



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday, 14 September 2017**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 14 September 2017

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

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

## *Bills*

### APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINEESHIP AMENDMENT BILL 2017

#### Returned

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

### PUBLIC HEALTH AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2017

#### Returned

**The SPEAKER:** I report the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the abovenamed bill with an amendment. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendment be set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

[Notices of motions given]

### PUBLIC HEALTH AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2017

#### Consideration in Detail

#### Consideration of the Legislative Council's amendment.

*Schedule of amendment referred to in message of 13 September 2017*

No. 1 **OPP No. 1 [c2017-067A]**

Page 10. Schedule 1 [56], proposed section 131A, line 39. Insert "(including specifying the conditions to which those orders related and the number of orders made in relation to each of those conditions)" after "section 62".

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research)**  
**(10:13):** I move:

That the House agree to the Legislative Council amendment.

I note that there was an extensive debate in regard to the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill in the other place. I respectfully appreciate the input of all members. I note that Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile of the Christian Democratic Party was seeking to have the matter referred to a committee for consideration. I regret that, as I explained to Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, it is critical for the community that the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill become legislation as soon as possible.

We had an extensive review in accordance with the statutory five-year requirement. What is contained in the bill substantially reflects the outcome of that review. There were obviously some challenging issues, particularly around section 79. I believe that this outcome achieves the right balance. The shadow Minister in the other place suggested that the amendments that were moved by the member for Sydney in some way reflected what he considered to be an inappropriate relationship with the Government. I point out that this Government will work with whichever member of Parliament comes to us with reasonable proposals. The member for Sydney's proposal was reasonable.

Indeed, sometimes the Government will even deal with people who are not necessarily very reasonable, including the Opposition spokesman. His amendment, which inserted "(including specifying the conditions to which those orders related and the number of orders made in relation to each of those conditions)" after "section 62", was accepted. So the reflections publicly put on the record about the member for Sydney would equally apply to him, if it were true. Of course, it is not true. The Government will work with any member of Parliament who seeks to improve public health. The bill, as amended in the other place and in this place, reflects the best interests of the community.

**Motion agreed to.****JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO 2) 2017****First Reading****Bill introduced on motion by Mr Mark Speakman, read a first time and printed.****Second Reading****Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla—Attorney General) (10:17):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Justice Legislation Amendment Bill (No 2) 2017. The bill will update and improve the operation of the New South Wales justice system by improving the efficiency and operation of legislation affecting the courts and other Justice portfolio agencies. In addition, a number of amendments are made to legislation in the Premier's portfolio.

I will now outline each of the amendments. Clause 1 of the bill sets out the short title of the proposed Act. Clause 2 provides for the commencement of the proposed Act on the date of assent, except for the amendments to section 106, which will commence three months from the date of assent, and sections 118A and 124A of the Civil Procedure Act 2005, schedule 1.2 [2] and [3] which will amend the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2013, and schedules 1.3 [6], 1.10 and 1.17 [2] which will make other consequential amendments which will commence upon proclamation, so affected agencies can prepare for implementation. Schedule 1 contains amending provisions which amend various Acts within the Justice portfolio and the Premier's portfolio.

Under section 33 of the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990, a magistrate can order that a defendant who appears to be mentally ill be taken to a mental health facility for the purpose of a mental health assessment. Practical difficulties arise under the current provisions where a person is refused bail at the time the magistrate makes an order under section 33. This is because mental health facilities cannot assess or detain remandees. Police officers must then detain the person in custody until such time as they can be brought before a court. Schedules 1.19 and 1.20 to the bill amend the Mental Health Act 2007 and the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990 to clarify and standardise bail status so that bail is dispensed with when an order is made for a person to undergo a mental health assessment under section 33 (1) (a), (1) (b), (1D) (a) or (1D) (b). These amendments complement amendments to the Bail Act 2013 in schedule 1.1.

When an order is made for a person to undergo a mental health assessment under section 33 (1) (b) or (1D) (b), the person must be returned to the court if they are assessed by the mental health facility as not being mentally ill. It is sometimes necessary for police officers to detain people overnight before they can be brought before the court at the first available opportunity. Schedule 1.1 items [1] and [2] amend the Bail Act 2013 to authorise police officers of or above the rank of sergeant to make bail decisions for persons assessed as not mentally ill at mental health facilities to avoid the need to return people to court for bail determinations. The amendments to the Bail Act 2013 implement recommendation 15 of the final review of the Bail Act 2013 by Judge Hatzistergos. If this amendment is passed, the Government will have implemented all recommendations of the interim and final Hatzistergos reviews.

Schedule 1.2 item [1] amends the definition of interlocutory decision in section 4 (1) of the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2013 to include a decision made by the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] concerning the granting or refusal of leave for a person to represent a party in proceedings. Schedule 1.2 items [4] and [5] amend the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2013 to clarify the NCAT Appeal Panel's power to confirm a decision under appeal on grounds other than those relied upon at first instance in circumstances where the Appeal Panel would be exercising a function conferred on the NCAT at first instance. Schedule 1.2 item [6] amends schedule 6 of the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2013 to provide that when two members constitute the NCAT's guardianship division, the two members must come from two of the three different categories of members currently provided for in clause 4 (1) of schedule 6.

Schedule 1.2 items [2] and [3] amend the Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2013, and schedules 1.3 item [6], 1.10 and 1.17 item [2] make consequential amendments to other courts legislation to enable parties to commence proceedings in the Local or District Court if NCAT does not have jurisdiction to resolve the dispute. In February 2017 the New South Wales Court of Appeal in the decision of *Burns v Corbett; Gaynor v Burns* [2017] New South Wales CA 3 found that NCAT does not have jurisdiction to determine disputes between New South Wales and interstate residents if the dispute involves an exercise of judicial power as distinct from an exercise of administrative power. The amendments will provide affected parties with a forum in which to resolve their dispute. If parties are unable to resolve their dispute through conciliation at NCAT, parties will have the

option of commencing proceedings in the Local Court or District Court. The courts will have jurisdiction to hear the same matters and make the same orders that NCAT would otherwise have been able to make.

Unless parties substantially vary the nature of their claim, parties will not be exposed to additional fees to commence proceedings. Administrative processes will be streamlined to ensure that the impact on the parties is limited. The amendments will ensure that parties impacted by the Court of Appeal decision are not left without a forum to resolve their disputes. I have met with both the President of NCAT the Hon. Justice Robertson Wright, and the Chief Magistrate of the Local Court, His Honour Judge Henson, to discuss this proposed solution. I thank them for their input. The amendments to the Civil Procedure Act 2005 in schedule 1 of the bill will improve the efficiency of the debt recovery process while ensuring that the system continues to balance the interests of both debtors and creditors. These reforms originated from the Legal Affairs Committee's parliamentary inquiry into debt recovery in New South Wales and the statutory review of the Civil Procedure Act 2005. The Government has consulted extensively on these amendments, including with representatives from the debt collection, legal and banking sectors. The amendments were unanimously supported by those stakeholders.

Schedule 1.3 item [1] will align the definition of property that is protected from seizure under a writ for the levy of property with the Commonwealth Bankruptcy Act 1966. This will remove an incentive for debtors to declare bankruptcy to protect certain personal items created by existing discrepancies between the New South Wales and Commonwealth Acts. Two amendments will codify existing practices of the Sheriff's Office in the exercise of their seizure and sale powers: schedule 1.3 item [2] codifies the Sheriff's existing discretion to decline to seize property if the cost of seizure, storage or selling it would likely exceed the sale price; schedule 1.3 item [3] codifies the existing practice of the Sheriff to notify judgment debtors before a writ for levy of property is enforced; schedule 1.3 item [4] provides that a minimum amount must be left in a judgment debtor's bank account when a garnishee order for debt is executed, which will ensure that a judgment debtor is not left completely destitute due to the operation of a garnishee order. This protection already applies when a garnishee order is issued against wages or salary. Schedule 1.3 item [5] clarifies the Court's power to vary and suspend garnishee orders.

Section 60AA of the Crimes Act 1900 defines "law enforcement officer" for the purpose of division 8A, which sets out special offences with higher maximum penalties that can be charged when law enforcement officers are assaulted or other actions are taken against them. Schedule 1.4 to the bill adds "officers of approved charitable organisations" under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 to the definition of "law enforcement officer" in section 60AA. The RSPCA and Animal Welfare League are "approved charitable organisations", which means they have been approved by the Minister for Primary Industries to exercise law enforcement powers under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 and regulation. The amendment means that special offences can be charged in relation to assaults and other actions against officers of the RSPCA and Animal Welfare League.

Currently, annulments of convictions or sentences are considered by the Local Court on application from the defence or prosecution. However, there have been instances where matters are determined in a defendant's absence due to an administrative error. Schedule 1.5 amends the Crimes (Appeal and Review) Act 2001 to enable the Local Court to annul a conviction or sentence on its own motion in the interests of justice. This eliminates the need for a defendant to make their own application in such circumstances. Schedule 1.6 items [2], [3] and [4] amend section 57 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 to broaden the circumstances in which a court can hear and determine apprehended violence order proceedings in the absence of the defendant to include any subsequent mention of the proceedings. The amendment enhances the protection of victims of domestic and personal violence by enabling orders to be made as early as possible.

Schedule 1.6 items [5] and [6] amend section 75 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 so that courts are able to vary existing apprehended violence orders in a broader range of cases. Currently, courts can vary existing orders only after a defendant pleads guilty to or is found guilty of a stalking/intimidation offence or a domestic violence offence. Under the proposal, courts will be able to vary existing orders in respect of other serious offences including attempted murder, sexual assault offences and child sex offences. Items [1] and [7] of schedule 1.6 amend section 84 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 to allow a party to a non-local domestic violence order [DVO] to appeal against the variation or revocation of the order by the Local Court or the Children's Court or against a refusal by the Local Court or the Children's Court to vary or revoke the order.

Items [8] to [13] of schedule 1.6 extend the existing police direction and detention powers to circumstances where police are required to obtain a copy of a non-local domestic violence order [DVO] or to serve an interstate DVO. Item [8] introduces section 89B into the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007. It allows a police officer who has grounds to make an application for a provisional order against a person to direct a person for the purposes of ascertaining whether there is already a non-local DVO in force against the person or obtaining a copy of such an order or both. If the person fails or refuses to comply with the direction, a police officer may detain the person at the scene of the relevant incident or other place, or detain the person and

take them to a police station. Item [9] extends the current direction and detention power for the purpose of serving a non-local DVO or a variation of a non-local DVO.

Items [10] and [12] expand the existing time limitation on the direction and detention powers contained in section 90A to apply to the new circumstances of ascertaining whether a non-local DVO is in force against the person or to obtain a copy of any such order or both. Items [11] and [13] extend the safeguards in section 90A to limit the amount of time a person can be detained for the purpose of serving a non-local DVO or variation. Since the introduction of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (National Domestic Violence Orders Recognition) Act 2016, some of the States and Territories have introduced or amended their legislation that governs domestic and family violence protection orders. Items [2] to [10] of schedule 1.7 update the cross-references to the terminology and legislation of other States and Territories.

Item [12] of schedule 1.7 removes the restriction on a person issuing a provisional DVO when they are aware that another order is already in place. Police and authorised officers will be permitted to make provisional DVOs if they consider it necessary to protect the victim. Police and authorised officers will be able to make provisional DVOs in the same way as currently provided for in part 7 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act. Item [1] omits the notes that refer to this limitation. Item [11] inserts a new subsection to clarify that a provisional order made by an authorised officer does not supersede a DVO made by a court of any jurisdiction that is made against the same defendant and for the protection of one or more of the same protected persons. This amendment is a departure from the model legislation but is consistent with amendments made by other jurisdictions.

Item [13] of schedule 1.7 provides that where police enforce a local DVO that has been revoked or varied as a result of action in another jurisdiction, anything done or omitted to be done is taken to be lawfully done or omitted if the police officer was not aware at the time that the local DVO had been revoked or varied, and the police officer acted in good faith on the basis of the information available to the police officer, and the thing would have been lawfully done or omitted if the local DVO had not been varied or revoked. For the purposes of this provision, a New South Wales DVO is taken to be varied or revoked if it is superseded by an interstate DVO made in another jurisdiction or a foreign order that is a registered foreign order in another jurisdiction or is varied or revoked in another jurisdiction and that variation or revocation is recognised in New South Wales

A police officer is taken to be acting in good faith on the basis of information available to them if they make reasonable inquiries on the apprehended violence order system within the NSW Police Force's web-based computerised operational policing system [WebCOPS] and proceed in reliance on the information in that database. Under section 35A of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999, a certificate must be presented to a court when a plea is accepted to an additional charge. The current drafting suggests a certificate only needs to be filed when the accused entered a plea to a charge other than an offence they had originally been charged with. Schedule 1.8 amends section 35A of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 to require that a certificate must be presented to a court where a plea is accepted to any additional charge, including a backup charge, clarifying that victims are to be consulted before any plea to a lesser charge is accepted.

Schedule 1.9 [1] amends section 3 of the Criminal Procedure Act to correct a drafting error and confirm that kidnapping is a prescribed sexual offence only where the kidnapping includes the commission of or an intention to commit another prescribed sexual offence. The amendment in schedule 1.9 [2] relates to procedures for defendants who instead of attending court provide the court with a written notice of pleading. A person who receives a court attendance notice after being charged with a criminal offence is provided with a form providing them with the option to enter a plea in advance, rather than attending the Local Court on the appointed court date. The effect of a valid written notice of pleading is that the person is taken to have attended court on the appointed court date. This means if the person pleads guilty, he or she cannot later apply for their conviction to be annulled on the ground that they were absent.

Schedule 1.9 [3] amends the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to provide that written notice of pleading is not required to be provided in a form prescribed by the Local Court. This addresses a disparity caused by requiring the prescribed form to be used. A written notice of a guilty plea that is not on the prescribed form is considered invalid. A person who provides an invalid notice can be convicted in their absence and is able to make an annulment application, because they are not taken to have appeared in court. By allowing the Local Court to accept a written notice of pleading that is not on the prescribed form, the amendment ensures consistent treatment for all people who enter pleas in advance. The prescribed form will continue to be provided with court attendance notices.

