



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament  
First Session**

**Wednesday, 13 September 2017**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

**Wednesday, 13 September 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.]*

### *Notices*

#### **PRESENTATION**

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Does the Member for Port Stephens, have a problem with the motion acknowledging volunteers?

**Ms Kate Washington:** It is a community recognition statement [CRS].

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

### *Bills*

#### **PUBLIC HEALTH AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2017**

##### **Second Reading**

**Debate resumed from 10 August 2017.**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (10:13):** As the representative in this place of Labor's shadow Minister for Health, the indomitable Hon. Walt Secord, I lead for the Labor Opposition in response to the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017. This bill makes a number of changes to the Public Health Act as part of its statutory review process and was guided by more than 200 submissions, which were received as part of that process. Obviously, the Act, as its name suggests, governs public health. The statutory review process identified a number of changes to the Act that would better protect public health, which gave rise to a number of recommendations. This bill predominantly gives effect to those recommendations. It includes a range of legislative changes relating to public health orders, vaccine-preventable diseases and childcare vaccination standards, public health registers, reforms to drinking water supply protections, prohibiting eyeball tattooing, privacy reforms for people who are HIV positive and various other changes including reforms to the powers and responsibilities of the secretary of Health.

The Labor Opposition is supportive of the substance of the bill as it essentially strengthens public health initiatives and protections. We will, however, be proposing a number of technical amendments to assist the functionality of some aspects of this bill. Those amendments will be proposed in the other place by the shadow Minister for Health, the Hon. Walt Secord. I would like to discuss a number of the important changes contained within this bill, the first of which is the amendment to public health orders. This bill will require a person with certain serious health conditions such as Ebola virus, avian influenza, typhoid fever, Middle East respiratory syndrome, severe acute respiratory syndrome or human immunodeficiency virus to comply with lawful directions of treatment and/or detainment or other related directions for the purposes of reducing risks to public health. This will ensure that health authorities have available to them the information and legal power to make sure the general population is protected from serious communicable health conditions as far as is possible.

Importantly, there are safeguards within the bill that provide for public health orders to be reviewed by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Regarding the length of time a public health order can apply, under this bill an order cannot exceed the incubation period of the relevant disease which led to the order being made, so affected patients can be subject to a public health order only for the incubation period of their illness or the disease to which they may have been exposed, and no longer. People who are subject to a public health order may be required to provide details about other people with whom they have come into contact. This only will assist health authorities to better understand and manage notifiable disease outbreaks and protect the community.

Another significant element of this bill is the introduction of universal childcare vaccination standards across the State. Under the bill children must be up to date with their vaccination schedule to be enrolled in child care. This bill adopts the Labor Party's sensible plan whereby children who are not vaccinated are refused enrolment in early education services to protect other children at the centres and the community at large.

I understand that this is a sensitive policy initiative and, as the shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education, I have received concerns from early childhood experts about the impact on children who cannot access all-important preschooling as a result of a decision made by their parents. I acknowledge and respect those concerns; however, it is the view of the Labor Opposition that anti-vaccination rhetoric not only is unfounded and unscientific, but also is dangerous to the community and that this danger outweighs the potential disadvantage.

For babies who cannot be fully vaccinated and for those children and adults who, for medical reasons, cannot be vaccinated, we must ensure that the remainder of the population is vaccinated to protect people as much as is possible. Vaccinations have played, and continue to play, a vitally important role in our community's health. They are responsible for the reduction—and almost total eradication—of some of the most horrific diseases that cause death and/or lifelong suffering. I take a moment to recognise the amazing work undertaken by Rotary and its quest to end polio globally, something that almost has been achieved in just one generation as a result of commitment, tenacity and an enormous effort of fundraising. That was achieved by making a vaccine available to all. The role of vaccinations in reducing suffering, pain and heartache cannot be underestimated. They underpin our public health system by aiming to improve our entire population's health and removing health inequities across our community.

There is a disturbing trend in particular areas of New South Wales whereby families are choosing not to have their children vaccinated—children who have no contra-indications to vaccinations. This is disturbing and threatens the health of other children, and potentially opens the door wider to diseases that we thought were almost gone. These actions are irresponsible. The laws proposed in this bill, like those proposed by the Labor Party, are designed to provide an incentive for families to vaccinate their children. The proposed laws will allow for certain groups of vulnerable children to enrol in childcare centres if they are on an approved catch-up schedule and on the condition of providing full vaccination documentation within 12 weeks of enrolment. This will ensure that children who are in out-of-home care, for example, are not disadvantaged because of their situation and carers are given a reasonable opportunity to comply with the law. For the purposes of ensuring the integrity of the system, this bill creates an offence for a person to forge or falsify a vaccination certificate in order to enrol a child in a childcare centre. It also extends the existing provisions that apply to primary schools to high schools and requires principals to obtain information about a child's vaccination status at the time of enrolment.

There are provisions within the bill that allow a public health officer to exclude a child with a vaccine-preventable disease or an unvaccinated child from high school during the outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease. There also are provisions that allow a public health officer to take action to exclude a child from child care or an early education facility or school if the officer believes that an unvaccinated child has come into contact with a person with a vaccine-preventable disease, even if there is not an outbreak within that facility or school. Again, these provisions will assist our health authorities to manage notifiable disease outbreaks and better protect our communities. The bill amends sections 54, 55 and 83 of the Act to allow the secretary of NSW Health in certain circumstances to obtain information about a person with a scheduled medical condition or notifiable disease and also allows the secretary to apply for a search warrant in the course of a public health inquiry. This is an important amendment because, as we have seen during the recent chemotherapy protocol inquiry, several medical staff refused to cooperate with the inquiry that was ultimately set up to ensure the integrity of the system. Under these changes those medical staff would be required to cooperate with the inquiry and that is undeniably in the public interest.

There are changes within this bill that will provide additional privacy protections for people with a category 5 health condition or human immunodeficiency virus [HIV]. This will bring HIV pathology tests in line with other similar tests identifying information contained within the request form. This is a stakeholder-led change that will increase patients' privacy protections and reduce barriers to HIV testing. This bill also expands the current exemptions for non-disclosure to ensure a person's HIV status can be disclosed for the purposes of providing treatment or counselling, but only if that disclosure is relevant to the care, treatment or counselling that is being provided. These legislative changes will ensure HIV-positive people have increased privacy protections while making sure the disclosure of a person's HIV status is limited to circumstances where it is relevant for a medical professional to be made aware.

The bill also removes provisions in the Act relating to the NSW Pap Test Register. Up until now the Cancer Institute has undertaken the important task of maintaining a register and notifying women when they are due or overdue to have another pap test to screen for cervical cancer. While the States and Territories have undertaken this task, this role will now be undertaken by the Commonwealth under its new National Cancer Screening Register for a range of cancers, not just cervical cancer. A national register will mean that we can continue to assist women who move interstate to keep up to date with screening. The New South Wales Opposition supports this measure, although somewhat cautiously given the Commonwealth Government's consistent propensity to make a mess of large rollouts, such as we have seen with the census.

The bill also goes some way to give effect to another of Labor's policies, banning the practice of eyeball tattooing in the hands of unqualified people—a long overdue provision that for some time the shadow Minister for Health, the Hon. Walt Secord, rightly has been calling for. The new section 39A will make it an offence for a person other than a qualified and recognised medical practitioner or a person prescribed by regulation to carry out this dangerous and somewhat unusual procedure. The bill also makes it an offence for a supplier of drinking water to fail to establish or adhere to a quality assurance program, unless exempted by the Chief Health Officer. Suppliers of drinking water now will be required to provide the information gathered through their quality assurance program to the secretary of NSW Health so that public safety concerns can be monitored and management practices put in place in order to ensure drinking water is safe for local communities.

On the issue of water safety the bill expands the scope of our public health law that relates to reducing the risk of legionella bacteria. The law will now include pools on residential premises that are used for commercial purposes such as home-based learn-to-swim businesses, as well as public splash parks and interactive fountains. It clarifies the responsibilities of owners corporations of multi-tenanted premises where those premises contain a water cooling system or air handling unit. These changes are designed to better protect the public from legionnaires' disease by ensuring a strict system of accountability exists to reduce the risk of legionella bacteria within the community.

I draw the attention of the House to the Minister's reference in his second reading speech that the bulk of submissions made as part of the statutory review process related to the need for registered nurses [RNs] in nursing homes 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Minister stated, "The issue of aged care is the responsibility of the Commonwealth". Here we have another public health protection measure that the State Government has chosen to wipe its hands of and pass the buck to the Commonwealth. My view differs to that of the Minister. While there is not an obligation under Commonwealth laws the State should ensure that RNs are in our nursing homes 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The responsibility for our frail and aged is the responsibility of us all. It is disappointing, although not surprising, that the Minister has not taken this opportunity to redress this missing safeguard. It is of great concern to many in the community, as reflected in the submissions made to the statutory review process.

In closing, this bill includes sensible changes that will improve public health, allow our health authorities to better understand and manage notifiable diseases, and protect the community from vaccine-preventable disease and outbreaks. I thank the Minister for Health for recognising the good policies developed by the New South Wales Opposition under the direction and guidance of the shadow Minister for Health, the Hon. Walt Secord, and incorporating a number of them into this bill. It is pleasing to see the Government once again following our lead on these serious public health issues. On this side of the House, we will always develop and support good public health policy because fundamentally it means our community is safer, stronger and fewer people suffer harm. On behalf of the Labor Opposition team, we support this bill.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (10:26):** I am the first to speak for the Government in debate on the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017. The object of this bill is to amend the Public Health Act 2010 as a result of the statutory review of that Act. I congratulate the Minister for Health and his outstanding team for all the hard work they put in to update the bill. I note that it was the Minister for Health and his department who took the lead on this bill and not those opposite. I commend the work done to develop the changes and amendments to the original 2010 Act. I will highlight the point outlined by the member for Port Stephens concerning child vaccination. Vaccination has proved to be a great public health success, with many once-feared diseases now controlled in this country due to strong vaccination programs.

This Government is serious about building on the success of these programs to ensure the protection of our community's most vulnerable populations. I draw the attention of the House to schedules 138 and 139 which amend section 87 of the Act to provide that the principal of a childcare facility must not enrol or permit to be enrolled an unvaccinated child at the facility if the only reason provided for failure to vaccinate the child is that the parent of the child has a conscientious belief that the child should not be vaccinated in respect of specific vaccine-preventable diseases. The proposed amendment makes it an offence with a maximum penalty of \$5,500 for the principal of a childcare facility to enrol a child at a facility if the principal has not been provided with a vaccination certificate or a medical certificate and to fail to retain information in the register in accordance with regulations. Schedule 1 [41] makes a consequential amendment. Schedule 1 [40] substantiates section 87 (2) to make it an offence with a maximum penalty of \$5,500 for a person to forge or falsify any certificate that is required to be provided under section 87.

Schedules 1 [37] and [44] apply sections 86 and 88 of the Act respectively to principals of high schools as well as primary schools. Those provisions place certain requirements on principals in relation to the immunisation status of children enrolled at schools and during an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease at their school. Schedules 1 [34] to [36] make consequential amendments. Schedule 1 [42] substantiates section 88 (1) of the Act to require the principal of a school or childcare facility to notify the public health officer

in an approved form if the principal becomes aware that the child enrolled at the school or facility has a vaccine-preventable disease or if the principal reasonably suspects that a child enrolled in the school or facility for whom no immunisation certificate has been provided has come into contact with a person who has a vaccine-preventable disease. Schedule 1 [43] makes a consequential amendment.

Schedule 1 [45] amends section 88 (2) of the Act to enable the public health officer, in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, to direct the principal of a school or childcare facility to notify the parent of a child who has the disease, who has come into contact with a person who has the disease or for whom no immunisation certificate has been provided, that the child is not to attend the school or facility for the duration of the outbreak. Children are particularly vulnerable because young babies cannot be fully protected by vaccination. Furthermore, some children and adults cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons. This is why the bill before the House amends the Public Health Act to require a principal of a childcare facility to prevent a child who is unvaccinated solely due to the objections of their parents from being enrolled in child care.

Excluding unvaccinated children from attending child care will send a very strong public health message about the importance of vaccination. It will also reinforce the overwhelming scientific evidence that vaccination is safe and highly effective in preventing disease and may help to reduce the transmission of disease in certain geographical areas. Removing this exemption will also align with the Commonwealth Government's No Jab, No Pay measure, under which certain childcare and family tax benefits are dependent on a child being vaccinated. These changes also respond to the Prime Minister's calls for a nationwide approach to increasing rates of vaccination in early childhood education and the removal of conscientious objection to vaccination for children in child care.

This Government supports that national approach. Vaccine-preventable diseases do not respect State and Territory boundaries, so national cooperation on this issue is critical. These measures, which strengthen childcare vaccination, are important because childcare facilities can expose children to increased risk of the spread of diseases. Importantly, the vast majority of children will be unaffected by the changes because more than 93 per cent of children in New South Wales are fully vaccinated at five years of age. Children who cannot be fully vaccinated due to a medical condition or who are on a recognised catch-up schedule will still be able to be enrolled upon presentation of the appropriate form signed by a medical practitioner. Furthermore, the Public Health Regulation exempts children in emergency out-of-home care and children who have been evacuated during a state of emergency from the vaccination enrolment requirements. Parents or carers of these children are required to provide the vaccination records within 12 weeks of enrolment.

These time-limited exemptions are included because the parents or carers of such children may find it difficult to produce the required records at enrolment. This bill amends the Public Health Regulation to extend the existing time-limited exemptions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children in out-of-home care. It is important to acknowledge that these additional exemptions do not mean that these children are not expected to be vaccinated. Instead, the exemptions recognise that parents or carers of these children may also face challenges gaining timely access to the records at enrolment. In fact, a strong collaboration between Aboriginal communities and clinicians has meant that the gap in immunisation coverage between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children has closed in New South Wales. That is incredibly heartening to hear.

Despite pleasing results across all age groups, there is no room for complacency about our vaccination programs. It is important that those who can be vaccinated do so to ensure the protection of those who cannot be vaccinated. The Save the Date vaccination campaign commenced in 2013 to provide parents with key messages about the importance of timely vaccination. It included the popular phone application which reminds parents when their children's vaccinations are due. The 2017 campaign also included television, print, digital and social media campaigns. This Government does not rest on its laurels when it comes to vaccinations.

Furthermore, in response to a rapid increase of meningococcal type W in recent years, years 11 and 12 students in all New South Wales high schools are being offered the meningococcal ACWY vaccine throughout 2017. The vaccine will protect students against type W, provide a booster dose for type C and also protect against types A and Y. The Government takes the role of promoting vaccinations across New South Wales seriously and it will continue to work hard to protect our communities from preventable diseases. The Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill is part of a statutory review of the Public Health Act 2010. I commend the Minister for taking the lead in this role as well as his team, and for the consultation that has taken place as part of the review process. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (10:35):** I am delighted to contribute to debate on the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017, which relates to the important but controversial issue of vaccinations. From the outset, I make it clear that I support vaccinations. I have long supported the Labor Opposition's position on vaccinations and whether unvaccinated children should be permitted to attend childcare centres and schools. I had a conversation with a Campbelltown constituent who, after hearing Senator Pauline Hanson's comments on

vaccinations in the Senate, will no longer support her. With all due respect to Senator Hanson, she yet again saw an opportunity for popularity but she was on the wrong horse on this issue as a lot of her followers are demographically diverse and her speech went against her. The constituent I spoke with was an elderly woman who had lost a child to a disease because a vaccination was not available when her child was ill.

A lot of people are alive as a result of vaccinations. People older than me, such as my parents and grandparents, baby boomers and others, have lived through times when children have died needlessly. Immunisation is science at work—work that began some time ago. The amendments in the bill are appropriate to ensure that stronger measures are put in place. That is why we on this side are supporting the bill that was introduced by the Government. The bill makes small amendments to the Public Health Act, but the key amendment will ban unvaccinated children from being enrolled at childcare centres, which I support. I am a firm believer that parents should have the right to raise their children as they see fit, but nobody has the right to endanger the lives of their child or other children by refusing to have their child vaccinated.

Recent reports, which show that the attendance of patients at New South Wales hospitals with vaccination-preventable diseases, such as whooping cough and measles, has become prevalent, are an indication why we need to take these appropriate steps. Earlier this month it was reported that a northern beaches mother wants to set up a vaccine-free day care centre, and in September 2015 a Lismore mother said that she wanted to set up a similar venture in her area. Both women have called for expressions of support to sidestep current laws which require children in childcare centres to be vaccinated.

In order to achieve herd immunity in Australia we must maintain a vaccination rate much higher than 90 per cent. Having a large percentage of the population immune provides a form of indirect protection from infectious diseases. As a father of two boys, I am a firm supporter of immunisation. We need to find ways to increase vaccination rates. If it requires us to fix loopholes, as these amendments will, I welcome such measures. We make no apologies for taking these tough steps to protect children, even if they are controversial. As with most matters that come to this place and in public discussions and debate, everyone is entitled to their opinion. I respect those who have an alternative opinion but, reciprocally, it is only fair that they respect those who strongly support immunisation.

It is concerning to see vaccination rates dropping to dangerously low levels in some areas. From memory, the far North Coast, the eastern suburbs and the north shore have the worst vaccination rates. The rates of immunisation for five-year-olds in various areas are: Mullumbimby, 52 per cent; Byron Bay, 73.2 per cent; Bondi, 86.8 per cent; the Sydney central business district, 70.5 per cent; and Burwood 81.4 per cent, or 2,134 five-year-olds fully immunised. These disturbing figures highlight why these amendments are required. I draw the House's attention to some definitions in the amendments. At part 2, schedule 1, the bill states:

**Section 4 Responsibilities of local government relating to environmental health**

Insert "private water suppliers, water carters," before "public" in section 4 (1).

Part 3, schedule 1 defines "private water supplier":

**Section 4 (3)**

Insert after section 4 (2):

(3) In this section:

*private water supplier* means a person who supplies drinking water in the course of a commercial undertaking (other than that of supplying bottled or packaged drinking water), being a person who has not received the water:

- (a) any supplied drinking water referred to in paragraphs (a)-(g) of the definition of *supplier of drinking water* in section 5 (1), or
- (b) in the form of bottled or packaged water.

I note the discussions relating to the proposed amendments to section 79 of the Act, and I look forward to seeing what transpires in that regard. I refer to proposed section 39A, "Eyeball tattooing to be carried out by a medical practitioner or other qualified person". There are not many more sensitive parts of the human body than our eyes and we must take care of them. It is the role of this Parliament to ensure that safety measures are in place for eyeball tattooing, just as with any other procedure. It is beyond me why anybody would want to tattoo their eyes but, clearly, those people also need protection. The amendments in this bill will provide that protection. The public would be most interested in the proposed change to section 87 of the Act, "Responsibilities of principals of child care facilities with respect to immunisation". The bill omits section 87 (1) (a) to (c) and inserts instead:

- (a) a vaccination certificate and, if the vaccination certificate does not cover some of the vaccine preventable diseases for which immunisation at the child's age is recommended by the

NSW Immunisation Schedule, a medical certificate in respect of any vaccine preventable disease not covered by the vaccination certificate, or

- (b) if a vaccination certificate is not provided—a medical certificate in respect of the vaccine preventable diseases for which immunisation at the child's age is recommended by the NSW Immunisation Schedule. I draw the attention of members to new section 88, which relates to the responsibilities of principals during outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. It reads:
  - (1) The principal of a school or child care facility must, as soon as practicable, ensure that the public health officer is given notice in writing, in the approved form, if:
    - (a) the principal becomes aware that a child enrolled at the school or facility has a vaccine preventable disease, or
    - (b) the principal reasonably suspects that a child enrolled at the school or facility who is a child at risk has come into contact with a person who has a vaccine preventable disease.

The Opposition is supporting the bill and I will be watching its passage through the other House with interest. I acknowledge the Hon. Walt Secord, who has led this debate for some time. Taking a collaborative approach to amendments on these matters is for the benefit of all.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (10:45):** I support the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017 and congratulate the Minister for Health, Brad Hazzard, on bringing it forward. It is great to see legislation like this before the House. It is wonderful to have the member for Port Stephens in Parliament today. Having been expelled from the Chamber yesterday, it was great to see her here to make her contribution. The member complimented the Government on the bill and on its good work. We are all about good governance for the people of the New South Wales through legislation like this. It was good to hear the member for Port Stephens—who is affectionately known as the member for potty-mouth—recognising the support this bill has received.

The member for Port Stephens made one mistake when she spoke about the requirement to have registered nurses in nursing homes 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We support registered nurses 24/7 in high-care facilities, but low-care facilities have never had registered nurses and they are not required. Low-care patients in aged care facilities require other things. I repeat that in high-care facilities we support 24/7 nursing but in facilities with low-care patients that is not required. The member for Port Stephens and the member for Campbelltown mentioned the Hon. Walt Secord. I have done some checking. He played no role in the drafting of this legislation and made no contribution to the Minister about it. We must remember that Walt Secord, like the member for Port Stephens—

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: My point of order is relevance. Members are allowed to refer to the contribution of other members. Let us keep this mature.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! There is no point of order. The member for Myall Lakes has the call.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** We must remember that the member for Port Stephens and Walt Secord have been playing from the old Labor Party handbook written by Graham Richardson, which states to do and say whatever it takes; do not let the truth get in the way. We recently had a farcical situation in Myall Lakes. The Hon. Walt Secord visited the electorate and addressed the public by saying that our oncology services had been run down. When we came to government there were no oncology services in Myall Lakes. We now have one oncologist and a second will be starting in January. I do not know how it could be said that oncology services are being run down.

He said also that there is no cardiology unit. There is a cardiology unit; it is in the intensive care section, as it is at Port Macquarie hospital. Walt Secord is a scaremonger. He is going around the countryside whipping up community concern when there is no need for anyone to be concerned. Our hospital is doing a fantastic job. Indeed, the latest statistics show that it is meeting and exceeding its key performance indicators and the State average. The community should not listen to Walt Secord because he is not telling the truth.

I turn now to the bill. The Government introduced the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017 for the good governance of this State. That has been recognised by the support of those opposite for this bill. The object of the bill is to amend the Public Health Act 2010 as a result of a statutory review of that Act. In November 2016 the report on the statutory review of the Public Health Act 2010 was tabled, informed by a discussion paper and more than 200 submissions from stakeholders and members of the public. The review concluded that an additional object should be included in the Act "to monitor diseases and conditions affecting public health".

The majority of the amendments proposed in the bill relate to this object and include the tightening of vaccination requirements for childcare centres and schools and the creation of certain exemptions from

vaccination enrolment requirements. The amendments include also increasing the secretary's ease of access to information regarding scheduled medical conditions and notifiable diseases; amendments to public health orders; changing the disclosure requirements for patients with HIV; and removing the requirement for persons with a sexually transmitted infection to notify partners. Other amendments proposed in the bill relate to environmental health premises and the supply of water.

Minister Hazzard noted in his second reading speech that the bill also removes provisions relating to the Pap Test Register as a result of the establishment of a National Cancer Screening Register. The bill amends division 4 of part 5 in a number of ways, some of which I have already outlined, including removing the ability of a childcare facility to enrol a child who is unvaccinated due to the conscientious objections of their parents. A childcare facility will be able to enrol only a child who is fully vaccinated, is on an approved catch-up schedule or has a medical contraindication to vaccination. It will be an offence for a director of a childcare facility to not comply. Certain categories of vulnerable children such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children in out-of-home care still will be able to enrol but they will have to provide their vaccination documentation within 12 weeks of enrolment.

The bill creates an offence for a person to forge or falsify a vaccination certificate provided to a childcare facility to enable the enrolment of a child. It also extends the existing provisions that apply to primary schools to high schools. This will require principals of high schools to obtain information about a child's vaccination status at enrolment and allow a public health office to exclude a child with a vaccine-preventable disease or an unvaccinated child from high school during the outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease. It allows a public health officer to take action to exclude a child from a childcare facility or school if the officer believes that an unvaccinated child has come into contact with a person with a vaccine-preventable disease, even if there is not an outbreak at the childcare facility or school. This will assist in better preventing outbreaks from occurring.

The bill also amends section 25 to make it an offence for a supplier of drinking water, unless exempted by the Chief Health Officer, to fail to establish or adhere to a quality assurance program. In addition, suppliers of drinking water will be required to provide a copy of the quality assurance program to the Health secretary. It also makes minor changes to the environmental health premises provisions to clarify that a public swimming pool includes a pool on residential premises that is used for commercial purposes as well as splash parks and interactive fountains. The bill clarifies that the definition of "skin penetration" includes procedures that penetrate a mucous membrane such as the tongue.

The bill also gives the secretary the ability to obtain further information about a person with a scheduled medical condition or a notifiable disease who has been notified to the secretary by the patient's treating medical practitioner. These changes will ensure that where the treating medical practitioner is not the person who made the notification, relevant information about the patient's medical condition and risk factors can be obtained by the secretary. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (10:55):** I speak in this second reading debate on the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017, an omnibus bill in response to the statutory review of the Public Health Act. I want to speak in particular about two aspects of the bill that have raised particular interest from constituents in my electorate of Summer Hill. Firstly, I join my colleagues in welcoming the Minister's decision to adopt Labor's policy of closing loopholes in the vaccination requirements for enrolling children at childcare centres and schools. Secondly, I cautiously note the bill's amendments to the privacy arrangements for citizens of New South Wales with HIV and AIDS and note the concerns raised by key stakeholders, including the AIDS Council of New South Wales [ACON], regarding amendments to the penalty criminalising the transmission of sexually transmitted infections.

There has been, maybe, no greater breakthrough in the history of modern medicine than vaccination. Vaccination has been part of Australia's medical practices since 1804 when the first smallpox vaccine was used. Australia's first mass vaccination program began in 1924 and its first school-based program commenced in 1932. Since that time, vaccination rates have risen and the prevalence of common diseases has fallen, saving countless lives over successive generations. This bill strengthens immunisation by removing provisions of so-called conscientious objection when enrolling children in early childhood education, and childcare operators will be permitted to enrol a child in a childcare facility only if they are fully vaccinated or are on an approved catch-up schedule, or if they have a medical contraindication to vaccinations such as chemotherapy, organ donation or recognised major illness.

The bill provides sensible exemptions, including for children receiving cancer treatment or children identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or living in out-of-home care. As the Minister noted in his second reading speech, these two demographic groups are exempt not because they have low immunisation rates—in fact, the immunisation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups are often higher than for non-Indigenous communities—but because they may have substantially more difficulty in obtaining records to

prove the case. Currently, the rate of full immunisation among New South Wales children aged up to 15 months sits at 93.6 per cent. That is the third lowest in the country, behind the Northern Territory and Western Australia. The immunisation rate for children aged two years is only 90.23 per cent.

Of course, in some communities it is even more dangerously lower than this. Vaccination rates of five-year-olds in Byron Bay stood at 61 per cent and the rate was 46.7 per cent in Mullumbimby. Shamefully, the lowest vaccination rate in Australia is right here in the city of Sydney central business district, with just 70.5 per cent of five-year-olds being fully vaccinated. That is far below the rate of 95 per cent which experts set as the threshold for herd immunity—the rate at which a sufficient number of people are immunised to protect the small number who cannot be immunised for medical reasons.

There are a small number of genuine reasons why a parent might choose not to vaccinate their children: they have a contraindication to vaccines, including anaphylaxis; they are too young for a specific vaccine; or due to immune deficiency because they are undergoing specific treatments for cancer. Conscientious objection to vaccinations is not and will never be a genuine reason for failing to vaccinate a child. Conscientious objection selfishly puts the health of that unvaccinated child at risk but also risks the health of every child and adult who cannot be vaccinated for genuine medical reasons. Non-immunisation is responsible for the return of common diseases including measles, mumps and whooping cough. Many parents in my electorate are aware of this and find it very concerning.

As of December 2015, a total of 8,115 children in New South Wales were recorded as having a conscientious objection against vaccination. Thankfully that is on a downward trend, but that is still 8,115 too many. Young lives are at risk from crackpot conspiracies peddled by those who should know better. Conspiracies include claims that vaccinations are agents of government mind control, or are a pro-capitalist plot cooked up by big pharma. The purported link between combined vaccinations and autism can be traced back to 1998 when a former doctor, Andrew Wakefield, claimed that there was a link between the two. The Texan-born doctor has since been struck off the medical register and his research papers have been retracted. However, potentially because the theory gained popularity among celebrities, the myth persists and is endangering lives. These ludicrous theories have taken hold in certain political classes; they have been spouted by luminaries like Pauline Hanson and Donald Trump as well as, it indeed should be said, by certain members of the New South Wales Greens.

Of course, each of those claims fails to acknowledge the significant reduction of contagion of many deadly infections and the complete elimination of others. Those conspiracies also fail to acknowledge the risk that not vaccinating children poses to other children and the community as a whole. Labor proposed the changes we see in the bill following reports of families seeking to establish anti-vaxxer childcare centres and exploiting loopholes in the existing legislation designed to protect children. This bill adopts sensible and principled measures that will further the protections offered by immunisation and ensure that no child is exposed to the risk and suffering of deadly infection from diseases that are easily prevented. The bill also exposes the truth about conscientious objection: There is no such thing as a conscientious objector to vaccination, just anti-vaxxers.

I also comment briefly on another measure contained in the bill that has raised interest in my electorate—the provisions around sexually transmitted infections [STIs]. The bill removes existing disclosure requirements that demand a person disclose their STI status before engaging in sexual activity with another person. This is a positive step that represents a move towards a recognition that sexual health is a mutual responsibility. However, I am concerned about any move to criminalise the transmission of an STI in a private setting. We know that our health-focused approach in New South Wales has made our State a world leader in HIV prevention and we must continue to give primacy to health experts and to evolve our response.

Evidence suggests that shifting the focus of managing STIs from a health setting to the criminal code may discourage testing, intensify existing stigma, possibly clog up our courts and undermine the best practice strategy on ending HIV-AIDS in effect here in New South Wales. I am concerned that those impacts have not been properly thought through. I support the Opposition's amendments to bring forward the statutory review of these aspects of the bill to 2019. We must ensure that we assess the impacts of the Minister's reforms in a timely way and ensure that there are no unintended consequences to overall public health strategy when it comes to HIV/AIDS and to the individual health outcomes of those in our community living with HIV. The purpose of this bill should be to protect the vulnerable when it comes to public health.

While I think there is significantly more work to do on some aspects of the bill, I absolutely welcome the Government's decision to adopt Labor's policy of closing loopholes for anti-vaxxers. That will lead to substantively better health outcomes for our community and protect those who cannot be immunised for legitimate medical reasons.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (11:02):** It is a pleasure to contribute to debate on the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017. I acknowledge the contributions by speakers who preceded me in this debate, in particular comments made by the member for Summer Hill concerning vaccination and support for the bill, comments made by the member for Terrigal, who is the Chair of the Health Care Complaints Committee in this Parliament, and comments made by the member for Myall Lakes, who was a registered nurse in a previous life. The main purpose of the bill is to make a number of changes to the Public Health Act 2010 following a recent statutory review of that Act and other developments in public health. Having been involved in a number of statutory reviews of various Acts prior to becoming a member of Parliament, I am fully aware that that is one of the most important processes we have in this State and is characterised by wide consultation with agencies and stakeholders who have an involvement in the operation of an Act.

