a policy of mandating, on government-owned land, an affordable housing target of 25 per cent—that is, when government land is sold and rezoned for residential development, a Labor Government led by me will mandate that 25 per cent of dwellings will be affordable housing. On privately developed lands, we have adopted a target of 15 per cent—that is, a Labor Government led by me will mandate that 15 per cent of new floor space on privately developed land will be affordable housing.

I thank the member for Epping for being prepared to bring this petition to the House. The petition does not reflect current Government policy, so I think it is to the credit of the member for Epping that he was prepared to bring it to the House. I hope that his Government listens, as the Opposition has, to the arguments put forward by the St Vincent de Paul Society and matches our ambition when it comes to adopting targets for affordable housing. This is one area where the market has failed: Simply boosting supply has not solved the housing affordability crisis. Here we are dealing particularly with the issue of affordable housing, not the issue of housing affordability. There is a crisis in social and affordable housing in this State that is brought home to those of us in this place every day when we simply cross the road.

We are critical of the sell-offs of public housing properties, particularly in areas such as Millers Point. There is a crisis. Why is it happening at a time of unprecedented affluence when the surge of revenue into the State's coffers from the Sydney property boom means that revenue for the State Treasury is literally billions of dollars more than the State has received at any point in history? Yet so many of our fellow citizens are stuck with unaffordable rents and no hope of ever purchasing a property of their own. They are forced to sleep at the homes of relatives or friends, often on couches. We must reflect on that extraordinary affluence for the State but squalor for many of our citizens.

The Labor Party has listened. This need not be a partisan issue. The fact that the member for Epping is prepared to bring this petition on behalf of those thousands of citizens and the members of the St Vincent de Paul Society indicates that we can be hopeful that the adoption of ambitious targets for social and affordable housing can be committed to and delivered by both sides of Government. That is my hope. In the end, the problem we seek to address can only be solved by the provision of more quality social and affordable housing stock in this State. I commend the petitioners and thank them for bringing this matter to the attention of the House.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State) (16:41):** I thank the member for Epping for tabling this petition. Government members, Opposition members and crossbenchers are passionate about housing affordability. I have a great deal of respect for the St Vincent de Paul Society. I pray for its members and ask that they pray for this Government and this Parliament. I thank them for the great work they do in our communities. However, in this case, the argument must be made against the mandated 15 per cent targets. Targets for affordable housing must be considered in relation to the circumstances of the particular scheme and its potential impact on the deliverability of the development on which it relies. It can be misleading to set unrealistic targets for the achievement of affordable housing without consideration being given to local market conditions.

Delivering the quality, quantity and variety of housing that is required in New South Wales remains a challenging task for government as well as for the development industry. This Government recognises the need for a sensible and balanced approach to the increasing affordable housing issue, which must be implemented in a way that does not impact on supply. There is no point in having a target that cannot be met. The result will be that there is no development and our housing crisis will worsen. I assure the House and those present in the gallery that this Government will work with the Greater Sydney Commission to establish realistic, achievable targets for affordable rental housing based on the consideration of economic analysis and the views of all stakeholders involved in delivering new housing.

Considering financial feasibility is important to ensure that the delivery of the public benefit provided by affordable housing does not negatively impact development feasibility or impede overall housing supply. This Government has worked collaboratively with stakeholders, including the development industry, to ensure that development, where possible, delivers affordable housing for people on very low, low and moderate incomes. The application of targets, everyone would agree, must be fair and just to respond to local conditions. This Government has been working hard to achieve record levels of new housing supply to put increasing downward pressure on housing costs while at the same time considering how we can increase affordable—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Summer Hill will come to order.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** Members on this side of the House have given Opposition members the respect to be heard. The issue we have is that under a Labor government— [*Time expired.*]

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (16:44):** I thank Vinnies for bringing this petition to the House. If I am not mistaken, 180 people is the largest public attendance for discussion of a citizens' petition since the provision was enacted. Well done. I thank Vinnies for being one of the first bodies that came to see me when I became the shadow Minister for Planning, as well as the Sydney Alliance, the union movement, the Committee for Sydney and a number of others. They begged us, on behalf of the people who cannot get a start in the housing market, to turn our minds to the issue of housing targets—and we have. They can take a great deal of credit for the policy formulated by the Labor Party. In addition to Chris Bowen's and Bill Shorten's negative gearing and capital gains tax policy, it is one of the two levers that we will pull first to make a huge difference.

Over the next 10 years, the Government will construct 100,000 dwellings on surplus government land. We could have heard today that the Government will match our target that 25 per cent of those dwellings will be set aside for people on very low, low or middle incomes, key workers and other people such as that. But we did not. We hope that the Government will reconsider, because 25 per cent of 100,000 dwellings will service half of those on the social housing waiting list. It would be a massive relief for people who are looking for a roof over their heads. In addition, the Labor Party has promised that if it is elected in March 2019 it will work with the development industry, which has shown some willingness to discuss this matter and be part of the solution. Developers have come up with their own models for inclusionary zoning. We will move to a model that 15 per cent of rezoned dwellings on private land be set aside for affordable housing and we will work with the development industry to move to a full-blown inclusionary zoning model.

We make that solemn promise because first home buyers and people on very low, low and middle incomes are being kept out of the market. The market has failed them. They do not have a chance because of overseas investors and local investors taking advantage of negative gearing. We cannot sit in this Chamber and say we will think about this issue because every day we do nothing means that property prices are rising and the dream of owning one's own home or renting an affordable home will be further and further away. This is a crisis;

it is an emergency. Luke Foley tasked me and others to come up with a solution. I thank the member for Bankstown, the member for Keira and the member for Macquarie Fields for being part of a group that has come up with a raft of housing solutions. We will not dally. If we get into government, we will enact our policy from day one.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:47):** By leave: On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to this petition debate on affordable housing. I acknowledge my colleagues in the Chamber, Jamie Parker and Tamara Smith. The Greens are committed to establishing that housing be a human right. We recognise that we should approach the issue of housing in the same way that we approach health care and other services, which is to recognise that all people have a right to live somewhere they call home. We recognise that successive New South Wales governments—for six years of the present Government and 16 years of the previous Labor Government—have talked about their willingness to address the housing affordability crisis. But to put it in perspective, it has been a while since either of them have acted.

It is a credit to the community that has enabled this petition debate today and that has pushed for the need for inclusionary zoning and the setting of percentage targets. I can put our percentage out there as 30 per cent. We are seeing here a bidding war on the percentages, and that is a true sign of a community campaign that is moving in the right direction. People are now talking about the percentages they can offer. They have accepted the petitioners' commitment to seeing affordable housing targets set in new developments as a way to address the housing affordability crisis. I give credit to the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Sydney Alliance, and to all the different groups that have been pushing for those targets. It is because of their strong community campaign that we now see this percentage bidding war. They must continue those efforts. The Greens will stand with them to make sure that whoever is in government takes action to make sure that we see these kinds of targets delivered for affordable housing.