Schedule 1.11 of the bill amends schedule 1 to the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 to permit compliant low-THC hemp seed food products. Schedule 1.11 [3] of the bill amends schedule 3 to the Act to validate previous amendments made to schedule 1 to the Act that may have been invalidly made by way of regulation. Section 44 of the Act enables schedule 1 to be amended by regulation for certain purposes. It has been assumed by successive governments, on the advice of the Parliamentary Counsel's Office, that this

regulation-making power permitted the amendment of threshold quantities of drugs listed in schedule 1 and the introduction of exceptions from the operation of schedule 1. The Parliamentary Counsel now advises that seven regulations are likely outside of the regulation-making power in section 44 and are therefore invalidly made.

The regulations identified by Parliamentary Counsel are the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Prohibited Substances) Regulation 2016; the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Methylamphetamine) Regulation 2015; the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Prohibited Drug) Regulation 2009; the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Miscellaneous) Regulation 2003; the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Prohibited Drugs) Regulation 2001; the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Prohibited Plants and Drugs) Regulation 2000; and the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Amendment (Prohibited Drugs) Regulation 1999. These regulations were made by Governors on the advice of Executive councils constituted by former Labor governments as well as by the current Government. The validation will have effect from the day the amending regulations were made and will ensure that the law, as applied since that time by police, the legal profession, and the courts, will be affirmed.

Currently, the Christmas vacation dates of the Local Court are set by the Attorney General. This approach is inconsistent with that taken in the Supreme and District Courts where the relevant rules committees set vacation dates. Schedule 1.17 [1] amends the Local Court Act 2007 to provide the Local Court Rules Committee with a power to make rules setting Christmas vacations and providing for the hearing and disposal of proceedings during vacations. Schedule 1.12 makes a consequential amendment to the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Act 1998 so that audio visual links can be used during vacations set by the Local Court Rules Committee. Schedule 1.13 repeals section 13A (2) of the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007, which uses wording that is different from that found in section 63 of the Administrative Decisions Review Act 1997, which governs how the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] performs its functions. The repeal of this section will ensure consistency in terminology relating to NCAT.

Schedule 1.14 amends the Law Enforcement (Conduct Commission) Act 2016 to make several minor amendments that are required to permit the inspector to perform his statutory functions. Schedule 1.14 [1] confers a similar express power to the New South Wales Ombudsman to delegate functions on the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC] Inspector. Schedule 1.14 [2] ensures that these two requirements relating to the appointment of the Inspector only apply if the Inspector is appointed on a full-time basis. Schedule 1.15 makes an amendment to the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Regulation 2017, which will allow the Inspector to issue identity cards to staff.

Schedule 1.16 [1] amends the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 to clarify that the NSW Police Force may make applications to dispose of seized goods which have been used as exhibits and are no longer needed, even if the goods are being held by third parties. The NSW Police Force can currently only make these applications in respect of goods stored on NSW Police Force premises. However, it is sometimes necessary for goods, such as vehicles, to be stored elsewhere. Schedule 1.16 [2] updates an erroneous reference to a provision of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979.

Schedule 1.18 amends the Members of Parliament Staff Act 2013 to allow a Presiding Officer to terminate the employment of a staff member if the staff member has engaged in misconduct, after consultation with the relevant member of Parliament. Currently, electorate staff are employed and dispensed with at will by the relevant member of Parliament. However, there may be circumstances in which a member of Parliament is not able or prepared to terminate the employment of a staff member who has engaged in misconduct. Pursuant to section 25 of the Members of Parliament Staff Act 2013, any liability incurred by a member of Parliament as the employer of electorate staff is taken to be the liability of the relevant Presiding Officer. The proposed amendments were requested by the former Presiding Officers and are supported by the current Presiding Officers.

Schedule 1.21 of the bill amends the Oaths Act 1900 to include a general power to provide that the Governor may administer any oath or affirmation undertaken by a person whose appointment to office is required to be made by order of the Governor. This will streamline procedural requirements for appointments to office where suitable. Schedule 1.22 amends the Police Act 1990 to expressly provide that the Commissioner of Police may administer the police oath of office, and that the police oath of office may also be administered by a person who can administer an oath of office under the Oaths Act 1900.

Schedule 1.23 addresses an inconsistency between section 181 (3) of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and section 34 of the Land and Environment Court Act 1979. Section 181 (3) of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 requires the court to continue to hear proceedings whether or not parties reach an agreement at a conciliation conference. Conciliation conference is defined under section 181 (7) to mean a conciliation conference under section 34 of the Land and Environment Court Act. However, section 34 (3) of the Land and Environment Court Act states that the commissioner must dispose of the proceedings if an agreement is reached at a conciliation conference—that is, those disposals amount to a finalisation of the proceedings such

that the court may not hear or continue to hear the proceedings. The proposed amendment will address this inconsistency, which is currently being addressed through administrative arrangements.

Schedule 1.24 amends the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 to change references from "request" to "require" in section 16, which gives police officers the power to obtain identification information from unknown persons. The word "require" more accurately describes police officers' powers under these provisions, as it is an offence for a person to fail to disclose their identity when directed to do so by a police officer. This bill will lead to a number of improvements and enhancements in the operation of New South Wales courts and law enforcement agencies, the civil justice system and the criminal justice system. I commend the bill to the House.

#### **Debate adjourned.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I welcome students from Oakhill College, guests of the member for Baulkham Hills, and Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs, David Elliott. I also welcome year 11 students from high schools in New South Wales who are attending the Young Women's Leadership Seminar conducted by the hardworking Parliamentary Education unit.

### **FOOD AMENDMENT (SEAFOOD COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELLING) BILL 2017**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr David Mehan, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (10:46):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

In bringing forward the Food Amendment (Seafood Country of Origin Labelling) Bill 2017, I note that most of the seafood consumed in this State is imported. This information will surprise many people who believe that the fish we consume at restaurants and takeaway food shops is locally sourced. Take the barramundi as an example. Australians rate the barramundi as their favourite fish. They believe it to be an Australian fish; "barramundi" is an Aboriginal word meaning "large-scaled fish". Most of us believe the barramundi we consume is Australian, yet over two-thirds of the barramundi we eat is imported from Asia. An assessment of barramundi consumption commissioned in 2009 by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation indicates that imports made up 68 per cent of about 7,400 tonnes of barramundi fillets consumed in 2008-09.

The Food Amendment (Seafood Country of Origin Labelling) Bill 2017, if enacted by this Parliament, will ensure that when we order barramundi from a restaurant or at our local fish and chip shop, we will do so knowing whether it is imported or sourced from Australian waters. And in so doing, we will be supporting the professional fishing men and women of this State. The New South Wales commercial fishing industry is quite small, but it has great potential. Having a vibrant local fishing industry is part of what it means to have a diverse economy that can support a range of jobs, particularly jobs in regional areas.

Most of those who work in the New South Wales fishing industry do so as self-employed fishers or small family businesses. This bill will support these people at very little cost to business or consumers but with great benefit to this State. It will also satisfy the recommendation of a number of inquiries into food labelling and the fishing industry, including the most recent inquiry conducted by the Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5 into the Government's Commercial Fisheries Business Adjustment Program. The recommendation from that inquiry reads:

That the NSW Government:

- complete its consultation on a country of origin labelling scheme for seafood sold for immediate consumption and commence implementation of a labelling scheme with any necessary funding by December 2017
- consider the creation of a New South Wales seafood label as part of the planned community awareness program. In all Australian jurisdictions except the Northern Territory, the food service industry is exempt from the current country of origin labelling requirements. This means that restaurants and takeaway food shops do not have to write on their menus whether their seafood is Australian or imported. Northern Territory laws require that imported seafood prepared for immediate consumption must be labelled as imported but the source country is not required. Australian-sourced seafood in the Northern Territory is not required to be labelled or identified at all. On 1 July 2016, a new country-of-origin food labelling system commenced under the Australian Consumer Law, the Country of Origin Food Labelling Information Standard 2016.

Under the standard, from 1 July 2018 most food offered for retail sale in Australia will be required to carry or display country-of-origin labelling that meets the requirements of the national standard. The standard has detailed specifications and criteria for the labelling, including the use of a standard kangaroo logo and colour. However, the national standard will continue the exemption currently in place for restaurants, cafes and outlets selling seafood for immediate consumption. The object of this bill, if enacted by the House, is to require persons

who sell seafood to the public for immediate consumption, including at restaurants and takeaway food shops, to display information about the country of origin of that seafood.

Clause 1 of the bill sets out the title of the proposed Act. Clause 2 provides for the commencement of the proposed Act to be 1 July 2018. That date was chosen to allow a reasonable time for business and the regulator to adjust to the requirements of the proposed Act and to also coincide with the start date for the new national labelling standard. Clause 3 amends the Food Act 2003 by inserting a new section 20A which sets out the requirements for the labelling of seafood being sold for immediate consumption. The new section 20A would be in three parts. Subsection (1) outlines the requirement for seafood sold for immediate consumption to be accompanied by a statement identifying the source of the seafood. Subsection (2) outlines how the statement is to be displayed, and subsection (3) provides for definition of the terms "seafood" and "sourced from Australia".

In the case of seafood wholly sourced from Australia—which under the proposed subsection (3) means seafood taken from the waters within the Australian fishing zone, that is within the meaning of the Fisheries Management Act 1991 of the Commonwealth, or waters within the limits of the State of New South Wales, or another State or Territory of the Commonwealth. The statement accompanying that seafood is required to read "this seafood is sourced from Australia", or similar words identifying Australia or a specified State or locality in Australia as the source of the seafood. This provision provides a great deal of flexibility to business in the way Australian-sourced seafood is identified as such.

For example, Tasmania salmon, which is a popular menu item, is often identified as such on menus at present and would continue to comply with the proposed Act, if passed by this Parliament. The term "Hawkesbury River school prawns", from my own region on the Central Coast, would also comply as the Australian source locality is provided and complies with the Act. Oysters sourced from the waters of Coffin Bay in South Australia, which are widely known and of high repute, described on a menu as "Coffin Bay oysters" would also comply with the proposed Act. In the case of seafood that is not sourced from Australia, the statement accompanying the seafood is required to read "this seafood is imported".

The term "imported" was carefully chosen after much consultation with business and industry to provide a degree of flexibility to businesses which source their seafood from multiple countries. This is often the case with large clubs which will source frozen seafood from a number of, usually, overseas countries and sources and store that product for use as required. The provision under the proposed Act allows one menu statement to cover most, if not all, seafood sourced and used in that way by clubs and other businesses. In the case of a product containing seafood sourced from both Australia and other countries, the statement accompanying the seafood is required to read "this seafood may include seafood sourced from Australia and imported seafood". It can also include other words identifying the countries from which the seafood is sourced.

This provision allows menu items, which may include both Australian and imported seafood in them. Seafood marinara and seafood marketed as marinara mix are an example which comes to mind of a food product or a menu item that may contain both Australian and imported seafood. The definition provided under the proposed Act is flexible enough to allow for variations in the proportions of Australian and imported seafood in the menu item or product to change over time, ensuring that only one menu statement can cover products sourced from a variety of locations.

The provisions of subsection (1) of new section 20A also allow the actual countries of origin of the imported product to be advertised or displayed if that is the preference of the business. Under subsection (2) of the bill, the statement must be displayed with the seafood where the seafood is displayed for sale or on the menu or display used to describe the seafood for sale. The definition of "seafood" contained in subsection (3) is based on the standard definition but includes provision that would allow the Government to prescribe certain seafood or a class of seafood and in doing so remove the labelling obligation for that seafood or seafood class by way of regulation. In this way, for example, so-called "kids meals", often served at clubs and hotels, could be prescribed by regulation where these contain seafood if the Government considered doing so would ease the regulatory burden on businesses in those circumstances.

In terms of penalties, the bill has none specifically linked to the obligations set up underneath it. However, I note that clause 45 of the Food Regulation 2015 imposes an automatic statutory condition that a licensee must comply with the provisions of the Act, which would also include the new origin labelling requirement if this bill were enacted by the Parliament. Accordingly, the labelling required would become a licensing condition for business. The Northern Territory—having been the only jurisdiction to enact seafood labelling at the point of immediate consumption—is important for the purposes of this debate. I will address the Northern Territory experience as part of my speech today.

The Northern Territory Government in 2008 introduced legislation requiring licensed fish retailers, including eating establishments such as restaurants and takeaway outlets, to label seafood as imported if it was

not harvested in Australia. No labelling is required for Australian-harvested seafood. In 2011, a Fisheries Research and Development Corporation funded assessment of the impact of these laws was undertaken by industry consultants under the supervision of a steering committee comprising industry representatives and a Northern Territory government representative. The assessment used face-to-face interviews with food service establishments and consumers in Darwin over a period of time to gauge the development of opinion and the impact of the laws on consumers and business in the Northern Territory.

The cost to food service businesses of implementing and complying with the labelling legislation was found to be "generally not significant". The survey indicated that consumers are willing to pay a premium for food labelled as local. Consumers indicated a strong preference to purchase Australian seafood, with a willingness to pay up to 25 per cent for Australian product over imported or unlabelled seafood. The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation report also found that fish wholesalers reduced imported product and began to source more local product. The survey results also showed that 90 per cent of licensed fish retailers in the Northern Territory had complied with the requirements of the labelling laws within three months of their introduction. Of these, 55 per cent reported that they had complied with the law within one month of the introduction of the legislation and another 35 per cent had complied within three months. Of course, cost is an important issue for business. Businesses appeared to adjust quickly and the vast majority were in a position to comply with the legislation within a month of its implementation.

Major concerns expressed by the sector related to updating and changing menus and specials boards because of local product supply issues and the need to undertake ongoing staff training. The food service sector in Darwin has a considerable staff turnover. As a result, knowledge of labelling laws was frequently lost, which necessitated ongoing and proactive education programs. Survey results indicated that the initial cost was noticeable, with 35 per cent of respondents claiming that they had spent more than \$500 to accommodate the new requirements. This can be balanced against 60 per cent reporting costs of less than \$500. However, after the fifth survey towards the end of the process that led to this report on the Northern Territory experience, 70 per cent of businesses reported nil ongoing compliance expenditure, and the remainder reported expenditure of less than \$500.