That process has proved to be satisfactory in improving the laws in operation in our State and this bill is a result of a statutory review process. In 2016 the Ministry of Health conducted a review of the Public Health Act to determine if the objectives of the Act remain valid and if the provisions of the Act are appropriate to secure those objectives. As part of the review, the "Report of the Statutory Review of the Public Health Act 2010" was tabled in this Parliament in late 2016. The report found that the Act was working well overall, but a number of recommendations were made for improvements in the operation of the Act. The Public Health Amendment (Review) bill 2017, which has been introduced by the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research, will implement those recommendations. The Minister for Health certainly knows his brief.

Recently I visited a number of our public hospitals in the company of the Minister. Redevelopment is taking place at Blacktown Hospital and I recall the Minister speaking to numerous staff members, including doctors and nurses. I remember in particular an occasion when the Minister was speaking to a member of the nursing staff about day-to-day issues and activities. I thought the manner in which the Minister took on board suggestions of the nursing staff was an absolute credit to the interaction between Ministers of this Government and those who are working at the front line in our hospitals. It was a shining example of both taking suggestions on board and making commitments to look into the issues that are raised by staff as well as good government interacting with those who do such a good job in our community for the benefit of all of us.

Like the original Public Health Act 2010, this bill is all about safety—the safety of all of us in this House and all of us across the community of New South Wales. The bill is designed to protect not only us but also those about whom we care most dearly, particularly children and elderly people. The bill will be a safeguard for the community against harm that may arise in many ways. Common sense suggests that we know we cannot protect everyone from all the ways in which people may come to grief, but we certainly can protect them from harms that are recognised and that we have the means to prevent or minimise. We seek to protect the children in our community by ensuring that they are vaccinated against diseases that could kill children in large numbers if protective measures are not taken. Safe and effective vaccines are widely available throughout our community. This bill will exclude children who are not vaccinated from enrolling in child care if they are not vaccinated due to their parents' objections. This is in line with the request earlier this year to all first Ministers requesting that a national approach be adopted in relation to this very important issue.

Other children who have not been vaccinated, such as those who have a medical condition or who are in out-of-home care or who are on a catch-up schedule, will be able to enrol for child care by producing a form that has been signed by their doctor. This bill extends protection to high school students that already exists in primary schools, which excludes children who have not been vaccinated from a high school during an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease. This is a result of recent evidence showing that rates of some illnesses, such as measles, have been higher among high school students than among younger children. The Government also seeks to protect those who, for whatever reason, might want to have their eyeballs tattooed. That shows how far the bill goes to protect. Although I cannot imagine why, apparently eyeball tattooing is a practice pursued by some and it indeed has taken place, fortunately possibly in small numbers. However, it is clear that there are safety issues involved in this practice. This bill limits the practice of eyeball tattooing to being carried out by medical practitioners only.

There are other niche practices that involve the penetration of skin that have arisen over time. This bill tightens up and regulates how those procedures take place. Other areas amended by the bill affect a great many people in our community. Its purpose is to clarify provisions around water cooling towers in the event of an outbreak of legionnaire's disease. As I indicated, it is all about the safety of not only the children of our community but also the elderly, who are often severely affected by preventable outbreaks of legionnaire's disease, which is one that affects the elderly quite severely. This happens when bacteria are able to breed in water-cooling towers, which regulate a building's air conditioning.

It is a potential problem that can touch anyone working in, visiting or passing through a built-up area with multiple air-conditioning systems. In summary, this is a bill about safety and protecting the young, the old,

and all the rest of us in the community. It is a classic example of good government. We are a Government that is not only confident but is also compassionate when it comes to the laws of the State. We are a Government that puts the people of our great State first and the lives of our citizens at the forefront. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (11:09):** I contribute to the debate on the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017. I support the vast majority of the measures in the bill. Anything I say that might be taken to be contrary should not be taken as an indication that I am not concerned. I hope the Minister for Health is having a break. I saw him down here earlier and I know he is quite ill at the moment. This bill deals with a number of public health issues and it is not my intention to deal with all of them individually as I believe the Minister and the shadow Minister for the Hunter comprehensively outlined those matters and their objectives earlier in the second reading debate. I will comment briefly on several aspects of the bill that have generated a lot of correspondence to my electorate office and have sparked new debate in some familiar quarters.

Most importantly, this bill introduces measures that will mean a childcare centre will be able to enrol only a child who has been age-appropriately vaccinated. The Minister outlined several exemptions to that rule, including allowances for children on an approved catch-up schedule, children who have properly identified contraindicated medical conditions to vaccination, and allowances for children of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, who have more difficulty in producing vaccination records. I fully support the Minister's intention in this regard and I applaud him for bringing the substantive part of the bill before the House. I do not accept the views of those parents who conscientiously object to vaccinations in the face of a mountain of evidence and modern science and who are swayed by the somewhat peripheral arguments peddled by the anti-vaccination lobby, which chooses to ignore so many facts. Sadly, perhaps we will never change the minds of those objectors, but what we can do is try to keep them properly informed of the facts and, more importantly, protect the vast majority of children and parents who do the right and responsible thing, and, of course, those parents' children.

The science on vaccination is in. It is not a perfect science and is one that will continue to evolve. It is not a one-size-fits-all solution, but vaccination clearly unequivocally works. It saves millions of lives, it protects our communities, and any side effects are almost zero when weighed against the global benefits. The World Health Organization estimates that immunisation prevents up to three million deaths every year and is one of the most successful and cost-effective forms of public health intervention. For those living in the developed world, vaccination has so successfully contained once-rampant diseases such as smallpox, measles, polio, tuberculosis, whooping cough and hepatitis A and B that people can easily forget what a scourge these health problems once were. Smallpox, a disease which has been eradicated worldwide thanks to vaccination, killed an estimated 350 million people in the twentieth century alone. Measles is now a relatively rare childhood disease in Australia but it remains a leading cause of death globally among children aged under five.

In the late nineteenth century, tuberculosis was the leading cause of death in Australia. It was 20 times deadlier per capita than all the cancer conditions combined today. Today, tuberculosis is virtually non-existent in Australia, but sadly we do not have to look far to see the impact it is still having in communities that do not have universal access to vaccination. In Papua New Guinea, 14,000 new cases of tuberculosis caused almost 3,000 deaths in 2010, although that annual figure is now falling thanks to greater levels of vaccination. There are many other statistics I could use to illustrate the tragic incidence in the developing world of high mortality rates from vaccine-preventable diseases, but most people are aware of them.

In my time working as a nurse at Morisset Hospital, I cared for a number of people who had suffered severe developmental disability from the infectious and now preventable disease rubella. I also cared for people who had suffered from and carried lifelong debilitation from tuberculosis. I am old enough to have known people who bore the physical effects of polio. Their limps or constant need for leg braces and crutches were the lifelong legacy of a now preventable disease. Since the World Health Organization committed in 1988 to eradicating polio throughout the world, the annual incidence of cases has fallen from 350,000 to several hundred. Polio currently exists in just six countries, which all have isolated cases or outbreaks. Those statistics serve to remind us why we should remain vigilant to the potential dangers of infectious diseases that are now, thankfully, little more than bad memories.

I saw in Martin Place yesterday the protests from some of these conscientious objectors and anti-vaxxers who say that the Parliament does not have the right to remove their freedom of choice, compel them to participate in a public health program they disagree with, or discriminate against their child's right to early education. This bill does not do any of that. What it does do is protect the health and wellbeing of our entire community, in particular children, who should not be exposed to unnecessary and preventable health risks. I cannot sit by, and I do not think any government should sit by, and allow the health of millions of people to be put at risk by others. All children who can be vaccinated should be vaccinated for their protection as well as that of others.

An area I do have some concern with is the amendment to section 79 of the Public Health Act, which pertains to the requirements and obligations on people with a sexually transmitted infection. The Minister and the Government are generally finding the right balance between the rights and responsibilities of an individual and those of others, but I agree with some of the leading sexual health agencies when they say the penalties appear significantly disproportionate to the crime. Imposing an \$11,000 fine, a six-month jail term, or both on one party who fails to disclose a notifiable sexually transmitted infection [STI] is not reasonable. In this day and age, all people should know of their risks and responsibilities during somewhat romantic or sexual encounters, however random or regular they may be.

Although I question the proportionality of the measure, a more important consideration could be that legislating such punitive measures will undo so much good that has been done to encourage people to be aware of their sexual health and to seek appropriate health care when they suspect they may have been infected. This is a regressive step that I cannot support. There have been cases of the wilful transmission of an STI where, in effect, that infection has been weaponised for a malicious purpose. However, such actions are covered by criminal law and are considered to be inflicting grievous bodily harm.

Notwithstanding that issue, other amendments contained in this bill offer significant improvements to public health. I specifically note the provisions relating to environmental health, which should further reduce the risk to public health posed by pools or public splash parks, and to section 25 of the Act, which relates to the provision of drinking water. With the exception of those matters around section 79, I thank the Minister and his staff for these amendments, which I believe will result in a significant positive impact on public health. Although I have expressed concern about section 79, I understand there may be some consideration of this in the other place. I cannot be sure whether that will lead to amendments, but I certainly hope that will be addressed. Notwithstanding that particular consideration, I will be supporting the bill in this place.

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) (11:18):** Much of the debate to date on the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017 has naturally been around issues relating to vaccination because that has been the controversial element in the community. Some people have argued that they should not be required to vaccinate their children and have strongly entrenched opposition to doing so. I generally take the view that we should restrict people's freedom as little as possible and that we should do so only where a strong argument for the protection of other people's rights would apply. This is such a case. All the scientific evidence available to us leads us collectively, and me as an individual, to the conclusion that it is appropriate for the Parliament to insist that children enrolling in preschool are vaccinated to protect other people's children and the community generally from disease.

We believe vaccination benefits everyone, but we understand that some parents have a conscientious objection to vaccinations. However, we have an obligation to other children in preschool and to the broader community, including the staff of the preschool and people who come in contact with the preschool, to ensure that disease is limited as much as possible. That is the basis on which it is entirely reasonable for the Parliament to legislate to require that only people who have been vaccinated can enter into that childcare or preschool environment. From a practical point of view, we know that preschool is one of the places where many illnesses are incubated. In childcare facilities and in preschools lots of children are in a relatively confined space where they pick up bugs and pass them around—they are very generous like that. People who work in those environments tend to have a high rate of illness because they pick up all the bugs the kids share around. It is common sense that they are obvious places to focus on in preventing the more serious diseases that we can vaccinate against occurring.

There are significant diseases that we know cause real harm, even death, and it makes sense to insist that children are vaccinated against those diseases, when it is medically possible. A small group of people have medical contraindications that make it impossible for them to be vaccinated, and a separate regime needs to be put in place where there is a sound medical reason for doing so. For people for whom there is no medical contraindication, we believe that it is sound policy to require vaccination for entry into preschool and childcare facilities. That puts some conscientious objectors in a hard place. Such parents may have to choose between giving their child a preschool education and taking a stand on what they believe about vaccination. That is their choice, not the community's choice. If those parents believe sufficiently strongly that vaccination is not in the best interest of their child then they have to make other arrangements for preschool education for their child, probably a home-schooling arrangement.

It is a hard call, but it is a necessary one to make in the interests of public health and we should not resile from it. Extensions of the vaccination regime and the powers of the Chief Medical Officer to insist that children in higher levels of education be withdrawn from educational settings during outbreaks or once they have been in contact with an infected person are sensible incremental measures to improve the effectiveness of the regime we have in place that is designed to protect schoolchildren, in particular, as well as the broader community from

communicable diseases. It is important that we take steps, when the evidence indicates that we should, to protect the broader community.

The history of vaccination is a success story. There are diseases that are hardly known in Australia today—in fact, diseases that are hardly known in many parts of the world—because vaccination has been hugely successful. It is perhaps easy to lose sight of how diseases affected the world's population 50 or 100 years ago, when some seriously nasty diseases were relatively common. Without having the means to prevent the spread of those diseases, they either killed, maimed, crippled or severely disabled people. We have all heard heart-rending horror stories about polio victims in the 1950s and 1960s. At the time it was difficult for anybody to prevent the spread of this disease. In the modern world we have the tools to deal with these diseases, and so it would be not only tragic but also criminal if we were not to use them to protect people in our community. In Australia today we do not have outbreaks of these diseases, but were we to drop the shield of vaccination some very nasty diseases might well rear their ugly heads again in our community. We should not lose sight of what we are doing and the great gains that we have made in public health.

As we have heard, the bill deals with a number of other minor but nevertheless significant changes to improve public health in New South Wales including clarification of who is responsible for cooling towers to help prevent legionnaire's disease and tightening the wording around the supply of drinking water to make sure we have quality assurance programs in place and the ability to monitor them. The legislation also deals with eyeball tattooing and other kinds of skin penetration that may make us shiver but which some people in our community engage in and therefore need to be undertaken in regulated and safe conditions to ensure the protection of public health. All of the measures in this legislation are sensible small steps forward.

I note the reservations of the member for Lake Macquarie about new section 79. I had other reservations about that section, but on balance I know that the Minister is trying to reach a sensible balance. Despite my reservations, I believe the bill it is an attempt to pursue the broader goal of protecting the community generally from communicable diseases, which we have the capacity to prevent. On that basis, I believe this is a sensible bill, which I support. I believe that the bill's controversial measures for vaccination are well and truly justified because we should be undertaking such steps. Despite its being a tough call for some conscientious objectors, we have to take a stand on vaccination in the interests of the broader community.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (11:26):** On behalf of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and the people of Orange, I speak in debate on the Government's Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017. From the outset, I indicate that we support this bill. Health care is a vital service that we all rely on, and rural communities especially rely on it. That is why I will be supporting this bill. Keeping public health regulation and legislation up to date is important, especially in a complex and multifaceted portfolio such as Health. I know this review has been a long time coming, and I applaud the Minister and his staff for bringing this legislation, especially the provisions for childhood vaccinations and immunisations, before the House.

However, one omission from this bill that was flagged in the Minister for Health's second reading speech speaks volumes. In discussions relating to a 2015 upper House inquiry by General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3 relating to the staffing of registered nurses in nursing homes, the Minister's predecessor, Jillian Skinner, noted that amendments to section 104 of the Public Health Act 2010 were forthcoming in this review. Fast forward to today, and this important review lacks any reference to section 104 that specifically deals with minimum staffing requirements in aged-care facilities. The section was carried forward from section 52 of the Public Health Act 1991 and reads as follows:

A person who operates a nursing home must ensure that a registered nurse is on duty in the nursing home at all times, and a registered nurse is appointed as a director of nursing of the nursing home ...

As this House knows, this was inadvertently repealed by Federal legislation due to a definition change for the term "nursing home" in 2014, after this safety net had been enjoyed for almost 50 years in New South Wales. Saying that this requirement would bankrupt nursing homes is ridiculous, given its longevity in New South Wales legislation. The straw-man argument that the State Government cannot legislate in this matter is also a fallacy. Not only has this minimum standard been upheld by lawmakers in New South Wales for at least half a century, but there has been no referendum to change the distribution of State and Federal government powers with respect to this matter. For the record, my Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party staff have found this minimum standard in the following New South Wales legislation: section 104, Public Health Act 2010; section 52, Public Health Act 1991; section 39, Nursing Homes Act 1988; section 30, Private Health Establishments Act 1982; and section 2 (m), Private Hospitals (Amendment) Act 1971.

In briefings yesterday the Minister's staff stated that the bandaid regulation by the Minister's predecessor would be carried forward for another 12 months—namely, the Public Health Amendment (Nursing Homes) Regulation 2014. I say this is a bandaid solution because it extends the provision only to existing facilities

operating before the legislation was changed on 1 July 2014. I note that there are no longer dedicated high- and low-care facilities but what concerns me is that facilities that were formerly designed as low care are housing high-care residents without the appropriate staffing of registered nurses 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Rather than putting the aged care industry and elderly residents and their families on tenterhooks for 12 months at a time, the Government should enshrine this regulation in legislation.

I gave the Minister a simple solution earlier this year with the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016, but my calls fell on deaf ears. That was put in the too-hard basket and the Minister blamed the Federal Government and washed his hands of the responsibility of caring for thousands of elderly nursing home residents in New South Wales. A petition circulated in my electorate was overwhelmingly in favour of finding a way to reinstate section 104 of the Public Health Act, and I am sure that sentiment is echoed throughout New South Wales. I support this bill, but I had hoped that the Minister would provide for our most vulnerable nursing home residents instead of ignoring them again. Our elderly deserve better. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (11:30):** I speak in debate on the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017. Like the original Public Health Act 2010, this bill is about safety. Under the existing Public Health Act there is a rarely invoked authority to make a public health order in relation to a person who has one of the following infections or conditions: avian influenza in humans; Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus; severe acute respiratory syndrome; typhoid; or viral haemorrhagic fevers, such as Ebola. These conditions have the potential to cause outbreaks with major implications for the community. Currently a public health order can be made by an authorised medical practitioner only if a person has a condition and is causing a risk to the public.

The amendments in this bill will create a new category of public health orders in relation to people who have come into contact with a person who has one of those infections. The amendments to section 62 will allow an order to be made if the authorised medical practitioner is satisfied that a person has come into contact with a contact order condition, and is also posing a risk to the public. This extends the current requirement—that a public health order can be made only if a person has the condition—to include those people who are potentially incubating the condition and are taking no steps to prevent risk to the public. The bill includes a number of important safeguards, such as setting time limits on contact order conditions, and review of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

The Public Health Act 2010 allows authorities to require a person with one of the listed infections to undergo compulsory treatment or even—in extreme cases—be detained. Public health orders are rarely used and would only ever be used as a last resort. That last resort would usually be when a person with an infectious disease posed a threat to other members of the community and refused to change their activities to remove that threat. Only two such orders have been made in the case of human immunodeficiency virus [HIV]. In the past 10 years two orders for tuberculosis have been issued. The amendment proposed in this bill addresses the issue of those people who have come into contact with someone who has one of the named infections.

The bill also amends division 4 of part 5 to remove the ability of a childcare facility to enrol a child who is unvaccinated due to the conscientious objections of their parents. A childcare facility will be able to enrol only a child who is fully vaccinated, who is on an approved catch-up schedule or who has a medical contraindication to vaccination. It will be an offence for a director of a childcare centre not to comply. Certain categories of vulnerable children—such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children in out-of-home care—will still be able to enrol but will have to provide their vaccination documentation within 12 weeks of enrolment. The bill also creates an offence for a person to forge or falsify a vaccination certificate that is provided to a childcare facility to enable the enrolment of the child.

Further, the bill extends the existing provisions applying to primary schools to high schools. This will require principals of high schools to obtain information about a child's vaccination status at enrolment and allow a public health officer to exclude a child with a vaccine-preventable disease or an unvaccinated child from high school during the outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease. Further, the bill will allow a public health officer to take action to exclude a child from child care or school if the officer believes an unvaccinated child has come into contact with a person with a vaccine-preventable disease, even if there is not an outbreak at the childcare facility or school. This will assist in better preventing outbreaks from occurring.

The bill also amends section 25 to make it an offence for a supplier of drinking water, unless exempted by the Chief Health Officer, to fail to establish or adhere to quality assurance programs. In addition, suppliers of drinking water will be required to provide a copy of the quality assurance program to the secretary of Health. New section 79 removes the requirement of a person with a sexually transmitted infection—an STI—to notify their sexual partners before having sex. Instead, the provision has been included making it an offence for a person with an STI to fail to take reasonable precautions against the spread of the STI. The bill also removes the provisions of the Act relating to the Pap Test Register. This is due to the Commonwealth establishing a National Cancer

Screening Register, which will take over the State-based Pap test registers. There are some miscellaneous changes to the Act as well. The bill includes a new section 130A to provide that the secretary cannot be compelled in any legal proceedings other than under the Public Health Act to produce information or give evidence in respect of notifications about scheduled medical conditions and notifiable conditions received by the secretary.

The bill amends sections 97 and 98 that relate to the establishment of public health and disease registers to make clear that these provisions do not limit other registers that can be created under the Act, and to allow for regulations to set out additional purposes for which a public health and disease register can be created. The bill amends section 106 to allow the secretary, following a public health inquiry, to direct a person who is responsible for, or has contributed to, a risk to public health to notify persons at risk. Further, the bill will allow a search warrant to be applied for when the secretary is conducting a public health inquiry. The bill also will allow regulations to be made in respect of the payment of fees in relation to functions exercised by local government and authorised officers.

Fortunately, in my lifetime Australia has been spared the all too common outbreaks of deadly diseases that have swept through other communities. The 1918 Spanish flu, which killed millions of people across the world, was probably the most notable. My father and I have spoken over many years about the polio that wreaked havoc on Australians in the 1930s and 1940s. I remember him telling me about the large number of people in the very small street in which he lived who contracted polio and who were crippled as a result. Diseases like polio are now preventable if there is strict adherence to vaccination programs. Most importantly, this bill will ensure that everyone in our community is vaccinated, particularly our children. We must not have a recurrence of the tragedy that outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases cause. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) (11:40):** I speak on behalf The Greens in debate on the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017. I acknowledge the work of the Minister, his staff and the department in drafting this bill, which will significantly improve public health in a range of areas. It is important to acknowledge the work that has been done on miscellaneous issues such as cooling towers, drinking water requirements, and the improved definition of pools. They might seem small issues, but they are important and stem from real-life situations that have highlighted the need for improved legislation to ensure that public health is a priority for not only the Government but also the broader community. We must have clarity and opportunities for everyone to understand the importance of particular issues, especially with regard to drinking water.

A member referred to vaccine-preventable diseases and what happened 100 years ago. We do not need to look back that far; we can simply fly to Papua New Guinea or Myanmar to see the impact of preventable diseases that are almost non-existent in Australia. I have lived and worked in low-income countries, including Myanmar, and I know that the level of immunisation is extremely low and that the level of disease is shockingly high. People in Australia forget that at their peril. Vaccine-preventable diseases, vector-borne diseases and other diseases take an enormous toll on people's lives. We need a solid public health sector and a government that is committed to ensuring those diseases are not prevalent in this State.

That takes me to the issue of vaccination, which is obviously contentious in some parts of our community. It is clear that the benefits of vaccination far outweigh any negatives. I welcome the significant education component in this bill. That is important because we must ensure that facts are put on the table and that myths are not peddled. The Greens had concerns about the lack of that component in the Opposition bill. We should take an education approach rather than a punitive approach to this issue. I acknowledge that the Government has rolled out an advertising campaign focused on busting myths about vaccination, and that is a positive measure. I also welcome the fact that the Act provides that a person with a positive sexually transmitted infection [STI] diagnosis is required to notify their sexual partners and also to take reasonable care to prevent the spread of STIs.

The bill proposes to remove the requirement to notify sexual partners. That is logical and based on the evidence, and it is welcomed in the HIV community because notification has proved to be a barrier to testing. If we are serious about public health, especially in the HIV space, we must promote and encourage testing and not impose any barriers. I also welcome it because it recognises mutual responsibility—that is, each individual should consider and negotiate their sexual practices. That is a positive step forward. Concerns have been expressed about the creation of a new offence in new section 79 on the basis that it may be excessive and disproportionate. A range of community groups working in this sector have questioned the meaning of "reasonable precautions", and it deserves consideration. If this amendment succeeds, there should be education about the prevention of STIs and the importance of regular testing.

"Reasonable precautions" is not defined in the Act—and, interestingly, it never has been. We were told by the department at the crossbench briefing that it could be dealt with by regulation or that it may be decided by the courts. As legislators, we always seek to avoid that option by having statutory definitions to ensure clarity for not only the courts but also the community. The enactment of regulations or allowing the courts to decide has an element of putting the cart before the horse because penalties may be introduced without there being a definition

of what is reasonable in respect of each different disease. Departmental officers said that in most cases the use of a condom would be sufficient, except in respect of HIV. In that case, a reasonable precaution may mean that treatment is being undertaken to ensure an undetectable viral load. The legislation does not seem to cover other chronic STIs that can be spread despite the use of condoms—for example, herpes, which can be spread without an outbreak. The legislation must define "reasonable precautions".

As I said, The Greens believe the increased penalties must be the subject of an education campaign to ensure there is a community of understanding about whether using a condom is sufficient to meet the standard required. It has been said that that will be covered in part by doctors informing their patients of when it is safe to have sex again if someone is diagnosed with an STI. However, as I said, some STIs are always at risk of being transmitted. What advice are doctors expected to provide in those situations and who will bear responsibility? While there is a lack of clarity about reasonable precautions in addition to the increased penalties and potential jail time, there is a real risk of this becoming another barrier to testing. Stakeholder groups have raised the fact that there is no need to comply if a person is not tested and they do not know they are infected. In addition, there is no penalty for not meeting the standard of taking reasonable precautions because someone does not know they are infected.

I have had range of correspondence from organisations such as Positive Life NSW, ACON and others stating that STI transmission, including of HIV and viral hepatitis, is a health issue not a criminal issue. The Greens agree. I acknowledge that this bill is the result of a comprehensive consultation process that was undertaken in 2016. I reiterate the concern expressed to The Greens that many of the recommendations, particularly in respect of new section 79, were not reflected in the NSW Health report tabled in Parliament in 2016. The Greens support the bill in principle but, as I said, we are concerned about that new section. We welcome the vaccination education initiatives and recommend that the Government examine this issue carefully and consider the inclusion of a sunset clause to ensure that there is an early review of the bill.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (11:49):** I contribute to debate on the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017. The Public Health Act relates primarily to the protection of public health in relation to infectious diseases. The object of the bill is to amend the Public Health Act 2010 as the result of a statutory review of that Act. The 2016 statutory review of the Act was subject to more than 200 submissions. The report found that overall the objectives of the Act remain valid, but it recommended that a new objective be added relating to the monitoring of diseases and conditions. In addition, the report recommended a range of amendments to ensure that the Act can best protect public health. The bill follows on from the review of the Act and from subsequent developments in relation to public health. The bill incorporates two Labor private members' bills: a ban on eyeball tattooing—of which notice was given in the other place—and a private member's bill about the vaccination of children attending childcare facilities, which was introduced by the Hon. Walt Secord.

I will speak on the vaccination provisions in this bill. Vaccination is a cornerstone of public health and continues to be a safe, cost-effective means of effectively preventing suffering caused by once common and fatal illnesses that have wreaked havoc and caused misery in our communities. Measles, tetanus, polio and diphtheria are just some of the diseases that once caused fear, pain, suffering and death but which are now, thankfully, largely controlled in Australia due to the success of vaccination. But not everyone can be safely vaccinated and vaccines are not always fully effective. Young babies cannot be fully protected by vaccination, and some children and adults cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons.

That is why it is the responsibility of anybody without a medical contraindication to be vaccinated and to ensure their children are vaccinated. When we vaccinate all people who safely can be vaccinated, we provide a greater level of protection to those who cannot. The higher the rate of vaccination among those who can be vaccinated, the lower will be the rate of infection among those who cannot be vaccinated safely. Thankfully, a significant proportion of the community fully supports vaccination, as evidenced by the more than 93 per cent of New South Wales children who are registered as being fully vaccinated. However, the rate of vaccination needs to be 95 per cent and above to protect those who cannot be vaccinated.

Disturbingly, there are small groups in the community who not only do not support vaccination but also peddle lies and misinformation about the safety and effectiveness of vaccination. Immunisation data released in June this year showed that just 70.5 per cent of five-year-old children were fully vaccinated in the area encompassing the Sydney central business district, Millers Point, Haymarket, Dawes Point and The Rocks. More than one in four five-year-old children who live in this area—122 in total—have not received all the vaccinations listed on the National Immunisation Program Schedule. Burwood and Burwood North, in postcode 2481, have the second-lowest vaccination rate at 72.8 per cent. The Byron Bay area has the third worst vaccination rate at 73.2 per cent.

When these figures were released Labor's shadow Minister for Health, the Hon. Walt Secord, was quick to call on the State Government to support Labor's tougher anti-vaccination legislation, including removing the

conscientious objector provisions in day care centres. The shadow Minister introduced the Public Health Amendment (Vaccination of Children Attending Child Care Facilities) Bill 2017 on 6 April 2017. Contrary to what the member for Myall Lakes said earlier in the debate, the bill before us does adopt the provisions of that earlier bill. From the start, Labor recognised the importance of maintaining the highest possible level of immunisation in childcare facilities. Childcare facilities can be a breeding ground for the spread of disease due to the number of children in close proximity in a confined space. Children are also not very good at making sure anything that comes out of them when they cough or sneeze does not reach other children.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Some adults have that problem too.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** Indeed, which is why we have a flu epidemic. Herd immunity is especially important in a day care centre. Increasing the proportion of children in child care who are vaccinated will help to protect those who cannot be safely vaccinated or who are not yet fully vaccinated. Currently, one in five children across the world do not have access to life-saving vaccines, which puts them at risk of contracting deadly but preventable diseases such as measles, polio, tetanus and whooping cough. Each year, nearly two million children die for want of a simple vaccination. They often miss out on these life-saving interventions because they live in some of the most isolated communities in the world's poorest countries. Immunisation saves the lives of up to three million children each year, yet one in every five of the world's children still does not have access to life-saving immunisations. Right now, more than 22 million children are at risk of dying from preventable diseases.

The UNICEF Australia has shared tragic stories of the suffering of children who do not have access to vaccines. It tells of 14-month-old Joel in Angola, who had measles and who subsequently contracted an associated brain inflammation disease, meningitis. Every few moments his body stiffens and spasms, his face screws up in a grimace from the pain, and—because measles has also made him blind—he rubs at his eyes while staring, unseeing. All this pain and suffering could have been avoided if only Joel had received a vaccination. That is why it is incumbent on us in this place to ensure the best possible vaccination rates in this State. Despite this, and despite how far we have come in getting rid of these preventable diseases in our community, clusters of vaccine refusers are popping up in prominent suburbs across our State. That is just unfathomable to me. In only July this year *Vaxxed* was screened in my electorate. The central premise of *Vaxxed* is that the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine may be leading to an epidemic of autism diagnoses in children.

The Act in its current form provides that principals of childcare facilities must not enrol a child unless they first obtain a vaccination certificate in an approved form indicating that the child is appropriately vaccinated for their age, or is on a catch-up schedule, or has a medical contraindication to vaccination, or has parents who have a conscientious objection to vaccination. When this amendment was made in 2013 the approved forms were the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register history statement and exemption forms. Provisions in the Act allow a principal to enrol an unvaccinated child in child care when their parents are conscientious objectors so long as their parents provided the relevant forms. At the time those provisions were introduced they were in line with Commonwealth requirements relating to certain social security payments, such as the Child Care Benefit.

However, in 2015 the Commonwealth passed the Social Services Legislation Amendment (No Jab, No Pay) Act, which removes the ability of parents who are conscientious objectors to vaccination to receive the Child Care Benefit, Child Care Rebate and the Family Tax Benefit Part A end of year supplement. These changes commenced on 1 January 2016. The Commonwealth amendment required New South Wales to approve a new form in this State to record details about conscientious objectors, being the "Interim vaccination objection form for enrolment in NSW child care centres", which was valid from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016. Changes to vaccination and childcare enrolment have been made in other jurisdictions. The Victorian Government recently passed legislation requiring a child to be vaccinated or to have a medical contraindication to vaccination before being enrolled in child care. While this legislation contains a number of exemptions, there is no conscientious objector exemption. Queensland also amended its legislation to allow a childcare facility to refuse to enrol a child who is unvaccinated.