It would be remiss of us to be talking about affordable housing in this place if we did not acknowledge the tents just outside Parliament House at the top of Martin Place. It is unacceptable and shameful that members of the Government, who have the ability to act to address homelessness, have walked past the tents and are meeting with police to move people on rather than providing those people with the affordable housing they need. Those people need to be offered permanent housing and community support and social support services. I am sure everybody in the gallery would agree. It is shameful that Government members have sat in the Chamber this week and have failed to act on the blight that is just outside this place—not because people should not be able to protest and sleep rough in Martin Place if they have no choice, but because the Government has failed to act to address homelessness. Addressing housing affordability is a key way to reduce homelessness in our city.

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (16:51):** By leave: I commend the St Vincent de Paul Society and acknowledge the more than 10,000 people who signed the petition as well as those in the public gallery today, who have a great interest in affordable housing. I also recognise that affordable housing is a significant issue for the State. Premier Gladys Berejiklian has outlined housing affordability as the New South Wales Government's priority. We have announced first home owner stamp duty exemptions, which is a \$4 billion initiative. Parramatta, like many suburbs in Sydney, suffers from the lack of affordable housing. So this is a timely debate. Make no mistake, there is no silver bullet and no single solution. We need sensible and practical solutions. Our approach must be balanced to encourage industry and community groups to deliver affordable housing.

We need genuine debate between government, community and industry, not political grandstanding. Simply mandating builders to provide affordable housing is risky. We must be careful not to pass the cost of providing affordable housing on to those who do not qualify for affordable housing, which would create further price inflation. Most agree that a major part of the answer is increasing supply. We recently announced the Greater Parramatta Priority Precinct, which will deliver 72,000 new dwellings over 20 years. A special infrastructure contribution will ensure that we build not only density but also communities that have access to good transport, health care, road upgrades, new schools, and open green space. We also need a diversity of supply with different price points. We need to consider changing planning requirements for dwelling sizes and the provision of car parking and whether this can be offset by proximity to major transport hubs.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Are you seriously talking about car parks?

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** It is embarrassing that the member for Strathfield is showing her ignorance when members on this side of the House had the dignity to listen to the contributions of those opposite. We also need to consider the opportunity to incentivise industry to deliver affordable housing by increasing density on appropriate sites, with the cost savings used to provide affordable housing. The Government plays an important role in the delivery of more social housing, more dwellings, and improved liveability and amenity. I refer to the fantastic work of the Land and Housing Corporation, led by the capable Anne Skews, on the Telopea Master Plan. This is an exemplar of rejuvenation of public housing stock and the creation of an integrated public, affordable

and private housing community. The Telopea Master Plan is a 70:30 mix of private and social housing that not only delivers more homes but also builds a harmonious, vibrant, and diverse community.

I thank Minister Goward, Minister Roberts and Minister Hazzard for their continued support in this project. Again, I thank the St Vincent de Paul Society for the more than 10,000 signatories that enable the House to debate this important issue. I recognise the people in the gallery who took the time to listen to this debate.

**Ms Tania Mihailuk:** I seek leave to contribute to the debate.

**Leave not granted.**

**Ms Jodi McKay:** You are shutting down debate on housing affordability? You can't shut down the debate.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Strathfield from the Chamber under Standing Order 249.

*[The member for Strathfield left the Chamber at 16:54 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]*

*Private Members' Statements*

### **OURIMBAH CREEK DREDGING**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (16:55):** Ourimbah Creek is a perennial waterway in my electorate that flows through the southern slopes of the Hunter Range into Tuggerah Lakes. The creek separates Chittaway Bay from Chittaway Point and is popular in these suburbs for recreational boating. Unfortunately, due to inaction from government, this has become increasingly difficult as seagrass is overgrown in the designated navigation channel. The council and the State Government blame the other for the inaction. In December last year I went with local resident Ken Robertson to the mouth of the creek to see for myself. I was appalled to see the navigation channel overgrown with weeds that were visibly reaching the surface of the water. At this point in summer, the channel had become almost impossible for smaller boats to navigate.

When I returned in June this year it was not much better. Although there had been reasonable rainfall, the channel was still visibly difficult to navigate. Despite my raising the issue, council had still refused to apply for Rescuing our Waterways funding to assist in dredging the channel. Even if council had applied, this State Government has allocated so little money to the program it would have been difficult for the council to manage the project. This situation is all too common for many waterways along coastal estuaries in New South Wales. Although boat owners pay for registration, jetty fees and mooring licences, they do not get a fair go when it comes to funding to improve designated navigation channels. Locals in Chittaway, such as Ken Robertson, have been patiently advocating for years to see this emerging problem resolved.

The former Wyong council and newly amalgamated Central Coast Council should shoulder much of the blame for this inaction. Despite huge rate rises, the council has been unable to give any attention to this issue while it pursued lame duck projects such as the now cancelled Chinese Theme Park in Warnervale. I feel the frustration of locals, as they take immense care of and pride in their waterways and have a unique understanding and appreciation of their local environments and how they can best be protected and utilised for recreation. It is a sad indictment on the processes of government when locals are so demoralised about the prospects of success in their fight that they openly concede that it is unlikely that they will receive any attention from government.

I do not share this view; however, I do concede that this will be difficult. Without a properly funded statewide dredging strategy, waterways like this will continue to be ignored and local councils will continue to pessimistically refuse to take on dredging projects. There is no doubt in my mind that councils are best placed to operate and partially fund these works. However, they have little chance of success while the State Government remains steadfast in its underfunding of the Rescuing our Waterways program. I was particularly concerned when I met with Marine Rescue NSW Tuggerah Lakes, which indicated that over the summer it had to rescue countless boats. As the boaters tried to go through the weed, their engine intakes were filled and their engines overheated. It has also become a safety issue. Marine Rescue NSW Tuggerah Lakes was pushing for the channel to be dredged and for the weed to be dealt with.

I went out in a marine rescue boat in December. Even though it is a four-kilometre per hour no wash zone, the only way to get through was to go on the plane. The crew had to gun the engines to get through the channel, and even then the boat was churning mud through the motors. Why are councils collecting fees from owners of jetties along the creek but are not clearing the channel to allow the boats to use the waterway? It seems a little unfair to continue to collect the money when those channels are not being maintained properly. I have a small boat that I take out on Tuggerah Lakes and Lake Macquarie. It is very frustrating for boat owners—I imagine there are other members who also own boats. The most expensive part of a boat is the motor. If a boat-owning

tourist is using the waterways and the boat motor becomes overheated and damaged, and cylinders are ruined because the channel is not clear, it can cost up to \$30,000 to repair or replace those engines.