The Restaurant and Catering Industry Association of Australia claimed recently that the cost to the food service sector of implementing country-of-origin labelling would be \$300 million annually. The chief executive officer of the association, John Hart, gave evidence to an Australian parliamentary inquiry that the cost each time a menu is updated would be \$8,000 to \$10,000 per restaurant. He did that without presenting any evidence to justify the claim. Claims by the association about the high cost of changing menus to accommodate country-of-origin labelling for seafood have not been supported by any evidence so far. The report on the implementation of legislation in the Northern Territory indicates that there is robust evidence that the cost of labelling is "not significant". In fact, the study found that the Northern Territory experience and changes to labelling were supported by fishers, seafood retailers and consumers alike, and that they were pleased with the result.

The report also found that labelling does influence consumer choice. Consumers are willing to pay a premium for local product, and businesses adjust quickly to the new regulations. I appreciate that the Government is working towards a voluntary labelling arrangement. My view is that this bill is the only way to deal with the broad, and in some cases irreconcilable, claims made by stakeholders and participants interested in this issue. At one extreme we have Greenpeace, which initiated a useful and interesting "Label My Fish" campaign. The Greenpeace claim is that seafood sold for immediate consumption should be accompanied by information on the species of the fish, where it was caught, and the method used to catch it. My bill does not go that far. I note that the national standard also does not go as far as requiring the official fish species name to be used, let alone labelling for immediate consumption. At the other extreme, the Restaurant and Catering Industry Association believes nothing should be done. It is hard to imagine obtaining a voluntary agreement with that broad range of views without the Parliament enacting some sort of regulation to force the issue.

I wish to thank a number of people who assisted in the preparation of this bill. I thank the professional fishers in my local area and on the Central Coast more widely for helping me to understand their work and the need for this bill to support their livelihood. I particularly thank Allan Reed and his family, who have welcomed me into their home and showed me what it is like to be a fisherman on Tuggerah Lake. I thank Mary Howard and Dane Van der Neut of the Wild Caught Fishers Coalition for their dedicated defence of their colleagues, their pursuit of the interests of fishermen across New South Wales, and their support for this bill. I thank Tricia Beatty, the executive officer and leader of the Professional Fishermen's Association, for her support and advocacy. I thank my Labor colleagues and shadow Minister Mick Veitch for their support and for allowing me to introduce this private member's bill. I also thank parliamentary staff, particularly Chris Angus of the Parliamentary Research Service, who provided valuable information, and Nigel Hill and Daniel Gray of the Parliamentary Counsel's Office for their assistance in drafting the bill.

Finally, I acknowledge and thank Clubs NSW and the Australian Hotels Association, who engaged in the drafting of this bill. I particularly thank Josh Landis and Chris Gaffield for their positive approach to this ongoing process. Their desire to help the fishing industry should be commended. That cooperative effort has resulted in a piece of legislation with which they are comfortable. When we consume seafood at a restaurant, a takeaway shop or a fish and chip shop in this State we should do so knowing its origins; we should not have to ask. This bill achieves that aim with the least possible impost on business. Above all, it offers valuable support to the fishing men and women of this State. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## SECURING NSW STEEL INDUSTRY BILL 2017

### Second Reading

**Debate resumed from 6 April 2017.**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (11:08):** I will pick up where I left off. I had just finished mauling the Opposition for taking drafting instructions from The Greens and failing to look at the implications of simply listening to the Hon. David Shoebridge rather than doing its own work. The *Hansard* will show that I have gone through the provisions of the bill. In the interests of transparency, it is important for me to talk about what the Government will do in relation to this matter. We have done many things already. As Parliamentary Secretary, I am proud to have fought for \$60 million in payroll tax deferrals that helped BlueScope Steel through some tough times. But the Government has gone even further. The Minister for Finance, Services and Property and I hosted a Steel Procurement Forum on 20 March this year. The forum brought together the major players in the steel industry in order to bring about real and substantive change rather than the veneer of change that the Opposition offered up in a desperate attempt to try to secure green votes.

Those opposite know that they are in a real struggle. We need only look at the local government elections on the weekend to see that. I did not see the member for Shellharbour out on the hustings. During an election campaign we need to put our most positive and supportive faces out there, but unfortunately the member for Shellharbour does not get on with the former Mayor of Shellharbour. There is a reason that she was not on a booth: They did not want her on a booth.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Point of order—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! What is the member's point of order?

[*Interruption*]

Order! I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time. He will not behave in that manner when entering the Chamber.

**Mr Paul Scully:** The member for Kiama should withdraw the comment. The mother of the member for Shellharbour was hospitalised.

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

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I was not aware of that and I withdraw my comment. I also wish the member for Oatley a happy birthday. It is wonderful to see him in the Chamber.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Oatley has got off on the wrong foot. The Parliamentary Secretary will return to the leave of the bill.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** The forum brought together the major players in the steel industry. It was attended by the Minister for Finance, Services and Property; the Department of Premier and Cabinet; Roads and Maritime Services; the Department of Transport; the Department of Industry; NSW Procurement; BlueScope Steel; Bisalloy Steels; the Australian Steel Institute; University of Wollongong; Regional Development Australia; the Illawarra Business Chamber; the Port Kembla Chamber of Commerce; and the South Coast Labor Council. In framing this bill did The Greens speak to the industry? Did they speak to the people who produce the steel? Did they talk to businesses? No. The Greens spoke only to the union movement; they spoke to only one side of the debate.

This was a bipartisan forum; rather than listening to only one part of the debate, we invited people from both sides. The Australian Workers Union [AWU] attended the forum, which indicates my intention to have everybody at the table. The Lord Mayor of Wollongong also attended the forum. I congratulate him on his re-election. He received more than 35 per cent of the vote. Those opposite pale in comparison with him as they have only a measly quarter of the vote in a council that they used to control.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** What did you get? Sixteen per cent?

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Canterbury. We have three seats and may still get the fourth. That is off the back of a high watermark in 2011. Those opposite could not control a single council in an area that they believe they dominate. I thank the member for Canterbury for her idiotic interjection, which was on schedule as usual. I thank another attendee of the forum—one of the last economic rationalists inside the Labor Party and somebody who understands how the economy works—the member for Wollongong. Had he been around when this bill was being framed, I am sure it would be different because he is a rationalist. Now he has to defend the bill, and he does not like having to do that. He is fidgeting in his seat because the bill is so awful and because he knows that it will not work. He is in this place now and I am pleased that he attended the forum. Engineers Australia, KPMG, Australian Industry Group and K and R Fabrications also attended the forum.

We said that we would table a report within 28 days of the forum, and we have done better than that. On 8 April 2017 the Minister and I announced a suite of reforms to steel procurement to improve safety standards, industry certification and transparency. I am pleased to advise the House that from 1 October this year the Government will mandate a new Australian steel standard, AS/NZS 5131.

**Mr Paul Scully:** A mandate?

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Yes. We will mandate the new standard. I know that you do not know much about standards, but we impose them—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Parliamentary Secretary will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Standards are imposed in relation to the grade of steel that we wish to use. This will be the case in all government infrastructure projects. This new standard, published in December 2016, was developed by Standards Australia and championed by the Australian Steel Institute. I thank them for their great work on this. The standard aims to address concerns about the quality of structural steel that is used in construction work. It also aims to enable fair competition between Australia and international suppliers. I acknowledge that a majority of the steel used in projects like the Berry bypass and the Gerringong upgrade was Australian steel.

**Ms Anna Watson:** The Gareth Way.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I am pleased that the member for Shellharbour has acknowledged the Gareth Way; I encourage everybody to drive along it. If the member for Shellharbour wants to see a great local member, she should come to Kiama. She should not look in the mirror, but she should come to Kiama.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The Parliamentary Secretary will return to the leave of the bill.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** The new standard co-defines existing standards to ensure consistency across all aspects of construction-orientated steel production. To assist in industry readiness and compliance with the new standard, the Government has committed \$50,000 to the Australian Steel Institute on successful independent accreditation of its steel standard compliance scheme. New Government infrastructure tenders published after 1 October 2017 will have to comply with this new standard. The New South Wales Government will spend around \$70 billion per year on infrastructure over the next four years, so I want to ensure that our steelmakers, manufacturers and associated businesses can take advantage of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government's building boom. These changes will help to do exactly that.

The New South Wales Government has also announced further reform affecting steel procurement, including reviewing the application of the broader economic benefits test. The test compares Australian steel with imported suppliers to ensure fairness between local and international suppliers when considering value-for-money assessment. We will also publish digitally the amount of Australian steel that is used across key New South Wales Government projects to ensure transparency in government contracts. We expect that a dashboard will be made public later this year and it will be managed centrally by NSW Procurement. We will review the need to ensure protection for fabricators that raise concerns about steel quality directly with government agencies.

I mentioned earlier that the Opposition and The Greens do not talk to business. When you do not talk to business, you do not necessarily get all views. So I will put on record some of the views of the business community that came to light as a result of this forum, which was attended by a wide variety of stakeholders. I congratulate Mark Vassella on soon becoming the chief executive officer of BlueScope's global operations. He currently heads its Port Kembla operations. He said:

We congratulate the New South Wales Government on applying common sense. Premier Gladys Berejiklian, the Minister for Finance, Services and Property Victor Dominello and Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast Gareth Ward have listened to the concerns of both the community and industry in the Illawarra and acted. We believe these changes will help

Australian manufacturers to win more orders for New South Wales Government projects while still ensuring the Government complies with Australia's international trade obligations.

It gets better. He went on to say:

It is critical that we have accredited suppliers that comply with Australian standards. The addition of third-party independent certification ensures the quality standards designed into these projects are actually delivered. There are only two steel manufacturers in Australia, and that is what one of them is saying. That manufacturer is endorsing my work and the work of the Minister, rather than the fabrication of those opposite, to deliver real change. BlueScope chief executive officer Paul O'Malley has previously rejected the notion that mandatory steel quotas, as proposed by The Greens in alliance with the Opposition, are the best way for the Government to assist the Australian steel industry. Debra Murphy from the Regional Development Australia group said in relation to this policy that the New South Wales Government's steel procurement forms provide a "balanced approach to both price and quality as well as a level playing field". She said:

This has been long called for by the Illawarra and stakeholders. These initiatives will make a difference long term and support jobs and economic growth in the Illawarra on the back of an innovative steel industry and its supply chain.

I move now to what Chris Lamont has said. He is the well-regarded, well-respected chief executive officer of the Illawarra Business Chamber.

**Mr Paul Scully:** A former Liberal staffer.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Wollongong. Chris Lamont was a very fine chief of staff to a defence Minister. He is someone who is universally respected in the Illawarra. I have heard the member for Wollongong say nice things about the business chamber occasionally, which is always pleasant. Mr Lamont is very competent, and that is the main thing. He said:

These companies make a substantial contribution to employment and economic development, and are looking for fairness not handouts. Ensuring Australian Standards are applied is an important measure in helping to achieve this.

He went on:

The measures announced by Minister Dominello and Parliamentary Secretary Gareth Ward—

that is me—

are important and very much welcome. We want to make sure that local business is afforded every opportunity to provide goods and services to government projects. New procurement arrangements will assist in maintaining a competitive steel industry in the Illawarra.

Let us not look only at the business chamber but also at the Australian Steel Institute [ASI]—the people who have the role of developing standards and engaging with the industry to make things work. They do not play politics like those on the other side of the Chamber do. The Opposition engages in base politics—the sort of tub-thumping nonsense that destroys the industry. The Opposition bill will tear the industry apart.

[*Interruption*]

I hear the interjections from those opposite but I am enjoying this.

**Ms Anna Watson:** What did you say about the workers—that they were lazy?

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

**Mr GARETH WARD:** No, I said that you are lazy, not the workers. You are lazy. The former member for Wollongong used to say that about you, and she was right—bring back Noreen Hay! In a press release, the ASI said:

The joint announcement from NSW Minister for Finance, Services and Property, Hon Victor Dominello MP and Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, Gareth Ward is the most significant procurement policy change in NSW history.

The institute said that the announcement was the most significant procurement policy change in New South Wales history, but the Opposition opposes it because it wants to impose its populist policy failures across government—although they will not work.

**Mr Ryan Park:** What about Manildra?

**Mr GARETH WARD:** The member for Keira asks about Manildra. Does he not like ethanol jobs?

**Mr Ryan Park:** I love them.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** He does not like ethanol jobs. I love ethanol jobs in my electorate, and that is why we are mandating a new policy that is going to work.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Members will cease interjecting. Members will have an opportunity to contribute to the debate.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** The ASI called it the "most significant procurement policy change in New South Wales history". The ASI also congratulated the Government on the quick turnaround on the commitments made during the forum. Those statements were made not by some politician or a media outlet but by the ASI—a very significant body. Ian Cairns, ASI national manager of industry development, said:

The ASI supports free and fair trade that takes a more sophisticated view of procurement, recognising broader economic and social benefits in terms of enhanced business activity, job opportunities and skills training and retention in the State.

The Government has also sought to ensure that Australian steel is used across a range of projects. I was very pleased to see a press release from my good friend the Minister for Western Sydney, Mr Stuart Ayres. He welcomed the signing of contracts worth \$70 million to supply Australian steel to the WestConnex project. He said:

More than 50,000 tonnes of steel will be produced for WestConnex, that is 19,000 kilometres of steel bars—enough to stretch from Sydney to London.

He went on:

The contracts with OneSteel and ARC (Arrium) will ensure that more than 400 western Sydney steel-makers will now have job security thanks to WestConnex.

Almost 18,000 tonnes of steel has already been supplied by the OneSteel Sydney Mill in Rooty Hill for the new M4 and M5 projects. OneSteel general manager Neil Gibson says that his workforce at various Sydney plants is elated by the news. He said:

Our mills suffered a significant downturn post the global financial crisis, but the WestConnex project means we have employed more people and lifted production.

He went on:

This is about the livelihoods of our people, and their families, this means a lot for our workers who are the heart and soul of this company.

More than 2,000 semitrailer loads of steel will be used to reinforce concrete on the project for structures such as roads, tunnels, bridges and pile cages. The Minister for Western Sydney said:

This government is transforming the NSW economy, from a basket-case under Labor, into the engine-room of the nation.

I totally believe that. He went on:

The WestConnex story is not just about building the infrastructure that Labor failed to commit to, it's about supporting the local industries and Sydney families that rely on a thriving economy.