The bill amends the Public Health Act to bring it in line with other jurisdictions. It will remove the ability of a childcare facility to enrol a child who is unvaccinated due to the so-called conscientious objections of their parents. This bill adopts Labor's plan that a childcare facility will be able to enrol only a child who is fully vaccinated, but sensible exceptions are applied to children who are undergoing treatment such as chemotherapy and to those in need of emergency out-of-home care. The bill also allows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and guardians of children extra time in which to provide vaccination records. Vaccinations and their availability is a success story of the Australian modern era. Our position on this side of the House has long been clear: We strongly support vaccinations and need to continue to increase the rates of vaccination if we are to protect the public health of all citizens. I support the bill. I particularly support the vaccination provisions in the bill.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (11:59):** I support the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017 on the basis that good public health policy is necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and health of the people of New South Wales. On some occasions this necessitates the Government taking steps to protect people from the consequences of their own behaviour or decisions. Usually such consequences can be foreseen or at least anticipated. The bill addresses one such area of behaviour. Proposed section 39A of this bill makes it an offence for any person other than a suitably qualified medical practitioner to carry out the niche practice of eyeball tattooing. Eyeball tattooing fascinates me for one reason: I wonder why. I do not believe that legislators should tell people how they should treat their bodies or live their lives. But if people are going to be involved in such practices, the Government and the Parliament have a responsibility to ensure that any procedures of this nature are done safely and with health front of mind.

On the NSW Health website there is a fact sheet on eyeball tattooing. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists advises against eyeball tattooing and views the practice as an extremely dangerous and unnecessary procedure. For those members who are considering it—I doubt any are—I will tell the House what eyeball tattooing is. "Eyeball tattooing" is a term describing the permanent colouring of the white of the eye, called the sclera. It is performed by injecting ink with a needle underneath the top layer of the eye onto the sclera in several locations from where the ink then slowly spreads to cover all of the white of the eye. This procedure is undertaken by only a few tattoo artists around the world. People need to understand that unlike other tattooing it is permanent and non-reversible.

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists considers eyeball tattooing a high-risk procedure and recommends that it be performed only by a doctor when medically indicated, such as for specific eye abnormalities. The college advises against eyeball tattooing for cosmetic purposes as it is an extremely dangerous and unnecessary procedure. Some of the known risks of eyeball tattooing include perforation of the eye which can lead to blindness; retinal detachment; infections; the transmission of blood-borne viruses such as hepatitis B and C and HIV, generally from equipment that is not cleaned properly; bleeding and infection at the injection sites; delayed diagnosis of medical conditions as the true colour of the sclera is now hidden—for example, jaundice is often a first symptom for many diseases; adverse reactions to the ink; sensitivity to light; and staining of the surrounding tissue due to ink migration.

As I said, for the life of me I do not know why anyone, for cosmetic reasons, would even consider eyeball tattooing. However, it is a person's choice and I support the part of the bill which requires that only qualified specialists or medical practitioners can perform the procedures. I believe that medical practitioners would be averse to carrying out such a practice for cosmetic purposes and would do it only for the health and safety of a patient. I would like to touch on the issue of vaccinations. Many members in the House and many people in the community know about Rotary Australia and Rotary International and their longstanding campaign and fundraising efforts for the eradication of polio. I believe that there are now only 85 cases of polio in the world, and all of these cases are in Pakistan. The significant difference in the number of people suffering polio has come about purely because of vaccination. Through the decades, parents have been responsible enough to recognise the insidious nature of polio and other diseases and the unnecessary impact that those diseases have on children and the wider health of society.

I take exception to a certain section of our community who believe that vaccination is a problem in itself. I do not believe that the anti-vaxxers, as they call themselves, have the interests of their children at heart with regard to vaccinations: Nor do I believe that they have at heart the interests of the wider public. If the anti-vaxxers had their way, we would have a lot more than 80-odd cases of polio in the world today. There would be literally hundreds of thousands of people suffering, completely and utterly unnecessarily, from polio. The provisions of this bill will mean that children who go to preschool must be vaccinated. This will protect their own health and also the health of other members of the preschool community with whom they come into contact.

As mentioned before, and we all understand, it is not just children who inadvertently spread disease through human contact, sneezing, coughing, and shaking hands; adults and people of all ages do it. As responsible members of our community, everyone must do everything to keep themselves, their families and their households safe. We must keep the health and safety of the wider community front of mind. I fully support the bill. I ask anyone who is considering eyeball tattooing to reconsider their reasons for doing so. I am not making a judgement; I am just asking them to consider why they would want to do it. More importantly, I ask the anti-vaxxers to consider the health of their children and their families, members of their local communities and the good health of our society. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:08):** The Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017 makes a number of amendments to laws surrounding public health following a statutory review of the Public Health Act 2010. My contribution will focus on changes to the State's response to sexually transmitted infections on which the bill takes some forward steps and some concerning steps. On a positive note, the bill removes the

need to de-identify an HIV test request form. I understand that this will help clinicians know whether an HIV test has been ordered. That is important when there is more than one clinician involved in the care of a patient. Each clinician should be able to know what tests have been ordered so that tests are not repeated or, worse, that tests are left undone because it is assumed they have already been ordered. Although we no longer see advertisements with a grim reaper inciting fear of people with HIV and AIDS, the stigma associated with the conditions has not disappeared. I welcome the Government's decision to continue to require that positive results be de-identified.

I support the provisions in the bill that remove the current requirement for persons with a sexually transmitted infection [STI] to notify sexual partners of their STI status. No other State or Territory has these disclosure laws, which fail to acknowledge the shared responsibility of practising safe sex to prevent the spread of infections as well as increase stigma and provide a disincentive for being tested. However, there are some concerning elements of the bill. Unfortunately, the Government is considering making it a criminal offence for someone with an STI to not practise safe sex, with excessive penalties of up to \$11,000 or six months in prison. Sexually transmitted infections are a health matter. Making them a criminal matter will have serious consequences and add to stigma and discrimination.

The threat of criminal sanctions could discourage people with an STI from contacting former partners to tell them of their STI status. Alarming, being tested will be less attractive because a positive result would create the potential for criminal consensual sex. More people could be captured by the already overburdened criminal justice system, especially young people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal people and drug users. There is no evidence that these changes are needed. The spread of sexually transmitted infections is no more widespread than are other infections to warrant criminal justice intervention. Most STIs are quickly and painlessly treated with antibiotics. HIV treatment can achieve viral suppression so that most people living with HIV are undetectable and the virus is not transmittable. People with a positive STI status are less likely to pass on their infection. Existing laws in the Crimes Act already deal with someone who intentionally or recklessly puts others at risk.

The highest risk of infection comes from people who have not been tested and who do not know their STI status. They may be less likely to practise safe sex because they do not know they are infectious, or they may be more infectious because they have a higher viral load and have not started viral suppressant treatment. The focus must be on early testing and this is not promoted under a model that criminalises sex in private relationships between consenting adults when someone has knowledge of their STI status. New South Wales should be proud of its response to HIV and AIDS. Contracting HIV is no longer a death sentence, and the rate of infection in the State has been stable for the past decade. The number of people dying or having serious health crises has decreased significantly. Health services no longer need to provide dedicated wards for people with HIV-defined illnesses, and most health services have integrated their responses to HIV into broad health services.

Massive advances in treatment and understanding of how to prevent transmission of the HIV virus have been made. These advances mean that the lives of people with HIV are almost the same as the rest of the population. Early treatment can reduce the presence of the HIV virus in the body and help both to prevent HIV-related illnesses and transmission to others. New South Wales did not become a world leader in HIV prevention and treatment through criminal sanctions. We did it through a health-based approach and we must continue with this approach if we want to reach our target of ending HIV transmissions by 2020. It is also important to acknowledge the work of the current Minister for Health and indeed the former Minister of Health, which has led the way in the approach adopted by New South Wales towards HIV and AIDS and the wonderful goal that is in sight: ending HIV by 2020.

I also acknowledge the work of the AIDS Council of New South Wales [ACON], who raised some of the concerns I have mentioned during my speech. I foreshadow that I will move an amendment at the consideration in detail stage to require a review in two years of new section 79 in schedule 1, item [32]. That will provide the Government with an opportunity to assess whether there have been any adverse impacts on rates of STI testing. The Act will be reviewed in five years, which I believe is too late, particularly if criminal sanctions impact negatively on the spread of HIV.

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (12:13):** I join in debate on the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017 and note that the bill has been introduced as a result of a review of the Public Health Act 2010 conducted in 2016 by the Ministry of Health. The review was designed to ascertain whether the objectives of the 2010 Act remain valid and the provisions remain appropriate. This bill will implement recommendations of the review. The bill addresses a wide range of issues. I will focus on the Pap Test Register provisions that constitute a significant change for women because Pap tests will be dealt with differently in the future. Those provisions are very sensible because the register will be kept by the Commonwealth rather than each State maintaining separate registers. That is particularly important for people who move interstate, as many of us do and as I did for a year. It is convenient to know that the register will apply nationally and will be kept in one central place.

One of the many ways in which the community is kept safe is through the Pap test for women. Most women undergo screening for cervical cancer every two years through the Pap test. The majority of those tests are conducted by general practitioners. Each time I visit my doctor, her first question usually is, "When was your last Pap test?" It is good that she can quickly look that up. I usually do not want to admit how long ago it was because I actually do not relish having it done. However, it needs to be done and it is important to have it done. Pap test screening is a vitally important program. It reduces illness and deaths resulting from cervical cancer in our community. The Pap Test Register is an important register and has been maintained by the New South Wales Cancer Institute on behalf of NSW Health. Currently the Public Health Act 2010 includes provisions relating to the establishment and management of the register.

Following a review of the evidence for cervical screening and better technology, the Commonwealth Medical Services Advisory Committee recommended moving to a new cervical screening test. While the current Pap test can detect abnormal cell changes, the new cervical screening test will detect the human papilloma virus [HPV] infection, which can cause abnormal cell changes prior to the development of cancer. This is an important innovation concerning an illness that many women do not know they have until it is far too late. The new test is more accurate than the Pap test in detecting precursors of cervical cancer. The procedure for collecting a sample for the new cervical screening test is similar to the procedure for having a Pap test. For a female, nothing will particularly change. A sample of cells will be tested for the high-risk HPV types. If the human papilloma virus is detected, cells in the sample will be automatically examined to look for any abnormalities. The results will be used to inform further testing and/or clinical management.

A new National Cancer Screening Register also will be established to hold cervical and bowel cancer screening records. As I stated earlier, the Commonwealth register will replace the State and Territory Pap Test Registers. From 1 December this year the National Cervical Screening Program will introduce changes to the target age group, frequency and type of screening tests that will be administered. However, it is important that in the meantime women continue with the biennial cervical screening tests. A new national register will provide additional benefits as it also will apply to cancers other than cervical cancer. Importantly, it will ensure that women who move interstate are not lost in follow-up, which is particularly important. There is nothing worse than trying to get all your records back together again.

As the Commonwealth will establish the national register, retaining the Pap Test Register provisions in the New South Wales Public Health Act will result in duplications in notifications to both the Commonwealth and New South Wales. There is really no need for that. Therefore, the bill removes provisions in the Act relating to the Pap Test Register. Those provisions will take effect when New South Wales has formally opted into the National Cancer Screening Register and once the national register has commenced. I am sure the Minister has those measures underway. I take this opportunity to discuss vaccines and in particular changes to childhood education vaccination provisions. Recently released figures for Liverpool show that 94.1 per cent of our children are fully immunised.

That still leaves 5.9 per cent who are not vaccinated. That is too many children and young people who are unvaccinated and at risk. The little ones who are in between the first dose of their shots and their booster shots are particularly at risk. The *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* recently alerted the community to a measles outbreak following a person's week-long journey around the Sutherland shire. It is a scary time for a lot of young mums who are trying to remember whether their child who has not had all their vaccinations was at Miranda Westfield when the infected person was there.

It is important that as a community we do everything we can to ensure that we are all vaccinated so that those who cannot be vaccinated or have not yet been able to be vaccinated are protected as much as possible. I was pleased to see the changes in the legislation that prevent unvaccinated children from being enrolled in child care when the child is unvaccinated due to the conscientious objection of the parents. Those parents can object but they should not put other children at risk. It is not appropriate or fair. I took my little one to day care when she was four months old and had not had all of her shots. She is due for the remainder of her shots in about three weeks time. It is daunting for parents to hand over their little precious bundles knowing that there could be unvaccinated children present. As parents, we want to protect children. I am pleased that the Government has taken on that responsibility as well by ensuring that these places are safe.

Overwhelming scientific evidence shows that vaccination is safe. We all know that now, or we all should. Vaccination is highly effective in preventing disease and it needs to be done. It is an important message to send that vaccination helps to reduce the transmission of diseases. The Liverpool area has a high rate of chickenpox outbreaks, particularly due to people visiting family members who have not been immunised. It is particularly important that our young ones are vaccinated. I notice everybody started scratching the moment I mentioned chickenpox. Maybe it would help if I mention the word "nits"! It is particularly important that we look after our young ones.

I will briefly mention the Save the Date to Vaccinate campaign, which comprises a brilliant phone app that sends reminders. It would be good if the reminders were sent a week or two before the vaccination is due so appointments can be booked rather than needing an appointment there and then. But it is a great little reminder that vaccinations are due. No parent likes taking their child to get their shots. It is horrible, but it needs to be done. Parents are doing the right thing by vaccinating their children, thereby ensuring that they are safe and looked after. I commend the bill to the House and thank the Minister for making these important changes, which will make a difference for the future health of our community.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (12:22):** I contribute to the debate on the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017. I note that the Opposition will not oppose the bill but will seek to make some worthy amendments. The bill is a result of a 2016 statutory review of the Public Health Act 2010, which was the subject of a great number of submissions. As an omnibus bill, the proposed legislation makes a variety of alterations to the Public Health Act with respect to drinking water, eyeball tattooing, and legionella prevention measures, and proposes amendments to section 79 of the Act, which deals with obligations for persons who carry sexually transmitted diseases and who are engaged in sexual activity. Some amendments contained in this bill are more controversial than are others. While Government members in the other place previously deigned not to support the shadow Minister for Health, the Hon. Walt Secord, when he attempted to ban eyeball tattooing and support vaccination in childcare centres, they now find themselves supporting these very same initiatives in this bill.

This bill is something that I would have expected from the current Minister for Health, who, in his other portfolios, was always prepared to accept a good idea irrespective whence it came. The Public Health Act 2010 is a fine piece of Labor legislation. Its objectives are: to promote, protect and improve public health; to control the risks to public health; to promote the control of infectious diseases; to prevent the spread of infectious diseases; and to recognise the role of local government in protecting public health. The Labor Party has always put the health of Australians first and pioneered Australia's healthcare system to what it is today. From the introduction of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme [PBS] in 1947 by the Chifley Government to the publicly funded universal healthcare system Medibank in 1974 by the Whitlam Government, to the universal healthcare system Medicare by the Hawke Government in 1984, and to the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme by the Gillard Government, Labor has ensured that all Australians have the highest quality of life and care available.

When I was a young boy, Australia had just emerged from the worst polio epidemic in its history. Thousands of Australian children were diagnosed with polio every year. Polio claimed the lives of over a thousand Australian citizens and crippled many more in the decade to 1955. Before that, diphtheria and whooping cough claimed thousands more lives and smallpox killed nearly half a billion people around the world in the twentieth century. Polio has been officially eradicated from Australia since 2007. Just recently, India was declared polio free. If all goes according to plan, next year the world will be polio free, with the scourge completely eradicated by 2018. This is no accident of history. Polio, like smallpox, has been eradicated thanks to vaccination.

Jonas Salk's original polio vaccine and Albert Sabin's later improvement have saved the lives of many millions of people and have contributed to a vast improvement in the lives of potentially hundreds of millions of others. The immunology of vaccination predates all modern pharmaceutical companies and their history stretches back to the first inoculation by Edward Jenner in 1796 against the variola virus, also known as smallpox. Regrettably, a particular strain of thought about vaccination has arisen in some Australian communities. These people deny the efficacy of vaccination, ignore or distort the evidence, and create wild conspiracy theories to justify why, when vaccines are supported so firmly by the medical establishment and governments of all types, only they are burdened with the truth about vaccination.

Astonishingly, vaccine-preventable diseases are coming back. Whooping cough is not uncommon, especially in communities with low or very low vaccination rates. This is not always as a consequence of poverty or lack of access to health care. Early last year, a measles outbreak occurred in the well-to-do Melbourne suburb of Brunswick. The National Health Performance Authority declared blue ribbon suburbs like Mosman, Manly, and the northern beaches at risk of vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks. Even in my electorate of Heffron, vaccine rates in suburbs such as Rosebery have fallen below the 85 per cent mark. That is a grave danger. I fear the only thing that will wake us up to the dangers of their views is a young child being killed by polio, a disease eradicated in this country a decade ago and that ceased to be a serious public health concern many decades ago. In the literature, these people are referred to as "conscientious objectors". This phrase, like its colleague "climate sceptic", is far too generous to the antediluvians that it describes. They are anti-vaccination; they are anti-vaxxers. Conscientious objectors refused to go to Vietnam to kill those with whom they had no quarrel. Anti-vaxxers refuse to undertake a safe and sensible procedure that saves lives, prevents disease and contributes to a higher quality of life for themselves, their children, and those around them. There is nothing conscientious about their refusal.

The shadow Minister for Health in the other place moved an amendment to the Public Health Act 2010, which this bill now contains also, to prevent anti-vaxxers from endangering the lives of those who are

immunocompromised or may have medical contraindications to a particular vaccine. Schedule 1 items [38] and [39] would prevent children who are not vaccinated from being enrolled in a childcare facility, if the only reason for their vaccination status is a belief held by the child's parents, and if they are not on an approved catch-up schedule or do not have a medical contraindication to the vaccine. Those sections also make it an offence for a director of a childcare centre to permit children to be enrolled without receiving a vaccination certificate or a medical certificate, and to store that information accordingly, with penalties of up to \$5,500.

Ensuring that all children who are able to be vaccinated are vaccinated is integral to protecting the health and wellbeing of children who, for one reason or another, are unable to be vaccinated. Vaccine-preventable diseases are substantially less likely to occur in populations with vaccination rates of 95 per cent or above. Around 4 per cent of the population has a valid medical reason to refuse vaccination due to allergy or other contraindication. The Federal Coalition Government implemented the "No Jab, No Pay" policy in 2014, which removed eligibility for Family Tax Benefit A from parents of unvaccinated children in 2016, and subsequent policy changes were made in New South Wales to restrict early childhood centres from enrolling unvaccinated children. That amendment has seen a 3 per cent increase in the immunisation rate for one- to five-year-olds—from 90 to 93 per cent. At July 2016, nearly 6,000 children whose parents had listed themselves as vaccine objectors had been consequently immunised.

Nearly 150,000 children have also had their vaccination schedule brought up to date as a consequence of the Commonwealth Government's changes. These amendments are supported by the amendment moved to the Public Health Act by the shadow Minister for Health and contained within this bill. It is my duty and that of my Labor colleagues to legislate for positive health outcomes for everyone in New South Wales, which includes encouraging the use of vaccinations for vaccine-preventable diseases [VPDs]. The amendment does not seek to remove parental consent or to forcefully inject children, but seeks to prevent the spread of VPDs in the event of an outbreak within those populations most at risk; that is, unvaccinated, medical contraindicated, and immunocompromised children. [*Extension of time*]

It is the role of legislators to protect those children, particularly those who are unable to be vaccinated for various medical reasons. The research surrounding the efficacy and safety of each vaccine on the National Immunisation Program [NIP] Schedule is evident and is reported in various peer-reviewed journals, including *Vaccine*, the *Lancet*, and the *British Medical Journal*, to name a few. Since the introduction of childhood vaccination in Australia in 1932, deaths from VPDs have fallen by 99 per cent, with the population increasing threefold in the same period. The health and quality of life that Australian citizens enjoy today is evidence in itself of the long-term health outcomes of the combination of proper sanitation, pharmaceutical medications and antibiotics provided by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme [PBS], universal health care, and a thorough vaccination program.

The NIP has been under constant review since its introduction, and vaccines have been added and removed as new scientific evidence becomes available. The vaccines currently in use in the NIP have undergone rigorous four-phase clinical trials to ensure their safety. While it may be true that vaccines are not 100 per cent safe, the majority of the less than 1 per cent who do have an adverse event experience only minor symptoms like fever, injection-site swelling or rash, with symptoms lasting less than a week. A helpful analogy is that, while a seatbelt may give a person whiplash in the aftermath of a car accident, at least it saved their life. Vaccines that are unsafe rarely leave phase one clinical trials and are almost impossible to pass through phase two and phase three clinical trials.

The legislation before us today does not apply to children who are immunocompromised or who have medical contraindications to a particular vaccine. There is still a long way to go in the fight against vaccine-preventable diseases and for many of the infectious pathogens, like poliovirus, for which the only cure is vaccination prior to infection to prevent the lifelong disability that accompanies the disease. The bill before us today is one such example. I am advised that the shadow Minister for Health seeks to make a number of amendments to the bill with respect to the sexually transmissible infection [STI] and other disease orders and public health orders so that two years from the commencement of this bill they can be examined to determine their efficacy and opportunities for future reform. The Opposition also will request that the secretary of the Department of Health publish annually the number of public health orders with precision as to the disease category, rather than composite figures. I am pleased to support those amendments and the bill, subsequent to those amendments.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (12:36):** The Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017 makes a number of changes to the Public Health Act 2010 following a recent statutory review of that Act and other developments in public health. Members can be assured that these changes will be very effective. I have confidence in the Minister for Health, who is doing a wonderful job, including in my area in relation to the Concord Repatriation General Hospital. Members of my community are forever grateful for the \$341 million upgrade to the Concord hospital that was announced as part of the budget. The New South Wales Government is committed

to protecting the community from vaccine-preventable diseases. Changes to the Public Health Act were introduced into the Parliament on 10 August this year to strengthen the childcare enrolment requirements in relation to immunisation. The changes prevent unvaccinated children from being enrolled in child care when the child is unvaccinated due to the conscientious objection of their parents. This amendment will reinforce the overwhelming scientific evidence that vaccination is safe and highly effective in preventing disease.

The Prime Minister wrote to Premiers in March this year calling for a national approach to the removal of conscientious objection to vaccination for children in child care, which is sensible. Our Government will continue to work with the Commonwealth Government on this very important matter. Excluding unvaccinated children from attending child care will do a number of things. Firstly, it will send a very strong public health message about the importance of vaccination. Secondly, it will reinforce the overwhelming scientific evidence that vaccination is safe and highly effective in preventing disease. Thirdly, it may help to reduce the transmission of disease in certain geographical areas. Removing this exemption will align with the Australian Government's "No Jab, No Pay" measures, under which certain child care and Family Tax Benefits are dependent on a child being vaccinated. Importantly, the vast majority of children will not be affected by the changes referred to as more than 93 per cent of children in this State are already fully vaccinated at five years of age.

While this Government supports early educational opportunities for children, it is also very important to support vaccination in order to protect those children who cannot be vaccinated for very legitimate reasons. For example, some children are too young to be vaccinated and some others have a legitimate medical reason not to be vaccinated. Our Government does not consider it appropriate to allow parents who choose not to vaccinate their children to place others at risk. While children who are not vaccinated due to the conscientious objections of their parents will be unable to enrol in child care, the Government does recognise that there may be some groups in the community that have difficulties in producing vaccination records at enrolment.

These groups include children in emergency out-of-home care or a child who has been evacuated during a state of emergency. These groups will have a grace period of 12 weeks to produce vaccination records. In addition, the bill amends the public health regulation to extend the 12-week grace period to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and all children in out-of-home care. Yesterday there were parents in Martin Place protesting about this legislation. They have probably got their hearts in the right place, but unfortunately not their heads. I understand their right to protest but I disagree with their arguments.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** The evidence is not with them.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** As I have said, we fully back the science. The amendments extend the Government's existing efforts to protect our communities from these very preventable diseases. Many once common diseases of childhood are no longer seen in New South Wales and with the continual upgrading of the vaccination program we are seeing new population-wide benefits of vaccination across the State. The Save the Date to Vaccinate campaign commenced in 2013 to provide parents with key messages about the importance of timely vaccination. It includes a very popular phone application—referred to by the member for Holsworthy—that reminds parents when their children's vaccinations are due. There was also the 2017 campaign which included television, print, digital and social media components.

The Government also rapidly responded to evidence of the emergence of a new strain of meningococcal disease, meningococcal W. On 1 May 2017 the Government funded the meningococcal W response program that commenced offering vaccinations to approximately 180,000 senior secondary students this year. In 2015 the Government funded the whooping cough vaccine for all pregnant women at a cost of around \$2.5 million per year. I am happy to support this bill. The Minister is doing great work in the Health portfolio in this State, which is a very challenging area. At any one time there could be a health emergency in the many public institutions. His heart is in the right place. He is very sympathetic and humane and is doing a very good job in a very challenging environment.

The bill amends section 3 to provide that an object of the Act is to monitor diseases and conditions affecting public health. This will ensure that the object is better aligned with the functions under the Act. The intention of the bill is to try to get as many people immunised as possible. Currently 93 per cent of children in New South Wales are vaccinated. But we do not want all the good work to come undone because of a small number who are not vaccinated. There are some legitimate reasons not to immunise. We understand that but people should not use those reasons to choose not to immunise. The good work is being done by the vast majority to eradicate diseases that can be dealt with by immunisation. Science has proved that the more people we immunise the better. Certain conditions that were epidemic years ago are very curable and preventable now. With as many people as possible immunised, many of the ailments we face today will be a thing of the past. I commend the Minister for Health and I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research)**  
**(12:44):** In reply: I thank all honourable members who contributed to this very significant debate on the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill 2017. The member for Port Stephens reviewed various aspects of the bill and was generally supportive. The member for Terrigal spoke in particular about vaccination and was extremely focused, and importantly so, on vaccination in childcare facilities. The member for Campbelltown focused on the very significant issue of vaccination in child care, and eyeball tattooing. The member for Myall Lakes raised issues with childcare vaccination and the provision of nurses for high-care patients. I emphasise that in that regard we have had previous debate in this place.

We need to acknowledge and remember that the Federal Government has changed the definition of what are commonly called nursing homes and such facilities are no longer classified as either high care or low care. It is now a matter of each individual facility ensuring that if they have high-care patients they have the appropriate staff, and that would almost certainly include a registered nurse. In other areas, in particular in regional areas, where they may not have high-care patients they may choose to have other staff to provide outlets for the residents, such as outings, so that they are enjoying aspects of their life. They may choose to have physiotherapists, occupational therapists or music therapists, who may be more appropriate in their particular facility.

The member for Summer Hill spoke about a number of aspects of the bill. In particular, she acknowledged the importance of vaccination in child care and considered the concerns of some of the stakeholders with section 79. I understand those concerns and there have been some discussions this morning about the Labor Opposition—and possibly the member for Sydney—moving amendments. There have been some collaborative views on that, which I will address in due course if they are moved. I understand and am sympathetic to their concerns. The member for Seven Hills spoke about the bill's overall approach ensuring the safety of the community in a number of areas, including vaccination and eyeball tattooing.

The member for Lake Macquarie was very supportive of most of the bill but in particular was concerned about section 79. I think he referred to it as being a regressive step. I understand his views, although I do not agree with him. Hopefully, we may be able to find some sensible middle ground on that through some amendments that I understand will be moved by the member for Sydney after collaboration with the Opposition, and indeed discussions with me. If we can offer that to him I hope he will not oppose the bill and perhaps may even support it. I appreciate the member for Riverstone's concerns about vaccinations. The member for Orange mentioned nursing homes, and I have explained that. The member for Balmain raised a number of issues, including reasonable precautions with section 79. The member for Charlestown raised a number of issues. I thank the member for Coogee, who focused on public health orders. They may be subject to review, which is being discussed with the member for Sydney. I note that the Opposition sought the Government's agreement on that issue. I thank the member for Upper Hunter for his detailed consideration of the bill, particularly in relation to eyeball tattooing.

The member for Sydney has been constructive and positive and has discussed a number of issues with me on behalf of the community. He has foreshadowed amendments to proposed section 79 and proposed section 62. I thank the member for Holsworthy for her timely comments about the national register for Pap smear tests. Of course, there will be changes to the process and the recording of the outcomes. It certainly makes a lot of sense to have a national register. It was not mentioned that hopefully it will not be as important for our young people in future because immunisation with Gardasil and its variants of young women commenced in 2007 and of young men a few years later. That is making a huge difference to the likelihood of human papilloma virus infection in young people. I thank the member for Heffron for his comments about vaccination and the other issues he canvassed. The member for Drummoyne particularly focused on vaccination issues.

There is no doubt that the Public Health Act is an important piece of legislation for the community. It is the primary public health legislation and it is vital that it remain up to date and relevant to ensure that it can protect the community from serious public health risks. The recent review of the Act found that it was working well, but that a range of changes could be made to better protect public health, and the Government has responded in a number of areas. As almost every member who spoke in this debate noted, the Government has moved to strengthen childcare enrolment requirements with regard to vaccination.

The Government has clarified provisions dealing with the cleaning and maintenance of water-cooling towers to guard further against outbreaks of legionnaire's disease. It has also restricted to appropriately qualified medical practitioners the practice of eyeball tattooing. I met with a number of medical practitioners and there was no question that they were concerned about unqualified people thinking it is acceptable to undertake such a procedure. It is not. If we need to be reminded about how dangerous it can be when unqualified people carry out such procedures we need only think about the recent terrible death of a woman as a result of a so-called cosmetic procedure undertaken in a beauty salon. We must be extremely cautious about matters that can affect our health and potentially our lives.

This bill amends the definition of "skin penetration" to include procedures that involve the penetration of a mucus membrane. It also replaces an existing section of the Act, which requires a person to inform potential sexual partners if they have a sexually transmitted infection [STI], with a new section requiring a person with an STI to take reasonable precautions against spreading the disease or condition. The Government extended the rarely used power to make public health orders to include people who come into contact with someone with a listed infectious disease. It also extended the responsibilities of local government authorities to ensure further that private water suppliers and water carters comply with safety requirements.

I understand that the Chamber will be dealing shortly with an amendment to be moved by the member for Sydney. As I said, the amendment deals with proposed section 79 and public health orders in proposed section 62. I acknowledge that the Opposition and the member for Sydney had similar concerns and that the amendment relates to those concerns. The Government believes that we should work collaboratively on public health issues. If the amendment is as I anticipate, it is likely the Government will agree to it because I think it involves a logical review. I confirm that the bill before the House seeks to make changes to ensure the Public Health Act operates effectively. Accordingly, I commend it to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Mr Alex Greenwich.**

#### **Consideration in Detail**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** By leave: I shall propose the bill in groups clauses and schedules.

**Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:56):** I move amendment No. 1:

No. 1 **Review of amendments relating to public health orders and sexually transmitted diseases**

Page 11. Schedule 1. Insert after line 6:

**[58] Section 136**

Omit the section. Insert instead:

**136 Review of amendments made by the Public Health Amendment (Review) Act 2017**

- (1) The Minister will review the amendments made to section 62 and Division 1 of Part 5 by the public *Health Amendment (Review) Act 2017* to determine whether the policy objectives of those amendments remain valid and whether the terms of those provisions as amended remain appropriate for securing those objectives.
- (2) The review is to be undertaken as soon as possible after the period of 2 years from the commencement of the amendments to section 62.
- (3) A report on the outcome of the review is to be tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months after the end of the period of 2 years from the commencement of the amendments to section 62.