It is understandable that people are getting upset. The Government collects the revenue, but it cannot do the maintenance only once, pat itself on the back and say that everything will be okay. The channels should be dredged and weeds collected twice yearly to ensure the maintenance of those channels. I ask the Government to implement such a plan, and I will lobby those on this side of the House to devise such a plan.

### SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (17:00):** Today I will talk about some of the many recent grants from the New South Wales Government to organisations and parents and citizens [P and C] associations in my electorate of Seven Hills. Toongabbie Public School's parents and citizens group has benefited from a recent \$2,000 grant. The money will go towards purchasing a new oven and kitchen equipment for the school canteen, which is operated by the P and C. Craig White is the chair of the P and C and does a terrific job in raising funds for the school. The new oven and additional kitchen equipment will benefit the 670 students of Toongabbie Public School.

The Country Women's Association [CWA] of New South Wales Toongabbie Branch recently received \$2,000 in funding for two new sewing machines, cases and associated material. The new machines will help Ms Janice McKinnon and her branch continue their work in aiding our local community. The ladies of CWA Toongabbie give their time to volunteer for the organisation, with a focus on friendship, personal development and advocacy. CWA Toongabbie places importance on the advocacy of community issues and is part of the largest voluntary women's organisation in Australia.

The Kings Langley Cricket Club was also recently awarded a grant, which helped fund training and protective equipment for junior teams. The Kings Langley Cricket Club's home pitch is at Pearce Reserve and was established in 1979 with only two teams. The club now boasts more than 430 active members, including those belonging to junior and senior teams, and mini cricketers. The club is represented at all levels of cricket in New South Wales, including the Sheffield Shield. Kings Langley Cricket Club also focuses on community involvement, and developing both social and sporting skills. The club is organised completely voluntarily and holds core values of player participation and enjoyment above all. I congratulate the club president, Mr Scott Reibelt, and the committee team of dedicated volunteers on their work in not only managing the team but also encouraging many members of the Seven Hills community to stay fit and healthy through summer by playing one of Australia's most loved sports.

Toongabbie West Public School has received a \$2,500 grant to construct sun shades for the school's passive play area. Toongabbie West educates 260 local children and has a hearing unit for preschool to year 6 students. The school's hearing unit provides services to children with profound hearing difficulties and utilises specially trained teachers who cater for student needs. The school has an increasing number of students with autism who find the playground too active at times and prefer to play in a more passive area. The passive play area for which the sunshade will provide protection will be an area of retreat for some children but will also help students with hearing difficulties and autism to participate in more structured activities under supervision.

Monitoring of the passive play area will be done by the school's positive behaviour team, which will collect data on who uses the area, and how the area is used for the development of activities and improving overall student performance and experience within the school. Once the structure is completed it will be used by many future Toongabbie West students to provide shelter from the sun and rain for many years to come. The positive play area has been named Tassie's Retreat following a competition held by the positive behaviour learning team and the student representative council. I congratulate the principal of Toongabbie West Public School, Mr Brian Firth, and all his dedicated staff on their incredible service each day in inspiring and educating many diligent students in my electorate.

Again, I congratulate all the local grant recipients in my community of Seven Hills and the New South Wales Government on delivering a collective \$8,500 to local organisations and schools in the area. I acknowledge the incredible work of the Toongabbie Public School's parents and citizens group, the Country Women's Association Toongabbie Branch, the Kings Langley Cricket Club and Toongabbie West Public, and their commitment to the community and the Seven Hills area.

### MIDCOAST COUNCIL

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:04):** I will update the House on the MidCoast Council, which is the result of a merger in May last year of the former Great Lakes Council, Greater Taree City Council and Gloucester Shire Council. I congratulate the staff of the merged MidCoast Council on their hard work and diligence to ensure that this council is successful for the community. I thank the community for its patience

and understanding of the necessity of the merger. On 1 July this year the local water authority, MidCoast Water, was dissolved and is now being integrated into MidCoast Council. This makes MidCoast Council one of the most complex merged councils in the State.

MidCoast Council covers more than 10,000 square kilometres and has more than 91,000 residents, road length of 3,299 kilometres and 542 bridges, 195 of which are timber. The total value of MidCoast Council assets is \$3.5 billion, excluding water assets. The most significant portions are roads and bridge assets, with a value of \$2.46 billion, which is 76 per cent of the asset base. MidCoast Council has a significant asset backlog of \$180 million and is underfunding renewals of its assets by \$5 million annually. If the council does not fund the \$5 million gap in renewals, asset condition will decrease, the backlog will continue to increase, and community satisfaction will decline.

Through savings and efficiencies realised from the merger combined with merger funding from the Government, the council has been able to fund a \$30 million road care program towards the community's highest priority—the condition of local roads. The Government gave the council \$20 million. Councils have been merged many times in the past but never before has the Government assisted a merged council. Now there is \$20 million on the table, \$5 million for administration, \$15 million for infrastructure and \$1 million for community groups. The council has taken that \$14 million to put towards roads and bridges, and added to it more than \$4 million a year in efficiency savings. Put that together and there is \$16 million over four years, which is a \$30 million road program.

The MidCoast Council approached the Government for a special rate variation. It was the only merged council to have a special rate variation that was voted for unanimously, whether Nationals, Liberal, Labor or the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. There was total support for the special rate variation. The council intends to borrow \$50 million as a low-interest loan from the New South Wales Government through TCorp to address this vital community need. There is nothing more important for a community than that connection, so it is proposed to put that money towards the roads.

Traditionally the local government approach would be to tell the Government that it is the Government's responsibility to fund the shortfall under one of two models. One is the begging bowl, "Woe is us. Our roads and bridges are falling apart, so give us some money." The other is, "Our roads and bridges are falling apart and it is the State Government's fault because of rate-pegging and cost-shifting, so give us the money." An alternative approach is that the council applies for grant funding and asks the Government to part with it. In this case, rather than asking for a handout, MidCoast Council is asking the Government to help it lift itself up by its own bootstraps. It will borrow \$50 million, which that special rate variation will pay back. I call on the Government to match that dollar for dollar—\$50 million from the State Government over four years, which is \$12.5 million a year—to turn that into a \$100 million roads and bridge package, remembering that the council has more than \$180 million in backlog.

I implore the Government and the very good Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight to consider matching this dollar for dollar over four years to help the MidCoast Council build for the future. It will help to ensure it is viable and will support a community that is putting up with the council merger. By addressing the roads and bridge backlog, we will help the community and the council to be successful. It is a blueprint for success. I implore the Government to get on board and partner with the council.