WestConnex is a 33-kilometre motorway that is two-thirds underground. It will widen and extend the M4, duplicate the M5 East and join them to form a continuous, free-flowing western bypass of Sydney's central business district. I alert members of the House to another opportunity—the steel for the Broken Hill pipeline.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Five hundred million dollars.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I am very interested in this project, because supplying Australian steel for the 270-kilometre Murray River to Broken Hill pipeline has been made easier by the reforms of this Government. This is a result of the Government listening to the needs of the community. As the member for Oatley rightly says, it is a \$500 million water infrastructure project. Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Deputy Premier John Barilaro made the announcement and signalled their preference for using Australian steel and supporting local business. That is something we would all agree with. Mark Vassella, BlueScope's chief executive in Australia and New Zealand, said:

I am particularly encouraged by the language used by the NSW Deputy Premier, John Barilaro, in regards to wanting to ensure that Australian jobs are guaranteed by using local businesses, including our outstanding Australian manufacturers, and the domestic supply chain. He also said local companies of all sizes, including our steel producers, will have the opportunity to compete on a level playing field for work on this pipeline.

He continued:

Last month when the Premier announced the suite of reforms to the Australian steel procurement rules, I thanked the Premier and her team for listening to the Industry and the community, acknowledging that the changes 'passed the pub test'.

He went on:

By choosing 40,000 tonnes of BlueScope steel for this project, the NSW Government would be supporting Australian jobs and Australian manufacturing, including the 19,000 direct and indirect jobs in NSW that are underpinned by BlueScope's Port Kembla Steelworks.

I look forward to the next chapter where I can hopefully be standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the Premier announcing that the NSW Government has officially chosen Australian steel for the Broken Hill pipeline project.

I certainly endorse those remarks; I support them. I do not dispute the passion of my Labor colleagues for supporting local jobs. Members on both sides of this Chamber share that passion. In saying that, I opposed the Steel Industry Protection Bill 2016 not because I do not share the passion but because I do not share Labor's view on how best to support our steelworks, its workers and the long-term viability of this industry.

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** Shame! It is a disgrace. You are opposing it; it is unbelievable.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Newcastle. He has come a bit late to this debate, as he does to most debates.

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** I have been here for ages. You are opposing the legislation. It is unbelievable.

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

**Mr GARETH WARD:** The member for Newcastle is obviously unaware of the \$60 million in payroll tax deferrals that I secured for our region. He is obviously not aware of the statements that I have just read from industry leader after industry leader supporting our view.

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

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Members of Parliament like the member for Newcastle say, "You are not supporting our legislation; therefore you have no idea." I say to the member for Newcastle that sometimes there is not a Liberal thing to do or a Labor thing to do; there is a right thing to do. The Government has ensured that we maximise taxpayers' funds by encouraging competitive tension in the industry at the same time as we support business and jobs and having a long-term steel industry. I ask the member for Newcastle what he thinks happened to the car industry and every other industry that protectionism grasped its sleazy fingers around. What does he think is happening to those industries?

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

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Those industries have died. They have been buried, one after the other. The member for Newcastle and his union masters will not be happy until they have a headstone in front of the Australian steel industry stating, "Supported and sponsored by State-sanctioned protectionism", which has failed every economic test. Paul Keating said that. Even Bob Carr and Morris Iemma would not have introduced such a bill as this; in fact, they would roundly reject this bill as the cheapjack opportunism that we know it to be.

**Ms Anna Watson:** How do you know?

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I assure the member for Shellharbour that I know a lot of things.

**Ms Anna Watson:** You know what is in your lunchbox but that is about it.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I do not have a lot of choice.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Parliamentary Secretary, are you okay?

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I am fine, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** We all need to check on each other.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I am fine because I am on the Government side of the House but the member for Shellharbour will be on the other side of the House for a very long time. As I have said in relation to job generation, this Government has a passion for it. Labor's path of introducing this bill is one I would have thought it would never take. Bob Hawke, Paul Keating, Morris Iemma would not support this bill.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Guess what? They are not here, but we are.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I acknowledge the interjection from my friend the member for Keira, but I simply ask this: What does he think happens when, as a result of Labor's policy, prices are forced up, the unions make greater wage demands and the costs of production go up? What does he think will happen to those industries?

**Mr Ryan Park:** You wanted to pay \$7,000 for someone to move from Wollongong to Shellharbour—100 metres. That is fantastic fiscal discipline.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! The member for Kiama will be heard in silence.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** There is the three-card trick from the member for Keira: Do not talk about our policy—talk about something else that was resolved a long time ago. I am talking about Labor policy that Labor members want to take to the next election. When Labor was last in government, which was six years ago, its last couple of major infrastructure projects in the Illawarra featured the western grandstand. Do members recall that one? The roof blew off because the then Labor Government used Chinese steel.

**Mr Ryan Park:** What about the Seacliff Bridge?

**Mr GARETH WARD:** The Seacliff Bridge is one project. Well done! One project—thumbs up!

**Mr Ryan Park:** Do you remember the hospital that your Government left a hole in?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! The member for Keira will come to order.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Did the former Labor Government do anything about the Princes Highway in Gerringong, Berry or the Albion Park Rail bypass?

**Mr Ryan Park:** What about the Kiama bypass?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! I call the member for Keira to order for the first time.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Did the former Labor Government do anything about the Wollongong Hospital or the Bulli Hospital? The other project was the South Coast correctional centre. Labor must have known that they were making way for the new Eddie Obeid wing and they decided to set that up on the South Coast. How much Australian steel was in that? Not a jot. Not even the paperclips used in procurement were made from Australian steel. Labor members come into this House and say that they are the workers' friends but as I have demonstrated, by speaking to the Australian Institute of Steel, BlueScope and members of industry such as Regional Development Australia [RDA], all the industries are not siding with Labor. They are not saying that they agree with or embrace Labor's policy.

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** It is a disgrace that you will not support the legislation.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Because what this Government has achieved is a better way to go.

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** You don't support local steel.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** The member for Newcastle says I do not support Australian steel. That is why I did not use it in the Berry bypass or the Gerringong upgrade! In both those projects, the majority of the steel used was Australian steel, but Australian steel was not used in any of the projects done by the former Labor Government. Let us talk about Labor's record on using Australian steel. When we think about the purchase of certain train carriages, we recall that not an ounce of Australian steel was used in those purchased by the former Labor Government. That is why I will not be lectured by Labor members. This Government has done the hard work and has demonstrated that politicians who are interested in good policy ignore the political games and engage in decent policy formulation by working with the industry.

It may interest Opposition members to know that BlueScope exports approximately 900,000 tonnes of steel. What do Opposition members think will happen with retaliatory pricing if New South Wales attacks other countries and other exporters? Other countries will put up their trade barriers in response. Labor's policy is fraught with danger from a trading point of view. As demonstrated in the past, protectionism is a policy failure waiting to happen. Instead of simply opposing the bill, the Government proposes an alternative policy. I thank everyone who worked to formulate that.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Amend the bill.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I acknowledge the interjection. The member for Wollongong cooperated by attending the forum and I was very pleased that he did. I remind this House that this Government is the largest single procurer of Australian steel. This Government uses more Australian steel than any other Government or any business. Implicit in this bill is the criticism that the State Government is not purchasing Australian steel products. I reject that because, unlike former Labor Governments that built projects without using an ounce of Australian steel, the State Government has been using Australian steel products. I think that is of absolute importance. The Opposition is adopting an approach that I think is very dangerous. I encourage Labor members not to follow The Greens policies. It is important to have an honest debate about what can be achieved. I do not believe that Labor members would follow through with the policy enunciated in the bill, should Labor ever be elected to govern at some distant point in the future. I cite the opinion of a former Federal Labor leader, Simon Crean, who is a former trade union official:

When things are going bad it is very easy to blame others - to blame foreigners for taking local jobs or forcing local factories to close.

It is simple but it is wrong - especially for a trading nation like Australia ...

For us we have to trade with the rest of the world. But we will only succeed - promoting our comparative advantage - not protecting inefficient local industries.

He also stated: "The introduction of steel quotas would likely constitute a repudiation of our free trade agreements so that creating jobs in many other local critical export industries, like farming and agriculture in our region, could be at risk." I think Kim Beazley—someone who is known to Opposition members, I am sure—put it best when he stated:

The one guaranteed route to global wealth destruction lies in the downward spiral of retaliative protectionism.

Despite that, Opposition members would rather fall into the seductive and populist embrace of The Greens' economic idealism than move towards solutions that we know would work and work for the long term. I find it odd that The Greens claim to support the steel industry while opposing coalmining in New South Wales. Given that steel manufacturing requires coking coal, one truly wonders whether The Greens are serious or whether this is a struggle between The Greens and Labor for the hearts and votes of trade unionists. The Greens talk of corporate profits, but this bill mandates that governments purchase steel from a duopoly, which would mean bigger profits for business and inflated costs for steel—all to the inevitable detriment of schools, hospitals and roads.

This bill mandates nothing other than a tougher choice rather than positive outcomes. The bill before the House fails to acknowledge what we all know to be true—that there are but two steel manufacturers in Australia. To require those two manufacturers to produce 90 per cent of steel products for Australian infrastructure fails to acknowledge that those same two steel manufacturers do not produce everything that governments require. Indeed, based on the shutdown of power supplies in South Australia, where one of the two manufacturers is located, I would have thought the time of this Parliament would be better spent discussing the critical need to address energy security, which is fundamental to preserving our steel industry in the Illawarra.

Even the chief executive officer of BlueScope Steel, Paul O'Malley, spoke against the imposition of steel quotas and in favour of a more holistic, sensible approach to procurement. When even the CEO of Australia's largest steel manufacturer is telling us that this is not the answer, we simply must ask, "What is Labor's bill really about?" I want to see real reform that works, not protectionism that has failed every industry it has ever touched, with the Australian car manufacturing industry being but one example. I want to see practical and believable change that delivers for regions, our workers, the industry, taxpayers and jobs. That is why, instead of simply opposing this bill, the Government has come up with a policy that has worked and that will deliver real outcomes that industry leader after industry leader has backed in press statements.

**Mr John Sidoti:** This is just hypocrisy by Opposition members.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Indeed. The Government's policy has been based on a roundtable of all industry leaders and unions. When I convened that roundtable I did not want to exclude unions or any other industry that may have had a particular partisan view. That is why my friend the member for Wollongong was invited. I was very pleased that a sensible and rational voice from the Labor Party was able to attend. Clearly, that is why the name of the member for Shellharbour was not on the list of invitees. I am pleased that he was there to participate. Of course, when he came to the forum he did not need his notes written by someone else, like the member for Shellharbour, who used to have her notes written by Gino Mandarino.

Of course, Gino Mandarino cannot write those notes anymore because he is now working for the member for Wollongong. The speeches of the member for Shellharbour were much better, more eloquent, more erudite, and more entertaining when Mr Mandarino was working for her. Her speeches lack the zest, zeal, and pitch that they used to have. I understand why she has become so much more boring since Mr Mandarino left. Mr Mandarino had a wit about him and now the member for Wollongong has it, and the member for Shellharbour is just a halfwit. I commend to this House a solution based on industry responses that delivers more jobs and more investments for workers. I commend to this House a Government that is working to deliver a tough reform to the steel industry.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Point of order: I ask that the member for Kiama withdraw the statement he just made about me.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Which one would you like me to withdraw? There were several.

**Ms Anna Watson:** The one where you called me a "halfwit". It is unparliamentary and I ask that the member withdraw that statement.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! The member for Shellharbour has asked the member for Kiama to withdraw his statement. I did not hear the comment.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I withdraw the comment that ever since Gino Mandarino left the member's office and went to work for someone else her speeches have been halfwit. But the right reform has been adopted and has been endorsed by industry. I want to see more steel jobs, more production, and more innovation in the steel industry. I want the steel industry to be in the Illawarra for a long time to come. Cheap shot opportunism and populism is not going to deliver the response that we need for taxpayers, for workers, and for the industry's future.

I encourage the House to look deeply at the policy, to look at the idealism of The Greens, to reject a bill that will kill the steel industry, and to back the side of the House that backs the steel industry.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (11:41):** Thank goodness that speech is over. The poor people listening or watching the webcast could not suffer through any more of that. It was interesting that during that contribution we heard about a mandate that is going to produce the most significant procurement change in New South Wales and that will see the New South Wales Government using more New South Wales steel. The member for Kiama got up and said, "More of this and more of that." He said he wants more steel in more parks. So do we. That is why we are introducing a mandate through this bill that requires at least 90 per cent of steel used in New South Wales Government projects to be local steel. It is a radical reform to see a New South Wales Government using New South Wales steel! Yet members opposite, at the encouragement of the member for Kiama, will be voting against it.

They will be voting against jobs, against employment opportunities, and against business in the Illawarra. Instead the member for Kiama holds out some sort of hope that there is going to be a \$500 million pipeline. When the Premier announced it she said she "hoped we would use Australian steel". The Government has a preference for Australian steel but we will have a mandate because we believe in local steel. We do not believe in holding out some sort of false hope that maybe one day the New South Wales Government might possibly use local steel. On this side of the House we want to use local steel.

I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the debate on Labor's Securing NSW Steel Industry Bill 2017. Let us be clear that this is Labor's bill. It has been introduced to give the Government a second chance to support the steel industry. We have heard that they are going to reject it. This is a policy that has been tested at an election and was endorsed. It was tested at the Wollongong by-election, but the members opposite would not know about that because they squibbed it. They could not even turn up. We went out there and spoke about the New South Wales Government leading by example by using New South Wales steel—Port Kembla steel. But the Liberal Party and National Party members were tucked up in bed asleep because they could not even be bothered to turn up.

Today the member for Kiama has continued his attempt to desperately avoid a vote. He desperately avoided a vote on the bill the last time. He tried to run down the clock and make the bill lapse. That is why we reintroduced it. If it was the Government's hope that we, who represent steel makers and the steel industry, would give up on this bill and the support of local steel, they were dead wrong. On this side, we will never walk away from the steel industry or its workers, the countless small businesses that it supports, or the community on which it is founded. It is profoundly disappointing that the member for Kiama has done this, especially as he likes to remind us of his parents' connection with the steel industry. This bill will secure the future of steel making in the Illawarra and in this State.

The bill has three main provisions. First, it will mandate the use of Australian-made steel up to 90 per cent of local content on all infrastructure projects publicly funded across the State. Secondly, it establishes a steel industry advocate to certify compliance with the use of Australian-made steel in infrastructure projects. Thirdly, by establishing the full-time, independent cop-on-the-beat, the bill locates the New South Wales steel industry advocate in the Illawarra. This bill is a historic change to procurement policy in New South Wales. It would not be the first time this Parliament and this House has passed legislation to mandate the use of a product made in a regional area in this State. In fact, the steel industry is stronger because of new procurement policies introduced by the Victorian and South Australian Governments.