New South Wales is a world leader in the treatment and prevention of sexually transmitted infections, particularly HIV and AIDS. This has been achieved through a health-based approach that has encouraged frequent testing, early treatment and safe sex practices. I share the concern expressed by the STI sector that amendments in proposed section 79 risk undermining that achievement by discouraging people, who are at risk of contracting an STI, from being tested. I know that is not the Government's intention, so it is vital that these changes are monitored to ensure we maintain our high rate of testing.

This amendment provides for a review of the new provisions two years after they commence ahead of the five-year review of the entire Act. This is an important part of achieving our goal of no HIV transmissions by 2020. The amendment is similar in substance to those flagged by the Opposition and followed discussions with the Minister. In supporting the amendment, this Parliament is continuing its multipartisan approach to the prevention of HIV and AIDS and supporting those with the conditions. The amendment provides for the Minister to review section 62 and, as flagged, section 79, which is in division 1 of part 5 of the Public Health Amendment Act, to determine whether the policy objectives remain valid and whether the terms of the provisions, as amended, remain appropriate for securing those objectives. I commend the amendment to the House.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (12:58):** As I indicated during the second reading debate, I understand the concerns expressed by some in the community about the Government's approach to proposed section 79. From the Government's point of view, it strikes a balance. It is very different from the previous provisions in regard to persons who have a sexually transmitted disease such as HIV. However, I stress that as long as an individual takes reasonable precautions they should be absolved from any obligations and any likely legal consequences.

In the Government's view, there needs to be some way to ensure that people who have a sexually transmissible disease [STI] take reasonable steps or precautions so that it is less likely they will transmit that disease. Earlier today, a member queried what would be considered to be reasonable precautions. It was suggested that reasonable precautions may have to be determined by a court. If the viral load is very insignificant it is arguable that you may not have to use, for example, protection such as a condom. Equally, it is logical and sensible—as in all sexual practices—to use a condom. That should be the starting point. Hopefully that will be considered as a reasonable precaution, and I think it will be.

With regard to the amendment moved by the member for Sydney, I know from discussions with him and other Opposition members that they share a similar view. The Government is inclined to accept the amendment on the basis that there is a genuine concern about the provisions that are being inserted into the legislation at section 136, section 62, and division 1 of part 5. We will not oppose the amendment. In respect of section 62, the bill will create a new category of public health orders in relation to persons who have come into contact with a "contact order condition". A contact order condition is one of the following conditions: Avian influenza in humans, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome [MERS] coronavirus, severe acute respiratory syndrome, typhoid or viral haemorrhagic fevers such as Ebola.

Currently a public health order can be made only by an authorised medical practitioner if a person has a condition that is causing a risk to the public. The proposed amendments to section 62 represent a significant shift in the powers of authorised medical practitioners to make a public health order. Under the bill, a medical practitioner would be able to make and authorise a public health order if they are satisfied that the person has come into contact with a contact order condition and is posing a risk to the public. This is a more subjective test than the current requirement that a public health order can be made only if the authorised medical practitioner is satisfied the person has a condition.

The bill includes a number of important safeguards such as setting time limits on contact order conditions and requiring a review by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. However, the Government agrees that the proposed amendment to section 62 represents a significant shift in policy that could interfere with people's liberty. A review of the new provisions after two years would be appropriate and helpful. In respect of division 1 part 5, the bill also proposes a significant policy change in removing the current requirements in section 79 that persons with a sexually transmitted infection notify their sexual partner prior to engaging in sex. The bill instead introduces new requirements on persons with an STI to take reasonable precautions against the spread of the disease. The Government thinks it is appropriate to conduct a statutory review of the provisions after two years. In the circumstances, the member's amendment is accepted and supported.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The member for Sydney has moved an amendment to schedule 1. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that schedule 1 as amended be agreed to.

**Schedule 1 as amended agreed to.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that schedule 2 be agreed to.

**Schedule 2 agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Business of the House*

### **VALEDICTORY SPEECH**

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I move:

That the business of the House be interrupted at 4.00 p.m. to permit the presentation of a valedictory speech by the member for Murray.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Budget*

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

**Debate resumed from 3 August 2017.**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (13:06):** I am resuming my contribution on the budget that was passed earlier this year and how it pertains to my electorate of Wyong. In the first part of my speech I summarised the great road projects that have been undertaken in my electorate. These projects are much needed as the area is experiencing high growth. Just the other day I saw plans to release 6,000 residential blocks in the very near future, and I have been contacted through Facebook and other means by local residents who are wondering how the infrastructure will keep up with that high level of growth. It is good to know that work is being done on the roads, as I have previously outlined.

I also mentioned that the Government announced a new primary school for 1,000 pupils. I have a commitment from the Minister that there will be a public meeting to discuss the provision of both primary and secondary education in the Warnervale area. I also raised that, as it is close to Westfield and the supercentre of Tuggerah and it is used by many young disabled people to get to their day jobs in the Tuggerah Business Park, Tuggerah railway station needs lifts. I am sure that I have mentioned previously in the House that the former Labor Government allocated funds to build those lifts, that one of the awnings had been installed, that the holes had been dug and that, following the 2011 election, those funds were withdrawn and the lifts were never installed. [*Extension of time*]

The following year, in 2012, station staff received a survey that asked them how the lifts were operating—rather humorous given that the lifts were never installed. The former Labor Government intended to install those lifts, and I hope that this Government will finish this project. That brings me to another issue with railway stations—that is, the proposed new North Warnervale railway station adjacent to the proposed town centre in Warnervale, which has been on the books for a very long time. I wrote to the department and put a question on notice about where that was up to. The department indicated that it is watching passenger numbers and will decide, when numbers reach a certain level, to move ahead with that station. Local residents are concerned about that.

As we know, in most areas where the population is growing residents would rather have the infrastructure so that the community grows with the infrastructure rather than having it the other way round. We already have great difficulties getting parking spots at Tuggerah and Wyong stations in the morning. Having a bigger, better station in the Warnervale area, where there are 6,000 new residential blocks, certainly would aid local commuters. I am aware that when stations are added to a line the trains will be slowed—trains have to slow down, take on passengers and then speed up again—but when populations are growing, infrastructure should be supplied.

There was some other good news in the budget for the electorate of Wyong. Originally I thought that both the Toukley and Wyong ambulance stations would be upgraded. I wrote to the Minister asking for a timetable. He indicated that the two ambulance stations will not be upgraded but will be replaced with two new ambulance stations. I certainly will not complain about that; that is very good. Obviously the Minister likes me when it comes to health, as indicated by the non-privatisation of Wyong Hospital, a \$200 million upgrade and two new ambulance stations. He obviously appreciates my very kind lobbying of him. He also recognises the growth that is occurring in that community.

As a local member it is always important to know that there is a time to play politics and a time to work together to get things done for the community. I certainly understand how that game is played. When ministers listen to sound arguments and deliver infrastructure funds I will always congratulate them. I congratulated Minister Stokes when he announced the new school. However, when things do not occur as they should—at Tuggerah railway station the budgeted funding for the lift was taken away—I will be critical. All of us have responsibilities to fight as hard as we can on behalf of our electorates to get our respective pieces of the pie. There was certainly some good news in this budget.

I have spoken to Minister Roberts, the Minister for Planning, because one of the impediments to growth in the Warnervale area is the delivery of water, sewerage, gas and electricity infrastructure. I know that the Minister is aware of some of the difficulties that developers face when they are trying to establish new housing developments. They have to wait for those services to be put in place, which places a strain on the developers and the people who are buying the land. In the Warnervale area—particularly off Warnervale Road and into Virginia and Louisiana—the estates are selling out even before a sod of earth is turned. There is obviously a demand.

People in Sydney understand that if they move to places like the Wyong electorate on the Central Coast they can buy a house for a fraction of the price of a house in Sydney, and also buy a very good lifestyle

I note that the member for Terrigal and the member for South Coast are sitting on the other side of the Chamber. They know that when you move to regional New South Wales you gain benefits with cost of living and lifestyle. But infrastructure—things such as roads and rail—are very important in making sure that people can get to their places of work. I will soon meet with the consortia about the fast train between Newcastle and Sydney that is being considered. For a fraction of the price that is being put into some of the road and rail infrastructure in Sydney, the Illawarra line and the main northern line to Newcastle could be improved, which would provide a better cost benefit because a lot of the infrastructure is already in place.

Areas in the Illawarra, on the South Coast and the Central Coast, and in Newcastle already have schools, hospitals and such things, which means that brand new infrastructure does not need to be built in those areas as it does in some of the Sydney growth areas. There is a really good argument for looking at places such as the Central Coast for investment to get a better return—for both cost of living and lifestyle reasons. I put forward that argument to my colleagues on this side of the House, as do all the regional representatives in the Labor Party. I am sure the regional representatives in the Liberal and Nationals parties put forward those arguments as well. The solution to fixing Sydney is not just about throwing money into Sydney; the solution is in decentralisation and moving people to other parts of the State.

**Debate interrupted.**

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

### **MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITY**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:15):** I inform the House of the work within the Myall Lakes electorate to create a dementia friendly community—a place where people living with dementia are supported to live a high quality of life with meaning, purpose and value. The Myall Lakes electorate is home to the largest number of people living with dementia. Perhaps nowhere in New South Wales is the push for dementia friendly communities more important than it is in the Manning Valley and the Great Lakes. I was honoured to welcome the Hon. John Watkins, chief executive officer of Alzheimer's Australia and formerly of this House—to the Myall Lakes electorate last week. I give thanks to both Taree-Wingham and Great Lakes steering committees for their hard work and also acknowledge some of the dementia friendly businesses, such as the Ashlea Road Boutique, Priceline Forster, the Great Lakes Tackle shop, GBP Partners, LJ Hooker Wingham and the Wingham gymnasium. There are many others going through accreditation now.

### **NETHERLANDS TRIATHLON WORLD TITLE PARTICIPANT LORCAN REDMOND**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend) (13:16):** I congratulate year 11 St Philips Christian College student Lorcan Redmond upon his selection in the Australian junior team competing in the Netherlands triathlon world titles this month. Lorcan decided to pursue triathlons in the long term after witnessing British champion Alistair Brownlee win the triathlon in the 2012 London Olympics. Seventeen-year-old Lorcan's fantastic record includes winning the National All Schools triathlon title for the past four years, and also winning the junior cross-country nationals title in 2013. Lorcan was also one of four Australians chosen to compete in the inaugural English Triathlon Mixed Relay Cup in August. He competed alongside his sporting heroes Jonathan Brownlee and Aaron Royle. We wish Lorcan all the best.

### **TRIBUTE TO LIZ INGRAM**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (13:16):** It is with great sadness that I inform the House of the loss of Liz Ingram, an outstanding member of the community who will be missed by many. Liz devoted many hours to increasing awareness of the role that 905,000 carers play in New South Wales, especially the role of Aboriginal carers. Liz, an Aboriginal carer and elder from Lake Cathie and Port Macquarie, was a long-serving member of the New South Wales Carers Advisory Council and the Ageing, Disability and Home Care [ADHC] Aboriginal Advisory Council.

Liz had 20 years of experience caring for two family members with a mental illness and was a founding member of the New South Wales Carers Advisory Council between 2010 to 2016. Liz contributed to the development of Aboriginal projects in the NSW Carers Strategy 2014-2019 and the review of the New South Wales Carers (Recognition) Act 2010. Following the announcement of the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] in December 2012, Liz worked to provide strategic advice about how to support the smooth transition of Aboriginal people and their families to the NDIS system.

Liz was well liked and respected by her peers. Those who worked alongside Liz expressed their admiration of her as a remarkable woman who never gave up or walked away from a challenge. They said

Aunty Liz was a truly inspiring, kind, resilient and strong Aboriginal woman and an absolute honour to know; they have all been enriched by knowing Liz and grateful to call her a friend. Liz sadly passed away on Friday 16 June 2017. I extend my condolences and deepest respect to Liz, her family and her community. Vale, Liz Ingram.

#### **MOUNT DRUITT NETBALL CARNIVAL**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (13:18):** I congratulate the Mount Druitt Netball Association players on their participation in what is believed to be the first netball carnival dedicated to domestic violence advocacy. The White Ribbon Netball Carnival was held at Blacktown's International Peace Park in late July and actively engaged athletes in both education and awareness of this severe and non-discriminatory issue. It is important for this up-and-coming generation to say no to domestic violence of any form and understand that this behaviour has a devastating impact on communities everywhere. Thank you, Mount Druitt Netball Association, for your advocacy. I encourage other sports and associations to partake in similar efforts to work towards a domestic violence free nation.

#### **BATHURST CAR RACERS BLAKE AND KYLE AUBIN**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst—Minister for Lands and Forestry, and Minister for Racing) (13:19):** I congratulate the talented Aubin brothers, Blake and Kyle, who both come from Bathurst and have been involved in car racing for a very short time. On a number of occasions they have raced around Mount Panorama. The talented young brothers are going from strength to strength. Recently they had their first-class victory at Phillip Island. Last weekend at the Australian Production Car Series they were behind the wheel of a car that they had not driven previously. The brothers were placed seventh outright, first in class D as part of a four-hour race at Phillip Island's Grand Prix Circuit. The Renault Cleo beat the Toyota 86 CTS by 33 seconds. It was the first national win. On the day, Blake Aubin recorded the quickest lap with a time of 1:54.466 seconds.

#### **TRIBUTE TO COUNCILLOR JOHN DAVIS, OAM**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (13:20):** I recognise in this House the recently retired Mayor of Orange, Councillor John Davis, OAM, who has been in local government for 30 years. Following 17 years as a councillor and 10 of those years as the Mayor of Blayney, he was elected to the Orange City Council in 2004. He served as the Mayor of Orange from 2004 until 2008, and from 2009 until his recent retirement this year. John was awarded an Medal of the Order of Australia in 2013 for services to the community. John is an active patron of the Holy Trinity Foundation, the Duntryleague Foundation, the Orange Male Voice Choir and Cancer Care West.

John was Mayor of Orange during a period that delivered intergenerational projects, which include delivering water security for the city for the next half century through pipelines, Australia's first stormwater harvesting for drinking water, dam augmentations, a bypass roadway, and an airport extension as well as a new terminal. Mayor Davis focused on delivering infrastructure for youth, including a new police and community youth club [PCYC] complex, an indoor aquatic centre, skate parks, sport fields upgrades and the cricket centre of excellence. I and the community owe Mr Davis a great debt of gratitude. I wish him well for the future.

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

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (13:21):** It was my great privilege to visit the Balgowlah Boys Campus last week in my electorate of Manly. I took the opportunity to see in action the NSW Government's Youth Frontiers Initiative run by the Raise Foundation. The Raise Foundation provides mentoring for a small group of students at no cost to the school or the students. In my short time in this House, there have been a number of memorable occasions, but spending time with young people in my electorate has been the most fulfilling and inspirational.

Organisations such as Raise ensure that our young people get the skills they need to succeed. The program this year focused on empowering young people to become resilient, capable and connected. The program involves community members as mentors. In theory this sounds like a good idea, and in practice it certainly is. I hope the House will join me in congratulating program counsellor Libby Jones on her work. I look forward to supporting Raise in the coming months and years.

#### **GOSFORD MEN'S SHED**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:22):** I congratulate the Gosford Men's Shed—coordinated by their leader John Welland—on the united effort it has taken for the team to upgrade existing old buildings and make possible their recent move into new premises located within the Gosford Showground. The Gosford Men's Shed utilised a grant from the Stronger Communities Fund of \$33,000 from the Central Coast Council and a generous cheque from Eagles Plumbing at West Gosford to finish its new facilities in preparation for the official opening.

While it may look like two old tin sheds on the outside, inside is a wonderland of tools and resources as well as a hum of productive activity. Not only is it the tools at work: The sense of community and support for men's health is alive and well. Last week on the day I visited the shed, a gentleman going through the hardship of recent retrenchment sought solace and found a supportive network within the Gosford Men's Shed team. I commend the work of all Men's Sheds across New South Wales and congratulate our guys at Gosford on their great work for our community.

#### **THE HILLS LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (13:22):** Last Saturday the residents of The Hills shire gave a resounding endorsement of the local Liberal council team. For the second straight election, the entire Liberal ticket was elected in North Ward, while each of the other wards elected two of three Liberal candidates. Indeed, in North Ward the informal vote in some booths was higher than the Labor vote. My congratulations go to the first popularly elected Mayor of The Hills, Dr Michelle Byrne-Fuentes, and councillors elect Elizabeth Russo, Frank De Masi, Alan Haselden, Samuel Uno, Robyn Preston, Dr Peter Gangemi, Brooke Collins, OAM, Mike Thomas and Reena Jethi. Reena is the first Indian to be elected to The Hills Shire Council. Given the importance of Western Sydney, it was great to see Parramatta choosing the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party vote in Parramatta was the single largest vote of any major party, polling 37.1 per cent of the popular vote compared to Labor's 30 per cent. Steven Issa was elected for Rosehill Ward and in North Rocks Ward Andrew Jefferies and Bob Dwyer were both elected.

#### **PAINT BANKSTOWN READ INITIATIVE**

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (13:24):** Last week I was delighted to participate in the seventh annual Paint Bankstown REaD Day at Nugent Park, Chester Hill. Paint Bankstown REaD is part of the wider Paint the Town REaD initiative, which is designed to promote literacy in early childhood by motivating parents and carers to read, talk, sing and rhyme with their children so that they are best placed to learn to read and write when they begin school. I congratulate Anna Certoma and the team from the Bankstown Community Resource Group on coordinating such a successful day. I also pay tribute to the many organisations that formed part of the working committee, including: the Chester Hill Neighbourhood Centre, the Coolaburoo Neighbourhood Centre, the Bankstown Department of Family and Community Services [FACS], the Arab Council of Australia, the Bankstown Local Area Command, Fire and Rescue, and the Bankstown Family and Community Services branch.

#### **TRIBUTE TO ANDREW WATSON**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (13:25):** Today I speak of a remarkable young man, Wahroonga's Andrew Watson. After being informed that he had stage four oesophageal cancer, Andrew decided to focus on helping others rather than on his own circumstances. Prior to his diagnosis, Andrew had every reason to be positive about his life. He had a loving family, a great job at Macquarie Bank and starred at five-eighth in the Redfield Old Boys Rugby first grade team. After embarking on a course of chemotherapy, he would have been forgiven for feeling sorry for himself. However, from a very early stage of his treatment, Andrew decided that he would help Sydney's homeless on Saturday and Sunday mornings by buying them a hot breakfast or having a chat. He has bravely kept doing that despite the side effects of his treatment.

Andrew also has coached and managed his rugby team and mentored the club's younger players, despite being unable to play. Andrew's efforts for the homeless are an inspiring example to us all and he has not only helped them but has had a big impact on his peers, changing their attitudes and perspectives. At only 26, Andrew is a magnificent role model for young men and women in Ku-ring-gai and for all of us. Andrew, you have shown extraordinary character and we give you our very best wishes for your future treatment.

#### **YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENT JEREMY HOLMES**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (13:26):** I recognise the achievement of Byron resident and well-known business entrepreneur, Jeremy Holmes, who is the development director of Elements of Byron. Recently Jeremy won the Young Entrepreneur of the Year award in the Northern Rivers Business Awards. This is no surprise to me as he is an extraordinary urban designer who has been able to reflect his love of the beach and respect for the environment in the design of Elements. He is a worthy recipient of this award and I wish him well in the State round of the Business Awards.

#### **TRIBUTE TO PAUL WRIGLEY**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:26):** Central Coast local Paul Wrigley will be celebrating his twenty-fifth year of employment at Southern Cross Austereo on his last day on 29 September. Paul began his employment as a media sales executive in 1992 and is now the general manager. Throughout his career, and

indeed throughout his entire life, Paul has played a huge part in the Central Coast community. On many occasions he has participated in sleep-outs to raise homelessness awareness. He has also been a member of the Gosford-Erina and Coastal Chamber of Commerce.

Paul Wrigley is a huge supporter of community events and fundraisers including 2G0's own Give Me 5 For Kids, which raises more than \$150,000 annually for regional hospitals. I am told that Paul has been hugely active in encouraging and supporting young people entering the media industry, and has always been happy to provide support and training to new recruits. Paul certainly is loved by his staff at 2G0 and at Sea FM, and of course the wider Central Coast community. I am sure that he will be dearly missed by all his colleagues. "Wriggles", thank you very much for the past 25 years.

#### **NATIONAL MEALS ON WHEELS DAY**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (13:27):** In celebration of National Meals on Wheels Day on 30 August, I was delighted to accompany Ms Carolyn McMahon and Ms Caterina Taviani on their morning Meals on Wheels run, visiting the delightful Mrs Amy Taylor at her immaculate home in Pagewood. That day marked the sixtieth anniversary of Meals on Wheels in Australia, and is a special day to say thanks to the volunteers who make that vital service possible. Meals on Wheels volunteers make a huge difference in the lives of their clients. All across Australia, 35,500 volunteers deliver 4.5 million meals every year, mostly in our regions. They provide so much more than a nutritious meal—they are a friendly face and an important part of the support networks that care for some of our most vulnerable people. To all Meals on Wheels volunteers, especially those whom I met with at the Eastlakes Senior Citizens Club for our "Thank-you Morning Tea", I say thank you for your selfless devotion to your community.

#### **NOWRA-BOMADERRY MEALS ON WHEELS FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (13:28):** I also recognise National Meals on Wheels Day and wish to congratulate members of the Nowra-Bomaderry Meals on Wheels branch, who on 30 August 2017 celebrated their fiftieth anniversary—a celebration I was fortunate enough to attend. Meals on Wheels is an organisation that is reliant upon volunteers who each and every week dedicate their time to preparing and delivering meals and visiting seniors, people living with disability and their carers. The service is far more than a meal and offers its clients a reprieve from isolation and an opportunity for social interaction, including the occasional excursion.

Currently 40 local people volunteer with Nowra-Bomaderry Meals on Wheels and help to coordinate and deliver meals to between 100 and 120 clients every week across the Nowra-Bomaderry area. Once again I offer my congratulations to all the team at the Meals on Wheels Nowra-Bomaderry branch on a wonderful celebration. I also pay tribute to some who have been volunteering for more than a decade and one lady in particular who has been volunteering for 40 years. I also note the hardworking volunteers of the other branches in my electorate including Culburra, Currarong, Huskisson, Vincentia, Jervis Bay, Milton-Ulladulla, Sussex Inlet, and their committee members. Well done to everyone who has helped provide this quality service.

#### **MARY MOTHER OF THE CHURCH FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (13:29):** I acknowledge and congratulate the Mary Mother of the Church Catholic parish at Macquarie Fields on celebrating 40 years of service to our community. From its early days as an outpost of the parish of Campbelltown, the Macquarie Fields parish has grown significantly to represent the diverse and vibrant community it serves. Mary Mother of the Church prides itself on its multicultural parish, where people come together united by faith, friendship and service to others. I make special mention of parish priest Father Linh Nguyen. The church community has thrived under his guidance. I congratulate him and the entire parish on this important milestone. I thoroughly enjoyed attending the celebrations at the Liverpool Catholic Club on Friday evening. I congratulate everyone involved at Mary Mother of the Church as they celebrate the momentous achievement of 40 years of service to the Macquarie Fields community.

#### **AUSTRALIAN SUPERMODEL OF THE YEAR FINALIST ADRIANA MALTESE**

**Ms TANYA DAVIES (Mulgoa—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing) (13:30):** I proudly inform the House that a finalist for the 2017 Australian Supermodel of the Year competition hails from my electorate of Mulgoa. Adriana Maltese is a naturally beautiful 19-year-old Western Sydney woman who had only been modelling for a short time when she was directly approached by the founder of the Australian Supermodel of the Year. I have known Adriana and her family for well over seven years and my heart is filled with pride and excitement about the journey she has commenced. She has maintained success by keeping a positive attitude and being confident. Her words of advice are, "Always have a strong mindset, remain resilient, determined and display a sense of drive and passion within the industry." On behalf of the New South

Wales Parliament I extend to Adriana our best wishes for the rest of her journey in the competition. Whatever the final result, I know she will do exceedingly well in life with the attitude she displays and the unwavering support of her parents, Tony and Angela.

#### **COOKS RIVER TITANS FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (13:31):** On 26 August 2017 the Federal member for Barton, Linda Burney, and I attended the Cooks River Titans Football Club presentation day and celebration of gaining access to Waterworth Park. I acknowledge President Nick Kambounias and the executive, volunteers, hard workers, parents and carers involved with the Cooks River Titans who have done a sensational job over the past three years. More than 250 people attended the presentation at Gough Whitlam Park in Earlwood. It was a fantastic day to celebrate not only an increase in junior football participation but also the club's success at gaining access to Waterworth Park. It took nearly three years for the club, the community and local representatives to secure access to the park for young people playing football and other sports. I congratulate everyone involved at the Cooks River Titans.

#### **ALBURY ELECTORATE AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (13:32):** Lavington day care educator Charmaine Blackett has been named the regional winner in the 2017 Excellence in Family Day Care Awards run by Family Day Care Australia. Charmaine has been a day care educator for 15 years. I congratulate Charmaine on such a well-deserved award. Lynn Fredericks, a Corowa Lion and this year's Federation Council Citizen of the Year, was awarded life membership of Lions International for his volunteering for Lions and within his local community. Lynn's volunteering began at an early age in the Boy Scouts. In 1995 he joined the Lions Club of Corowa and has covered the roles of secretary, president and district governor. I congratulate Lynn on such a marvellous achievement. Helene Mortlock, an apprentice carpenter of Jerilderie who is studying a carpentry and construction course at TAFE NSW, won a special award at the NSW Industry Excellence Awards for a woman in a non-traditional trade category. I say congratulations to Helene. What a wonderful accomplishment!

#### **FANTASTIC AUSSIE TOURS TRANSPORT SERVICE**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (13:33):** I look forward to joining the Fantastic Aussie Tours team and their Blue Mountains Explorer Bus crew in the very near future to celebrate another achievement: One of the oldest tourism vehicle operators in the country will be the first transport service in Australia to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to zero. Fantastic Aussie Tours has operated in the Blue Mountains since 1974. It runs hop-on, hop-off buses 15 times a day, 365 days a year around the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, where we are richly blessed to work and play within a wilderness area with fresh air. It will become the first certified 100 per cent carbon neutral bus charter transport service under the Australian Government's Carbon Neutral Program.

The company operates a fleet of four distinctive red double-decker sightseeing buses. It has a great team of dedicated and hardworking staff committed to providing a special experience for visitors and locals alike. I congratulate everyone involved—including very proud managing director Jason Cronshaw, and Darryl Booth—who has been working for years to make this happen.

#### **TRIBUTE TO ANNA MCPHEE**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:34):** I acknowledge and mourn the passing of Anna McPhee and extend my deepest sympathy to her husband, Reggie Cabal, mother, Trish McPhee, and all her family. Her death last month ended a life of contribution of almost 20 years to community and to the Liberal Party. Many people in this place would have known Anna, and all would have respected her. Anna was the first female chief of staff to a New South Wales Liberal Premier under the Hon. Barry O'Farrell. She also contributed to political campaigns and to the party organisation for many years prior to that. Anna dedicated her life to the advancement of women, including in her role as chief executive officer of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency and as chair of the employer member organisation Diversity Council Australia. I know Anna will inspire many women to pursue a career in Parliament. Our only misfortune is that she never joined us in this House or another, as I know her contribution would have been significant. Vale, Anna McPhee.

#### **BUTTERFLY FOUNDATION LOVE YOUR BODY WEEK**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) (13:35):** From 3 to 9 September 2017, with incredible support from Sportsgirl, the Butterfly Foundation celebrated Love Your Body Week, because body confidence is worth celebrating. The campaign coincides with Body Image and Eating Disorder Awareness Week and aims to promote body confidence in all Australians by celebrating body diversity. Eating disorders and body dysmorphia are a

scourge on our society, and affect men and women of all ages across communities. Many suffer in silence as they struggle to maintain a healthy lifestyle and good mental health while balancing the demands of the modern world.

I took a humorous approach to raising awareness of this issue; however, it is far from funny. If people have friends or family who are struggling with body confidence they must remember to be supportive of them. I thank Oliver's Real Food, the Glen Centre, Sportsgirl Tuggerah, the Central Coast Mariners, Snap Fitness Tuggerah and Fitness First Erina for their help. A healthy lifestyle and positive mental wellbeing starts with loving your body. I thank the Butterfly Foundation and Sportsgirl for taking up this initiative.

#### **WOODCHOPPING CHAMPIONSHIP WINNER DAN SHIPMAN**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (13:36):** I congratulate woodchopper Dan Shipman of Glenreagh on his second placing in the Kevin Smith Memorial NSW 250mm Combination Championship at the recent Glenreagh Timber Festival. It was a wonderful result for Dan, who was beaten on the day by young Australian representative Blake Marsh. Dan got involved in woodchopping following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather—literally following them around as they competed in the sport. I wish Dan continued success in the future.

#### **NEWCASTLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (13:37):** Today I congratulate all those newly elected to the Newcastle City Council at last Saturday's local government elections. In particular, I single out Newcastle's Lord Mayor, Nuatali Nelmes, on her re-election. In the three years since coming to office she has achieved much for Newcastle, and I look forward to working with her in the future. Though not all the seats have been decided at this stage, it seems that Labor has achieved its best result since the 1970s. I congratulate Emma White, Carol Duncan, Declan Clausen, Jason Dunn and Matt Byrne on their election, and it seems that Peta Baartz will very likely join them in the council chambers once all the preferences have been distributed. This result is due to the hard work of Labor members, activists and organisers who poured so much time and energy into the campaign. I look forward to working with the Newcastle City Council over the coming years to deliver for the people of Newcastle.

#### **ST IVES MEDIEVAL FAIRE**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (13:38):** Living in the twenty-first century with technology and modern conveniences, I sometimes wonder what it would have been like to live in a simpler time. On 23 September and 24 September the St Ives Showground in my electorate will be transformed into a living medieval kingdom for the St Ives Medieval Faire, hosted by Ku-ring-gai Council. This family-friendly event generates significant tourism, with 20,000 people visiting throughout the weekend to experience the Dark Ages through to the High Middle Ages. Now in its fourth year, the fair will showcase the inaugural World Jousting Championship, with knights jousting just as they did in fifteenth century Europe. Other activities include a traditional feast accompanied by jesters and music, birds of prey, children's juggling, dance, puppetry, archery, trebuchet and a Viking battle. In honour of these celebrations, at 1.45 p.m. today I will be "knighted" by a "knight" dressed in full plate armour in the Speaker's Garden. I commend all involved in the organisation of the fair, including creator Andrew McKinnon, staff and volunteers, and I look forward to a wonderful spectacle.

#### **KARATE CHAMPION DESTINY COLLIER**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (13:39):** Today I congratulate young Lurnea resident Destiny Collier on her hard work and dedication to the sport of karate. Nine-year-old Destiny has been watching her father take part in karate from a young age—that was her key inspiration to take up the sport. Destiny has more than 200 trophies and medals from the International Sport Karate Association and the National All Styles martial arts tournaments. Indeed, those medals and trophies reflect her true love of the sport. Last year the young star placed first in the under 9s extreme weapon category for both girls and boys, and in October she will be competing in the International Sport Karate and Kickboxing Association World Cup. Destiny not only has been recognised at her local centre but also has been nominated for a Local Sports Star award in the junior category. This great accomplishment shows Destiny's dedication to the sport. As well as her excellent achievements, she also gives back to the karate community by helping out with the under 6s class at the IMC Liverpool Martial Arts Centre. I commend Destiny on her hard work and excellence in the karate field.