#### ROSE BAY MARINA

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON (Vaucluse—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage) (17:09):** Rose Bay, in the heart of my electorate of Vaucluse, is an iconic part of Sydney Harbour and a public asset where thousands of residents and visitors alike enjoy views each day on their daily commute by ferry to and from work and during their down time on weekends. It is a magnificent place named after the Rt. Hon. George Rose, Joint Secretary to the British Treasury from 1744 to 1818. The name "Rose Bay" was used as early as 1788 by Captain John Hunter, who was both a sailor and a scholar, and succeeded Arthur Phillip as the second Governor of New South Wales from 1795 to 1800. Rose Bay has a significant place in our colonial history.

The extensive views of Sydney Harbour and the immediate surrounds of the Rose Bay promenade, including the seawall and its setting, were appropriately recognised by Woollahra Council, the Heritage Council of New South Wales and the Minister for Heritage when they were placed on the State Heritage Register on 22 August 2014. I was pleased to support the State Heritage listing along with Woollahra Council by submitting a petition to the Parliament for that purpose, with more than 800 signatures collected from across my community in July 2012. Rose Bay is now at risk of losing its rich history with another proposal being put forward to develop the Rose Bay Marina. Local residents have told me that the proposal will result in a significant increase in the

space that will be taken up by the marina and the extra boats. The proposed redevelopment would also decrease boat manoeuvrability in Rose Bay and potentially create a safety hazard.

As far back as 2012 I have been strongly opposed to proposals to develop Rose Bay Marina. It is a position I share with the Rose Bay Residents Association, the Woollahra History and Heritage Society, the Darling Point Society, the Sydney Harbour Association and the wider local community. Proposals to develop the marina have also been rejected by Woollahra Council, the Joint Regional Planning Panel and the Land and Environment Court. Rose Bay is recognised as a public asset of great heritage significance, beauty and recreational value. We want it to remain so for future generations. It will be detrimentally impacted by the latest proposal.

I understand that on 7 July 2017 Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] gave consent as the owner of the seabed, lessor of the land and seabed as well as the marine safety regulator. I wrote to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight on 14 July 2017 stating my strong objection to RMS consent being granted and requested it be withdrawn. On 26 July 2017 the Minister responded to my letter advising me that landowner's consent did not indicate endorsement or approval of the proposal by Roads and Maritime Services. The effect of landowner's consent being given by RMS is limited to permission for the proponent to lodge a development application. It is not a consent that endorses the application or goes to the merits of the proposal.

That said, I will continue to work and to bring those views of my community to the Minister to have that landowner's consent withdrawn. I will continue to raise my community's concerns with Woollahra Council, to work with the council and local residents groups just in case a development approval is sought. The fight against the proposal is far from over. Rose Bay is a gem. It is a gem not only for my local community but also for the State and for Australia. We must continue to protect it as such. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

### CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE ORGANISATIONS

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:14):** Tonight I wish to recognise a number of people and organisations in my electorate of Charlestown. CanTeen is the Australian organisation for young people living with cancer, renowned for its successful annual National Bandanna Day. Recently I had the privilege of visiting the CanTeen Hunter premises at Kotara in the electorate of Charlestown and was impressed with the level of service and support that it provides for young people who have had their world turned upside down by cancer. I was surprised also to learn about the level of service it provides to young people with close friends and family members diagnosed with this terrible disease.

Understandably, when people are diagnosed with cancer the focus is almost entirely on them in an attempt to find the right treatment, specialist and facilities. During this time family and friends, the people around those sufferers, can be left struggling with a range of emotions that they experience. Often they are unsure how to deal with those emotions while supporting their families or friends. It is even more difficult for young people who are already struggling with the issues of growing up, let alone having to deal with supporting family members with cancer. I commend CanTeen for all the work that it does in helping young Australians deal with the challenges of living with cancer.

I recognise also the work of Boyd Conrick. Boyd is a father, a firefighter, a lifesaver, an athlete, a coach and a beach lover. Boyd joined surf life saving at a young age. He worked as a professional lifeguard in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie area for seven years and has been involved in promoting beach safety for more than 20 years. He is an active member of Redhead Surf Life Saving Club in my electorate. After taking part in numerous surf rescues Boyd saw firsthand how dangerous our beaches, coastlines and waterways can be and he noticed how little engaging literature on beach safety was available for children. This led Boyd to write and create his own children's book entitled *At the beach with Lizzie and Luke*. The book has been well received and has contributed to Boyd recently being awarded Volunteer of the Year by Redhead Surf Life Saving Club, and the Rotary Newcastle service award for Outstanding Contribution to Fire and Rescue NSW. I commend Boyd for his proactive approach to educating our children and community in beach safety.

Some nominees and category winners at the 2017 Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards included Charlestown constituents Lauren Haskens, Michael Nolan and Ryan Bennett, who were all Young Business Person of the Year finalists. Lauren Haskens is the owner and director of A Growing Understanding, which is a speech pathology centre providing fun and effective speech pathology services to children and their families in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie areas. Michael Nolan—whom I have had the privilege to commend in this place before—is the owner and director of the Michael Nolan Vocal Studio, which prides itself on the quality of singers that it produces. Ryan Bennett was awarded the Young Business Person of the Year award. Ryan is the co-founder of Zimpleweb, which provides all web services from design to search engine optimisation under one roof.

I also congratulate Mega Save Chemist, Charlestown on being a finalist in the Excellence in Business Practices and Excellence in Customer Service by a Whole Business awards. Located only a short walk from my office, Mega Save Chemist in Charlestown Square is a locally owned and run pharmacy where staff are renowned for delivering high-quality customer service. Its team was voted not only the best pharmacy in the Hunter 2016 but also the best pharmacy in Australia 2017 at the Small Business Awards. The chemist offers a wide range of free services to the community, including a baby health nurse, packing and deliveries of medication and monthly health clinics. Mega Save Chemist, Charlestown was the only chemist to be nominated in the 2017 Business Awards, a reflection of its hard work and dedication to customer service.

I commend and congratulate all the finalists and category winners of the Lake Macquarie Business Excellence Awards and I wish them all the best in the future with their growing businesses. I thank them for the services they provide to the people of Charlestown.

#### **SOUTH COAST ELECTORATE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUBS AWARD PRESENTATION**

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (17:19):** I acknowledge the ongoing contribution to the local South Coast community of our volunteer surf lifesavers, particularly members of the Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club, Sussex Inlet Surf Life Saving Club and the Nowra-Culburra Surf Life Saving Club. Recently I was pleased to attend the South Coast Surf Life Saving Awards, acknowledging the contribution and efforts of the nine surf clubs and 3,000 members of Surf Life Saving South Coast Inc. The South Coast branch patrols beaches from Warilla-Barrack Point Surf Life Saving Club in the north to Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club in the south. It excels in its work on a day-to-day basis. We heard many of those stories last week.