Rather than destroying the industry, as the member for Kiama predicts, it is stronger because of policies requiring 100 per cent local content for level crossing removals, a 93 per cent requirement for the Metro tunnels and stations package, and a further 93 per cent requirement for the West Gate Tunnel project in Victoria. I refute the member's re-definition of the Hawke and Keating economic legacy that he made in his remarks. The fact is that Australia would not have a steel industry today if it were not for the intervention of the Hawke-Keating Labor Government in 1983. Far from using free-market initiatives as the member implied, the steel industry was saved by the Hawke Government's sensible use of bounties and tariffs to protect and support the industry from imported steel products. That is what it did, while at the same time negotiating a new investment package at the Port Kembla plant.

The Hawke-Keating Government, in partnership with the Wran Labor Government in New South Wales, never walked away from regional communities in transition. We will not be lectured to by the likes of the member for Kiama over Labor's economic record at Federal and State levels. In the context of the debate on this bill, it is worth taking some time to look at some earlier debates that illustrate the hypocrisy of the Government. This Government likes to pass legislation to mandate the use of certain products from certain parts of the State. There is the Biofuels Amendment Bill 2016, now the law of the State, following its passage in this place. The Government, and the member for Kiama in particular, had no problem supporting that mandate. Motorists pay an

extra \$85 million as a result of that mandate, but in the context of that debate it was apparently okay to pay a little bit more per litre to support an Australian-made product. Yet it is not okay for the New South Wales Government to lead by example and use a local product in its infrastructure projects.

It is a bit rich for Government members to defend the fact that their mandate is costing motorists more to support major industries in some areas while at the same time they rail against today's mandate, with the member for Kiama spending an incredible amount of time encouraging everyone to vote against it. A few weeks ago we saw the mandating of planning panels to make local decisions. We went through an election process but the Government removed local democracy just beforehand. The Government removed it because it got such an appalling result in Wollongong. It is no wonder that members opposite did not turn up for the Wollongong by-election after they got around 16 per cent in last Saturday's election and a drop in a councillor's spot.

**Mr John Sidoti:** Is that all? Just one?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** You did not have many to lose. Policy based on hypocrisy is the worst form of public decision-making but it is at the heart and soul of this Government. Once the Productivity Commission's report was published, the member for Kiama and the member for South Coast rushed out on 5 April and said it was time for the Federal Government to declare its hand on biofuels, come out against the commission's finding, and declare its support for one of the South Coast's major industries. Steelworkers, their families and the region the member for Kiama is supposed to represent in the Government have been making the very same demand for the last two years. They have been calling for their industry to be supported. It is time that the member for Kiama stopped supporting hypocrisy and instead started supporting one of the Illawarra's major industries, steel.

I attended the forum hosted by the member for Kiama, as he pointed out, and it is interesting that the result is the Government intends to mandate the use of Australian steel standard, AS/NZ 5131. It is intriguing that once you mandate the use of a standard, as the Government intends to do, it removes any constraint in supporting the provisions contained in this bill—mandating is mandating, after all. The Government mandated the use of ethanol in fuel sold in the State. If the Government wants to propose amendments to this bill so as to enforce its mandate, we will incorporate those amendments. But in return the Government must adopt the provisions in this bill and ensure that there will be a steel industry advocate located in the Illawarra. Instead, those opposite have a Dial-A-Dump-style campaign of enforcement around standards. The Government seems to expect steel fabricators to do in their suppliers in order to use imported steel that does not comply with domestic standards. We have a superior solution and it is contained in this bill: appointing a steel industry advocate, ensuring there is an independent full-time cop on the beat to monitor and enforce compliance on the use of Australian-made steel on infrastructure projects.

The member for Kiama has also been critical of the drafting of the bill, but he is well aware that bills introduced into this place are also accompanied by detailed regulations. It has also been suggested that Australia's free trade agreement obligations may be offended by the provisions in this bill. Such suggestions are fanciful and hold no substance, and to reinforce this I need look no further than page 11 of the Australian Steel Institute's submission to the current public inquiry into the Commonwealth's procurement framework, which was announced late last year. We are very proud of the steel we make at Port Kembla. We are so proud of it that we want to make Port Kembla the steel city and have its steel in every road, bridge, school, hospital and all other infrastructure projects across New South Wales. I have even called on Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore to put it into Sydney's Cloud Arch sculpture. [*Time expired.*]

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (11:51):** We in this House know that members of the Labor Party mandate everything; they even mandate the gender of candidates, and that is how we ended up with the member for Shellharbour. The Government should oppose the Securing NSW Steel Industry Bill 2017, as it is not materially different from the amended 2016 bill. This is just another way for those opposite to bring back this bill.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Drummoyne will be heard in silence.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** This bill has been reintroduced due to the great management of the member for Kiama and the way that he looks after his electorate. He must infuriate some of his adjoining Labor-held electorates. Bringing back this bill is not going to work. We know the arguments, and those opposite are being hypocritical, as usual. They can keep being hypocritical, but they will not succeed. This Government should oppose this bill, because it puts New South Wales government agencies potentially in a position of acting in a way that is contrary to Australia's commitments under free trade agreements.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Name the clause.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** The bill does that. It would add cost to New South Wales infrastructure projects as it would remove the competitive tension faced by domestic steel suppliers. We must remember that every time

the Government proposes a project, members of the Opposition complain about the cost of the project. There are 4,500 road projects alone in New South Wales, but those opposite oppose them because it suits them to do so. They built no infrastructure in the 16 years they were in government. This Government is building infrastructure, and those opposite come into this place and say, "It should have been done sooner." They also complain about the cost, saying it should have been built sooner, more cheaply and in their electorates. They show absolute hypocrisy, but they will not get away with it. Labor Party members of this place seem to have a habit of forgetting their past

**Dr Geoff Lee:** They're rewriting history.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** They are rewriting history. During their 16 years in government they did absolutely nothing, and I can understand why securing the steel industry was not dealt with while they were in government. Steel was not an issue when they were in government because they did not build anything. The reality is that they did not need steel, particularly on the Rozelle Metro. They spent \$500 million but did not even lay a track. Those opposite should stand up for Play Doh, not steel, yet they come in here and talk about the steel manufacturing industry because its heart is in the Wollongong electorate. We understand that they need a drama in excellence award for parading in this place and saying that they are looking after the steel industry in their electorates. They talk about the industry being the powerhouse of the State, but they do not give a damn about their constituents.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Here we go—like you do.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Greg Aplin):** Order! The member for Canterbury will restrain herself.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** It is deadset obvious that they are not economic managers. This Government is building infrastructure across the State, which everyone can see. Labor did not deliver anything when it was in government. If this bill were to proceed, it would add complexity and cost to the management of infrastructure projects.

**Ms Anna Watson:** How much steel is there in your electorate?

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** There is a lot of steel in my electorate. This Government will not support the Securing NSW Steel Industry Bill 2017. Australia is a member of the World Trade Organization and has signed agreements with various countries to remove tariffs and other restrictions on trade. Australians have benefited from free trade deals done with other countries over the last 30 years. Free trade agreements benefit Australian businesses and consumers because they provide access to larger overseas markets. Several of the free trade agreements Australia has entered into apply to government procurement by Australian States and Territories. For example, Australia's current agreement with the United States provides that government entities in their country must not treat the goods, services or supplies of the other country less favourably than those of their own domestic goods, services or supplies when undertaking procurement.

If this bill becomes law, all New South Wales government agencies, State owned corporations and local councils will be required to use steel manufactured in Australia in all public work construction, unless the cost of doing so is unreasonably high. The bill would thus require government entities in New South Wales to treat steel manufacturers and suppliers from countries with which it has free trade agreements less favourably than domestic Australian manufacturers and suppliers. It therefore requires New South Wales government entities to undertake procurement of steel in a manner that potentially breaches Australia's obligations under free trade agreements it has signed. Countries with which Australia has free trade agreements may respond to a breach by taking retaliatory action in other markets, such as imposing tariffs on exports of agricultural products. Those opposite should fear this potential action, but they probably do not because there are not a lot of Labor members from regional electorates, which The Nationals hold.

The reason that Labor does not hold regional seats is that people who vote for The Nationals are very responsive and they can make decisions based on merit. All we have to say to voters in regional areas is that the Labor Party could come back into government, which is a frightening prospect. We have heard about *Nightmare on Elm Street*, and that would be part 27. This bill is nothing but rhetoric and hypocrisy from those opposite. They fear that the Kiama fever will spread across to their electorates and the Liberal Party will take their seats by storm. They want to look as though they are concerned and standing up for their constituents, but they are presenting a fraction of the argument. The members opposite are concentrating on a small part of the argument. They want to introduce 90 per cent quotas. That will not work. It will put every industry in Australia at a disadvantage globally.

The reputation of Australian industry, which is regarded highly throughout the world, will be put at risk. Putting those opposite in charge would put the State and country at risk. As I said earlier, this bill, if adopted, could result in some of our major trading partners taking retaliatory action, which would affect Australia economically. This bill will act as a disincentive to investment in our economy. That was not a problem under Labor because it did not invest at all.

**Dr Geoff Lee:** They had the lowest economy amongst all the States.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI:** We could talk all day about the electorate of the member for Parramatta, which has been inundated with infrastructure projects. Australian steel is still being used in that electorate, a hundred per cent. We all know that those opposite are against infrastructure; they did not deliver. I say look at what they do, not listen to what they say. They have never delivered infrastructure, so this bill is irrelevant to the Labor Party. When Labor was in power, steel could not be mandated because no-one was using it. Labor delivered nothing. There must be another motive behind this bill. It must have something to do with union donations and looking after their union mates. That is not going to come about through this bill.

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (12:00):** I speak in opposition to the Securing NSW Steel Industry Bill 2017. I note the passionate objections made by the member for Kiama, as well as those of the articulate member for Drummoyne, also known as the Man of Steel or the Superman of Drummoyne. I am sure that both sides of the House want to create and support jobs in Australia, especially in New South Wales. Right now in New South Wales we have a fantastic opportunity to create thousands of new jobs with a \$73 billion infrastructure spend over the next four years. That is an unprecedented amount of money to be spent on infrastructure. The delivery of these major and mega projects—particularly in Parramatta, as noted by the member for Drummoyne—will drive steel consumption.

The members on that side of the House take a naive view on how best to run the New South Wales economy. Unfortunately, their ideological position is one of protectionism. It is about decreasing free trade and investment. This side of the House supports free trade to the benefit of New South Wales, Australia and the world economy. Australia's success has relied upon free trade. It is an advantage for Australia to have access to international markets for its products and services. As has been shown over decades, especially the last 20 years, that is why we have been so successful. Without free trade, Australia, particularly New South Wales, would be in a much worse position.

Recently I travelled with the Premier to Japan and Korea. I was interested to note that our major investors and trading partners commented on the advantages Australia enjoys through our free trade agreements, especially in relation to our exports. Australia's free trade agreement with Japan gives us favourable access to its beef market, which gives Australia a strategic competitive advantage over the United States and other world competitors. Australia relies upon free trade. The problem with this bill is that it is anti-free trade. It is a protectionism bill. This bill is contrary to free trade agreements and potentially could impact our exports. I am sure The Nationals in this place would agree with that. As the custodians of the land, they rely upon their agricultural, horticultural and mining produce being sent overseas, which helps build the nation by obtaining valuable export revenue. The bill places our free trading reputation at risk.

The bill increases red tape in the reporting and management of projects. This increased red tape would affect detrimentally mostly small businesses that supply products to the market. Small business is the lifeblood of the New South Wales economy and creates employment and innovation to make our communities wonderful. This bill increases the complexity of employing people through the creation of more red tape. This side of the House does not want any more red tape; we want less. That side of the House seems to love red tape. Whilst I acknowledge that the Government must do everything it can to ensure the use of Australian steel and the fair importation of steel, I am pleased that we have taken action against countries that want to dump their cheaper, and in many cases inferior, steel in Australia.

I acknowledge that the anti-dumping provisions must be enforced, and we have had some success. We must ensure that any products used in our constructions adhere to the Australian Standards and meet our building codes. The right building products for the job must be on site. Our solution on this side of the House is to maintain and enhance our free trade agreements. That is the benchmark at which Australia is proving very successful on the world stage. We must keep Australia open to free trade and encourage our exports to the rest of the world. We must not endanger free trade agreements in the future. This Government is working hard to maintain our free trade agreements and to keep Australian industry competitive. Over the past two to three decades, Australian industry has been working hard to make Australia a more competitive environment. Australian companies must be able to compete on the world stage. Whilst I acknowledge other measures such as anti-dumping legislation and protection of the building code and building product standards, on this side of the House we are looking at increasing the consumption of Australian steel and steel in general, which comes about from building more mega projects throughout the State.

**Debate interrupted.**

*Motions***NATIONAL STROKE WEEK**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:09):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges it is National Stroke Week from Monday 4 to Sunday 10 September 2017.
- (2) Acknowledges the importance of National Stroke Week and the importance it plays in increasing public awareness that stroke is a medical emergency.
- (3) Notes that stroke is one of Australia's biggest killers and a leading cause of disability, and that in 2017 there will be almost 56,000 new and recurrent strokes, being one stroke every nine minutes.

I thank members for agreeing to the reordering of this motion. The fact that there will be 56,000 strokes in 2017 means that one in six people will experience a stroke. Strokes happen to anyone; they do not discriminate. The important part of the public awareness campaign is the message that stroke is a time-critical, life-threatening event that is caused by a disruption of the blood supply to the brain. There are two main causes of stroke: a blood clot or plaque blocks a blood vessel in the brain, which is an ischemic stroke; or a blood vessel in the brain breaks or ruptures, which is a haemorrhagic stroke. Approximately four out of five strokes are ischemic. Stroke is one of Australia's biggest killers and is the leading cause of disability. Getting to an appropriate hospital as quickly as possible is critical for accessing assessments and time-critical stroke treatments.