#### **SYDNEY OUTER WEST/BLUE MOUNTAINS YOUTH VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (13:40):** Today I congratulate Michael Tran, of Canley Vale High School, for being awarded the 2017 Sydney Outer West/Blue Mountains Youth Volunteer of the Year. This young man from Cabramatta genuinely wants to help his community. This has led to his involvement in the Fairfield Relay for Life and Cancer Council NSW. His many fundraising efforts have resulted in his being recognised for

his "outstanding contribution" to community. For three consecutive years he has been the youth parliamentary representative for Cabramatta at the YMCA Youth and Government NSW Junior Parliament. At school he has engaged in events such as the World's Greatest Shave and Australia's Biggest Morning Tea. NSW Volunteer of the Year awards are an important way to recognise the sacrifice that people like Michael make to improve the lives of others. I congratulate Michael Tran and acknowledge his contribution to the Cabramatta community. Today is Michael's birthday, and I wish him a very happy birthday. I also wish him the best of luck in the upcoming Higher School Certificate examinations and in his future endeavours.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I welcome new attendant Hayley Jarrett to the Chamber. I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.15 p.m.

*Visitors*

**VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome all the guests in the gallery this afternoon and hope they enjoy question time. I welcome Brooke, Montana, Violet, Georgia, and Jayne from Cooma. These girls are from Project O, a program to prevent family violence that works with young women in rural areas to give them the tools and encouragement to speak up and make a positive change in their communities. The girls are guests of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, Minister for Small Business, and member for Monaro. I welcome to the Chamber Italian exchange students and their teachers from Sydney Grammar School, who are guests of the member for Sydney. I acknowledge in the gallery the student leaders from Wyoming Public School, who are accompanied by their Principal, Rebecca Wild. They are guests of the member for The Entrance.

I welcome Philippa Burley, who is taking part in the parliamentary internship program in the office of the Hon. Courtney Houssos MLC and is a guest of the Hon. Courtney Houssos MLC. I welcome the postgraduate law students from the University of New South Wales, who are accompanied by Audrey Blunden. I welcome members of the Sydney Alliance group. I welcome Elias Niahos, who is a graduate with Transport for NSW. I also welcome representatives of the Sunshine Progress Association, who are guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. I welcome everybody to the Chamber this afternoon.

*Members*

**REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** In my capacity as acting Leader of the House, and on behalf of the Premier, I inform the House that the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services will answer questions today in the absence of the Attorney General. The Minister for the Environment, Minister for Local Government, and Minister for Heritage will answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing, and Special Minister of State.

*Question Time*

**WATER MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE INTERIM REPORT**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:24):** My question is directed to Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services. Given findings on page 17 of Mr Ken Matthews' report, did the Minister or any member of his staff give permission for irrigators to pump water during a ban?

**Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (14:24):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. The answer is no.

**NORTH WEST METRO**

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (14:24):** My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the New South Wales Government delivering its state-of-the-art metro services to improve customer experience?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:24):** I acknowledge the member for Epping's advocacy on behalf of his community. The North West Metro will transport commuters through communities represented by the member for Epping, the member for Ryde and me. The metro will bring our communities many opportunities, and I am pleased that today the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure and I have talked about real progress on extending the north-west rail line under the harbour and out to Bankstown. This shows that this Government is getting on with the job. What is exciting about today's announcement is that even though we are upgrading all stations so that they are ready for the metro when it comes into operation all the way to Bankstown in 2024, some customers, depending on where they live and which stations they use, will be able to use some new stations as early as 2020—and for this I congratulate the Minister and his team.

This Government has the resources to build these projects and the ability to get on with the job of delivering the world-class metro to south-west Sydney, and our customers, commuters and citizens will be able to access some stations up to four years ahead of schedule. That is real progress. This Government is all about providing opportunities for the citizens of this State to move around hassle free and reducing the time they spend getting to and from their destinations. But I am pained that only today I heard that the Leader of the Opposition attacked the project—and if my information is incorrect, let the record be corrected on this assertion. We are building a world-class metro that will have "turn up and go" services for people using the Bankstown line. I ask the member for Bankstown: Why are you not sticking up for your community? The member's community will really benefit from this infrastructure project.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Bankstown will come to order. This is not an opportunity for the member to argue with the Premier.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I do not blame the Leader of the Opposition for being absent from the Chamber, but the only time the Leader of the Opposition says anything about public transport or road projects is when he is axing them. There is not a project that we are building that he does not want to axe. I say to the people of New South Wales that this Government is pleased to be building this world-class infrastructure and people should look at our track record. We came to government and built the South West Rail Link, under budget and ahead of schedule. We came to government and we built the Inner West Light Rail extension, also on time and on budget. Anyone seeing the progress in the north-west in relation to the metro will appreciate that it is a world-class project.

Members on both sides of the House are very excited by this project and we are all looking forward to its next phase. It will bring benefits to all customers on the Bankstown line. Once the project is completed from Rouse Hill all the way to Bankstown, there will be 31 new metro stations and 66 kilometres of track—a real achievement. It is interesting that apparently the member for Prospect had a special guest in his electorate a few days ago, if I am not mistaken. This special guest was a former Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads. His visit is interesting because it is timely.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** It is very timely that the former Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads should be visiting the member for Prospect, especially when there is a question about the metro and the Labor Party's opposition to this fantastic project. We just have to turn to page 459 of Mr Scully's book. The member for Prospect clearly supports what has been written here because Mr Scully was his guest a few days ago.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** It says:

The period of March 2007 through to February 2010 was about as damaging and wasteful as any three-year period in the history of government in NSW.

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

*[Extension of time]*

The special guest of the member for Prospect also said:

\$500 million was washed down the drain over the ludicrously mismanaged metro project and then the \$1.5 billion cash payment for road building was ignored. I still find it hard to believe that a Labor Government literally threw away \$2 billion in infrastructure funds.

I find that hard to believe. One of the absolute clinchers is on page 461—if anyone is interested. It says:

The current Liberal and National Party State Government is now getting on and building major roads and rail infrastructure across Sydney and fully exploiting the fact the three post-Carr Premiers were simply asleep at the infrastructure wheel.

We think they are still sleeping over there. The final sentence in his book:

The baton passed, it will not be easily returned.

Ain't that the truth. Only the New South Wales Labor Party would oppose public transport to south-western Sydney and oppose improving the lives of its citizens. Only the New South Wales Labor Party would throw billions down the drain because they do not know how to build a single project. We are the party of the workers, and the party of the builders. We are getting on with the job and they are asleep at the wheel.

#### POLITICAL DONATIONS

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (14:32):** My question is directed to the Minister for Education. Given the many serious mental health issues that our veterans face, will the Minister now return the thousands of

dollars that he solicited from RSL LifeCare, particularly given that it runs Homes for Heroes, a support service for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! That question could be ruled out of order as it contained an alleged statement of fact. However, I will allow the question if the Minister is happy to answer it.

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (14:32):** I state clearly for the record that of course I will attend functions in support of the fundraising efforts of the party I represent. I imagine that is something I have in common with other members in this place. I am advised that at no stage did any Liberal Party branch within Pittwater breach any electoral funding laws. Furthermore, in relation to the specific question asked by the member opposite, I understand that the donations in question were returned by the New South Wales division of the Liberal Party some time ago.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat. I call the Minister for Corrections to order for the first time. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time. I call the Minister for Corrections to order for the second time.

### REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH

**Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (14:34):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. How is the New South Wales Government promoting economic growth in regional and rural New South Wales?

**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 Coffs Harbour for his question. He is a strong advocate for not only regional New South Wales but also the electorate of Coffs Harbour. He has won funding for hospital upgrades, for the Pacific Highway bypass and for the great World Rally Championship held each year in his region. Why? Because tourism is so important to our local economy. He is a great champion and part of a strong Liberal-Nationals team that is delivering for regional New South Wales. I say hello to the young women from the Braveheart Project O group who have travelled from Cooma. They have had an opportunity today.

*[Interruption]*

Those opposite are interrupting because they do not care about New South Wales. More than likely they do not know where Cooma is. They fly over it when they go to Victoria but they do not know where Cooma is because they do not care about regional New South Wales and they do not care about Cooma. Go home and tell your parents and your community that Labor does not care about Cooma. These are fantastic young women from my region representing and advocating for issues that are important to young people.

What a great question from the member. It gives me an opportunity to talk about what was announced in the budget this year. We said the budget would be focused on regional New South Wales. And did we not deliver in spades? Our new \$1.3 billion Regional Growth Fund is an opportunity not only to let regional New South Wales grow but also to turbocharge regional New South Wales. It is an opportunity to make New South Wales not only a great place to live and play and raise a family, but also a great place to start a business, and of course create jobs. As members will remember, the Regional Growth Fund provides \$200 million for stronger country communities. It allows for those small amenities and projects, working with local government and community groups, to deliver the stuff that matters and that makes our towns and cities in regional New South Wales great places to grow a community.

We also announced \$100 million for regional arts and culture, and \$50 million for more mobile phone towers, because we know how important connectivity is. For those communities impacted by mining we committed another \$50 million to build the important amenities. At the centre of this announcement was our \$500 million Growing Local Economies fund. This \$500 million is to work with regions across New South Wales in growing the economy, and by that I mean creating jobs. We have done things differently than in the past by not simply providing the \$500 million but dividing the funds across 34 economic zones.

We did some work, and through the regional development framework we have been able to identify some strengths in regional New South Wales. If we see a region that has some natural and organic growth, the New South Wales Government can provide a small investment to remove any impediments and turbocharge those economies. Great centres like Tamworth, Dubbo, Bathurst, and of course my region of Queanbeyan—I cannot leave Cooma out of this—could benefit. There are places such as Goulburn and other areas where we know there is opportunity for growth, and we are playing in that space.

Our Growing Local Economies fund is about removing impediments. It might be the last mile of a pipeline or a power upgrade that unlocks an industrial park or a business. It is about investing in what I call enabling infrastructure that designs an environment where we see greater investment in regional New South Wales. Yesterday members heard me talk about small businesses in regional New South Wales. Confidence is at an all-time high. This is about turbocharging those businesses through investing in infrastructure to allow them to grow. You do not have to listen just to us. There are mayors and advocates right across regional New South Wales who are talking about how important this money is and how important it will be for growing jobs and the future of regional New South Wales. RDA Central West Deputy Chair Reg Kidd said:

It is great to see the NSW Government recognising and catering for the growth of the region and to see them walking the talk when it comes to regional development.

Local Government NSW President Keith Rhoades said:

This goes to show that the Government does listen when the community speaks, and particularly so when they make their voice heard at the ballot box. The Government has hosted webinars and forums. It has also worked with industry, local government and community groups to ensure that this investment continues to build on its legacy of delivering in regional New South Wales. The Minister for Water announced the \$1 billion Safe and Secure Water Program. The Government has also allocated \$9 billion to regional New South Wales through Restart NSW. *[Extension of time]*

The Government is clearly demonstrating its commitment with the dedication of 30 per cent of the proceeds of the sale of poles and wires to regional New South Wales. A total of more than \$9 billion will be going to regional areas, not only the \$6 billion. Members opposite will say that the Liberal-Nationals Government is not delivering for regional New South Wales. They have said that they will use 100 per cent of the proceeds of the sale of Snowy Hydro to fund regional projects. Even if it is valued at \$5 billion or \$6 billion, it should be remembered that the New South Wales Government owns only 58 per cent. That is already much less than this Government's \$9 billion commitment.

The Roads budget has increased by 105 per cent since 2011, and 65 per cent of that is being spent in regional New South Wales. I add that there are no tolls! This Liberal-Nationals Government is building roads, schools, hospitals and the other infrastructure that is so important to this State. The shadow Minister for Regional Development said that the Government has not considered the needs of regional areas in its approach to policy-making. Has he not read the State budget or the media releases? This Government is clearly focusing on growing jobs in regional New South Wales and on making our towns and cities the best places to live, to raise a family and, more importantly, to provide a future for our kids—like the kids in Cooma—so that those kids can study in their own towns and look for great jobs in regional areas. The Liberal-Nationals Government has a plan for regional New South Wales. Members opposite could not locate a regional area if it bit them on the ankle.

#### DEPUTY SECRETARY, AGEING, DISABILITY AND HOME CARE

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (14:42):** I direct my question to the Minister for Multiculturalism and Minister for Disability Services. Given that Jim Longley yesterday admitted to multiple breaches of his duties to RSL LifeCare, a charity that provides aged care to veterans in nursing homes and retirement villages, does he still occupy the position of Deputy Secretary for Ageing, Disability and Home Care?

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (14:42):** The Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation has recently commenced an inquiry.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maitland will come to order. The Minister has just commenced his answer and he will be heard in silence.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** As I said, my colleague the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation recently initiated the Bergin inquiry into RSL charities. Given that the inquiry is underway, it is not appropriate for me to comment.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. The Minister has concluded his answer. The member should read the standing orders.

#### FRONTLINE EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) (14:43):** I address my question to the Minister for Police and Minister for Emergency Services. How is the Government investing in frontline fire and emergency services?

**Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services) (14:44):** I thank the member for Holsworthy for her question and acknowledge her interest in and support of frontline emergency services in her electorate. She knows, having joined me in visiting the Police Dog Squad facility on the border of her electorate, what a fantastic job the police and emergency services do throughout this State. As

the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services, one of the best parts of my job is going to the NSW Police Force Academy at Goulburn or, as I did recently, to the Fire and Rescue NSW State Training College to attend graduation ceremonies. It is great to see the graduates take up positions on the front line.

I recently attended the graduation of 22 new Fire and Rescue NSW firefighters. It was a special day for those beginning their careers in a service that has "Service Above Self" as its motto. That ceremony saw a father join his daughter and a wife join her husband in the service. It is great that the service is so family oriented and that those officers are joining the Fire and Rescue NSW family. The new firefighters joined the ranks of more than 3,500 permanent officers who serve across the State and who are dedicated to serving our community in some of the most dangerous conditions and events imaginable. During 2016 we received more than 7,500 applications for the 130 new permanent positions available in Fire and Rescue NSW in that calendar year. Such is the interest in joining the service. The community can have enormous confidence in the exceptional ability and professionalism of those who join the ranks of Fire and Rescue NSW. The recruits bring with them an extraordinary depth of life experience and incredible skills sets, and I know that we are in good hands.

On 18 August I had the privilege of joining Commissioner Fuller at Goulburn to welcome to the NSW Police Force 226 new probationary constables, who took their oath of office or affirmation before their very proud family and friends. The class included four probationary constables who went to Liverpool in the electorate of the member for Holsworthy. They now work out of the fantastic new police station that I had the privilege of opening in November last year. One graduate, Bol Piyombol, has started his policing career in the Fairfield Local Area Command. I hope the member for Fairfield has the opportunity to meet him because he has an amazing story to tell. Bol came to Australia with his parents from Sudan as a child. He was faced with numerous transitional challenges, but he was determined that they would not stop him pursuing his dream. He wanted to join the NSW Police Force because he dreamt of a career that would allow him to do what was best for not only him and his family but also the community that had embraced him and which had helped him to get where he is today. *[Extension of time.]*

That is what our frontline services are all about—giving back to a community that supports the NSW Police Force in serving our needs. We want a police force that is flexible and agile and which better reflects the diverse needs of this State, whether they be challenges in the north, the west, the south or in metropolitan Sydney. The challenges in regional areas are very different from those on the northern beaches, in Western Sydney and on the eastern beaches. This State is now enjoying some of the lowest levels of crime across the major crime types in two decades. We should be proud of that and grateful for the work undertaken by the NSW Police Force in partnering with other agencies and, more importantly, with the community in achieving those results. Our crime rates are the envy of the other States and Territories. As Minister, I am proud not only of what our police officers do but also of the support that this Government gives me as Minister to help them to do that job.

I am pleased to advise the House that the Government is well on track to meet its election commitment to bring the authorised strength of the NSW Police Force to a record 16,795 officers over this term of government. That number has already increased by some 951 since this Government was elected in 2011, and there is more to come. Our Government remains committed to ensuring that the hardworking men and women of the NSW Police Force, NSW Fire and Rescue, Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service and all other emergency services out there have all the tools and support they need to do their important jobs. Each of these agencies faces ever-changing challenges and they will have resources and support from this Government now and into the future.

#### DEPUTY SECRETARY, AGEING, DISABILITY AND HOME CARE

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (14:49):** Madam Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Prospect will be heard in silence.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT:** My question is directed to the Premier. The former Liberal member for Pittwater, Jim Longley, told the Bergin inquiry that his role in the Department of Family and Community Services will be terminated on 30 November because his work is completed. Given what he admitted about his disgraceful conduct at RSL LifeCare, will the Premier rule out making a termination payment to Jim Longley?

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

*[Interruption]*

Order! The member for Prospect will come to order or I will rule the question out of order and he will be removed from the Chamber for the rest of the day.

*[Interruption]*

Order! I rule the question out of order. The member for Prospect will remove himself from the Chamber for two hours.

*[Interruption]*

Order! The member for Prospect continues to interject and to argue. I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Prospect from the Chamber for the rest of the day.

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

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: My point of order is that the conduct of the member for Prospect—

**The SPEAKER:** I found his behaviour unacceptable. I find your behaviour to be out of order as well but I will hear your point of order because of your seniority.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I suggest that whether a question is out of order should be based on its inherent content and not the subsequent conduct of the member who asked the question or the behaviour of any other member in this Chamber.

**The SPEAKER:** The behaviour of the member for Prospect was inappropriate and therefore I removed him from the House. He continued to argue and to interject, and therefore he will be out for 24 hours.

**Mr Michael Daley:** I have no problem with that, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr Michael Daley:** The question of whether the question is out of order—

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

**Ms Jodi McKay:** There are seriously no standing orders in this place; the Speaker just makes it up.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Strathfield thinks she knows so much, but she knows very little. Miss Cleverness!

### SCHOOL LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (14:52):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Education. What is the New South Wales Government doing to ensure our schools have excellent school leaders and invest in the future of education?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the Minister for Education. Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber.

**Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Education) (14:55):** I thank the member for Davidson for his question and I congratulate him on the iridescence of his tie. I also recognise that, as a former teacher, Madam Speaker, you and many others in the Chamber would realise the fundamental importance of school principals to the leadership of our society. In fact, if we were to look for a role model for what leadership best looks like in modern Australia and for one of the most compelling environments in which to exercise leadership, we would find them in our State's magnificent schools. On that note, I acknowledge that a number of members on both sides of the Chamber have served in school leadership roles, and I congratulate them on their service to our community.

This Monday I was pleased to join the member for Davidson; the principal of Killara High School, Jane Dennett; the President of the New South Wales Secondary Principals' Council, Chris Presland; and Andrew Stevenson, who is principal of Lindfield East Public School and a member of the State executive of the NSW Primary Principals' Association, to announce the School Leadership Strategy, a long-term support package that will provide better support for our principals so that they can spend more time leading teaching and leading learning in their schools and less time as deskbound managers and administrators of the day-to-day management of their schools.

The evidence is clear from researchers like Professor Stephen Dinham, OAM, Professor John Hattie and Michael Fullan of Ontario: School leaders who have the time and the space to focus on instructional leadership have a huge impact on student learning outcomes—an impact that is second only to teacher quality. Principals all start their careers in front of classrooms of students. They work hard, study hard and are promoted because they show skill and capability in delivering quality education. However, once they begin work as a principal they find themselves responsible not just for teaching and learning but also for the vast array of duties associated with running a school. This can include ensuring a safe site, ensuring that expenditure meets department policies, and

maintaining a good relationship with the local community. The responsibilities of school leadership are vast and varied.

In collaboration with principals, the Department of Education recently commissioned a study to better understand the daily activities of principals. The study found that principals spend significant time on management and administration, which leaves them less time to be active leaders of teaching and of learning—but this is where they make the most difference to students. To shift this balance, an additional \$50 million per annum is being provided to schools so that they can release principals to focus on what they do best: teaching and learning. Schools can choose to use their share of this funding to hire a business manager or extra support staff to take on some of the administrative load.

In addition, a number of compliance activities are being taken out of the hands of principals to free up their time from administration. For example, a centrally engaged and trained team of departmental officers will conduct annual visits to schools and undertake activities such as tree audits, bushfire safety inspections and emergency management inspections. This additional support will decrease the time and energy our principals need to spend filling in forms and completing routine inspections. This will mean they spend more time with teachers and students and in classrooms.

Another key finding of the study was that new principals found the role particularly challenging. Many felt unprepared for the complexity and diversity of the role. The School Leadership Strategy includes commitments to help prepare new principals—and those aspiring to be principals—for the role, with all its responsibilities and opportunities. We will establish a dedicated Leadership Institute to ensure that school leaders have access to quality, expert and standards-based development programs. The first flagship course will start in 2018 and will be a development program for aspiring principals.

From 2019, we will have a pool of people who have been trained quite precisely for principalship and are ready for the challenges that the role entails. For those starting out as principals, there will be better coaching and mentoring support in their first two years. Induction programs for school leaders at all levels will also be improved. Of course, it is not just about new leaders. To better invest in principals as system leaders, up to 20 scholarships will be offered each year to highly capable principals to participate in internationally renowned leadership programs. This cohort will then share what they have learned with other school leaders throughout the State. [*Extension of time*]

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Are we even learning anything?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Strathfield would learn something if she listened, but she cannot listen.

**Mr ROB STOKES:** We are retaining the well-regarded role of principal, school leadership, to provide further coaching and mentoring support. This is important because some of the research has identified that principals can find their role in leadership isolating and stressful, and it is important for them to have peer support. Principals need a trusted colleague that they can rely upon to share their experiences and gain advice earned through experience. We are looking at the way we staff schools. We will continue to improve centralised support, communication and advice. We will consider ways to reduce red tape around procurement, asset management and information technology.

It is a big job, but one that will make a real difference in schools and in the education of our students. We can provide more support to our quality principals—whom many of us would count as friends in the communities that we are proud to represent, and we all know the challenges their role entails. This is one way in which we can work together collaboratively to provide them with support that will cascade down to better outcomes in our classrooms, and give them the time and space to do what they do best—which is to lead teaching and learning in classrooms and in schoolyards. We look forward to seeing the results of the strategy in years to come. It will enable us to attract, develop and retain the best-quality leaders so that every school, every teacher and every student can improve every year.

#### DEPUTY SECRETARY, AGEING, DISABILITY AND HOME CARE

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (14:59):** My question is directed to the Premier. The former liberal member for Pittwater, Jim Longley, told the Bergin inquiry that his role in the Department of Family and Community Services will be terminated on 30 November. Given what he admitted about his conduct at RSL LifeCare, will the Premier rule out making any termination payment to Jim Longley?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:59):** I acknowledge the question asked by the member for Campbelltown and I refer him to the answers given by my colleagues on two separate occasions during question time today. I also state that I have full confidence in the head of the department, Mr Michael

Coutts-Trotter, to deal with the matter appropriately and to give the Government appropriate advice at the appropriate time.

#### M4-M5 LINK

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:00):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given that the environmental impact statement [EIS] for the M4-M5 Link of WestConnex states that "the detail of the design and construction approach presented in this EIS is indicative only," and that the word "indicative" is mentioned hundreds of times throughout the 13-volume document, how can the community have any trust in her Government's and this State's planning process when approval for a billion-dollar project can be sought and granted based on indicative concept designs only?

**Mr Michael Daley:** That is cherry-picking.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra will remain silent. He did not ask the question.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (15:01):** I thank the member for Newtown for her question. I think she will be extremely pleased with my response. I want to acknowledge the great work done by the Minister for WestConnex and the Minister for Roads and the whole team for making this project come to life.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I can hear the interjections from the other side of the Chamber. This is another project that the Opposition does not support. The members on the other side of the Chamber do not support the Sydney Metro and they do not support the WestConnex, but I will come back to that. Given that the member for Newtown has asked a question in that tone, I will respond in an adequate way. The M4-M5 Link project team for WestConnex has been engaging in community consultation for more than 12 months. The environmental impact statement [EIS] is now formally out there for public consultation, and I encourage everybody to have a say. This is the time for members of the public to have their say on the M4-M5 Link.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** It does not matter what people say.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I will respond to the interjection by the ill-informed member for Strathfield who says that we never listen and we never take anything on board.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. The member for Bankstown, the member for Canterbury and the member for Strathfield will cease interjecting or they will be called to order and may find themselves out of the Chamber.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** In the EIS process for the North West Rail Link the community said, "We need stations at Norwest Business Park." Guess what? The Government delivered that. During consultations on the CBD and South East Light Rail the community said, "We want the trees back." The Government said, "We will plant eight trees for every one we cut down."

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. How come there is a gaping hole in the fig trees along Anzac Parade?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The member for Maroubra will resume his seat. I call the member for Maroubra to order for the second time. He is being a little too clever for his own good.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** There is a long list of examples I could use to demonstrate that the Government listens during an EIS process. I can hear the member for Strathfield laughing. I look forward to reading her submission to this EIS. I look forward to seeing what she will put in. We have done this M4-M5 Link EIS process slightly differently because we listened to feedback from stages one and two.

**Mr Michael Daley:** They were a debacle.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** There was a concurrence in the planning approval prior to the contractor doing the selection and final design, so the Government took on the feedback from stages one and two when the community said, "We want a say before it goes to the final design process." The Government is listening to what the community says. In stages one and two the community said, "You moved too quickly. Slow down, give us a say first." Then we will give out the contract for the final design process. Anybody who cares about greater community consultation and better listening will know that this is the way to do it.

As I have said on numerous occasions, this Government takes the lessons from one project and applies them to another, whether it is in respect of stages or new projects. I say to the member for Newtown that we have provided this indicative proposal because we want to make sure that we get all the feedback and that when the project is contracted out the feedback is taken into consideration. I am proud of the fact that we have taken this approach. I think it is the right approach to take. I appreciate that the member for Newtown represents an inner-west community and that she is advocating on its behalf. The Labor Party thinks that Western Sydney stops at Strathfield.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Labor Party members do not care about all the benefits this project has for Penrith, Parramatta and greater Western Sydney.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Londonderry will lower the volume of her comments.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I can understand the member for Newtown caring about the inner west because as a Greens member that is the constituency she represents.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The member for Campbelltown interjects because he does not care. His party does not care about greater Western Sydney.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Has the Premier concluded her answer?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** No.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier is being relevant to the question. Does the member for Campbelltown have a different point of order?

**Mr Greg Warren:** If the Premier cared so much, she might extend the time for the M5 for another four years.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I hope the member for Newtown might consider giving me extra time.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the Clerk to stop the clock until members come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** One day the Opposition members support the WestConnex and the next day they do not. Today, apparently, they do not support it. The Opposition members do not support WestConnex and do not support public transport, extra housing or extra light rail. They stand for nothing.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The refined behaviour of some members in the Chamber is most impressive. I refer to the member for Swansea.

#### PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (15:06):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members who are not interested in transport and infrastructure will leave the Chamber. That probably means all members of the Opposition. The member for Cessnock will come to order or leave the Chamber.

**Dr GEOFF LEE:** How is the Government investing today for the State's future rail and public transport needs? Is the Minister aware of any alternative plans?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE (Bega—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) (15:07):** I thank the member for Parramatta for his question. I have spent a lot of time with him over the last fortnight in Parramatta making a number of key announcements for the people of Western Sydney.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Newcastle has remained silent until now. He should return to his Facebook or his Twitter. I direct the Clerk to stop the clock. The member for Newcastle will come to order or he will be removed from the Chamber. The member for Newcastle has little episodes like this now and again.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Come on, Crackers.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I place the member for Newcastle on three calls to order.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Point of order: The Minister should refer to the member for Newcastle by his correct title.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I uphold the point of order. The Minister will refer to the member for Newcastle by his correct title.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** What have you done with your hair, mate? There's something about Fairfield.

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

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73.

**The SPEAKER:** I thought your hair looked nice.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** The Minister should not comment about my hair, and I will not comment about his first marriage.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I am surprised at that remark from the member for Fairfield. I would expect that comment from other members but not from the member for Fairfield. That is outrageous.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** One rule for them; one rule for us.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Strathfield should grow a brain. The Minister for Transport has the call.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** As I was saying, I am pleased as the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure to inform the House that this Government has made the biggest single investment in service increases in the rail network in the State's history.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order or they will be removed from the Chamber. Members who are on one call to order will be removed from the Chamber if they continue to interject.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** More than 1,500 extra weekly train services will be in place by November, which is a 20 per cent increase in Penrith, a 40 per cent increase in Parramatta and, for the information of the member for Campbelltown, a whopping 92 per cent increase for the south-west.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** More than 70 per cent of the entire rail network will have a train service at least every 15 minutes and as regularly as every three minutes in some places. It is More Trains, More Services, and more reliability in getting people to where they need to be. It means more trains for places like the Blue Mountains.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** They don't fit the tracks.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** It means more trains for Londonderry, Mount Druitt, Blacktown, Prospect, Campbelltown, Macquarie Fields, Liverpool, Cabramatta and Fairfield. The list goes on.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! If the member for Blue Mountains continues to interject she will be removed from the Chamber for the remainder of the day. The member has interrupted proceedings before. This is not a joke. I warn the member for Blue Mountains. I know the member is proud of herself.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I assure the member for Blue Mountains that I will keep the V Sets on the Blue Mountains line. That is what I will do. The member for Blue Mountains loves 40-year-old trains and that is what she will continue to get, since she made that comment. Now she is upset.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I place the member for Blue Mountains on three calls to order.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** All across Western Sydney, what we are seeing is absolutely remarkable. It is a rail revolution and Opposition members can thank the Government later. I am also pleased to update the House in relation to the Parramatta Light Rail. Recently the environmental impact statement [EIS] was released. I assure the good member for Parramatta that people love it.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** It does not go to Olympic Park.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The member for Strathfield should watch this space.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Did the member for Strathfield say Olympic Park or Strathfield? I could not quite catch the remark.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Olympic Park.

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

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The member for Strathfield said "Strathfield". I think that is what she said.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I give the member for Strathfield a final warning. If she continues to interject she will be removed from the Chamber for the remainder of the day.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** On the Western Sydney rail network there will be services every 7½ minutes and 16 fully accessible stops connecting Westmead to Carlingford via the Parramatta central business district [CBD] and Camellia. It will be rail to the front door of the Westmead Children's Hospital, which of course is very important for families. The Government also is delivering rail to three university campuses, Parramatta station, the racecourse and the new Western Sydney Stadium. It will also give access to light rail for more than 130,000 residents, which will increase to 180,000 residents in the next 25 years. It is no wonder that people love it.