I congratulate in particular the Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club, which was named Club of the Year—a worthy award in recognition of the more than 300 members and lifesavers who undertake admirable work in ensuring the safety of locals and visiting beachgoers. Not just restricted to Mollymook Beach, the club covers the area from Green Island in the north to Dolphin Point in the south, conducting more than 6,513 hours of lifesaving patrols during the 2016-17 season. The club has been instrumental in members support and development programs, with a total of 88 training awards achieved throughout the season, and five new assessors and five trainers currently being mentored in various awards.

Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club also claimed the Life Saving Patrol Team of the Year award for its Patrol 14 team comprising David Johnson, patrol captain; Leonie Wicks, vice patrol captain; Stacy Wildsmith, vice patrol captain; Drew Hicks, inflatable rescue boat driver; Kim D'Ombrian, inflatable rescue boat driver; Abbie Wildsmith; Anne Pomfret; Patrick Armstrong; Declan Davies; Harrison D'Ombrian; Harrison Drury; Harry Hicks; Jack Skinner; Matthew Wheeler; and Glenn Matthews, as well as winning the Gear Inspection Award. It is also important to note the contribution that the Mollymook Club makes to the broader surf lifesaving movement, with members of the club training two inflatable rescue boat crews from Sussex Inlet.

I again congratulate Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club on this prestigious award and acknowledge club president Rodney Austin, senior vice president John Patterson, secretary Sandra Woodward, treasurer Kevin Whitford, club captain Adam Woodward, club vice captain Annette Chapman and the entire club executive for their hard work and dedication to making our beaches safe for locals and visitors. The South Coast electorate and its three surf life saving clubs are no strangers to awards. Last year the prestigious Club of the Year award was given to the Nowra-Culburra Surf Life Saving Club. This year Emma Pakes was presented with the Club Administrator of the Year award. Over its 63 year history, the Nowra-Culburra Surf Life Saving Club has continued to serve the local community and visitors to Culburra Beach and Warrain Beach. I congratulate all members of the club, particularly the club's executives Mitchell Pakes, Roger Mearns, Steve Jones, Peter Adlington and Brad Lilly.

I acknowledge Richard Hingston of the Sussex Inlet Surf Life Saving Club, who was presented with the Volunteer of the Year award. Additional awards were presented in the surf sports categories. I congratulate Holly Abbey of the Nowra-Culburra Surf Life Saving Club, who was awarded the female 11-14 competitor award; Keeghan Norwood of Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club, who was awarded the cadet male 15-17 competitor award; Tim Burgmann of Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club, who was awarded the under-19 male competitor award; and Steine Lofts of Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club, who was awarded the Coach of the Year award.

The New South Wales Government understands the importance of surf life saving clubs in our local communities and the role that they play in protecting the lives of so many beachgoers along the New South Wales coastline. The 2017-18 budget doubled surf club facility grant funding from \$2 million to \$4 million—a massive investment in surf club infrastructure. Both Mollymook Surf Life Saving Club and Nowra-Culburra Surf Life Saving Club have been the beneficiaries of support from the New South Wales Government to upgrade their facilities both at Warrain Beach and Mollymook Beach, ensuring members and volunteer surf lifesavers have the best possible facilities to undertake their work. I again congratulate all recipients of awards at the recent South

Coast Surf Life Saving Awards and wish all clubs the very best for the commencement of the 2017-18 season in coming weeks.

I congratulate Steve Jones, president of South Coast Branch Surf Life Saving who mentors all nine clubs within the South Coast branch, on organising the evening last Saturday night. It was a wonderful evening, which he has organised for many years. He is certainly in need of increased administrative assistance. It is a huge job that some volunteers undertake in these surf life saving clubs to ensure that all beaches are patrolled appropriately every year. Last Saturday night we heard about the incredible rescues that have occurred. We heard in detail about the bravery of the surf lifesavers who undertook rescues almost on a daily basis, even at Christmas time and in the middle of the night. Well done to all the surf clubs, especially those in my electorate and all those in South Coast Branch Surf Life Saving. I had a fantastic evening last Saturday night. Well done Steve Jones and well done everybody.

#### **BEROWRA WALLABIES RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

##### **Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (17:24):**

I acknowledge an outstanding sporting club in my community—the Berowra Wallabies—and congratulate it on 50 years of rugby league competition in our area. The Berowra Wallabies Rugby League Club was officially formed in 1967, when a local landowner and builder named Bill Whiddon teamed up with former North Sydney Bears rugby league player Doug McKinnon to form a local rugby league club for the district's rapidly growing youth population. The partnership turned out to be a tremendous success, with Bill's amazing organisational skills behind the scenes and Doug able to utilise his extensive contacts in the rugby league community.

The pair worked feverishly behind the scenes ahead of their first annual general meeting [AGM] with representatives from other clubs to make sure that everything was in place for the historic meeting. At the inaugural AGM, Bill was entrusted with the role—he was elected unopposed—of the club's first president. Bill's dedication and passion for the club was evident to anyone who met him. He even donated space at his Berowra Waters Road home to be used as the club's unofficial home base and clubrooms. For the next few seasons Bill's life revolved around setting up and establishing the Wallabies. Located just over the back fence from the club's ground at Berowra Park, his home was also used as the club's headquarters for all committee meetings and fundraisers, and even as an equipment storage shed.

Bill's house also served as a dropping-off point for junior players whose parents could not take them to away games. Carpooling would often then be organised from Bill's house. Several ex-junior Wallabies players still fondly remember the times when Mrs Whiddon would pick them up and carry them across her house so that their football boots would not mark her kitchen lino. It is this love and affection for the community and club that has helped forge the Berowra Wallabies' identity and family-friendly reputation, which exists to this day. It is a club that has always stuck to its mission statement of developing and promoting rugby league in the local area while encouraging and promoting fairness, competition, player safety, and enjoyment of the game.

This nurturing environment at the Wallabies has helped produce an impressive array of rugby league talent over the past 50 years. The North Sydney Bears benefited most, with five representatives including Ian Fox, Mark Rudd, Brad Collins, Curtis Johnston and Jack Hawkins. All these players remind us of the wonderful rugby league talent we have on the upper North Shore of Sydney. Let us hope that the North Sydney Bears can one day rejoin the National Rugby League competition. Bring back the Bears, I say!