I will use this opportunity to talk about the stroke statistics in my electorate. I will do so by referring to the two Federal electorates that border the State electorate of Port Macquarie—the electorate of Lyne and the electorate of Cowper. In 2017, there were 4,481 stroke victims—2,563 males and 1,918 females—living in the electorate of Lyne. Lyne is ranked first in Australia for stroke prevalence in 2017, and it is predicted to be ranked fourth by 2050 as population movements are taken into account. That means the Australian prevalence of stroke will increase to 9,226 victims annually. The number of strokes this year in Lyne is expected to be 553. It should be borne in mind that some people will have multiple strokes, which means that that figure does not refer to a number of people but the number of stroke events.

In the Lyne electorate, we have an ageing population and 21.8 per cent of local residents have high blood pressure, 3 per cent have atrial fibrillation, 28 per cent have high cholesterol, and 48 per cent are physically inactive. The Federal electorate of Cowper also borders the electorate of Port Macquarie. We have 4,327 stroke survivors living in the community—2,491 males and 1,836 females. Cowper is ranked third in Australia for stroke prevalence in 2017, with 522 strokes expected to occur by the end of the year. Cowper is also ranked the fourth highest electorate nationally for stroke incidents in 2017.

During National Stroke Week, I had the opportunity to engage in a public awareness campaign in my electorate. I congratulate the Stroke Foundation for the work it does locally and across the country. As I stated in my motion, stroke awareness is critically important. The campaign event was held at Settlement City, a local shopping centre. Like many people who were passing by, I had my blood pressure checked and talked about some of the stroke risk factors. The campaign uses the acronym FAST, which provides guidance about what people should look for when they suspect that someone has had a stroke. If any of the symptoms are evident, they should call 000 immediately because it is an emergency and it is critical that the victim is transported to a healthcare facility as soon as possible.

FAST is easy to remember and helps us to recognise the signs of stroke and to take appropriate action. "F" stands for "face". Has the victim's mouth drooped? "A" stands for "arms". Can the victim lift their arms? "S" stands for "speech". Is the victim's speech slurred and do they understand instructions? "T" stands for "time critical". As I said, time is critically important and if anyone displays any of those symptoms someone should call 000. Some strokes are fatal and others will cause permanent or temporary disability. The importance of stroke prevention, awareness and early access to organised stroke care cannot be stressed enough.

In Australia, only 36 per cent of people who suffer a stroke reach hospital within the critical 4½ hour window. The Stroke Foundation estimates that the financial cost of strokes is approximately \$5 billion each year. It is important to understand that more than 80 per cent of strokes can be prevented. The risk factors for stroke are evident in a community like Port Macquarie and on the mid-North Coast, which have increasing ageing populations. Those risks include high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes, high cholesterol, and atrial fibrillation. High blood pressure, which is also called hypertension, is the most important known risk factor for stroke. It can cause damage to blood vessel walls, which will eventually lead to a stroke. Blood pressure can be controlled. In most cases we can change our diet and our lifestyle by engaging in regular exercise and maintaining a healthy weight.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (12:16):** I commend the member for Port Macquarie on moving this important motion about National Stroke Week. As the member said, National Stroke Week is held from 4 September until 10 September. This motion allows us to acknowledge the importance of the week in increasing awareness and also ensuring that people are aware that a stroke is a medical emergency. The stroke statistics are astounding. We have had 56,000 new and recurrent strokes this year alone in Australia. That is one stroke every nine minutes.

I also commend the member on the work she has done in her electorate in this area. We must ensure that people have more information about strokes, particularly in rural and regional New South Wales. My electorate of Canterbury and a number of other electorates have large multicultural populations. We need more multilingual information, particularly for our elderly migrants who have difficulty in reading and speaking English. Many people in my community are over the age of 55 and they tend not to go to the doctor to have a check, and sometimes they leave it too late. That is a major concern.

The Federal shadow Minister for Health, Catherine King, joined with the Stroke Foundation in announcing that the Australian Labor Party will deliver a \$16 million boost for stroke awareness campaigns and stroke survivor support. The shadow Minister has pledged to partner with the Stroke Foundation in a national FAST campaign to raise awareness of the signs of stroke and to roll out follow-up and referral services for stroke survivors and their families. Stroke kills more women than does breast cancer, it kills more men than does prostate cancer, and it is the leading cause of acquired disability. However, with more information and increased awareness, stroke is treatable and beatable. Thousands of people live with the impact of stroke. The recent announcement and funding will go a long way towards improving community awareness and support of stroke survivors so that they can make their best recovery possible.

When a stroke occurs, brain cells die at a rate of 1.9 million each minute. Time-critical treatments can stop damage from spreading and can even reverse it in some cases. We should all know the signs of stroke. They are easy to learn and can save the life of somebody that we love or even our own life. Building on the national FAST campaign, funding for the Stroke Foundation's follow-up and referral program will ensure that thousands of stroke survivors and their families across Australia get the support they need upon discharge from hospital. I acknowledge the work that the Stroke Foundation does across Australia. Recently they held a number of events across our local government areas. I looked at some of those activities. I hope that local councils can partner with the Stroke Foundation and members of Parliament to increase awareness of stroke even more next year.

I would like to see additional funding from the State Government in next year's budget to increase awareness of stroke in our multicultural communities and our Indigenous communities, particularly in rural and remote New South Wales. I thank the member for her motion. I will do what I can on this issue. I know that our shadow Minister for Health, Walt Secord, has been doing a lot in this area. He has been in regional and rural New South Wales and Greater Western Sydney, increasing awareness of how strokes can be prevented. We need more information and targeted information. We need local councils to partner with the Stroke Foundation to increase awareness and facilitate more activities for National Stroke Week next year.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne) (12:22):** The member for Canterbury mentioned that stroke kills more women than does breast cancer and more men than does prostate cancer. That is unbelievable in this day and age. In 2015 there were 10,869 stroke fatalities in this country. That is nearly 7 per cent of the approximately 160,000 deaths that year. Data indicates that many deaths from stroke occur amongst the elderly, but stroke also features as one of the top 10 leading causes of death among people aged 45 and over. I note that 65 per cent of stroke survivors suffer a disability that impedes their ability to carry out daily living activities unassisted. Rehabilitation of stroke survivors plays a critical and crucial role in our health system for patients and their care providers, yet this area is often overshadowed by care provided elsewhere in the hospital system. Rehabilitation services play a critical role in stroke care and in the broader context of the Australian healthcare system.

In 2016, there were 2,500 stroke rehabilitation episodes in New South Wales public facilities, or 79 per cent of all inpatient stroke rehabilitation in New South Wales. Rehabilitation services not only improve outcomes for patients who experience a disabling condition such as stroke but they also decrease the long-term burden of disability for the person, their family and for society as a whole. Around 30 per cent of stroke survivors are of working age—under 65—so access to rehabilitation is essential for stroke survivors. In New South Wales, rehabilitation commences in acute services. The New South Wales rehabilitation model of care supports rehabilitation that is provided closest to home and in the least restrictive setting possible, with a focus on the provision of a coordinated process for ongoing rehabilitation. In New South Wales there are various approaches to supporting patients in accessing early rehabilitation after a stroke. These include inpatient rehabilitation, in-reach rehabilitation in acute hospitals and more intensive day rehabilitation so that patients can be discharged from hospital earlier than previously possible while still having access to intensive rehabilitation.

In 2016, nearly 70 per cent of stroke patients receiving inpatient rehabilitations in a New South Wales public health service were able to be discharged back to their usual accommodation. This is consistent with the rate of 70 per cent across the whole of Australia. New South Wales ranked second in the Stroke Foundation rehabilitation audit in providing effective links with acute stroke service providers, with a score of 71 per cent. That is above the national average of 66 per cent. The Agency for Clinical Innovation's stroke and rehabilitation networks continue to support local health districts and specialty health networks to provide best practice evidence-based care to stroke patients across metropolitan, rural and remote New South Wales. Discharge planning was identified by the Agency for Clinical Innovation's stroke and rehabilitation networks as a key area for quality improvement following the 2014 National Stroke Foundation rehabilitation audits. A quality improvement program was implemented in 2015-16 with the goal of improving performance across six key domains. The impact of this program is expected to be seen in the next rehabilitation audit in 2018. I commend the member for Port Macquarie on this motion and I fully support her endeavours.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (12:26):** I speak on the motion relating to National Stroke Week and raising awareness of stroke. As a community, we must all take an active part in doing everything we can to minimise lifestyle activities that can contribute to stroke. I acknowledge a group in my electorate known as the Stroke Recovery Group, which is run by Christine and David Crooks. Christine and David have been good friends of mine for many years. Last year I attended the launch of a pilot program for stroke victims in Camden. With the assistance of a small grant from Camden Council, the Camden Stroke Recovery Club launched a pilot program for stroke patients at Camden Hospital. The grant enabled the club to purchase and donate equipment to be used by inpatients at Camden Hospital. The equipment included five iPads, 10 portable digital versatile discs [DVDs] players and iTunes cards. Camden library also assisted with the donation of 700 DVDs, compact discs, talking books and free access to library services.

For anyone who is interested, I recommend they contact the Camden Stroke Recovery Club at [dcrooks9@bigpond.net.au](mailto:dcrooks9@bigpond.net.au). At the launch of the pilot program, Christine said that the group strongly recommends that people get back to a normal routine in order to assist their mental and physical recovery. This group does great work within my local area in helping stroke victims live as normal a life as possible. I commend the member for Port Macquarie for dedicating many years to helping others not just in her role in this House but also in her former role in health. I am sure she did a wonderful job in that role as well. I commend her and all members for supporting this initiative and for helping raise awareness in individual electorates about National Stroke Week and what the community can do, by working together, to minimise the impacts of strokes. The Agency for Clinical Innovation's Stroke Network supports local health districts and specialty health networks to provide best-practice, evidenced-based care to stroke patients. My local health district does an outstanding job in this regard. All members support National Stroke Week and raising awareness about it. When we return to our electorates we will do whatever we can for victims of stroke.

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (12:30):** I speak in support of the motion of the member for Port Macquarie with respect to National Stroke Week. I join with the member for Camden in thanking her for bringing this important matter before the House today. I reiterate that stroke is a medical emergency and the treatment of stroke is time critical. Immediate medical attention is required for people suffering a stroke, which can be obtained by calling 000. Over the past two decades stroke deaths in New South Wales have fallen by 56 per cent—from roughly 63 to 27 per 100,000. These declines have been driven by improvements in increasing public awareness of the FAST test, which the member for Port Macquarie went through earlier.

I will reiterate those steps. "F" means checking the face to see whether the mouth has dropped. "A" stands for arms—can the person lift both of them? "S" stands for speech—is the person's speech slurred? "T" is most important; it stands for time. If any of these signs are visible someone should call 000 immediately and ask for assistance. The decline in the number of deaths as a result of stroke has also been driven by improvements in key risk factors: high blood pressure and smoking, in particular; progress in medical treatment and other advances in medical care; and increasing access to dedicated stroke units in hospitals and the high level of care received there.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of clinicians working in stroke care across New South Wales. We cannot stop; we must continue to review our performance and engage with consumers and clinicians to continually improve access to evidence-based, quality stroke services. I know that all members of this place agree about that. As evidence for changing practice emerges, it is essential that the system and services respond to reflect evidence-based practice. The future direction for stroke care includes the further development of comprehensive stroke centres providing hyperacute stroke care. It also includes collaboration with NSW Ambulance, local health districts and speciality health networks, NSW Health, clinicians and consumers to redefine stroke pathways, including the implementation of pre-hospital triage tools.

I would like to touch on Telehealth. Expanding the use of Telehealth—that is using technology to support access to specialists—in the provision of stroke care to improve access across acute care and rehabilitation is essential to

improving outcomes for stroke survivors in rural and remote New South Wales. Increasing the use of Telehealth and developing a statewide Telestroke model to improve thrombolysis rates and increase access to endovascular clot retrieval is a key priority of the Agency for Clinical Innovation's Stroke Network. To support this work, the Agency for Clinical Innovation's Stroke Network is developing a minimum safety guide for Telestroke and planning a series of multi-agency workshops. Following the conclusion of Stroke Week 2017 it is critical to reflect again on the importance of the FAST message, which I touched on earlier, in the early detection of stroke. I acknowledge the Stroke Foundation's efforts to increase public awareness and its ongoing work over many years. The goal is for a member of every household in Australia to understand the FAST signs of stroke and to call 000 immediately.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:34):** In reply: I thank all the members who contributed to our debate today about National Stroke Week: the member for Canterbury, the member for Drummoyne, the member for Camden and the member for Miranda. I particularly thank the member for Canterbury because, as well as citing the statistics—more women die of stroke than die of breast cancer; more men die of stroke than die of prostate cancer—she also emphasised the sobering message that in Australia one stroke occurs every nine minutes, which is quite unbelievable. It is important to acknowledge that there are some lifestyle changes we can make to reduce the risk of stroke. I also commend the member for Canterbury for raising the issue of the need for multilingual information, particularly for elderly migrants across the State, including those in her electorate. I join her in acknowledging the work of the Stroke Foundation.

The member for Canterbury made a good suggestion—that we should be encouraging partnerships. I am all for that, because anything that is done in partnership with local communities works well and achieves positive outcomes. I am talking about partnerships with the Stroke Foundation, local members of Parliament and councils to raise more awareness about stroke and recognising the signs of stroke. The member for Drummoyne talked about the disabilities that people are left with after a stroke. Some 65 per cent of stroke survivors suffer a disability. He talked about the importance of rehabilitation services and the New South Wales rehabilitation model of care and the fact that rehabilitation starts in the acute setting. He also mentioned the fact that New South Wales scored second in the Stroke Foundation rehabilitation audit in 2016. While we are doing some really good work—for example, the New South Wales stroke reperfusion program—there is still more work to do. The Government acknowledges that and will continue to work diligently on this health issue.