Across Greater Sydney and throughout New South Wales, the Government is making great investments to improve the quality of life for everybody. It does not matter where people live—in the west, the east, the north or the south. I note that the Minister for Roads has been busy with the investigation and early works for the Beaches Link Tunnel. The bottom line in relation to that project is that, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, the Government will not play class games. The Government is investing in places like Newcastle, Campbelltown and some Labor-held areas.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will come to order or they will be removed from the Chamber without further warning. The member for Newcastle has had his final warning.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** We have seen from the Leader of the Opposition that he has a cancellation policy.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Newcastle should not single himself out. I remind the member that he is on three calls to order.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The Leader of the Opposition wants to cancel the Sydney Metro, the CBD light rail, the Newcastle Light Rail and WestConnex, and if he had not forgotten about the Parramatta Light Rail he would have cancelled that too. I was interested to read a headline in the *Manly Daily* that states, "We will resist Foley." I thought young James Griffin, the member for Manly, had been busily at work with the *Manly Daily* to get that headline, but guess what? It turns out that every Labor candidate for the local council elections is now publicly resisting Luke Foley. Even Labor people are beginning to like Luke Foley as much as do members of the Government! [*Extension of time*]

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Bankstown to order for the first time. If the member for Canterbury, the member for Bankstown and the member for Lakemba do not want to be in the House, they may leave. Those Opposition members who think this is a joke may leave also.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** I have actually been quiet today.

**The SPEAKER:** That is your opinion.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** There is no need for that.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I will not argue with the member for Lakemba. The member may leave the Chamber if he wants to argue.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** I was not arguing.

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

[*Pursuant to sessional order the member for Lakemba left the Chamber at 15:14.*]

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Labor members support the Government in building the Beaches Link Tunnel. This Government is not willing to govern by postcode or to play class games. This Government wants to deliver for everybody, which is why I listed those Labor electorates that are getting the uplift in rail services.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Blue Mountains will cease interjecting. This is her final warning.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** That is why this Government is investing in infrastructure for the benefit of everybody in New South Wales, not on the basis of the political colour of an electorate. This Government will continue its disciplined approach in the implementation of its \$73 billion program, \$41.5 billion of which is invested in roads and transport over the next four years. This Government will continue to build mega projects across the city while we also continue to deliver local infrastructure. It is a great shame that we cannot have bipartisanship on major projects, given what the outcomes will be for communities right across the State. That is the bottom line. It is all very easy to sit in this House and then jump on Facebook to play games, but the communities are right to expect an infrastructure revolution that changes the course of this State forever.

*Business of the House*

**VALEDICTORY SPEECH**

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (15:16):** To assist the House regarding arrangements this afternoon, I indicate that at the conclusion of the usual matters that are underway now—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** What is he saying?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Strathfield will resume her seat and listen. It is rare for her to do that; it means shutting her mouth for a while. How rude some people are.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Indeed.

**The SPEAKER:** I am allowed to be. Opposition members will listen while the Leader of the House makes an announcement.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Is the member for Kogarah struggling?

**Mr Chris Minns:** Madam Speaker, I am struggling with your conduct in the chair.

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

**Mr Chris Minns:** Today you said someone was brain dead and then you made some other insult.

**The SPEAKER:** I did not say that.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Madam Speaker, you did say it.

**The SPEAKER:** No, I did not.

**Mr Chris Minns:** We can replay it.

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

**Mr Chris Minns:** Madam Speaker, you are not upholding the standards of this House by insulting people from the chair. You must understand that.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I heard some insults from Opposition members. The member for Kogarah will resume his seat.

**Mr Chris Minns:** That is fine. We are not in the chair; you are.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister for Health, and Leader of the House has the call.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** By way of clarification, after the normal course of matters that are underway, at 4.00 p.m. the business of the House will be interrupted for the valedictory speech to be given by the member for Murray.

*Documents*

**UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 13 September 2017.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

**Intercity Train Fleet**

Petition requesting that the Government cancel the Intercity Train Fleet contract and ensure a new Intercity Train Fleet is built in New South Wales, received from **Ms Trish Doyle**.

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

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

**Pig-dog Hunting Ban**

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

**Slaughterhouse Monitoring**

Petition requesting mandatory closed-circuit television for all New South Wales slaughterhouses, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

**Pet Shops**

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

**Inner-city Social Housing**

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

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

**Eastwood Park Commuter Car Park**

Petition opposing the construction of a commuter car park in Eastwood Park, received from **Mr Victor Dominello**.

**Blue Haven Intersection**

Petition requesting that the Government fund a solution to improve the Blue Haven Way and Motorway Link intersection at Blue Haven, received from **Mr David Harris**.

**The CLERK:** I announce that the following Minister has lodged a response to a petition signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Rob Stokes—Eastern Sydney High School—lodged 9 August 2017 (Mr Jihad Dib)

*Business of the House***NATIONAL STROKE WEEK****Reordering**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:18):** I move:

That the General Business Notice of Motion (General Notice) given by me this day [National Stroke Week] have precedence on Thursday 14 September 2017. My motion should be given precedence tomorrow because in 2017 in Australia there will be almost 56,000 new and recurrent strokes, which is one stroke every nine minutes. Stroke is a medical emergency. The treatment of a stroke is time critical. In Australia, only 36 per cent of people who suffer a stroke reach hospital within the critical 4.5-hour window. That is exactly why National Stroke Week, which took place from 4 to 10 September, aims to increase awareness and understanding of the FAST signs of a stroke and to encourage people to call 000.

FAST is an acronym that reminds us of the signs to check for that may indicate a stroke. "F" stands for check the person's face. Has their mouth drooped? "A" stands for arms. Can they lift both their arms? "S" stands for speech. Is their speech slurred? Do they understand you? "T" stands for "time is absolutely critical". If you see any of these symptoms you must act quickly and call 000. Stroke is one of Australia's biggest killers and a leading cause of disability. However, more than 80 per cent of strokes can be prevented. During Stroke Week, public

awareness is raised across New South Wales through community-based events, health checks and risk-factor education.

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

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** During Stroke Week last week, I took the opportunity to attend an awareness event in my electorate. In New South Wales, approximately 17,000 people will suffer from a stroke this year and the financial cost of strokes in Australia is estimated to be \$5 billion each year. In New South Wales, the Agency for Clinical Innovation and clinical networks for stroke and rehabilitation support our local health districts to provide best practice, evidence-based care to our stroke patients. Since 2003, the Agency for Clinical Innovation has supported the establishment of organised stroke care, acute thrombolysis centres, acute stroke units and stroke services in 42 of our public hospitals as well as the development of a rehabilitation model of care.

In 2013, the NSW Stroke Reperfusion Service was implemented, which aims to shorten the patient journey from onset of acute stroke symptoms to an acute stroke thrombolysis service for definitive treatment. In June 2014, the Agency for Clinical Innovation Stroke Network implemented the Stroke Clinical Variation Statewide Strategy. The aim of this strategy is to ensure the delivery of best quality care, and 32 stroke services in New South Wales have participated. The objective of the strategy is the reduction of mortality and an improvement of functional outcomes for our stroke patients.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (15:21):** My motion deserves precedence tomorrow because this Premier will stop at nothing when it comes to slugging the hardworking families in south-western Sydney. Premier Berejiklian will stop at nothing to ensure that families will be taxed along the M5 corridor. From Canterbury to Camden, this Premier is prepared to introduce and reintroduce tolls for the next 40 years. She should come into this Chamber tomorrow and argue her case. This is a Premier who wants to fatten up the pig for sale. She sold 51 per cent of the WestConnex corporation to the private sector. She also wants the toll money so she can pork-barrel jobs elsewhere. It is our communities along the M5 who will be paying for all those projects, like the northern beaches tunnel.

The member for Oatley should come into the Chamber tomorrow and argue his case. He has weaselled his way out of explaining why families in Peakhurst, Oatley and Mortdale are being forced to pay the M5 tax for the first time. Mr Coure knows that when people get on the M5 from King Georges Road they do not have to pay, but under the Liberal Government they will. It is a triple whammy for people living in Oatley because they will now be tolled when they enter from King Georges Road, they will not have an upgrade south-west of the M5 East, and they will be paying for the next 40 years.

My motion deserves precedence tomorrow because I also want to hear from the wonderful member for East Hills, whom we have not heard squawk from since 10 March 2016. He has not spoken in this place since 10 March 2016. Where is the member's outrage for our tradies and workers who live in Milperra and Panania? They will be slugged by his Government and forced to pay the levy for 40 years. The member for East Hills has something to say, but he should save it for tomorrow.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Point of order: I ask that the member for Bankstown be brought back to the leave of the motion. I also point out that the member should not be condemning other members. That is not contained within the motion. She is supposed to be establishing why her motion should be reordered.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! I uphold the point of order. The member for Bankstown will return to the leave of the motion.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK:** The member for East Hills has wormed his way back into the Liberal Party. Premier Berejiklian has welcomed him back with open arms.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** Point of order: The member is flouting your ruling, Mr Temporary Speaker.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The speaking time of the member for Bankstown has expired. The question is that the motion standing in the name of the member for Port Macquarie have precedence on Thursday 14 September 2017.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....48  
Noes .....36  
Majority.....12

AYES

Anderson, Mr K

Aplin, Mr G

Ayres, Mr S

## AYES

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	Fraser, Mr A
George, Mr T	Gibbons, Ms M	Goward, Ms P
Grant, Mr T	Griffin, Mr J	Gulaptis, Mr C
Hazzard, Mr B	Henskens, Mr A	Humphries, Mr K
Johnsen, Mr M	Kean, Mr M	Lee, Dr G
Maguire, Mr D	Marshall, Mr A	Notley-Smith, Mr B
O'Dea, Mr J	Patterson, Mr C (teller)	Pavey, Mrs M
Perrottet, Mr D	Petinos, Ms E	Piccoli, Mr A
Provest, Mr G	Rowell, Mr J	Sidoti, Mr J
Stokes, Mr R	Taylor, Mr M	Toole, Mr P
Tudehope, Mr D	Upton, Ms G	Ward, Mr G
Williams, Mr R	Williams, Mrs L	Wilson, Ms F

## NOES

Aitchison, Ms J	Atalla, Mr E	Barr, Mr C
Car, Ms P	Catley, Ms Y	Chanthivong, Mr A
Cotsis, Ms S	Crakanthorp, Mr T	Daley, Mr M
Donato, Mr P	Doyle, Ms T	Finn, Ms J
Foley, Mr L	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
Lynch, Mr P	McKay, Ms J	Mehan, Mr D
Mihailuk, Ms T	Minns, Mr C	Park, Mr R
Parker, Mr J	Piper, Mr G	Scully, Mr P
Smith, Ms T F	Tesch, Ms L	Warren, Mr G
Washington, Ms K	Watson, Ms A (teller)	Zangari, Mr G

**Motion agreed to.***Motions Accorded Priority***LABOR PARTY BY-ELECTION PREFERENCES****Consideration**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (15:30):** My motion should be accorded priority because it acknowledges that only the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals will deliver for the people of regional and rural New South Wales. It also recognises that the bankrupt Country Labor Party delivered a member of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party to this Chamber through backroom preference deals. My motion calls on the Labor Party to publicly rule out a preference deal with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in the Cootamundra and Murray by-elections. Communities in rural and regional New South Wales are calling for the truth. They are calling for Labor to come clean on what it plans to do at the by-elections in Cootamundra and Murray.

In November 2016 Labor as a brand had been trashed and had lost credibility, but it used the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party to try to get itself back into rural and regional New South Wales. That was achieved and one member of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party is now a member of this House. We are now heading towards the by-elections on 14 October, and over the last couple of weeks the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Maroubra have been cuddling up to the member for Orange on the deep, dark backbenches where the light does not shine. What are they doing? Are they saying, "G'day, mate, how are you going?" "Tick the box?" "Yes, sure."

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! Standing Order 56 requires all members to be seated when in the Chamber. The member for Auburn will resume his seat.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** That is what they are doing. Our communities are asking what they are doing as a last-ditch effort by Labor. Labor tried to give the seat to Country Labor, but as everyone knows Country

Labor is broke—well done, Country Labor. Country Labor kept faith with its masters, and its masters taught Country Labor well that financial management sits last on the priority list. Labor does not care about rural and regional communities; the only number it cares about is the number it is going to do with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in Cootamundra and Murray. Those opposite should come clean, but they will not do so. What will they do in Cootamundra and Murray? If Labor cannot run Country Labor, how can it run country New South Wales? It is through the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party.

**M5 TOLL**

**Consideration**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields) (15:33):** My motion deserves to be accorded priority because the needs of south-west Sydney motorists are a priority for Labor but, as we all know, this Liberals and Nationals Government does not care about the unfair treatment it continues to dish out to people in our area. Anyone who has driven on the M5 will say that it is a frustrating experience with traffic crawling at a snail's pace for no obvious reason, and a breakdown can cause extensive delays. There is nothing quite like an M5 traffic jam to raise frustration levels. But to make the M5 experience even worse, this Government now wants to extend the M5 toll and put its hands into the pockets of south-west Sydney motorists until at least 2060, when the great-grandkids of some of today's motorists will still be paying the toll, a toll that should have been paid off by 2026. Shafting and short-changing the people of south-west Sydney is a hallmark of this Government. The M5 toll extension is nothing more than a greedy cash grab, plain and simple. This cash grab is at the expense of south-west Sydney motorists.

Their commutes are long, their budgets are stretched, their wages are flat, their jobs are being casualised and their bills are going through the roof. What is this Government's answer to make life easier for the people of south-west Sydney? An M5 toll extension of more than \$2,000 a year for motorists doing the weekly grind, when the toll should have been paid off by 2026. In return for this privilege, motorists get stuck in the M5 car park, adding to a long and hard day. For that, they get nothing in return—zilch. How much more unfair can this Government get? This is appalling treatment and shows the contempt this Government has for the people of south-west Sydney, who want their fair share and a fair go. The M5 extension cash grab is so that the Premier can fund her North Shore pet projects, which will be paid for by south-west Sydney motorists who will never use them. The toll is designed so that the Minister can fatten up profits as part of a sweetheart deal for WestConnex. This is appalling, inflicting pain on south-west Sydney with indifference.

Where are the Liberal members for south-west Sydney? Where is the member for Camden? Where is the member for Holsworthy? They have been silenced and cannot be heard. We have seen *Where's Wally?* with his red shirt and aqua trousers, but now we have "Where's Camden?" and "Where's Holsworthy?" on the M5 toll. This is nothing short of a greedy cash grab by a government that inflicts pain on south-west Sydney, without care or concern. It is pure greed.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that the motion of the member for Tamworth be accorded priority.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....47  
 Noes .....36  
 Majority.....11

**AYES**

- |                 |                          |                         |
|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Anderson, Mr K  | Aplin, Mr G              | Ayes, 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            | Fraser, Mr A            |
| George, Mr T    | Gibbons, Ms M            | Goward, Ms P            |
| Grant, Mr T     | Griffin, Mr J            | Gulaptis, Mr C          |
| Hazzard, Mr B   | Henskens, Mr A           | Humphries, Mr K         |
| Johnsen, Mr M   | Kean, Mr M               | Lee, Dr G               |
| Maguire, Mr D   | Marshall, Mr A           | Notley-Smith, Mr B      |
| O'Dea, Mr J     | Patterson, Mr C (teller) | Pavey, Mrs M            |
| Perrottet, Mr D | Petinos, Ms E            | Piccoli, Mr A           |
| Provest, Mr G   | Rowell, Mr J             | Sidoti, Mr J            |
| Taylor, Mr M    | Toole, Mr P              | Tudehope, Mr D          |

## AYES

Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

Ward, Mr G  
Wilson, Ms F

Williams, Mr R

## NOES

Aitchison, Ms J  
Car, Ms P  
Cotsis, Ms S  
Donato, Mr P  
Foley, Mr L  
Haylen, Ms J  
Kamper, Mr S  
Lynch, Mr P  
Mihailuk, Ms T  
Parker, Mr J  
Smith, Ms T F  
Washington, Ms K

Atalla, Mr E  
Catley, Ms Y  
Crakanthorp, Mr T  
Doyle, Ms T  
Harris, Mr D  
Hoening, Mr R  
Lalich, Mr N (teller)  
McKay, Ms J  
Minns, Mr C  
Piper, Mr G  
Tesch, Ms L  
Watson, Ms A (teller)

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

**Motion agreed to.****LABOR PARTY BY-ELECTION PREFERENCES****Priority**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (15:40):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges that only the Liberals and Nationals will deliver for the people of regional and rural New South Wales.
- (2) Recognises that the Country Labor Party delivered a Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party member through backroom preference deals.
- (3) Calls on the Labor Party to publicly rule out a preference deal with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in the Cootamundra and Murray by-elections.

It is interesting that over the past few weeks we have seen a very public display of affection between Labor and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party right before our eyes in this Chamber. There is a bit of room on the backbench—and I acknowledge the wave from the member for Orange sitting up there—and we have seen the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Maroubra, and just a few minutes ago the member for Cessnock up there as well doing a little deal. "How are you, chappy?" "What's going on?" "What's the deal?" "What's happening on 14 October?" It is very interesting to note.

I happened to find a copy of *Country Labor Dialogue* on the scrap heap—pretty much where that organisation is at present. It states that Country Labor candidates have been preselected in Monaro and Gilmore and over the next two years they will be hosting events in every electorate held by the Liberals, The Nationals and The Greens across New South Wales. Hang on a second—every Liberal, Nationals and Greens-held electorate? The seat of Orange is missing. How come it is not in there? Would that be because the deal has been done already? It has already been inked. It is there. What sneaky deals have been done? Come on, come clean. That is a marriage of convenience and the member for Orange is not getting a fair deal.

When we think about what is happening in rural and regional New South Wales, we know that Labor does not care. The people in rural and regional New South Wales are being hoodwinked. Labor has been drinking snake oil and speaks with a forked tongue. In Western Australia the newly elected Labor State Government made its number one priority to strip regional areas of their Resources for Regions program. That is a program The Nationals fought hard for, to build hospitals, schools, roads, and other facilities across regional Western Australia. Now with metro-centric State Labor in government their election promises have gone out the door and the money has gone straight into Perth. Regional Western Australia has lost out. That is the risk for country New South Wales, for Cootamundra and for the seat of Murray.

Labor has no interest in delivering for regional areas. It only wants to regain control of the State and satisfy its thirst for power through its hungry unions. It will drive regional New South Wales into the ground. Regional New South Wales has been well served by The Nationals and continues to be so. The Regional Growth Fund is activating \$1.3 billion through Connecting Country Communities; the Regional Sports Infrastructure

Fund; the Regional Cultural Fund; the Growing Local Economies Fund; the Resources for Regions program; and the Stronger Country Communities Fund. We heard the Deputy Premier talk about the rubbish promise from the Leader of the Opposition about regenerating all the funds from the sale of the Snowy Hydro back into regional New South Wales. We only own 50 per cent of Snowy Hydro and although that is a significant percentage it is less than the \$1.3 billion that The Nationals are putting into regional New South Wales.

We know that Labor has no care factor for the people in regional New South Wales, for the people in the Cootamundra electorate or for the people in the seat of Murray. Labor wants its fair share. It will take its fair share at the expense of rural and regional New South Wales and it will deliver it straight back to its union mates in the city. That is its fair share. It cannot run Country Labor, which is broke. If it cannot run Country New South Wales, how does it think it will do it? It will do it through a candidate in the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in both those seats. Members opposite should own up. How are Labor's preferences going to be distributed?

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (15:46):** Somebody bust out the Kleenex: There is a bit of a cryathon happening over there in the National Party. This once great party that used to be elected in its own right is now seeking to squirm and squirrel so that Labor will preference it instead of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party so it has a chance to be elected. Nationals members are so deeply impassioned about this that there are three of them in the Chamber to have this conversation! What we do know about the by-election in Orange is that there were swings of up to 60 per cent. That is unprecedented. To use the words of the member for Murray—who is about to leave this place—I might suggest this to the members of the National Party: bang, bang, bang, they will all be gone at the next election, because they are all in the margin of error; they are all inside the 60 per cent range.

What is going to happen at Cootamundra or Murray is that that 60 per cent swing will come back to haunt the National Party. You know what? I would rather stand with a shooter, fisher or farmer than stand with Pauline Hanson and the disgusting One Nation Party. The Nationals want us to rule out the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. Why does it not rule out Pauline Hanson and One Nation? That is the challenge for it in this Chamber today. Rule it out here and now. I was in the polling station at Orange and I can tell members what the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers were fighting for in their local communities—

**Mr Troy Grant:** Point of order: There will be no support by me for any One Nation in Dubbo.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** What about the member for Tamworth?

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Point of order: One Nation is not registered in New South Wales.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** I acknowledge and congratulate the member for Dubbo. He has finally taken the stand that the party needs to take—not only the National Party but also the Liberal Party. Let us deal with some of the issues that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party members addressed in their campaign in the electorate of Orange. I support all of them: I support their fight for TAFE, their fight against cuts to health, their fight against the greyhound ban, and their fight against council mergers. Members of the Labor Party and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party stood at the polling booths—where The Nationals experienced a 60 per cent swing away from them—and supported the same things. They are the issues that the people care about and that is why members opposite are about to go bang, bang, bang out the door.

No matter what the Premier said in this Chamber today, members opposite will not listen. They say they want to talk about the economics. I love the economics practised by The Nationals—or, as I call them, "the Libs in tan pants". Not one member of The Nationals understands anything about economics. I have a fact challenge for them: How much of the efficiency dividend that has been ripped out of the budget in the past six years are they getting? The \$8.8 billion they are getting equates to 10 per cent, or the value of the North-West Rail line. Will the Government extend that rail line to Tamworth for the good local member? Will it be extended to Port Macquarie or Dubbo? The Nationals members are not seeing any of that efficiency dividend.

The Deputy Premier was beating his chest in this place today about getting \$10 billion of the proceeds of the asset sales. How much has the Government received for the sale of this State's assets? It has sold \$50 billion worth of assets. What is 30 per cent of \$50 billion? It is about \$15 billion. The member for Monaro was crowing about getting \$10 billion. He needs someone to help him with the economics. He needs someone to tell him about all of the government offices that have been closed in his electorate; he needs someone to tell him about all the jobs that have been cut as a result of the efficiency dividend. The Nationals are so dumb about economics. They just do not understand what is happening.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Point of order: That is quite harsh.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** They are in this Chamber cuddling up to their Liberal Party friends while wearing their tan pants. They should tighten their belts because their pants are being ripped down.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:51):** I do not have any tan pants; I do not have even a tan skirt. I will bring some calm to this debate and focus on the first part of the motion, which acknowledges that the Liberal-Nationals Government is delivering for rural and regional New South Wales. When members opposite were in government they had no interest in regional areas of this State. I will address what happened—or, more importantly, what did not happen—in my electorate for 16 years. In 2010—the Labor Party's final year in office—\$3.5 billion was spent on rural and regional roads.

**Mr Luke Foley:** How did your private hospital go?

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** I am happy to have a debate about the private hospital because I worked there. The Leader of the Opposition might want to talk about health infrastructure. In 2010-11, the Labor Government spent \$16.4 billion on rural and regional health services. That is compared to the \$22.1 billion spent by this Government in 2016-17 and the \$23.3 billion it will spend in 2017-18. The Labor Government's record in that regard is disgraceful. Thanks to this Government, the previous Minister and the current Minister, nearly every community in regional New South Wales—Lismore, Wagga Wagga, Coffs Harbour, Parkes, Dubbo, Forbes and Peak Hill—has benefited from new hospital infrastructure. Port Macquarie Base Hospital in my electorate has also benefited from this Government's investment.

I will mention some other things that were ignored in the Port Macquarie electorate during 16 years of a Labor Government in company with an Independent member supported by members opposite. The Labor Government made promise after promise about the Stingray Creek bridge, but it never delivered. It was delivered only after this Government provided funding. Along with my local community, I lobbied for 16 years about Lake Cathie Public School. I made representations to three Labor Ministers—Refshauge, Tebbutt and Watkins—but they ignored the need for a public school in my electorate. Who built it? It was the Liberal-Nationals. That school already has 300 students and it is getting bigger. My community was ignored by members opposite. Their record is abysmal. Clearly, the worst thing that could happen would be for members opposite to be returned to government.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (14:44):** This motion is based on only one thing—fear. We are witnessing The Nationals' fear of losing not only Cootamundra and Murray but also many other regional electorates in 2019. They will lose Bathurst, Dubbo, Barwon and Tamworth. Let us not leave it there: Liberal Party regional seats will also be on the chopping block.

**Mr Troy Grant:** Point of order: I ask the member to withdraw the reference to Dubbo. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party had a stall at the Dubbo show and no-one turned up.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** For too long The Nationals have had it too good. They have become lazy, complacent and disingenuous. Their attempts to represent regional communities are a farce, and that has caught up with them.

**Mr Troy Grant:** Point of order: I take offence at being called lazy. I ask the member for Orange to withdraw that statement.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The Minister will resume his seat.

**Mr Luke Foley:** To the point of order: The Minister has made a good point. He is not lazy; no-one worked harder to ban greyhound racing in New South Wales.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! There is no point of order. Any member who seeks to disrupt the debate will be sent to the naughty corner out in the square.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** The Nationals have failed to stand up to their Liberal Party masters. They supported the greyhound racing ban and council amalgamations. They are core issues affecting New South Wales regional communities and The Nationals let them down. That is the bottom line and it is why they are facing a debacle. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has two outstanding candidates in the Murray and Cootamundra electorates. Matthew Stadtmiller is an outstanding candidate and the future member for Cootamundra. Helen Dalton was today announced as the candidate for Murray. I understand that the member for Monaro personally rang her to coax her into being The Nationals candidate. What did she say? She turned her back on him. She turned her back on him as he has turned his back on regional New South Wales. Helen Dalton is a fantastic candidate for the electorate of Murray. I have plenty of room for more members of my party on the backbench and I look forward to walking them into the Chamber after 14 October.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (15:59):** In reply: From what we have seen and heard here today, it is obviously a done deal. Buddy, they are doing you over; massaging you like a marshmallow. It will be Country Labor and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party—a done deal.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The question is that the motion as moved by the member for Tamworth be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Members*

### VALEDICTORY SPEECH

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI (Murray) (16:02):** I take this opportunity to make my final contribution to the New South Wales Parliament after almost 19 years in this place. These speeches always involve thankyou to the many people who have supported a person personally and professionally throughout any job, and particularly this job. The first person I thank is my wife, Sonia. Partners are sometimes the last person thanked, but on this occasion I want her to be the first and last person I thank because all our partners put up with a great deal. We come to this place knowing what to expect because we have signed up for it, but our partners have not. Partners are often much less prepared for the downsides of political life than we who choose to be part of it.

Last week my wife, Sonia, went to a shop in Griffith and a person in the shop said, "Isn't it wonderful Adrian has decided to retire? He has done a great job over 20 years" and so on. Fortunately, she gushed to my wife about my performance as the local member. She said, "Isn't it great that he is putting his family first?" Sonia said, "Yes, that is lovely", but when she came home to me she said, "I am the one who has had to put the family first for the last 10 years. But I went into that shop and they were talking about you and gushing about you." It is the family who puts up with a lot, and so I thank Sonia and my two children, Finn and Jasper.

Jasper was born a few months before I became a Minister and has only known me as an absent father, but now I have a great opportunity to spend more time with those people who are most special to me. I thank my mother; my recently departed father, who would have loved to be here; my sister, Luisa, and her partner, Tony; my brother, Dino, and his partner, Jacqui; and my mother-in-law, Luisa, and Walter, who have always been very supportive of me. I thank the National Party. If my name had been on the corflute in 1999 without the support of the National Party I certainly would not be here today. I acknowledge the party and what it has done for me at a grassroots and a party level. I thank the State directors, Ben Franklin and Nathan Quigley. I thank the chairs of the National Party, Christine Ferguson, Niall Blair—whom I had the pleasure of signing up to the National Party and who went on to greater things, and is still doing great things—and Bede Bourke, the current chairman of the party.

Regardless of whether you are in a party, we all know that it is the local supporters who make a big difference. I thank Margaret Fulton and her late husband, John Fulton, who were great supporters in Leeton. I thank Joan Douglas from Deniliquin, Helen Dickie from Berrigan, and Louie Zafina from Euston in the western part of my electorate of Murray. I thank John Cattanach from Carrathool, Austin Evans from Coleambally, Morna Knight from Narrandera and Jenny Hawkins from Finley, who is a great supporter and friend who unfortunately passed away. I thank those who supported me strongly when I was first elected: Jock Donaldson, Michael O'Meara, John Bonetti, Marj Evans, Peter Sparks, former member for Murray Jim Small and his wife, Judy, and former member for Murrumbidgee Adrian Cruickshank. I thank Noel Hicks, who gave me the advice that politics is a tough business but you must make sure that at the end of it the ups outweigh the downs. I thank my great supporters Phyllis Jones and David Houston from Hay.

As we all know, you cannot survive in this job without great electorate staff. I thank Lyn Sparks, who was my electorate officer for about 16 years. She worked as an electorate officer for Adrian Cruickshank before that and even worked for Tim Fischer back when he was the State member for Sturt. She certainly worked for a long time. She retired about five or six years ago but still does a day or so in my electorate office. I thank Lyn for her long service not just to me but to the people of my electorate. I thank Jan Casagrande and Karen Givonazzo. I thank Sally Brown, who has also been there for a very long time. I thank Kim Burgess, the senior electorate officer in my office at the moment. I also thank Meagan, who is working there for a couple of months. They do so much of the unseen work in electorate offices. I am sure all members have been stopped in the street by someone who thanks them for something they have done and they have no idea what it was. That is because of things our electorate staff do. Still, we all smile and say, "No worries. Any time." We take all the credit for it—do not worry about that.

My office has received all kinds of crazy requests. We had a call from an elderly lady 200 kilometres away in Deniliquin who had a dead cat under her house that was starting to stink. She had rung the council and various other people who had all said it was not their responsibility. And so she rang our office. It had nothing to

do with me but my electorate staff, through the connections they all make within our communities, had the cat removed. It is a funny story, but it meant a lot for that one elderly resident of Deniliquin. It is these personal stories that matter. People have asked me what my greatest achievement is. I do not know that there is only one achievement; it is all the things you get to do for individuals.

A fellow from Coleambally once called me and said, "My brother is having serious mental health issues, but he is not a risk to himself or to others so they will not schedule him and send him to Wagga. He sleeps in the back of his ute and we need to do something for him." Through connections, I rang a friend who was a general practitioner and we ended up getting the fellow some treatment in Wagga. About six months later, I walked out of a restaurant in Griffith and this young man chased me out and said, "I am the brother who rang you. My brother who was sleeping in the back of a ute is in there having dinner with our family. I want to thank you for what you did." You can spend millions and billions of dollars and do all kinds of things, but it is the impact you make on individual lives as a member of Parliament that makes this job most satisfying.

I also thank the staff and all the members of Parliament who have made this an enjoyable place to work. I have calculated that I have made 1,300 Rex and Hazelton Airlines flights in my 19 years in Parliament. For those who enjoy flying on Saab 340s—no-one is putting their hand up—that is a lot of flights. I pay particular regard to Barry O'Farrell and Andrew Stoner. Opposition is difficult—as I am sure Opposition members appreciate. The time in opposition in the lead-up to the 2011 election, which was won by the Coalition, was difficult and required great discipline. Barry and Andrew, with the limited resources they had in Opposition—do not think we are going to give the Opposition any more; I am not that sorry—did a great deal of hard work to get the Coalition elected to government.