The Wallabies' list of rugby league representatives does not stop there. Former Roosters five-eighth and halfback Craig O'Dwyer played four seasons in the old Australian Rugby League, representing Easts, Western Reds and South Queensland Crushers. The Wallabies also produced former Newcastle Knights winger Craig Hall, country New South Wales Rugby League representative Gavin Tutill, and halfback Aaron Groome, who went on to play with Manly, Canterbury Bulldogs and Fiji in the 2008 Rugby League World Cup. Several Berowra players have earned National Youth League contracts, with Dean Connell and Riley Travers turning out for Manly's juniors, while Brad Wall and Charles Shepherd pulled on the green and red of South Sydney.

These rugby league representatives were not discovered by accident; their success was the result of the Wallabies' "One Club, One Team!" motto. That motto has served the club well over the past 50 years, with every volunteer pitching in to develop the next generation. Arguably the Wallabies' best role model embodying these traits is my great mate and lifelong Berowra resident, former club president and life member, the great Andy Paterson. Andy is a hardworking volunteer who never seeks the limelight, but I will single him out for special personal praise. Andy played junior footy and has been involved with the Wallabies since the 1960s. He has won the Wallabies Clubman of the Year on two occasions, in 1981 and 1992. He also recently project managed the club's brand-new clubhouse facility at the Wallabies' Warrina Street oval home ground. The club holds Andy and his family in the highest regard for his lifetime of service to improving rugby league facilities and administration in the local area.

Andy, however, is not alone. Volunteers such as Steve Rees, Rick Watson, Roz Pears, Lisa Jefferys, Carl Bunce, Steve Cunningham, Lisa Shelton, Mick Wall, and of course Andy's great son and my mate Scotty Paterson, can all be proud of their many achievements throughout the years that have helped the Berowra Wallabies grow into the successful club that it is today. This passion and pride for the club was on full display at the Wallabies' fiftieth anniversary celebrations this month. To mark the event, club officials organised a carnival rugby league day at Warrina Street oval. The carnival day had eight games played back to back, culminating in the Wallabies A-grade team beating Avalon Bulldogs to head into the long weekend at the top of the table. The golden jubilee celebrations continued at the Berowra RSL Club, where players, officials and supporters came together to celebrate the historic occasion with a formal dinner.

I thank the Wallabies amazing backroom administration team. The club's president, Adrian Gins, is doing a tremendous job and has been involved with the club for more than 26 years as a committee member, player, trainer and coach. Adrian played with the club right through from the under-10s all the way to the Wallabies A-grade team. Another dedicated executive member I thank is Berowra's much-loved club secretary, Lauren Milner. Lauren has spent her entire life involved with the Wallabies. Lauren started attending games at the age of three when her brother first started playing in the under-6s and her father was one of the team officials. Her love for and connection with the club has seen her taking up multiple roles with the Wallabies.

The club's strong sense of community is evident to anyone who comes into contact with this wonderful sporting organisation. All the volunteers involved with the Wallabies show tremendous dedication in making sure that the club is run smoothly and efficiently. I particularly commend the club's president, Adrian Gins, right through to the club's registrar, Tara Hamilton, coaching coordinator Kyle Jefferys, treasurer Rhonda Andersen, and canteen coordinator Lisa Jenkins, for all donating their precious time. Thank you all so much and congratulations on 50 outstanding years of rugby league in my community.

#### NARARA ECOVILLAGE

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:30):** Tonight I commend the magnificent community efforts of all those involved in an emerging world's best practice model of a modern "hippy commune" in the Gosford electorate. The Narara Ecovillage is a perfect example of a dream becoming reality through the passionate commitment of individuals uniting to achieve a greater good. Lyndall Parris and her husband, Dave, have been sharing the idea of the Narara Ecovillage since 1977 and have attracted diverse and friendly people from all walks of life. They have been building a dream of creating a rich community while caring for the environment and for others. The community aspires to achieve an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable world. They are developing the sustainable Narara Ecovillage as a demonstration of their vision.

The Narara Ecovillage is a world leader. The community is leading the industry in living with minimal environmental impact, taking pointers from the natural world for temperature control, energy efficiency and generation, and planting for temperature control and privacy between residences. Along with water supply, power, drainage, garbage disposal and recycling, all those elements put eco friendliness at the forefront. The residents are building a thriving community with the goal of seeing more than 300 people of all ages living in harmony with the surrounds.

As you know, Mr Temporary Speaker, Narara is the perfect spot. Sited in a lush valley, the ecovillage is the former home of the New South Wales Government horticultural research station. The ecovillage residents are already showcasing the beautiful Central Coast environment that we get to enjoy every day. The village is a showcase for what can be possible when we live in our environment and our community. It shows that we do not have to compromise a comfortable and mainstream lifestyle to live well. As stakeholders in the village's success, the residents are chasing physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing, and want to show the world how to do it. They are step by step researching, designing and building a stylish, intergenerational, friendly demonstration ecovillage at Narara, blending the principles of ecological and social sustainability, good health, business, caring and other options that can evolve from wellbeing.

An important part of this is the ecovillage's relationship with ARENA—the Australian Renewable Energy Agency. An ARENA grant of nearly \$1.2 million has supported the residents to install a smart grid, which is computerised and self-contained and which will manage the consumption and storage of energy for the 150 homes and several communal and commercial facilities. The community has named the smart transformer system "Priscilla, Queen of Narara". While ARENA recognises the importance of this project in itself, it is also looking at and learning from the experiences of community residents. ARENA wants to take the lessons and apply them to similar projects and villages around Australia. The Narara Ecovillage will be just the first of many. With the smart grid installed, the village is really coming along. The brand-new, contour-following roads have been laid and have been given Indigenous names from our local community. The dam and water treatment plant are ready for action. The natural landscape and heritage buildings are on their way. This truly is a safe, natural, creative, inviting environment—it is quite different from suburbia.

In the Gosford electorate, we are incredibly fortunate to have some really world-class talent, including those involved in Narara Ecovillage. The team includes a renewable energy and sustainability consultant, an accountant and meditation teacher, an architectural draftsman, a stay-at-home mum with accounts and office skills and others who include an engineer who brings a rich knowledge of sustainable community living as a former director of the Findhorn Ecovillage in Scotland. People are drawn to the community for a number of reasons, but the magnificent property, which is tucked into the hinterland of the City of Gosford, provides a beautiful, natural landscape where families are building their sustainable living dreams.

The Narara Ecovillage community is excited by the thought that their children will be healthier and happier growing up learning about and loving nature in their village. I have no doubt that they will live a wholesome life in a rich community that will nurture their environment and that they are looking forward to a bright and nature-orientated future. As families continue to dream about moving in, the work goes on and the plans continue. I congratulate everyone involved with the Narara Ecovillage.