I congratulate the member for Camden on highlighting the role that volunteers play in support groups in our community. He mentioned, in particular, Christine and David Crooks in his electorate of Camden. I join him in thanking them for the work they do and for their initiative in setting up a stroke recovery club. The member for Camden talked about the pilot program for stroke patients at Camden Hospital. I join him in acknowledging the support that the hospital received from the local council and the local library. I thank the member for Miranda for her contribution. She reiterated the importance of the FAST campaign. All of us need to know what the signs are because it is critical that we get people who are suffering a stroke—who are showing the signs of having a drooping face, slurred speech and inability to lift their arms—immediate help in a hospital by calling 000. The member for Miranda also mentioned the work that is being done to expand Telehealth, and how that will improve outcomes for stroke survivors, particularly in regional communities. In closing I thank members for their contributions to the debate. I know that all members will work strongly with the Stroke Foundation in the years ahead to make sure that we continue to raise awareness of this important health issue.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### **SHELLHARBOUR ELECTORATE SCHOOL MAINTENANCE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (12:39):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the current maintenance backlog in New South Wales schools totals \$775 million, including over \$8.5 million in schools across the Shellharbour electorate.
- (2) Acknowledges the concerted efforts of parents, staff and students in calling on the Government to immediately address the maintenance backlog.
- (3) Notes Oak Flats High School has a backlog of \$1,777,498, and a further five schools within the Shellharbour electorate have a maintenance backlog exceeding \$500,000.
- (4) Acknowledges that at the current rate of expenditure it would take more than 18 years for the maintenance backlog at Oak Flats High School to be addressed.
- (5) Condemns the Government for its inaction in addressing the maintenance needs of schools in the Shellharbour electorate.

The current school maintenance backlog, combined with the appalling cuts to funding in Gonski 2.0 and our State's overdependence on demountable classrooms, has exposed this Government's blatant disregard for our students' futures. When figures were released earlier this year they showed that the outstanding maintenance backlog within our schools totalled a staggering \$775 million. How much did this Government allocate to address that backlog? It was just \$65 million, which is 8 per cent of the amount actually needed. Within the electorate of Shellharbour the school maintenance backlog sits at more than \$8.2 million but it has received just \$743,334 in funding, which is only about 9 per cent of the amount that is needed. The backlog at Oak Flats High School alone totals \$1.7 million. At the current rate of funding, it will not be addressed for 18 years—without accounting for any worsening of conditions or maintenance issues during that time.

The story at Kanahooka High School is very similar. The maintenance backlog at the school will cost more than \$950,000. Dapto High School and Oak Flats Public School each require more than \$700,000 in additional funding. The maintenance to which I refer does not involve luxuries but rather is very basic. The most common issues reported are toilet and sewer upgrades, roof repairs, flooring, painting, guttering and replacement of broken windows. The Government is failing to deliver high-quality classrooms and educational facilities for our students. Our children deserve the best possible education, which means providing the best possible learning environment. However, the New South Wales Government seems content to allow our local schools to fall into disrepair.

Gonski was working. Hayes Park Public School was one of the most disadvantaged schools in my electorate, with 67 per cent of its students recognised as coming from low socio-economic backgrounds. Under Gonski years one to four, that school received more than \$388,000 in additional funding. Under this Government's new bargain basement Gonski, Hayes Park Public School will receive half a million dollars less in funding—and that school is definitely not the worst off. Warilla High School, Oak Flats High School and Lake Illawarra High School have lost approximately \$1.1 million in funding each under Gonski 2.0. Shamefully, the entire Shellharbour electorate has been stripped of \$11 million in school funding. That is despite the Government being led by a Premier who once promised to "make sure the Federal Government sticks to all its commitments in relation to Gonski".

In Shellharbour across a total of just seven schools there are currently 36 demountable classrooms in use that are taking up precious playground space. Dapto Public School has the greatest number of demountable classrooms—12—which are also impacting upon green space. Demountable classrooms were designed to be temporary structures in our schools. Their overuse is a sign of short-sightedness and poor planning by this Government. The New South Wales Government will need to create 300,000 new school places to keep up with the needs of the State's population over the next 15 years. The Government is not planning for the future. It is even letting the currently inadequate infrastructure degrade. West Dapto is one of the fastest-growing areas in the State and it continues to be serviced by only one primary school and one high school. Yet the Government has no plans for new schools and has acquired no land on which to build new schools.

Research has shown that the area will require eight more primary schools and a further three high schools. This is an estimate based on local developments having been completed and accounted for. What is this Government doing about that? Absolutely nothing. To address the population growth in the area, Dapto Public School was relocated to West Dapto in 2004. The school was the first, and to this day remains the only, primary school in the area. At capacity, Dapto Public School is struggling to meet the growing demand in this area. The education and future of our State's children will always trump party politics. I call on the Government to quit playing party politics and invest funding where it is undeniably needed—in our State's classrooms and our schools.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (12:44):** Before I begin my speech as the Parliamentary Secretary for Education on the motion moved by the member for Shellharbour, I acknowledge Keiran Cato and Sarah Clarke in the public gallery. I point out to the member for Shellharbour that sometimes there is not a Liberal thing to do or a Labor thing to do; there is just a right thing to do. That is one of the reasons that this Government was the first to sign up to Gonski. This Government maintains a strong and unequivocal commitment to the agreement it has with any future government. As a student who went through the public school system with a disability and who had to go to the library and spend time outside of my classes enlarging notes so that I could read them and participate, and as a student with a disability who would have benefited from Gonski funding, I say to the member for Shellharbour that there is no greater champion of education funding in this State than the Government.

I also say that this issue should be beyond politics. I was sorry to note the manner in which the member for Shellharbour politicised education funding in this State. The Minister for Education and I have a great relationship with Labor's shadow Minister for Education and we have reached consensus on issues of funding to ensure that students and young people get the best education possible. I have some news for the member for Shellharbour, who should stop doing what she is doing and listen to me for a change. I am absolutely delighted to

inform the House that today I announced a multimillion-dollar upgrade to Dapto Public School for new classrooms.

I acknowledge that both the member for Shellharbour and I have raised the issue about classrooms. I took this up directly with the Minister for Education to make sure that the issues at that school are addressed. I am very pleased that before walking into the Chamber today I was able to make that announcement. I hope that the member for Shellharbour joins me in welcoming that investment in Dapto. Perhaps when the member replies to the debate she may rethink some of the claims she made during her earlier speech. I would be very eager to hear that.

The New South Wales Government offers the highest quality of teaching and learning. The Government is committed to ensuring that buildings and playgrounds are maintained at a high standard through a never-before-seen investment in planned maintenance. A record-breaking \$747 million will be invested over the next four years to reduce our schools planned maintenance liability to an approved benchmark of 3 per cent of the asset replacement value. Like our own homes, there is always maintenance to be done. When we have an asset it appreciates, and of course we need to maintain our assets. There will always be a gap, but how big the gap is can be addressed by funding. I am very pleased that the Government has sought to address that.

The investment of \$747 million is the single largest investment in maintenance in the State's history. It is certainly not a minor investment. Schools across the State will benefit from this investment. From Shellharbour to Singleton and Balmain to Brewarrina, this unprecedented investment will ensure that our public schools are well maintained. That can only improve learning outcomes for students. This cash injection means that the Government's maintenance blitz will result in 2,100 schools across the State having their maintenance projects attended to. Under the program, roofing, floor coverings, painting and other items will be fixed by December 2018. This will mean that any school will have little or no outstanding maintenance as a result of this extraordinary initiative.

The Government's excellent financial management and commitment to providing the local infrastructure that our community needs to thrive means that we can support, and are supporting, our families and students in Shellharbour. As part of that program more than \$3 million has been invested in schools in the Shellharbour electorate to ensure that they are well maintained and offer great learning environments for students and teachers. I take this opportunity to commend all the hardworking principals, teachers and staff throughout the State. I have met many of the principals and teachers in the Shellharbour electorate. We can all be proud of the job that our State's teachers do in all our schools. All 20 local schools in Shellharbour will benefit from this record maintenance program by having their highest-priority maintenance tasks addressed.

At Oak Flats High School alone, which the member for Shellharbour mentioned, more than \$600,000 will be invested as part of this initiative. A portfolio of assets the size of the Department of Education's will always have a planned maintenance liability. With a \$25 billion property portfolio of 2,200 schools, there will always be maintenance work to be done. Anyone who owns a house knows that there are always maintenance jobs to do, but good management will keep the list as short as possible, and that is exactly what we are doing. Since coming into Government, the estimated cost of the backlog maintenance list has already been slashed from more than \$1 billion under Labor to around \$775 million. The Government's significant investment will stabilise and further reduce the maintenance liability, and bring it in line with the 3 per cent of the asset replacement value benchmark by December next year.

The Department of Education already has a well-defined maintenance strategy that ensures all statutory and preventive maintenance is addressed when it is due to ensure that our schools are safe and compliant—as they should be. We are taking this a step further by improving the way that we manage and prioritise maintenance projects through a new triage system. A new delivery body, School Infrastructure NSW, has also been established to drive the delivery of new and upgraded schools and the ongoing maintenance of schools. Planned maintenance will continue to be undertaken in parallel and in consultation with school principals. Addressing maintenance over and above the agreed benchmark of 3 per cent of the replacement value of the asset will continue to be the highest priority.

I often visit schools around our State and I always work with the local members, regardless of their political colour. I was recently in the Hunter and met with the member for Newcastle and the member for Swansea to inspect some local schools. I extend, as I have in the past, the offer to the member for Shellharbour to visit any of her schools to see firsthand some of the great work or any of the issues that she wishes to raise. The Government is delivering local infrastructure to cater for the needs of a growing State. As I am sure members are aware, the number of students enrolling in government schools is increasing significantly each year. This is fantastic news and a testament to the great teaching and learning being delivered across New South Wales government schools.

Over the next four years the Government will invest \$4.2 billion in the development of new and upgraded schools to cater for this growing student population. The Government is not only providing for growth but also

committed to ensuring that our schools are in the best possible condition. We are proud of our commitment to public education and to delivering high-quality learning environments for New South Wales students, including in Shellharbour. This issue should not be partisan; it should be bipartisan. We should all be focused on doing the most we can. Not every student will have the best job, house or carpet, but everyone deserves to have the best shot at it. That is why the Government remains strongly committed to public education.

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:51):** I am certainly committed to public education, having taught in some of the toughest public schools in New South Wales for 18 years. I support the motion moved by my good friend and colleague the member for Shellharbour. Public schools across New South Wales, but particularly in my electorate of Wallsend, have continued to lose out under this Government. In the Wallsend electorate the total maintenance backlog exceeds a whopping \$10 million. That is totally unacceptable. The five schools struggling most with their maintenance backlog are: Glendale Technology High School, with a backlog of more than \$1.1 million; Waratah West Public School, with more than \$750,000; and Callaghan College Wallsend Campus, Lambton Public School and Beresfield Public School, which all having backlogs exceeding \$600,000.

When I visit schools—which I do as often as I can, and particularly public schools—I hear from teachers, principals and parents who are concerned about the maintenance issue. There is a massive \$775 million maintenance backlog statewide. It is unacceptable that students and teachers work in classrooms that are run down and dilapidated. I know this because I have taught in schools and classrooms like that. It is impossible to teach and it is impossible for students to learn in demountables that have no blinds or windows and that are hot in summer and freezing cold in winter. How can teachers teach and how do students learn in those environments?

At current rates, some schools will be waiting more than 20 years before their growing maintenance backlogs are cleared. This will not happen unless the Government provides a much-needed cash injection into our areas. What sort of Government would allow public schools to deteriorate to the point where parents and carers must chip in to fix the air-conditioning in the children's classrooms? It is not acceptable for this Government to have allowed this backlog to balloon to such drastic levels. The Wallsend and Shellharbour electorates need a commitment from the Government on basic infrastructure, including a committed plan to address the maintenance backlog at all our local schools. There seems to be a lack of planning to address this problem.

Our children deserve the best possible education, and that means providing the best possible learning environment. It might not be flashy, but it is absolutely necessary. Just ask any local kid who has to try to learn in a classroom that is a refrigerator in July and a sauna in February. The Government has failed to restore the funding that it cut in its 2011 budget, when \$270 million was slashed from school capital works funding. It is appalling that this Government continues to wield the knife and to slash the Education budget. Only a Labor Government will invest properly in our public schools. I urge the Government to provide the cash injection that our schools urgently need so that students have well-maintained facilities that provide the best learning environments for all our children.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** Before I call the member for Oatley, I remind everyone that a Lions club charity barbeque is being held right now. I know that the member for Gosford has partaken, which is very good. All the funds raised today will go to St John Ambulance.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (12:56):** That is a very good cause. Only a Liberal-Nationals Government can properly fund public education. I will repeat that for those on the other side who are hard of hearing: Only a Liberal-Nationals Government can properly fund public education in New South Wales. That is why this Government will invest more than \$4 billion in the development of new schools and school upgrades across New South Wales in the next four years. In fact, the Government is not only providing for growth but also committed to ensuring that our schools are well maintained and safe. That is why we have continued to increase funding for maintenance in schools in New South Wales. This Government is committed to reducing the maintenance liability that was left behind by the previous Labor Government.

**Ms Anna Watson:** This is such an old song.

**Mr MARK COURE:** It is not; it is true. In the next three minutes today it is important that we compare the facts. We are investing a record-breaking \$747 million over the next four years to tackle the maintenance liability that was left by the last Labor Government and to address a backlog of deferred maintenance items such as roof repairs, painting, replacement of carpets and more. It is important to note that in the last two years of the previous Labor Government only \$122 million was spent on maintenance in public schools. This Government is committed to spending three to four times that amount in the same time frame. Those opposite should note that all statutory and important maintenance is completed as a first priority to ensure that our schools are safe and compliant.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** Let us see it in the Gosford electorate.

**Mr MARK COURE:** I acknowledge the interjection. This motion is focused on schools in the Shellharbour electorate. It gives me great pleasure to inform the House—and of course the local member—that schools across the Shellharbour electorate will benefit from this Government's record spend on maintenance. Public schools in the Shellharbour electorate will receive more than \$3 million for maintenance programs. The motion also pays particular attention to Oaks Flats High School. I am pleased to inform this House that Oak Flats High School is at the top of the list to receive funding.