Barry was a great leader in tough times, and I personally thank him for backing me when we had to make some pretty tough budget decisions in Education. He backed in the Gonski reforms when all the Ministers in the Government at the time had to make tough decisions in their own portfolios to fund an important reform that has already changed the lives of so many children in this State. I pay my regards also to Mike Baird, my great friend. He came through a tough election in 2015. I recall a time in the lead-up to that election when we were using capital works money to upgrade the fronts of some public schools that looked very ordinary. The decision about the schools was made completely objectively; projects were carried out in safe Labor seats. As always happens with these kinds of things, the question was raised: "Why are we spending money in safe Labor seats?" To Mike Baird's eternal credit he said, "We are not that Government." We did not change a single decision that we made about those schools.

I turn to Troy Grant, my good friend. "Integrity" is the word that comes to mind when I mention him. As a former police officer, Troy investigated a priest who had committed various child sex offences in the Hunter region. It was one of the things that triggered the special commission of inquiry into the Hunter Catholic Church and all the things that flowed from that. Troy rang me when he had not been in Parliament very long and said, "*Lateline* wants me to speak about the special commission of inquiry on this issue. I am a member of Parliament now; I don't know what I should do." I said, "When people are listening you have a responsibility to speak." He did speak on *Lateline* about his experiences and what had happened. As I said, that was one trigger for the commission of inquiry, which then led to the royal commission that is conducting critical work for this country. Troy is a great friend, and will remain so. I acknowledge the new deputy leader. I signed up Niall Blair to the National Party as we were standing on a bridge not far from Yanco many years ago.

I would also like to thank members of the Labor Party for treating me with respect in opposition and in government, particularly as Minister. There was a time when I defended one of our colleagues—not a Labor colleague—and his partner from very unfair treatment. I thank Labor Party members because when I was the victim of blowback they had the opportunity to pile on top of me, and they chose not to. I really appreciated that, and I know that my wife and family appreciated it as well. I wish Gladys Berejiklian and John Barilaro all the very best. This Government deserves to get re-elected at the next election because of the great work that we have been doing. This is a great Government—not a perfect one—but in my part of the world we need this Government to win the next election, and to win it well.

I move now to the next stage for me. The University of New South Wales is setting up an education institute of which I will be a director. One of the conditions in accepting the role was that I would be based in Griffith. A key task of the institute will be to work around the gap between rural and remote students and metropolitan students—not just in Australia but around the world. It has been a key passion of mine, and this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I apologise for causing a by-election. I know it is inconvenient, including for the electorate, but this is an opportunity for me to continue to make a contribution to public life in an area that I feel incredibly strongly about.

I am also a nominated board member of the Open Society Foundations Global Education Advisory Board, which is based in New York and in Budapest. This provides me with another opportunity to make a contribution

to education, particularly around access, openness and accountability of education. I am talking about things like academic freedoms for university academics. It will allow me to make a contribution to education in a broader way, rather than just in Australia. It will be a great opportunity for me.

I have also signed a contract with HarperCollins Publishers to write a book—none of you gets a mention—explaining schools to parents. I walked into my first parent-teacher interview when I had been a Minister for three years and I did not know what to ask. I realised that there must be parents out there who do not know what to ask at a parent-teacher interview and who do not know, for example, what "NAPLAN" means. It will be an interesting opportunity for me as I have never written a book before. Hopefully I can make a contribution to parents' better understanding of what questions they should ask and what they need to know in order to support their children in education.

I will not go through a list of all the things that have been done in my electorate—I refer members to my website; that is what one usually does—except for a couple. We have talked about the bridge at Moama and this Government is delivering it. I thank the Premier and the Minister for Health for their commitment to building a new hospital at Griffith. Those two projects are well overdue—they have been requested for a long time—but this Government is delivering them. Water remains a very big, very contentious issue. It is a critical issue for my electorate, and I will continue to advocate on that. We have a strong economy and in my electorate we have never seen so much money, especially in the past three years.

I will finish by passing on a few things I have learnt over the 19 years I have been in Parliament. I guess there is no point in learning if you do not get the opportunity to pass the lessons on—do not take the advice if you do not want it. First, always put your family first. This Parliament has a history of broken marriages. The strains and stresses of being a member of Parliament have led to the decay and ultimate breakdown of relationships. This place is in no way worth the end of a relationship with any member of your family—your partner or anybody else.

Secondly, if you are young when you enter Parliament be patient. What New South Wales needs and what Parliament needs is people who have experience in Parliament and legislating, experience in governing and experience in representing an electorate. What people have when they are young is time, and they need to use that asset because we need people with great depth and great experience leading this State. Thirdly, I advise that this is a leadership Chamber, not an echo chamber. Members should make sure they say what they think, not what other people think; otherwise they will regret it when they leave. It has been among some of my proudest achievements to say things that were controversial—things that have caused me, subsequently, a lot of grief. Every single moment of that was worth it.

Fourthly, you only need two senses to be in here. One is a sense of perspective. We are not as important as we sometimes think we are but, at the same time, we are often much more important than we think we are. Much as people in the community might criticise us at times, they have elected us and they treat us as their own. They think we are an important part of the community. The second sense that we need is a sense of humour. Whatever we might say in this place, the most effective rhetoric is tinged with humour when we walk out of here knowing that we are all trying to get to the same place but in a slightly different way.

Fifthly, I think members have a responsibility to shape their party, not to let the party shape them. Members of a party have a responsibility to try to shape the direction of the party, not to say, "I must have this position because this is the position of my party." Sixthly, I advise members to think in the grey. I always envy people who think in black and white. I got this email from a guy when we were debating stem cell legislation six or seven years ago. He was black-and-white about the issue—no way. I envied him because it must be so easy to think in black and white. But what do you do when a guy in a wheelchair comes up and says, "Do you know what? Stem cell research could make me walk again", or when a parent comes up and says, "My daughter has type 1 diabetes and will have a diabetes pump for the rest of her life, with all the associated health challenges"? You cannot say, "No, I won't even consider what that kind of therapy might lead to." It is absolutely critical to be sceptical of your political party, sceptical of your church and sceptical of your own ideology. I think that is where you make the greatest contribution in Parliament.

And do not give your power away. Alan Jones mentions me a lot—not necessarily in favourable terms. I remember when I had been the Minister for six months and there was the issue of Gosford Public School. The previous Labor Government and Minister Firth had made a decision to move it from the central business district next to the Henry Kendall High School, and there was lots of consternation about it. In the lead-up to the election we said that we would review the decision, and we did. I went to Gosford and had a look, got advice from the department and spoke to local people. There were some challenges with parking and various other matters, but it was the right decision to make and we backed in the previous Government. I remember standing at the airport in Griffith in the freezing cold at six o'clock in the morning and talking on the phone with Alan Jones.

He was doing what he does, but every allegation he put to me I was able to respond to and then he would move on. But at the end he said, "But, Minister, you've got to promise me one thing, and that is that you will review this decision." And I said, "No." He launched into a tirade and then he said, "You're worse than Clover Moore." I thought, "If that's the best he could do—I actually don't mind Clover."

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Clover would mind, though.

**Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI:** Yes, Clover might mind. But I thought if that was the worst he could do, it was not too bad. But, more importantly, when I returned to the office that day I saw some people with the department and I learned something that I did not know at the time, which is that when you are a Minister people in the department listen to what you say and take direction on what sort of Minister and leader you are by the way you respond to pressure. They said, "Had you said, 'Yes, we'll review it,'" it would have shaped the way they would provide advice to me, knowing that the minute I get a bit of the hard word put on me I would change my mind. I did not know that at the time, but I am glad I answered "No"—whatever Alan Jones might have said about me subsequently. But I think it is important that we do not pour our power onto the ground and hand it over to other people, like Alan Jones, every time they put the hard word on us.

Finally, I say to members: Measure your success by your enemies and by who your friends are. I list my enemies as Alan Jones, Miranda Devine, Mark Latham and Ray Hadley. But I name my friends as Deirdre Kennedy from Walgett, an Aboriginal lady who taught my children how to make johnnycakes; Thomas George, the member for Lismore with whom I came into Parliament 19 years ago; Phyllis Jones, who is a truckie from Hay; Jude Hayman, who is the principal of Griffith Public School; David Gonski; Bishop Peter Comensoli; Jihad Dib, whom I have had the pleasure of getting to know; Ben Denkant, who is a timber cutter from Mathoura; Henry Rajendra, who is a union organiser in Western Sydney; Ashley Haynes, who is a butcher from Finley—I was going to call him the best butcher in Finley but there are two butchers in Finley and politically you just cannot say that—and Pat Fogarty, who is a councillor from Deniliquin. I tell you that I will put my friends up any day against the enemies I have made over my period of representation in Parliament.

When I think about the advice that Noel Hicks gave me about the ups and downs, I can confidently say the ups have well and truly outweighed the downs. But it is time to go. As I said at the beginning of my speech, I will thank Sonia at the beginning and I will thank her at the end. Our partners put up with a lot and often put on a very brave face when they see you, to hide their own anguish about how they feel and sometimes about how they get treated but particularly the anguish they feel for you. I want to thank Sonia, and when I thank Sonia I want to thank the partners and families of every member of Parliament for what they have to put up with whilst we do what we can to make this State a better place. In that regard, I hope I have played my small part.

*Members stood in their places and applauded.*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Adrian, I am sure that every member of not only this Parliament but also the previous Parliaments wish you, Sonia and your two boys all the very best for the future. May you be blessed with plenty of good health and plenty of happiness. I thank the friends of Adrian who are in the public gallery. I know that he greatly appreciates your attendance.

*Private Members' Statements*

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION PROPAGANDA

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah) (16:28):** I wish Adrian Piccoli all the best in his future endeavours. It has been an honour to share the Parliament with him. He is a very respected member of the New South Wales Parliament. I refer to a disturbing pamphlet that was distributed in my electorate and other parts of the St George region. The pamphlet is not authorised and was timed to be distributed during the local government elections of last weekend and in the midst of community debate about the marriage equality postal vote. Its title is "Do Not Vote Labor" and, while some members of the House may agree with the sentiment, they would not, I am sure, associate themselves with the content. The pamphlet purports to implore Australians to vote against the Labor Party and against marriage equality. While the pamphlet is meandering and riddled with spelling errors, the suggestion carried within it is that, should marriage equality become law, it will be a threat to the idea of the family and ultimately mean strange things will happen to one's children.

The opening paragraph says not to vote Labor if "you don't want your children to become homosexual." It then says not to vote Labor if "you do not want children who have 63 genders". There is also a vulgar reference to a personal activity that is best not openly canvassed in this Chamber. These are obviously ludicrous and highly laughable assertions. Millions of Australians have voted Labor at successive elections and, to the best of my knowledge, none of their children has ever been suddenly afflicted with 63 genders. I do not know how one could even have 63 genders. Most of these ridiculous assertions could be laughed off, and I would ordinarily be inclined to ignore the propaganda because I am blessed with a highly literate and rational electorate. The reason I have

chosen to address it tonight is that images of cartoon pornography are included on the reverse side of the pamphlet. There are images of naked people in various stages of undress.

Some vile moron put these images in the letterboxes of my constituents, within the easy reach and access of underage children. Someone is distributing illegal images of pornography to underage children. Unfortunately, I must report to the House that a mother in a neighbouring electorate reported to me that her children collected the mail and discovered these vile images. It is a grotesque irony that the person who sent a piece of literature in the erroneous hope of stopping the sexualisation of young people has distributed these unauthorised pieces of literature to young people. If we were looking for evidence of a group exposing young people to material that they are not ready for, this is exhibit A.

It is sad to see this letter distributed during the referendum, but we were warned by many activists that a referendum would lead to an ugly culture war directed at same-sex couples. Over the last decade we have seen a sea change in Australia's attitude towards same-sex marriage. Millions of people who were softly against the idea of same-sex marriage were waiting for a cogent and persuasive argument against the institution. The reason there has been such a migration of support in favour of same-sex marriage is that this argument never arrived. The best argument that Tony Abbott can mount is that same-sex marriage will lead to Safe Schools programs and eventually to clergy being forced to conduct same-sex marriages.

There is no logical connection between these events and to present it as such to the electorate is disingenuous. Ultimately, both issues are a matter of choice. It should be the choice of parents to introduce sex education to their children and it should be the choice of same-sex couples to join this ancient institution in a legal environment. That is why I will support same-sex marriage when my survey arrives in my mailbox. These are important issues and they should not have been clouded by this hateful, anonymous material. Ultimately, these unauthorised letters were distributed by a coward. The person was unwilling to put their name to these dishonest arguments and instead attempted to pollute our children's minds with filth.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:32):** I thank the member for Kogarah for bringing this flyer to the attention of the House. This homophobic pamphlet was circulated across Sydney ahead of the local government elections. It was distributed in my council area, Georges River, and in Bayside, Canterbury, Bankstown, and Strathfield council areas. I have been advised that this flyer has been referred to the NSW Electoral Commission. The highly offensive flyer was not authorised at all. This flyer was offensive and hateful towards many people living in my community. It was appalling behaviour ahead of the local government elections. I find it completely offensive.

#### **KU-RING-GAI NETBALL ASSOCIATION FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:33):** Sporting associations occupy an important place in local community life, promoting strong physical, mental and social health through people playing sport together. This year, the Ku-Ring-Gai Netball Association [KNA] reaches its gold anniversary, celebrating 50 years of netball competitions on the north shore. The Ku-Ring-Gai Netball Association began in 1968, starting a full competition in 1969 with over 520 players. The Saturday competition has grown to over 3,600 players from 18 clubs and the spring competition sees over 540 competitors from 11 clubs. Over 5,000 loyal fans turn out every Saturday of the season to support their family, friends and community. Earlier this month, I attended the grand final day presentations for the Ku-Ring-Gai Netball Association as it celebrates 50 years of netball for all ages on the north shore. Later this month, I will attend a special dinner at Terrey Hills to celebrate this fiftieth anniversary.

An early introduction to regular exercise is vital in setting healthy lifestyle patterns that hopefully continue into adulthood. KNA's competitions cater for both beginners and developed athletes, starting from kindergarten children through to adults. Children from five to nine years old can participate in NetSetGo, a non-competitive skills-based program that teaches correct catching, passing, and shooting techniques. NetSetGo encourages kids to develop the coordination and balance that will help them later on in life. Netball competitors of excellent calibre represent the KNA and their clubs at State and national championship levels. For example, Alison Miller was coached by North Shore United, a joint venture between KNA and the Northern Suburbs Netball Association. This year, Ms Miller was selected for the Netball NSW Waratahs team for the second year running, having achieved success in 2016 playing for the NSW Under 21 State team in the Under 21 National Championships. Another shining example is the Under 12 KNA representative team, which recently won the State championships. I congratulate all involved.

In 2015, KNA was distinguished with the Association Award as part of the One Netball Community Awards for their AllStars program. For 15 years, the Ku-Ring-Gai AllStars team has supported players with an intellectual disability to achieve their best in netball. KNA provides opportunities for a range of people to stay active, make friends and improve their sporting abilities in the local community. The sport of netball is enjoyed by both men and women, but it is especially popular among female children and youth. This is encouraging as we

know that only one in three Australian girls is active through a sports club during their childhood, compared with one in two boys. Furthermore, the participation rate for female youth drops dramatically after the age of 12. Hence this year's New South Wales Government Local Sports Grants focus on encouraging more talented young women into sport programs such as KNA's competitions and workshops.

Local sports clubs can apply for grants of up to \$20,000 as part of the Government's \$10 million sports grants program. I encourage KNA and other local sporting organisations to apply for grants that may support initiatives such as new sports programs, facilities upgrades and programs designed to promote participation in sport. I look forward to seeing more women continue with sport throughout childhood and well into adulthood as a result of positive experiences with local sports clubs like KNA. I wish to acknowledge KNA patron Brenda Williams and president Jo-Anne Perry for their ongoing leadership in making the KNA the vibrant community organisation it is today. I also particularly acknowledge Jeanette Wright, who has been continuously involved with KNA for its entire 50 years. Congratulations to all players, coaches, umpires, other volunteers, supporters and staff involved in the life of the association. I hope that KNA's fiftieth anniversary will be a further launching pad for success as it continues to flourish into the future.

#### NATHAN GREMMO AND JERSEY DAY

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (16:38):** The date 30 April 2015 will stand in the Hills shire as a day on which a life's work seemingly ended but also only began. That particular day young Nathan Gremmo, a friend of mine whose family I know well, who went to school with my son and whose name resonates throughout Sydney's north-west, was involved in a traffic accident in Glenhaven. Sadly, Nathan passed away the following day. However, Nathan's family was determined to ensure that his tragic passing at such a young age would not be in vain.

Not long before his passing, Nathan was deeply touched by a documentary espousing the benefits of organ donation. After discussion with his family, this young man decided to become an organ donor. That conversation led to his father, Michael, and mother, Kylie, to give doctors permission for Nathan's organs to be donated after his passing. Their and Nathan's generosity helped six people, one of them just a baby, to continue their lives in a happy and healthy way. Such selflessness in a time of pain is indicative of the community spirit in which the Gremmo family lives their lives. The legacy of their community spirit is Jersey Day. On 1 September each year people across Australia are encouraged to wear to work a sporting jersey of their choice and to start a conversation about the benefits of organ donation with their colleagues and the wider public.

Since the first event in 2015, just months after Nathan's death, Jersey Day has gone coast to coast, with people across our nation taking part. What distinguishes Jersey Day and organ donation from many other causes is that organ donation does not cost a cent. People are not asked to buy items or donate money on Jersey Day. They are simply asked to engage in conversation, as young Nathan did. This creates a stronger community and ensures this vital message is spread throughout the country. The Hills District Bulls club, of which the Gremmo family is part of the fabric, has spread this message throughout the New South Wales rugby league community by way of the annual Nathan Gremmo Shield fixture, which is played against the Guildford Owls in the Ron Massey Cup each season.

All National Rugby League clubs marked Jersey Day this season in the final round of the regular competition, and even the champion racehorse Winx donned Jersey Day colours this year. It is a testament to the strength and community spirit of the Gremmo family that such a tragedy can be turned into such a force for good throughout Australia. I cannot do anything but admire the bravery and spirit of Michael and Kylie Gremmo and their daughters, Annaliese and Ashley, in spreading the word of the great deed performed by their son and brother, even after he left this world for the next. Jersey Day is now an institution across Australia and one that I hope will, for many years, change the way we think about organ donation.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I thank the Minister for bringing the issue of organ donation to the attention of the House. Jersey Day, which is a very successful campaign, has been boosted by the National Rugby League coming on board. I encourage all members to continue to promote and support organ donation within this State.

#### TRIBUTE TO MITCHELL PITMAN

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:42):** The Federal member for Page, Kevin Hogan, spoke in the Federal Parliament earlier this year about the wonderful achievement of young North Coast resident Mitchell Pitman, who overcame his very serious health problems to become 2017 far North Coast winner of ABC's *Heywire*. I have met Mitch on a number of occasions, and his boundless enthusiasm for life in the face of all his health challenges is inspirational and needs to be retold in this House.

Mitchell currently attends Casino High School and is studying year 12 as well as doing a traineeship at Richmond Valley Council. This year he took out the Trainee/Apprentice of the Year at the 2017 Richmond Valley Industry and Business Excellence Awards. This story is as much about how his school, Leeville primary, turned his life around as it is about how the loving support of his family and sheer determination from Mitch made him into the person he is today. He says he was treated as a normal kid at school, playing touch footy on sharp gravel. When he was down his friends would pick him up, because that is what friends do. He says, "I am really thankful." Mitch's words are truly inspiring:

From the second I was born I've been a problem. Eight weeks premature, I couldn't poop; a cyst on my twisted bowel—an operation and I bled out on the table. Pneumonia, leaving scarred lungs. Choking on my own saliva and coughing fits—diagnosis Cerebral Palsy. I was told I'd never walk but I wasn't going to let that happen!

On my older brother's birthday, a balloon exploded while I slept peacefully. My parents were told I'd never hear but they weren't going to let that happen either.

At age two, I had an operation for a cochlear implant. Mum and I flew to Sydney weekly for cochlear programming while Dad and my brother stayed home on the farm. It was a scary two years for my family.

At pre-school I wore splints so I could walk. I also had a large cochlear processor that used AA batteries, worn in a bumbag, every day. I was happy when the splint broke and Cochlear invented a small processor that sat on my ear. I felt free.

As soon as I started school, my life began to turn around. Leeville Primary created who I am today.

I was treated as a normal kid, playing touch footy on the sharp gravel. It was worth it—I made it to state, winning bronze for running in the Athletes With Disabilities category.

High School in Casino was no different. I became a face to know, playing footy with kids twice my size.

People ask me what my story is. They'll never get it the way I want them to.

It's hard to explain what I've been through. Every day my life is a struggle; sore muscles, twitching, flat batteries, "I beg your pardon?", FLAT BATTERIES, regular falls and losing my implants, people asking if I'm alright, no answer—I can't hear them.

I wake up to silence and it takes me 10 minutes just to get moving. All I hear are imaginary noises that my mind invents as a soundtrack for what's happening around me.

I get up and Mum talks to me. There isn't any logic to that, is there? I still can't hear, my implants aren't on! But I'm always polite, nod and smile.

My parents aren't helicopter parents and I don't need pity. I'll ask for help if I need it. Friends pick me up when I'm down because that's what friends do. I'm lucky.

I've learnt not to feel sorry for myself, it's not what I do. There's always someone worse off than me.

We can all learn a lesson from Mitch. He is someone who loves life and will not give up. I am sure we will be reading a lot more about him in the future. I have met Mitch on a couple of occasions. He truly is an inspirational young man with a great future and does well at everything he does, in particular with the Richmond Valley Council. I know that the council's staff and the community love him. I am sure that this kid has a terrific future ahead of him.

### SOUTH COAST RAIL SERVICES

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:46):** As a lifelong resident of the Illawarra, I have been a regular reader of the *Illawarra Mercury* for years. Over the last few weeks, a couple of *Illawarra Mercury* front pages have stood out from the others. In particular, I would like to draw the attention of members and guests in the gallery to the front page of 25 July this year, "Illawarra and South Coast sardines", packed and distributed by the New South Wales Government. On 4 September this year the headline was "Train pain" and the article began, "No more room on south coast lines, says Transport for NSW".

I raise these front pages in the context of a response I received last week about Illawarra rail services from the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Members would be aware that I have raised a number of times in this place concerns about train services on the South Coast line and to and from the Illawarra. In fact, I have two notices of motion before the Parliament and questions on notice about rail services in our region. As the region is one of the largest commuter communities in the country, the effective operation of our road and rail transport services is important to my community. In addition to measures in the Parliament, I have also written to the Minister on a number of occasions about travel times, rail infrastructure investment and passenger overcrowding, including in February, a couple of times in May, in July and a number of times in August and September this year.

I was pleased to receive a response late last week, but upon reading it I was a bit perplexed. In the response, the Minister outlines transport priorities being delivered by the Government, claiming that these will directly or indirectly benefit the people of the Illawarra. I was interested in this response, but I am sure that not many people standing on trains between Central and Thirroul in the afternoon would agree that investment in the

city Metro is doing much for them. It is nice that the Minister believes it. I do not expect that he says the same things to his constituents in Bega, but it is nice that he is a believer. The Minister went on to list a series of initiatives that the Government has introduced on the South Coast line, claiming that these initiatives have improved things. Among them he makes the interesting claim that the introduction of pick-up only stops on the 15:24 and 15:44 services are among the measures that are helping with overcrowding.

The reason I find that comment most interesting is that these services are still overcrowded. Despite this measure being in place for 12 months, they are the most complained about services from Central. Ahead of the Minister adding this initiative to his list of achievements, I had already asked questions going to the heart of the effectiveness of this measure. I asked what was the fine for getting off at one of these pick-up only stops and how many people have been fined so far. Not a single person has been fined for getting off a train at a pick-up only station. Yet despite the measure being ignored by passengers and those tasked with its enforcement, it is listed as one of the top five crowning achievements of the Government in the Transport portfolio on the South Coast line. I look forward to seeing this headline on future campaign material: "Measure Enforced, Measure Introduced, No Fines Written". I expect the people of the Illawarra will give it the reward it deserves at the ballot box. Is anything going to improve in the short term? It seems unlikely. It has been reported in the *Illawarra Mercury*:

It's not possible to put any more passenger trains on the South Coast line. So while the rest of the network is seeing the benefits of the NSW government's new \$1.5 billion "More Trains, More Services", commuters in the Illawarra will just get more of the same.

The Minister confirmed this in his response to a question on notice where the only things he could list as benefiting Illawarra commuters were Transport Access Program upgrades. Notably, removing the lifts at Unanderra station from the priority list was left off his list. I noted earlier today that he included a few more access upgrades on the Sydney Metro. I hope this does not mean that the Unanderra station lifts will get pushed even further down the Government's priority list. All of this is taking place at the same time that new Opal card trip data indicates a 15 per cent jump in rail journeys to and from the Illawarra. Am I the only one who can see a problem here? I am not sure what the Government and Transport of NSW are missing.

There is a rail line that is allegedly already at capacity and a growing number of people wanting to use it but no ideas or program on how to address this conflict. I appreciated the Minister's letter last week but it left me asking a few questions. This Government is entering its seventh year in office. It can list five items that it claims have improved rail services on the Illawarra line. My obvious question is, if all of these initiatives have improved services and reduced overcrowding, why are my constituents and other residents of the Illawarra still complaining about overcrowding and poor services on the Illawarra line? It does not make sense, because the Government has no agenda and no plans to fix the Illawarra line. It is happy to leave Illawarra rail commuters stuck in overcrowded trains.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:51):** Since I have been the member for Kiama, an additional 125 express services have been added to the South Coast line. I remind the member for Wollongong that when Labor was last in government it slowed down the amount of time it took for trains to get between stations to improve on-time running. I took on my own side in relation to the 4.24 p.m. service to double the number of carriages. I never see a member of the other side take on their own political party to get things done. We have also improved transport access at stations such as Oak Flats with more car parking, more car parking at Kiama, and improvements at Albion Park, and we are about to spend \$1 billion on new train carriages, which will mean more services on the South Coast line. I am looking forward to seeing the new trains come online and more services, which Labor ignored. As someone who actually uses public transport, I will continue to be an advocate. I have never seen either of the members opposite on a train to Parliament. They would not know an Opal card if they tripped over one. I am very proud of this Government's record on public transport.

#### **GLOUCESTER INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY LEGACY FUND**

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (16:53):** I bring to the attention of the House the good work of the Gloucester Independent Community Legacy Fund. This fund was set up by AGL with a \$2 million pool. The fund has done a lot of good work so far. To date, it has put approximately \$1.8 million into new jobs in the town of Gloucester. The fund has comprehensive terms of reference and rules. It has a panel of members from all walks of life; I am a panel member. Businesses that are looking to start up in Gloucester, expand in Gloucester or relocate from what is a very capital-intensive area in Sydney—where they do not necessarily need to operate from—can benefit from this fund.

Gloucester has everything going for it. It is a wonderful town with a rural atmosphere and it is not far from anywhere. People in Gloucester have a real sense of community and pride in their town, and so they should. It is a beautiful area and it has everything going for it. There has been some negative talk over a number of years from a very small section of the community that Gloucester was somehow going to come to an end as a result of coal seam gas or mining. That has been found to be completely untrue. People are now going to Gloucester to

explore and see the benefits for themselves, and they are applying to the legacy fund when they want to set up or expand a business. So far, 71 jobs have been created from that \$1.8 million. No matter how you look at it, that is an extraordinary achievement.

Drifta Camping has significantly expanded its business and employs approximately 15 people. It is training young people coming out of school in traditional apprenticeship roles and expanding its business. The business manufactures camping trailers, camping kitchens and related products at Gloucester and exports them overseas. That is a great story. Another manufacturing business that has expanded is Leveltec Engineering. It makes high-value hydraulic components and sends them to small towns in places such as Germany and other parts of the world. All of this is coming out of Gloucester. The preschool is about to undertake a huge expansion to meet the needs of the growing young community in Gloucester. This legacy fund has been able to assist in that process. It has been nothing but an utter success story.

It is not just money that is handed over to businesses. People apply and contribute 50 per cent of the funds themselves. If they need to spend \$100,000 they can apply for \$50,000. It is a partnership arrangement and it has worked very well. With the Government, in particular the National Party, focusing on investment and opening up the economies around regional New South Wales with the Regional Investment Fund, I call on the Government to contribute and match the \$2 million that AGL put into the community legacy fund in Gloucester and let us keep the success story going. Let us take the number of jobs in a small town like Gloucester from 71 to maybe 150, and who knows how many more. This has been a huge success story and I am calling on the Government to invest further.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (16:58):** Last Saturday the residents of Bankstown delivered a resounding endorsement of the New South Wales Labor Party with a large swing to Labor in the Bass Hill ward, which encompasses the suburbs of Georges Hall, Bass Hill, Villawood, Sefton, Chester Hill, Birrong, Potts Hill and half of Yagoona—all in my electorate of Bankstown. I congratulate the Labor councillors elected from the Bass Hill ward: my husband, Alex Kuskoff, and Rachelle Harika, who achieved an impressive 9.5 per cent swing to the Labor Party and a 5.7 per cent swing against the Liberals. I acknowledge the tenacious campaign run by the Labor team in the Revesby ward, where Linda Downey will be re-elected to council, and it is looking increasingly likely that Steve Tuntevski will be elected as a second Labor councillor.

In Revesby Ward, there was a mammoth 14.4 per cent swing against the Liberal Party. That is proof that it has been neglecting the community at a Federal and a State level. I also acknowledge the successful campaigns undertaken by Labor in the Bankstown and Roselands wards, with a 5.3 per cent swing to Labor in Bankstown and a 7.9 per cent swing in Roselands. I congratulate Nadia Saleh and Mohammad Huda, Bilal El-Hayek and Clare Raffan, who promise to be strong representatives for their respective communities. In Bass Hill Ward, Alex and Rachelle campaigned strongly against the overdevelopment of our community. It is clear that that message resonated strongly with the electorate, in particular in town centres such as Georges Hall, where it is inappropriate to construct multistorey residential unit complexes given the lack of parking, the congestion, the public transport and the proximity of the Georges Hall town centre to Bankstown Airport.

Alex and Rachelle also made clear from the get-go their position on the future of the Dunc Gray Olympic Velodrome in Bass Hill, committing to oppose any proposal that would result in the sale and demolition of the velodrome. The Dunc Gray Velodrome must remain in the hands of the local community. I implore the Government to provide the funding required to transform the velodrome into a state-of-the-art indoor sporting hub rather than allowing it to be knocked down to make way for more units. I hope the Premier has heard the message loudly and clearly that our community will not simply lie down and accept her plans to allow rampant overdevelopment of our community by dumping 35,000 units between Sydenham and Bankstown to support the conversion of the Bankstown train line to a metro.

Despite an expected population increase of more than 100,000 residents, this Government has refused to allocate the funding to upgrade local schools, congested roads, sport and recreation facilities and our local hospital prior to this so-called "urban renewal". While our community must live through this rampant overdevelopment within the next five years, Mosman has been set a measly target of 300 new households, and Hunters Hill just 150. It is unacceptable that Bankstown is being forced to accept this level of overdevelopment. It is unfair. As the member for Bankstown, I am proud that the Labor councillors elected from Bass Hill Ward—Alex Kuskoff and Rachelle Harika—will be joining me in the fight against the State Liberals overdevelopment of our community. I note that the Berejiklian Government has yet to formally respond to Canterbury-Bankstown Council's Canterbury Road Corridor Review, which is on public exhibition. The outgoing council administrator commissioned the review when it became apparent that the former Canterbury council had approved residential developments that breached planning policies and strategies. Mr Colley issued a media release on 12 September stating:

The effect of this was adding more pressure to roads, schools, parks and community facilities than the former Canterbury Council had planned for.