### MAY CHESTER 106TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

#### OTFORD RAIL TUNNEL UPGRADE

**Mr LEE EVANS (Heathcote) (17:34):** It gives me great pleasure to speak in this Chamber today, as I did this time last year, to congratulate a constituent of my electorate, May Chester, on her 106th birthday. May, who is still an absolute livewire, lived in her home until she was 100 years old, when she suffered a fracture of the spine that resulted in her moving into care. May now resides at the Jacaranda Nursing Home, Thomas Holt Village, Sutherland, and her family tell me that she is very well looked after by the wonderful staff.

May was born in England in 1911. She moved to Australia with her parents in 1913 but, unfortunately, work was hard to come by. So May and her mother moved back to England to stay with family until her father could afford for them to live together again. It was not until 1925, after World War I, that May and her mother came back to Australia to be reunited with her father. May still recalls the times in London when her mother would take her to a small room and pull a mattress over them as protection from the bombing. When she was 25 she married William Chester—always known as Bill—and together they shared 71 years of marriage until Bill passed away in 2007. May and Bill's first child, Donald, was born a couple of weeks before Christmas 1936 and they celebrated the birth of their daughter, Helen, in 1942. Their family grew to include six grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

May, incredibly, keeps up with current affairs. She is quite aware of day-to-day activities and she participates in them. She loves receiving letters from her family in England. She is still an avid reader. May likes to read the *English Woman's Weekly* and the *English People's Friend*, which Don and Kay buy for her each week. Over the past 12 months, May has had a couple of health scares and in true May style she has bounced back. The latest involved a procedure that was performed by the excellent staff at Sutherland Hospital, who took great care of this extraordinary centenarian-plus patient. May is Anne England's grandmother—Anne works in my office. Congratulations to May Chester on her 106th birthday.

On the topic of century-old treasures, I take this opportunity to mention the Otford Tunnel. In the last budget, funding was allocated to upgrade the Otford Tunnel and make it a tourist icon. This 1.7-kilometre rail tunnel was built in 1888 by Italian workmen, who also made the bricks for it on site. Just imagine how difficult it must have been in 1888 to dig the site and to make bricks on site. In the 1990s the tunnel was abandoned because passengers on the steam trains that were using the tunnel were being asphyxiated. Over the past 100 years the tunnel has been used for many different things, including mushroom farming. During World War II, part of it was blown up to stop the Japanese hordes coming over the escarpment. There are no longer any Japanese hordes but there are definitely Japanese tourists. The tunnel is to be turned into a bike track, which will access the top of the escarpment down to Stanwell Park.

The budget that Minister Constance has given us is spread over a couple of years, but it will allow this beautiful icon to be brought back to its former glory. I look forward to opening this tunnel, because it is the missing link on the Grand Pacific Way. Once completed, it will mean that you can ride from Cronulla all the way down to Lake Illawarra. It will be a fantastic addition to the Grand Pacific Way. I congratulate everybody who has been involved in the long, hard struggle to get these funds, and I thank the Minister for his indulgence.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:39):** I too pay tribute to an outstanding constituent of the electorate of Heathcote, May Chester. On behalf of all members in this Chamber, I wish her a very happy 106th birthday. She lived independently until her 100th birthday and now lives in Jacaranda Nursing Home. She has certainly seen many of the main events in Australia and the world in her lifetime.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Crouch):** On behalf of the Parliament of New South Wales, I add my congratulations to May Chester on turning 106. This time next year I hope to hear another private member's statement congratulating May on her 107th birthday.

#### **TRIBUTE TO SALLY MCNAB**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (17:40):** I advise the House of a tragedy that occurred on 10 January this year. A 20-year-old woman, Sally McNab, lost her life in a motor accident near Blue Haven Way on the Motorway Link Road at Blue Haven. The Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight is in the Chamber, and I may make a request of her later. This tragic event occurred on a short stretch of road where drivers go from a 50-kilometre-an-hour zone across lanes that are 100 kilometres an hour. The link road itself goes from 80 kilometres an hour to 100 kilometres an hour, so drivers are accelerating as they pass that section of road. I must thank Anna Zycki of Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] in the Hunter area. The RMS used available funds to put in line markings and barriers to make it a no right turn, which is what locals had been asking for from the previous Minister a year earlier when a new Aldi was built and traffic volumes increased.

I met with residents last week, and they now have a petition to reduce the speed limit near the intersection to 80 kilometres an hour and eventually to install traffic lights. Unfortunately, there are road users who break the law. Some people are still making right-hand turns at that intersection and there have been a few near misses. A man died a month before Sally McNab and there had been several other accidents in that area. The tragedy of Sally McNab's death is that she was in the right. A 78-year-old clipped another car, which ran into another car, which ran into Sally's car, killing her and putting her passenger in hospital. Her death affected the local community. Her friend Nikki Langdon said that Sally was supposed to play soccer that night. When her teammates found out about her death after the game, they were absolutely crushed. She said:

... anyone who knows her will never have anything bad to say about her, she was always smiling always kind always there if you needed her ...

Another of her friends Emma Marshall commented:

Sally, you were incredible inside and out. Your smile shone so bright and you always brightened everyone's day. I can't put enough words together to describe how amazing of a friend you were. I love you and you will be greatly missed and forever in our hearts. Heaven has gained a beautiful angel. RIP

The number of people at Sally's funeral service and wake was astounding. In a very short time Sally had made a huge impact on the San Remo-Blue Haven community. It may be a council matter, but I propose that we consider changing the name of Blue Haven Way to Sally McNab Drive or something similar in her memory. I have never seen a person of only 20 years of age have such an impact on their community. People contacted my office suggesting some sort of memorial for Sally as well as fixing the intersection.

We do not necessarily support having memorials on the sides of roads because they distract drivers, but perhaps renaming that section of road in Sally's honour is a way to keep her memory alive for the whole community. I know Anna Zycki is trying to get funds for further improvements at the intersection, but the intersection will continue to be a problem because of the speed of the traffic and the fact that people want to get in and out of Aldi, particularly those heading north to the suburbs of Lake Munmorah, Summerland Point and Gwandalan. I am sure further works will be needed. This was a real tragedy, but it may encourage drivers to think about how important it is to follow the road rules and to always be alert. We do not want people on our roads playing Russian roulette, which can lead to the deaths of such young people.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (17:45):** I thank the member for Wyong for bringing this matter to the attention of the House and for commemorating in this Chamber the life of a beautiful young woman that was tragically cut short as she was on her way to soccer. That is really tough for the whole community to deal with. I was pleased to hear the comments of the member for Wyong about my Roads and Maritime Services regional director, Anna Zycki, dealing with some of those line-marking issues. To be two or three cars from the incident is such bad luck. But we have to learn from each incident, whether it is caused by poor line marking or speed. New South Wales and the Western world faces a big challenge with the ageing of our drivers. As a society and a community, we must all take responsibility for having tough conversations with those we love. Into the future autonomous vehicles probably will provide many solutions, but we all have to work together on this very difficult issue. My heartfelt condolences go to the family and friends of a beautiful young woman.