I further note that on 7 July 2017, Mr Colley wrote to the chief executive officer of the Office of Local Government about an investigation being undertaken by the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] into the former Canterbury council. I tabled that letter, in which Mr Colley makes it clear that the ICAC has begun an investigation into the former council. With the population of the merged council forecast to increase to more than 500,000 it is imperative that our local representatives continue to fight against overdevelopment and for the community's interests. It is vital that we send a clear message that we are anti inappropriate development. We will work with our community to ensure that local facilities and public assets are protected. Of course, our primary asset is our community and its interests. It is important that we have a council that will always put those interests first.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I point out to the member for Bankstown that she cannot table a letter; only Ministers may table documents in the House. However, the member may lay it on the table of the House. I welcome to the gallery guests of the member for Shellharbour: Greg, Sally, Jessica and Emma McLean, Graham Kelly, Mark Morey, and a former member of the other place, Kayee Griffin. The other guests are members of various unions.

### TRIBUTE TO GREG MCLEAN

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:03):** I also welcome Greg McLean and his family, Graham Kelly, the General Secretary of the United Services Union [USU], and Greg's friends and colleagues. I acknowledge the USU executive, who always have been and always will be good friends of mine. It is with great pride and a real sense of honour that I draw the attention of the House to the career and achievements of a dear friend and colleague of more than 17 years, Greg McLean. Greg has dedicated his career to social policy, political engagement, industrial relations, and superannuation. He has acted as a political representative at a range of national and international conferences, worked on expert panels for the Australian Federal Government and was last year elected to serve on Sutherland Shire Council. Today in the gallery we are joined by Greg's friends and colleagues. Summing up a career that has spanned the past five decades would be a difficult task at the best of times. However, in the case of Greg McLean it is nearly impossible.

Greg's career in public service has been marked by countless highlights and he has created a legacy of work that will continue to improve the lives of workers for many years. He first joined the USU, then known as the Federated Municipal and Shire Council Employees Union, in December 1971 and began working as a clerk with Sydney County Council a month later. In 1973, Greg joined his local branch of the Australian Labor Party [ALP] in Malabar. Forty-four years and a life membership later, Greg's relationship with the ALP is still going strong. His daughter Jessica, who works in my office, will add to that legacy. Greg initially felt compelled to become involved in the ALP as a result of the political environment and events dominating the news at the time: the election of the Whitlam Government and its later dismissal, the rise of Neville Wran, the work of the Keating and Hawke governments, and the work of Bob Carr. It was the progressive policies of the ALP, as well as the party's industrial ties, that appealed to Greg and inspired an involvement in politics that has continued to this day.

It was during his time at Sydney County Council that Greg first became interested in industrial relations and the role of unions. It was this interest which led to him becoming a workplace union representative for a branch of the Federated Municipal and Shire Council Employees Union, which was known as the MEU, and which in 1979 led to him being offered the role of a research and industrial officer for the union, an offer he gladly accepted. Later the same year, Greg attended his first meeting of the Labour Council of New South Wales, which is now known as Unions NSW. Three years later, Greg was elected as a local government organiser and began working across the State in that role.

By 1988, Greg had been elected to the position of branch secretary. In that role, Greg was involved in dealing with workplace issues and industrial matters before courts and tribunals. He also began to handle electricity and local government reforms, and anti-privatisation campaigns, as well as public sector and microeconomic reform. He worked, lobbied and campaigned alongside state, national and local governments, and Labor and Coalition governments with a primary focus on the energy industry, anti-privatisation campaigns and privatisation and the moves to corporatisation.

In 1997, he was elected to the MEU-USU national office as assistant national secretary. That is a role in which he would thrive for the next 20 years. Working from the Sydney office, Greg became a strong advocate for local government, electricity and water union members and their industries. Next year will be Greg's fortieth year attending the New South Wales ALP conference as a delegate. He has been a delegate at the ALP National Conference for more than 22 years. Throughout his career, Greg has held too many positions within the ALP to mention. From positions in local ALP branches, to State and national policy committees, including the ALP

National Private Public Partnership Committee, to policy and rules positions within the appeals tribunal and the administrative style committees. Greg has contributed so much to Labor and our party is vastly better for his work.

In addition to all of that, in 1991 Greg undertook his first pro bono project for Public Services International [PSI]. He would continue to work with the PSI and to help union colleagues across the globe fight the privatisation of electricity projects in Malaysia, Pakistan, Indonesia, India, and Papua New Guinea, to name a few. Greg has represented unions and their members on numerous bodies and at conferences at an international level. He has fought for the rights of workers at the United Nations International Labor Organisation Forum. He has fought for action on climate change at COP15. He has also fought for workplace reform and movements opposed to the contracting-out of workers at Asian Development Bank forums.

He was also rightly appointed to the committee of experts by the Federal Cabinet of the Gillard-Rudd Government on the advice of Minister Crean to provide recommendations to the Australian Government on constitutional recognition of local government. This committee comprised 17 members of Australian society from many walks of life, from politicians to councillors, but Greg was the sole union representative. Finally, in 2016, Greg was elected to Sutherland Shire Council to serve and to represent the local community in which he has lived for the past 25 years.

Greg's achievements and extraordinary work ethic have not gone unrecognised. In 2011 he was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for services to industrial relations. He was also presented with the Unions NSW scroll of honour in 2013 and awarded life membership of the Australian Labor Party by the New South Wales branch in 2014. I thank Greg for his dedication, his passion and his efforts over the past 50 years. Greg's work has improved the lives of so many Australians and workers across the world. He is an inspiration to the union movement and the Australian Labor Party and I take my hat off to him.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser):** Congratulations to Greg; it is a pity that he is in the wrong party. The Nats are far better.

#### **SAME-SEX MARRIAGE**

**Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) (17:10):** I speak today in defence of Dr Pansy Lai. I am sure we have all read about the disgraceful way that she and two other mums have been personally targeted for appearing in an advertisement that encourages people to vote no in the upcoming same-sex marriage postal vote. I first met Pansy and her family during the campaign to end the Safe Schools program in New South Wales. During that campaign more than 17,000 concerned parents from the Australian-Chinese community signed a petition calling for the removal of the Safe Schools program. Pansy has since become a dear friend and I was appalled to hear about how she has been treated recently simply for having an opinion.

I find it astounding that in an environment where the yes campaign has seemingly unlimited funds and the support of politicians, journalists, corporations, chief executive officers, academics, and celebrities there should be such a reaction to this solitary advertisement which features three concerned mums. One would think the yes campaign would tolerate one inoffensive ad produced by the no campaign. Sadly, in 2017 it is deemed that simply disagreeing with the totalitarian Left is too offensive and must be punished. It takes tremendous courage to stand up to these bullies.

If members do not believe me, they should write something in support of the no campaign on social media and see what happens. We have lost our ability to disagree and still get along. It would be no surprise to anyone in this House that I am not in favour of changing the definition of marriage, an institution that has served us well, unchanged, for thousands of years. A yes vote would give a blank cheque to legislators to pass a bill that no-one has yet seen. If we redefine marriage there will be no safeguards for religious freedom. As Paul Kelly wrote in the *Australian* today:

The Speaker of the British House of Commons says "proper equal marriage" won't happen until the churches are compelled to obey by law.

The Australian Greens formally say they want the religious exemptions in anti-discrimination law to be wound back and many in the ALP left have the same view. But that is beside the point. One of our nation's greatest strengths has always been our ability to disagree respectfully. That is the very definition of tolerance and multiculturalism. It no longer matters whether you like the ad, whether you agree with its content, or whether you make a convincing argument or a poor one. What matters now is whether you think someone should be harassed, bullied and personally targeted simply for having an opinion.

Before we can debate the definition of marriage we should first have a discussion about the definition of free speech and religious freedom. One of the most disgraceful things to happen to Dr Lai was the petition sponsored by Get Up! to have her deregistered as a doctor. The petition received thousands of signatures. Get Up! has since distanced itself from the petition, but as Miranda Devine rightly points out, they own and operate the

website it appeared on and they are the ones who took it down after it was exposed for being a personal attack on an innocent mum. This is the same organisation that led a campaign to support David Hicks in 2007. It seems that Get Up! is willing to defend the rights of an accused terrorist but not the rights of a concerned mum.

I commend Miranda Devine and Andrew Bolt as two of the most vocal commentators speaking out in defence of Pansy Lai. They are always courageous when it comes to issues of free speech, and courage is exactly what people need these days to hold an opinion that does not align with the identity politics of the radical Left. If this is what free speech looks like now, how much worse will it be if marriage laws are changed? Simply disagreeing with the totalitarian Left on certain issues has become the modern day equivalent of blasphemy. In a society like ours with people from many different cultural and faith-based traditions, one would think the Left would tolerate different ideas but instead it seems they only support diversity when everyone thinks the same way.

### WYONG HOSPITAL PRIVATISATION

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:14):** I congratulate the Central Coast community on their resounding victory in their campaign to stop this Government's attempt to privatise Wyong Hospital. This was a big win for the Central Coast community. Several weeks ago I was pleased to join the member for Wyong, the member for the Entrance, the member for Gosford and the Federal member for Dobell at a victory barbecue to celebrate with hundreds of community members, workers and health professionals at Wyong Leagues Club's Morrie Breen Oval.

I thank the more than 35,000 members of the Central Coast community who joined the campaign against this despicable move to privatise our hospital. The fight to save Wyong Hospital was truly a grassroots community campaign and we did not give up. Since the Government made its outrageous announcement last year we have had boots on the pavement telling the Government it was wrong. We held a public rally at Morrie Breen Oval late last year with a couple of thousand community members in support of the fight to save Wyong Hospital from privatisation. When the Government refused to listen to our concerns, we held a candlelight vigil on the lawns of Wyong Hospital. Despite the cold and the rain that night, the local community still turned up in droves because they care deeply about keeping their hospital in public hands. Most recently we held a public forum at Wyong Leagues Club and I was pleased that the Government at least seemed to be listening to our community. How could they not, with tens of thousands of people demonstrating in no uncertain terms that the Government was wrong on this issue?

This hard-fought campaign could not have taken place without the compassion and conviction of many community organisations, local businesses and trade unions. From the beginning, the Health Services Union, the nurses and the midwives, Wyong Hospital Branch, Unions NSW and the Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation of NSW all supported the fight to save Wyong Hospital from being sold off. I congratulate the community for voicing its opinion just as loudly as we have. The people of the Central Coast have sent a loud and crystal clear message to this Government that our public hospitals are not for sale.

When the Government dropped the bombshell last year and proposed to privatise Wyong Hospital, my office was immediately inundated with calls from constituents who were devastated and disturbed. I remind the House of Margaret from Budgewoi who told me how hard she and her friends had worked over many years to personally raise funds to build Wyong Hospital and provide important lifesaving equipment to the people who live on the Central Coast. To raise funds for the hospital, workers sacrificed part of their take-home pay each week and participated in fundraising efforts including knocking on hundreds of doors.

The Government's approach to the privatisation of our hospitals has been nothing short of appalling. Let us call it what it was—a disgusting display of arrogance from an appalling Government whose agenda for this State is a fire sale of government-owned assets and services. I was proud to stand before the Parliament knowing that I and my Labor colleagues were doing the right thing by our community. Labor is the architect of public health care in this country and I will always stand up for public health care in this State. Let this be a warning to the Minister: We know that people deserve the health care they need, not the health care they can afford, and we will remain vigilant while ever this Government is in power.

We will not stand for the Americanisation of our healthcare system. Not now, not ever. We on this side will not give up until the Minister has walked away from this idiotic privatisation agenda, including abandoning the privatisation of Shellharbour Hospital. To every person in New South Wales—not just in the electorates of Swansea, Wyong or The Entrance—I say this: If you disagree with the relentless sell-off of vital public services and assets, the choice is clear. Vote Labor and kick these wreckers out of Government.

*Matter of Public Importance***R U OK? DAY**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:19):** R U OK? Day is held in September every year, with events held across the nation to mark the occasion. New South Wales has a strong history of acknowledging and celebrating this important event on the annual calendar. While mental health issues are important to address year round, it is great to see the success of initiatives like R U OK? Day, both in raising awareness of mental health issues and in opening up conversations about mental health, and hopefully changing attitudes. As a registered psychiatric nurse I know how important it is to remove the stigma, to talk about mental health and to change attitudes. I have met many people who are working hard to improve the mental health and wellbeing of our communities. The New South Wales Government is equally determined to strengthen mental health care in New South Wales and to build a better system. We are also working closely with other government agencies and the non-government sector to ensure the necessary supports are in place.

But good mental health and wellbeing is everyone's business. It is estimated that 20 per cent of the population aged between 16 and 85 have experienced a common mental disorder in the past 12 months. This means that all of us here today will at some stage, either directly or indirectly, be touched by the effects of mental health problems. We know also that many people are not able to openly share their feelings, particularly when they are struggling. Sadly, more than 3,000 Australians commit suicide each year. That is about eight people every day. For the past eight years, R U OK? Day has been reminding all Australians that we all have the ability to change this. R U OK? Day is about inspiring confidence in all of us to start a conversation every day of the year.

Talking about feelings can make some people feel awkward or embarrassed, but through connecting with others on a regular basis and being heard without being judged we find it easier not only to talk about these issues but to access help, if needed. Suicide and attempted suicide are human tragedies with many contributing factors. NSW Health recognises the need for an integrated approach to suicide prevention, which is why the New South Wales Government has invested in a range of initiatives to ensure that people at risk of suicide, as well as their families, friends and carers, are connected with the treatment and support they need. In 2017-18, \$1.9 billion has been allocated to mental health services, which is an increase of \$87 million from last year.

As part of the NSW Mental Health Reform agenda we have increased funding to improve and strengthen mental health services in New South Wales. We have invested in community hubs that integrate mental health support with other support services. These could be in key areas such as housing and social services. We also have increased the availability of programs that respond to the particular needs of older people, and new mothers and babies, as well as families affected by mental health or drug and alcohol issues. And we are providing \$10.5 million over four years to Lifeline Australia to continue to expand its crisis support and suicide prevention services across New South Wales.

Beyond the mental health portfolio, I am pleased to report that other New South Wales Government agencies have embraced the message that mental health is everyone's business and are promoting it accordingly. Schools provide a venue where health and education staff can intervene early to support children, young people and their families to manage any mental health issues that may arise. For many years, the NSW School-Link program has provided a strong platform for Health and Education to work together to identify and manage emerging mental health issues in young people as early as possible.

Our School-Link coordinators work in partnership with teachers, school counsellors and specialist mental health staff in over 3,000 schools and TAFEs across New South Wales. The New South Wales Suicide Prevention Fund is another great example of partnerships that can make a difference in our communities. Under this funding, the Government has committed \$8 million over four years to provide opportunities for non-government or community-based organisations to deliver local suicide prevention services and activities. I strongly value these partnerships. By asking "Are you okay?", being willing to listen without judging, and by letting someone know we care, we can all make a difference and support someone who may be struggling or experiencing a mental illness.

**Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) (17:24):** I acknowledge the member for raising R U OK? Day as a matter of public importance. I think members on all sides of this Chamber will agree that we are very passionate about ensuring that we support our community and all the organisations that work tirelessly throughout the year to support families, loved ones and many members of the community who are afflicted by a whole range of mental health conditions that require ongoing support.

I particularly acknowledge the hard work of Lifeline. The staff of Lifeline have, for many years, provided an incredible amount of support and counselling services. Lifeline staff are there at the coalface experiencing, on a day-to-day basis, some of the horrific circumstances that many people face. The statistics are startling, and there

is nobody in this Chamber who could honestly state that they are not in any way affected. It may be that they are affected through their loved ones or through people in their communities. In some respects it is amazing that we are now hearing more and more stories about people who have been affected by a range of mental health conditions. It is wonderful that people are now more willing to talk about those issues and to face the issues by speaking to professionals and organisations that are willing to provide support.

I acknowledge the Larkin family. Gavin Larkin was the founder of R U OK? Day. His father committed suicide many years before and it was as a result of that tragedy that Gavin Larkin came up with this amazing concept of having a specific day when we ask each other—our friends and our colleagues—whether we are okay. Sadly, Gavin Larkin has since lost his life to cancer. His son Gus also succumbed to cancer. I acknowledge his wife, Maryanne, and his two surviving children because they have continued to campaign every year to promote this very significant legacy of Gavin's and to ensure that every level of government is cognisant of the need to support various events throughout the community to encourage people to continue to ask the question of their friends and family: Are you okay?

I also acknowledge that there have been many reports into this issue, including the Living Well report, which has provided a range of recommendations for Government on what types of services should be supported. The Living Well report estimates that 17 per cent of the New South Wales population, over 1.2 million people, will experience some form of a mental illness each year. R U OK? Day is not about spectacular gestures, but about how to make a difference in those suffering from depression and other mental illness afflictions. I acknowledge the many organisations that work tirelessly through the year in the community, such as small organisations in my electorate like Bankstown Youth Development Service, a whole range of youth groups and Bankstown Women's Health Centre, which works with women who are suffering from a mental illness.

I acknowledge their incredible work in the community as well. I also acknowledge the work of a whole range of other organisations that work throughout the year to make sure that members of Parliament champion these causes. I again acknowledge the founder of R U OK? Day, Gavin Larkin, because there is no better way to acknowledge someone than in this House. I know that members on both sides of the Chamber would acknowledge the amazing legacy that Gavin, in particular, left. R U OK? Day is often spoken about in schools. At school my children have asked the question, "Are you okay?" I pay tribute in particular to the Larkin family.

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (17:30):** R U OK? Day is a national day of action that aims to inspire all Australians to help reduce suicide by reaching out to those around us and starting a simple conversation. The first step in helping others is as simple as asking the question, "Are you okay?" One of the best things about R U OK? Day is that you do not need to be an expert, just a supportive friend and a good listener. In the lead-up to the day, R U OK? has been taking the conversation convoy all over Australia by travelling 14,000 kilometres and visiting more than 20 communities to help spread the word about how we can all help to prevent suicide.

The latest figures show that 80 per cent of Australians are aware of R U OK? Day and one in four has participated. It is incredible to see the impact that such a day can have on raising the community's awareness that suicide can be prevented. We all have a role to play when it comes to suicide prevention. We all have what it takes to start a conversation and to support our friends, colleagues and families. We can all ask how someone is without judgement; encourage and support them to take action; and then stay in touch, and continue to be there for them. Suicide affects everyone in the community—people from all walks of life. Many of us have been affected by the tragedy of suicide or know someone who has been affected. As parliamentarians, we too have a responsibility to check in on our colleagues. That is why members of the New South Wales Government will ask each other "Are you okay?" in Parliament on 14 September.

The Government acknowledges that suicide is a complex issue, with neither a single cause nor a simple solution. But it can be prevented. Sometimes the simple step of reaching out is enough to break down the stigma surrounding mental ill health and to encourage someone to seek the help they need. The New South Wales Government continues to invest in and reform our mental health services so that people can access the best possible treatment at the time when they need it the most. This year the Government invested a record \$1.9 billion in mental health. I thank the Minister for Mental Health for visiting the Clarence Valley and allocating \$1.4 million in suicide prevention funding for two programs, which were developed by the community. This Government is delivering on our commitment to improve the lives of those who depend on these critical services. In conclusion, I encourage everyone to get involved in this important day of action. If you see someone struggling, trust your instincts and ask the question. You may end up saving a life.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (17:32):** By leave: I also wish to contribute to the discussion about R U OK? Day, which is observed on 14 September 2017. I appreciate members raising this as a matter of public importance because mental health is a matter of immense importance to us all. In the lead-up to R U OK? Day we acknowledged World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September. In recognition of that particular

day, I participated in Lifeline Hunter Central Coast's Walk With Us alongside 550 other people who also joined the walk. It was an impressive turnout and it was a restorative event, whereby the community showed its support for people and families who have suffered losses in their lives due to mental health issues.

Last Saturday I also participated in my local Walk With Us to show support for people who have suffered the loss of their loved ones as a result of suicide. The event was hosted by our local champion, the Suicide Prevention Network. I pay tribute to the network's former president, Bernie Fitzsimons, who is leaving the organisation and moving out of Port Stephens. I thank him for his work over a number of years with that organisation. Another group working in Port Stephens is Caring for Our Port Stephens Youth, or COPS Y. The group works hard to try to ensure that Port Stephens' youth gain access to mental health services. I pay tribute to Geoffrey Bassa, John de Ritter and Julie Agnew, who are working hard in that organisation on behalf of all the young people of Port Stephens to ensure that their mental health needs are met.

After R U OK? Day, which is acknowledged tomorrow, we will have World Mental Health Day on 10 October. Another special event in Port Stephens will be on 12 November, when Brett and Jackie Gainsford will host yet another fundraiser for beyondblue at Club Lemon Tree. Brett Gainsford has suffered enormously as a result of mental health issues and continues to do so, but he and his wife nevertheless continue to raise money and contribute to give back to the organisation that Brett attributes with saving his life. On R U OK? Day tomorrow I ask everyone to do what we should all be doing each and every day, which is checking in with everybody. Asking the question is important, but listening is equally important. I also urge everyone to look out for our youths and adolescents over this particular six-week period when the postal ballots are being distributed. They are particularly vulnerable at this time and it is especially important to ask them whether they are okay.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:35):** By leave: Today I am wearing a yellow badge to mark R U OK? Day, which will be observed tomorrow. This national day encourages people to ask those around them, "Are you okay?" R U OK?'s work aims to encourage everyday Australians to meaningfully connect with each other and ask about life's ups and downs; create a sense of responsibility where everyday Australians regularly connect and support others; and strengthen a sense of belonging because collectively we know there are people looking out for us. The mission of R U OK? Day is to inspire and empower all people to connect meaningfully with those around them and to support anyone who is struggling with life. We know that it is far too common for Australians—particularly males—to say, "She'll be right. I don't need to see the doctor about that." Yet mental health issues in both men and women are far more prevalent than we think.

The overall suicide rate is approximately 12.6 per cent per 1,000 people, which is the highest rate in more than a decade and equates to eight deaths from suicide per day. There are approximately 3,000 suicides per year and suicide happens in males at a rate that is three times greater than the rate for females. For every death by suicide it is estimated that there are 30 additional attempted suicides, and there are approximately 65,300 attempted suicides a year. These statistics are terrifying. We must collectively do more to raise awareness and also raise funds to help reduce the suicide rate. This is why initiatives like R U OK? Day are so important in being awareness-raising campaigns for these important topics. This is quite literally a matter of life and death. Just asking a simple question and checking on the welfare of your friends and family can literally make the difference between them being with us or not.

That is why it is so important that, as parliamentarians, we promote initiatives like R U OK? Day. R U OK? has four simple and easy steps that I encourage all members to take note of and to practise: first, ask; secondly, listen; thirdly, encourage action; and, fourthly, check in. R U OK? Day is about supporting people who are struggling in their lives and raising awareness of suicide prevention and mental health. By simply reaching out, asking a question and offering support, everyone can make a huge difference in the life of another. I encourage all the people who live on the Central Coast, particularly those who live in my electorate of Terrigal, to take the time to follow those four steps. I commend the R U OK? Day movement and the positive publicity it provides to this incredibly important topic for both men and women across New South Wales, and especially on the beautiful Central Coast.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:39):** By leave: I rise to speak on the importance of R U OK? Day not only to New South Wales but to the entire country. Suicide is a tragedy that has a profound effect not only on families but also on the community as a whole. In Australia more than eight people commit suicide every day. That is one person every three hours. Australian Bureau of Statistics figures released in 2016 showed that the average age of people who committed suicide was 44 years old. It was the leading cause of death among people aged 15 to 44 and the second leading cause of death among those aged 45 to 55. It is estimated that in a 12-month period, 65,000 Australians make a suicide attempt. In New South Wales in 2015 the death rate from suicide was 10.6 per 100,000 deaths in the population, and 16.3 deaths per 100,000 in males and 5.1 in females. Alarming, suicide rates among young Australians are at the highest level in 10 years.

A report from youth mental health service Orygen Youth Health found that, despite prevention strategies and investment from governments, the current system was failing. Orygen Youth Health has called for a new approach and for national leadership when it comes to prevention. An ABC News report from 30 November 2016 cited one case where a young, high-achieving school captain who took his own life on the last day of year 12 and one week before final exams showed no signs that he was struggling to deal with his stress. His mother said that they knew he was anxious but that he did not tell them and that things seemed okay. R U OK? is a not-for-profit suicide prevention organisation, and I acknowledge the work it has been doing to ensure that members of Parliament, community leaders, and business leaders will be out there tomorrow promoting R U OK? and speaking to people about many issues in our community.

I am happy to work with the Government, particularly in my electorate of Canterbury, where we have a large multicultural community. We are concerned about a number of issues, particularly involving women from non-English speaking backgrounds, older women, and of course young people who are suffering in silence. Much is taboo in different cultures and different ethnic groups. The Opposition supports investment in this area, but I am happy to work with the Government and relevant Ministers on this issue. I know that members on the Government side understand the issues that I have raised. We need a better understanding of suicide and suicide prevention among multicultural communities.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:42):** By leave: I rise to speak on this matter of public importance about R U OK? Day. This day is incredibly important to our community because it tries to address the stigma associated with seeking help for mental health issues and illnesses. It is a national suicide prevention awareness day, founded by Gavin Larkin in 2009 to help destigmatise and break down barriers around conversations about suicide. At the end of the day, a conversation can save a life. The day is dedicated to empowering and encouraging everyone to ask family, friends and colleagues: "Are you okay?" We have already had a number of those conversations around the House today.

For the past eight years R U OK? has been reminding Australians that we all have the ability to look after people who are doing it really tough in life. We know that more than 3,000 Australians will die by suicide each year, which is about eight people every day. That is eight people too many. R U OK? Day is about inspiring people to start these conversations. Suicide prevention is an enormously complex and sensitive challenge. We know that it is difficult to address, but this is a step that each individual in our community can take to try to make a difference. For me, the issue of mental health is close to my heart. It has been a personal challenge in my family and in my childhood, with my father suffering from the illness of schizophrenia. It is something that has driven my involvement in politics to date. I have had the good fortune of meeting with local community organisations, including the North Shore Schizophrenia Society and One Door Mental Health, to discuss this challenge and how we can work together to address it in our community.

I am proud that our Government is investing record amounts of money in mental health, with \$1.9 billion invested in mental health programs this year alone. I am also proud of the work that our Government is doing with the Black Dog Institute to pioneer a new model for suicide prevention called LifeSpan. The Government has also invested \$8 million into the Suicide Prevention Fund to support non-government organisations to work with local communities and develop local suicide prevention initiatives. R U OK? Day is a great opportunity for us to reflect on these initiatives and on this investment, and to make sure that we are all working together to achieve the best outcomes in our community. The day addresses what is a significant health challenge for rising numbers of people in our community and empowers us as individuals to make the huge difference that we can for our friends, families, and workplaces just by reaching out and asking, "Are you okay?" By asking and listening we can all make a difference.

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (17:45):** By leave: Political differences and arguments aside, it is very important to check in with other people around us and to ask them: "Are you okay?" R U OK? Day falls on the second Thursday of September each year. It is a day when people make a point of showing care and concern for their friends, families and loved ones. Statistics tell us that over a 12-month period around 65,000 Australians make a suicide attempt, with more than 2,000 people actually committing suicide. Mental illness and depression are massively under-reported in our society and one does not have to be a long-term sufferer of these conditions to start having suicidal thoughts. Previously, depression and mental illness was swept under the rug as much as possible. These days, we understand how important it is to get assistance and treatment if someone suffers from depression or mental illness.

No matter how alone or hopeless someone feels, suicide prevention organisations like R U OK? can make a huge difference to people's lives. All lives matter. A kind word, some gentle reassurance, or someone just showing that they care by asking whether they are okay can sometimes be the difference between life and tragic, unnecessary death. By asking "Are you okay?", one can make someone's life, world and future just a little bit more bearable, hopeful and secure. It is said that people at risk of suicide have three forces at play: The first force

is that the person thinks they are a burden on others; the second is that they think they can withstand a high degree of pain; and the third is that they do not feel connected to others. As a community and society, we must all do what we can to help look after each other. We need to forget the politics and divisions and remember that we are all not very different.

If anybody is feeling down, pick them up and ask them whether they are okay. I knew a guy many years ago whose mother committed suicide. He was only a child at primary school and came home to find that his mum had hanged herself in the garage. There was domestic violence. The father was a violent man and the mum just could not take it any more so she hanged herself. I remember once asking about his mother and he called her profanities that I could not repeat. He said, "Mum took the easy way out. She hanged herself to get away from the old man but left us kids with him for the rest of our lives."

They also had to bear the stigma of her committing suicide. He said that whenever they were bad or did something wrong at school people would say "No wonder your mother committed suicide with the way you are." He said that he loved his mother but thought what she did was wrong. The stigma remained with him, and I think he had a mental health issue after that. Many people do these things because they cannot take it any more, but the children suffer in the long run. The family who are left behind can suffer for many generations. If someone around you is not looking good you should always ask them, "Are you okay?"

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (17:48):** In reply: I thank the member for Clarence, the member for Terrigal, the member for Bankstown, the member for Port Stephens, the member for Cabramatta, the member for North Shore and the member for Canterbury for their contributions to the debate on today's matter of public importance, R U OK? Day. R U OK? Day raises the important subjects of depression and mental health issues. The member for Terrigal said that we should do four things on R U OK? Day: first, ask; secondly, listen; thirdly, encourage action; and, fourthly, check in. The first thing we should do on the day is to ask friends and family, "Are you okay? "

There are several parts to this action. First, if you ask a person whether they are okay, you must then give them the opportunity to get their problems off their chest. It is difficult to ask a person whether they are okay and then to listen to them pouring out their emotions in talking about their problems. However, as a friend or a family member, it is important for us to ask and to listen. The second part is to listen and not judge. The third part is to encourage action. As we listen to people, we can provide options for how they can tackle their problems. We should not tell them what to do or try to give them the answer to their problems. The person has to resolve the issue themselves, but if they are suffering from depression or the effects of a mental illness their thought processes may change and contract to the point where they feel they are almost suffocating. If we give them the opportunity to talk about their problems, they open up and we can give them options that they might think about pursuing to overcome their problems.

In that way we might lead people to find the answer they need, which then becomes their answer. That action can save lives. We should ask people whether they are okay every day, not just on R U OK? Day. We should ask them whether they are okay 365 days of the year—366 days if it is a leap year, as the member for Clarence would point out. However, these days we are very busy and are concentrating hard on what we have to do—our duties, our responsibilities, where we are going, the future of our jobs or other aspects of our lives—so we sometimes forget to stop and look at the people around us and ask how they are going.

If we stopped to think about the people we work with or our family members, we might see that they are struggling. If that is the case, we should ask, "Are you okay?" We should be prepared to listen to their answer and to help them by talking through their issues without judgement. We might suggest some healthy options for them to consider, rather than letting them think their only option is to take their life or drown their sorrows in drugs or alcohol. It is great that in Parliament today we are raising awareness of R U OK? Day. I congratulate the organisation for initiating R U OK? Day.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 17:52 until  
Thursday 14 September 2017 at 10:00.**