#### **MID NORTH COAST KOALA PROTECTION**

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (17:46):** The answer to concerns about mid North Coast koalas is not a politically motivated scramble to change more State forest to national park. A few people might get all starry-eyed, but it will not do much for koalas, and that is the bottom

line. That is because there are now 2.4 million hectares in the conservation estate in the North Coast region. Yet sadly, the reality is that the national park estate is undermanaged for key threatening processes of wild dogs, wildfire, scrub invasion and eucalypt decline—all causing koala habitat degradation. In contrast, the timber industry now has access to just 400,000 hectares of State forest in northern coastal New South Wales—many of that is in the district that I represent—and only 1 per cent to 2 per cent of that is used in any one year. Large areas of koala habitat are kept in corridors throughout these forests.

The harvested areas of forest regenerate and, through professional management, will continue to provide timber and habitat into the future—timber that is being put into beautiful homes and buildings in this city as we go through an incredible surge in infrastructure, whether it be homes or office blocks. Clearly, there is a very large question mark over the actual performance of all the 2.4 million hectares of national parks, conservation areas and nature reserves in assisting koalas. In reality, the question for the unholy alliance of the Australian Labor Party [ALP] and The Greens is how is more parkland going to help? It is just the old Bob Carr fence, forget and harvest green votes ploy. We must look at the actual performance of the existing large areas of conservation estate in achieving real and lasting outcomes before we even think about more tenure change.

The proponents of the so-called Great Koala National Park do not talk too much about its effect on our 100-year old timber industry and its thousands of workers—hundreds of them in my district—who rely on their income from working in timber manufacturing and in sawmills. No, they do not want to stir that bear. But here is the news: they have. At the recent Australian Labor Party State conference, the Australian Workers Union [AWU] and the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union [CFMEU]—two organisations well known to those who sit on the other side of this Chamber—said:

To ensure protection of the Koala population and protection of local jobs in Forest Corporation and the Timber Mills, Labor should:

- plant new trees for both koalas and timber
- properly fund pest and weed control
- restore fire trail maintenance
- fund credible ecological research
- invest in new or existing injured wildlife programs, and
- develop koala tourism It concludes with:

These proposals directly address the known threats to koalas in New South Wales: fires, dogs, disease and habitat loss.

There is no mention of a great koala national park, which is the Leader of the Opposition's big ploy to harvest inner-city Greens votes. It does not look like his union mates are falling in behind his ALP-Green utopian whim of fancy. Surely, the time of crusades for more tenure change has past. Our coastal hardwood forests deserve more than being unmanaged museum-like exhibits on one side of a line and multi-use, sustainable timber producing ecosystems on the other. Instead, the New South Wales Government is developing a sophisticated, whole-of-government New South Wales koala strategy with the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer Professor, Mary O'Kane.

This strategy must address the range of core issues, such as properly managing the existing conservation estate for koalas, stronger actions on reducing dog threats, better fire and wildfire management, introducing multiple multifunction koala sanctuaries to provide hospital, breeding, rehoming and repopulation services for koala recovery. I have been attacked by The Greens and ALP members in my region for those policies and ideas that promote koala sanctuaries and koala recovery programs. It is unbelievable. The irony is that our strategy aligns with the Australian Workers Union and the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union. I did not think I would be standing in this Chamber supporting the AWU and the CFMEU and their motion that was put forward at the ALP conference last weekend.

I am at one with them because they have an interest in protecting the jobs of their union representatives and their workers. Good on them for doing so. I will stand alongside the unions while the Leader of the Opposition joins with The Greens to harvest inner-city votes off the back of a sustainable timber industry. People in Sydney have no idea how well these forests are managed and how well they are harvested. What is the end result of us not doing that? Do we take timber from South-East Asia where the rest of the hardwood comes from? Those forests are not managed as well as ours. Please do not do this to our timber industry. I say to the Leader of the Opposition: Listen to the unions and stand up for timber workers, and stop playing the harvesting vote.

#### CONGOLESE-AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (17:52:0):** Recently I had the honour of attending Independence Day celebrations by the Congolese community, which is one of the emerging communities in my electorate. I thank their president, Theophile Elongo, for his kind invitation to join his community to celebrate Independence

Day of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Congolese community in Australia is a young one and I am still learning about it. Most of the Congolese-Australian community came to this country after 2004 under the humanitarian program of the Australian Government. I share this experience with the people from the Congo because I was born in 1945 in a refugee camp in Egypt. Sadly, my parents lost three children before I arrived in Australia with my family at the age of three. More than a year ago I returned to that camp for a visit for the first time. Although it was a long time ago, I share their stories of struggle and sadness, of coming to a new country and being accepted into a new community, and finding peace and happiness in a new home.

The suffering of those who remain in the Congo or those who have sacrificed their lives should not be forgotten. I am advised that in the past 20 years nearly eight million Congolese, particularly women and children, have died as a result of warfare with neighbouring countries. Political instability has crippled the Democratic Republic of Congo. We are fortunate to live in a free democracy in Australia. My message to the Congolese was to embrace and take advantage of the free and democratic process in this country and to enrol to vote so they have a say in who forms the future government of Australia. I told them to teach their children about what it means to live in a free and open society. I also told them that I hope they learn that in this country their dreams can come true.

When I was growing up in Bonnyrigg I did not have any idea that one day I would be privileged to sit in this House, representing a community I love from the streets in which I grew up. I was not the most academically gifted kid at school, although I was not too bad at sport. But sometimes fate leads one down unexpected paths. I told them if I could do it, they can do it. I tell all the children when I visit local schools to follow their dreams and never to give up. I fully expect that before too long we will have Congolese Australians and African Australians elected to the New South Wales Parliament. That will be a very proud day for me.

The Democratic Republic of Congo declared its independence from Belgium on Thursday 30 June 1960 at 11.00 a.m. As part of the celebrations on the night, I was honoured to help hand out awards for some of the pastors in the local community. I thank them for their hard work. Every community needs leaders, so I pay tribute to those Congolese Australians who have stepped up for their fellow countrymen. It was a wonderful evening with a vibrant community. I look forward to my relationship with the Congolese community of New South Wales continuing long into the future.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 17:55 until  
Tuesday 8 August 2017 at 12:00.**