I am sure all members appreciate that all assets need ongoing maintenance. An example is the painting of the Harbour Bridge, because we know that once they finish painting one end, they start all over again. Even with the Government's record spend on school maintenance, it will come as no surprise that with a property portfolio valued at \$25 billion, maintenance will always be required and it is a high priority. This record spend on maintenance will reach right across the State, not just in Shellharbour but in schools in my electorate. Around 2,100 schools across New South Wales will benefit from this Government's maintenance commitment. Under the program, roofing, floorcoverings, painting and other items at the end of their useful life will be fixed. We are getting on with the job of fixing our public schools.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** I remind the House that today is the birthday of the member for Oatley and I wish him many happy returns.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (13:00):** I convey my congratulations and birthday wishes to the member for Oatley. When Parliament sits, our work is all-encompassing and members are often away from their loved ones for celebratory occasions. I wish the member for Oatley a happy birthday.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) (13:01):** I also wish the member for Oatley a happy birthday. This time last year, the member for Oatley was the Deputy Whip—has he not risen through the ranks? I support the contributions of the member for Kiama and the member for Oatley to the debate on the member for Shellharbour's motion on school maintenance. Members on both sides of the House agree that New South Wales government schools offer the highest quality teaching and learning. The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that school buildings and playgrounds are maintained at the highest possible standard. How are we achieving this? We will make the biggest-ever investment in planned school maintenance. Recently I talked to the Minister for Education about school maintenance, and he said that to get the best outcomes for our learners and our dedicated teachers, we need to provide the best environment we can. The Minister is passionate in his belief in investing in school maintenance. This year's State budget delivers the biggest ever investment in planned school maintenance. Schools across the State will benefit from this investment—schools from Shellharbour to Singleton, Balmain to Brewarrina—

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** Gosford.

**Mr CHRIS PATTERSON:** Gosford will benefit, as will schools in Camden. I acknowledge the hard work of the staff in the Minister's office. I have read the flyer they have put out about school maintenance projects and noted that all the public schools in Camden will benefit from dramatically increased funding to tackle the maintenance backlog. This cash injection does not mean that only schools within Camden will benefit from the significant increase in funding in the State budget as some 2,100 schools across New South Wales will have maintenance programs attended to. This maintenance will include roofing, floorcoverings and painting, with all the maintenance programs anticipated to be completed by Christmas 2018. This Government is committed to school maintenance. I look forward to this program being completed across the State over the coming 12 months.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (13:05):** In reply: I thank the member for Wallsend, the member for Kiama, the member for Oatley and the member for Camden for their contributions to the debate on my motion on school maintenance in the Shellharbour electorate. The member for Kiama appears to have a new mantra about doing the right thing, but that does not fit with his contribution. The member for Kiama is the Parliamentary Secretary for Education, but he is all pastry and no pie on this issue. While I always welcome new money being spent on schools—and I am more than pleased with \$3 million for Dapto Primary School—what this Government is promising is simply not enough. There is an \$8.2 million backlog in school maintenance across my electorate, and there is much more maintenance to be done. Parents and students have been fighting for funding for school maintenance, and I congratulate them on their endeavours.

The member for Wallsend understands issues surrounding the school maintenance backlog, being a former schoolteacher. She understands that the learning environment is a very important place for our children, who deserve much better than they get. We must remember that \$1.1 million in funding will be cut from the three schools that I mentioned in my contribution, which leaves me shaking my head that the member for Kiama glossed over the contents of this motion. The school maintenance backlog is just one of many symptoms of this

Government's disregard for our State's children. There has been an 18-year wait to meet the most basic maintenance needs of our schools, which is unacceptable. I remind the House that these figures cannot be disputed. The school maintenance backlog in the Shellharbour electorate is \$8.2 million. Under Gonski 2.0, our schools have lost \$11 million in additional funding. In the seven schools in Shellharbour, students are forced to have lessons in demountables. There is a need for new schools to cater for the growing population of West Dapto, but this need continues to be ignored by this Government and the member for Kiama.

This is clearly not an isolated issue. We lost funding under the revision of Gonski and now we are relying on demountables and temporary school structures. The maintenance backlog has highlighted the poor planning and low standards of this Government. It talks about a planning document, and I would like to see that document because this Government continues to cut corners and pinch pennies in the areas of greatest funding need. Its decisions are undoubtedly compromising the quality of our education system and thus having an impact on our students. I remind the House that every child has the right to study in a safe and clean school. By ignoring the maintenance backlog, by cutting funding and by refusing to plan for the long-term future of our students, this Government is failing New South Wales. I call on the Government and the member for Kiama to address the outstanding school maintenance backlog in my electorate and in every electorate across New South Wales. Dapto High School has a well-respected principal, Mr FitzSimons. He is quoted in the *Illawarra Mercury* as saying:

Our school can house about 1,100 students but we expect enrolments will rise above that in the years to come.

Mr FitzSimons said some years ago there was talk of two high schools and six new primary schools being built in the Dapto area. But the current [NSW Education] departmental thinking is that they won't build a new high school until there is a possibility of 2,000 students and they won't build another primary school until there is the prospect of 1,000.

That is clearly unacceptable and I would like that to go on the public record and see what the member for Kiama has to say about that. [*Time expired*]

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes ..... 34  
 Noes ..... 45  
 Majority..... 11

AYES

Aitchison, Ms J	Atalla, Mr E	Car, Ms P
Catley, Ms Y	Chanthivong, Mr A	Cotsis, Ms S
Crakanthorp, Mr T	Dib, Mr J	Donato, Mr P
Doyle, Ms T	Finn, Ms J	Foley, Mr L
Harrison, Ms J	Haylen, Ms J	Hoenig, Mr R
Hornery, Ms S	Kamper, Mr S	Lalich, Mr N (teller)
Leong, Ms J	Lynch, Mr P	McDermott, Dr H
McKay, Ms J	Mehan, Mr D	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		

NOES

Anderson, Mr K	Aplin, Mr G	Ayres, Mr S
Berejiklian, Ms G	Bromhead, Mr S (teller)	Brookes, Mr G
Conolly, Mr K	Coure, Mr M	Crouch, Mr A
Davies, Ms T	Dominello, Mr V	Elliott, Mr D
Evans, Mr L	Fraser, Mr A	George, Mr T
Goward, Ms P	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
Roberts, Mr A	Sidoti, Mr J	Speakman, Mr M
Stokes, Mr R	Taylor, Mr M	Toole, Mr P

## NOES

Tudehope, Mr D  
Williams, Mr R

Upton, Ms G  
Williams, Mrs L

Ward, Mr G  
Wilson, Ms F

## PAIRS

Barr, Mr C  
Daley, Mr M  
Harris, Mr D  
Mihailuk, Ms T

Rowell, Mr J  
Grant, Mr T  
Constance, Mr A  
Gibbons, Ms M

**Motion negatived.****NATIONAL GARDENING WEEK**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (13:18):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Congratulates George Hoad, Myall Lakes resident and President of Garden Clubs Australia, on launching National Gardening Week from 8 October to 14 October 2017.
- (2) Notes that this will be Australia's inaugural National Gardening Week to celebrate the simple joys of gardening and to highlight the associated environmental, social and health benefits.
- (3) Commends George Hoad, the driving force behind the idea of a National Gardening Week. George Hoad is this year's Myall Lakes Citizen of the Year. He has also been the Manning Valley Citizen of the Year. George was involved in the recent Killabark Day in the Country, which was an outstanding success. As well as his involvement in Anglicare, George is the president of the local gardening club, and he is now the national president of Gardening Australia. George had the brilliant idea of having a day on which we recognise the importance of gardening across this country. Gardening is not only about having a few plants; it is also about making our gardens look beautiful, community gardens, and the social interaction involved in gardening.

In March this year, George announced at the International Flower and Gardening Show in Melbourne that National Gardening Week would be held from 8 October to 14 October 2017. This celebration is a new and exciting addition to the Australian gardening calendar. This will be Australia's first national gardening week. It offers a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the simple joys of gardening and to highlight the associated environmental, social and health benefits. Gardening might involve simply having a few pot plants on a balcony for those unfortunate enough to live in a unit. My daughter lives in a unit and she loves buying orchids. My wife thinks that is wonderful because when they are nearly dead she resurrects them and gets great joy from them. A gardener might have a quarter-acre block of land or many acres. The Temporary Speaker (Mr Geoff Provest) is obviously very knowledgeable about and is aware of the joys of gardening because he has 160 acres of land. The member for Gosford also has a green thumb and loves gardening.

Gardening is about getting outside and having an interest, and people of any age can enjoy it. I enjoy visiting primary schools in my electorate to see the children's native gardens, vegetable gardens and flower gardens. I have been fortunate to be able to provide small grants to help in their establishment and maintenance. At the other end of the spectrum, the electorate of Myall Lakes has the highest proportion of elderly citizens in New South Wales. Gardening offers our senior citizens great joy while they take in vitamin D. Gardening clubs and community gardens also provide an opportunity to engage in social interaction. Gardeners have the chance to talk to their neighbours or to people walking by while they care for their gardens. People in Sydney might not do that, but in regional New South Wales there is nothing better than talking to your neighbours over the fence or to people walking along the footpath. I sometimes greet people when I walk down Macquarie Street and they seem to find it strange.

I congratulate George Hoad and the gardening community on launching National Gardening Week. The member for Castle Hill is a keen gardener. One of his other great pastimes was horseracing. He would know that there is no better fertiliser for a garden that what comes from horses—it keeps gardens organic. The establishment of National Gardening Week is an extension of Garden Clubs of Australia's primary objective, which is to extend the culture of gardening into the wider community for the benefit of all citizens. With a large network of gardens promoting the event, George and his group are very confident that the Australian community will embrace the idea and be inspired to participate.

People of all ages, organisations, businesses, local communities, local councils, schools and others can participate and celebrate gardening in any way they choose. They can organise a garden party, visit a local park, join a garden club, plant a tree, visit their local nursery, or simply spend a day relaxing on the lawn. The list of possible activities is endless. I challenge the Temporary Speaker, the member for Tweed Heads, to organise a garden party. He could invite people to his 160 acres.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Geoff Provest):** I remind the member for Myall Lakes that we are good at growing things on the North Coast.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD:** There would be no better location to hold a garden party. I encourage all members to get behind National Gardening Week. They should hold a garden party and enjoy this great pastime.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (13:25):** I have spoken about many things during my more than 10 years in the place, but this is the issue that I have been keenly anticipating. People may not know that The Hills Shire is known around the world as the "garden shire". It was previously Baulkham Hills Shire, but I am pleased to say that it is now The Hills Shire and it is still known as the garden shire. I will provide members with some history to explain why that is true. A garden competition has been held in the north-west of Sydney for more than 50 years. It was initiated by Councillor Eric Mobbs. In fact, we have a large recreation area known as the Eric Mobbs Reserve off Excelsior Avenue at Castle Hill. The competition was established to determine the best-kept road reserve in the area. What a great initiative. It encouraged people to look after the road reserve at the front of their home. Over 50 years it has transformed into the Orange Blossom Festival.

I take great pleasure in acknowledging that the Rotary Club of Kenthurst held its street parade last Sunday. It is the last of the street parades held in the area. The festivities commenced on Sunday morning with a lovely church service at 9.30 a.m. Kenthurst Park is owned by the local Rotary club and it has been maintained by the club for many years. We were blessed in having the Hills Tongan choir perform at the service, which was followed by a friendly community day that attracted thousands of local residents. We always have a wonderful sunny day. In fact, I understand that the event has been washed out only once in 36 years.

The highlight of the day is the march-past involving an impressive number of organisations. It is an opportunity to acknowledge our many State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Service volunteers, dance clubs and various schools. The principal of Kenthurst Public School, Caron Dodd, was there with some of her students. It is a high-achieving school that provides a great quality education. The march also included scouts. The Kenthurst and District Football Club, which is a wonderful soccer club, is now represented under the banner of The Hills Football Association. It is a wonderful association with about 12,500 members.

Once again, I acknowledge the wonderful work done by those volunteers. Mr Temporary Speaker, you have spoken many times about the volunteers in your electorate. In fact, members regularly speak in this place acknowledging the wonderful work of their local volunteers. These events would not go ahead without them. New South Wales has no less than 2.1 million volunteers. That is an extraordinary number in a population of just under seven million people. About 30 per cent of our population volunteer each and every week to help their communities through parents and citizens federations, emergency services groups, surf clubs, Rotary clubs, and Lions clubs. I did not realise the extent of volunteering in this State until I became the Minister for Volunteering. There are wonderful organisations like the Smith Family and the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, which have thousands of volunteers on their books who help out each and every week. I am acknowledging their efforts because these organisations are not normally recognised.

**Debate interrupted.**

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

#### *Announcements*

### **PARLIAMENTARY LIONS CLUB RAFFLE**

**The SPEAKER:** Before I welcome guests in the gallery, I announce the winners of the Parliamentary Lions Club barbecue raffle: first prize, Kailee Shaw; second prize, Nick Chapman; third prize, Lee Evans; fourth prize, Felicity Wilson; and fifth prize, Jonathan O'Dea. I thank everybody who supported the Parliamentary Lions Club. I also wish a happy birthday to the member for Oatley.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome students and teachers from Oakhill College, guests of the Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs, and member for Baulkham Hills. The Minister's son Lachlan is also in the gallery. He is very handsome and clearly takes after his mother. I welcome Kieran Cato and Sarah Clark from Cato Film and TV Logistics, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for Education and the Illawarra and South Coast, and member for Kiama. I welcome Assistant Commissioner Jason Li of the St John Ambulance Service, Constable Patrick Tsang of the NSW Police Service and Richie Wessen, guests of the member for North Shore. I also welcome Veronica Nicolich and Isabella Antoun, school captains from Merrylands High School, accompanied by their student representative council coordinator, Melissa Rutter. They are guests of the member for Granville.

I welcome the young women from Kingsgrove North High School and Wiley Park Girls High School, participating in the Wise Up mentoring and leadership program. The program is run by the Lighthouse Community Support group in partnership with Campsie Police Local Area Command, the Greater Western Sydney Giants, Bankstown Police Citizens Youth Club and the Canterbury unit of the State Emergency Service. We welcome several Lighthouse Community Support program leaders, guests of the member for Lakemba.

*Members***REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** On behalf of the Premier, I inform the House that the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight will answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure.

**The SPEAKER:** Our thoughts are with the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. I gather there are some very serious bushfires in his electorate.

*Question Time***LIDDELL POWER STATION**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:23):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given that in her electricity privatisation she gave AGL the Liddell Power Station for nothing, is she seriously now in discussions with the Federal Government about buying it back?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:24):** Let us get to the bottom of the gentrader transactions. Labor sold government power retailers and electricity trading rights in a midnight fire sale on 14 December 2010. Eight directors, including former Labor Minister Michael Knight, knew it was appalling behaviour and walked out. Treasurer Eric Roozendaal appointed mates to the boards of Delta Electricity and Eraring Energy to get the energy sale through. In fact, the member for Maroubra was the Minister for Finance at the time, and made sure it went through. Labor was so determined to hide the terrible terms of that deal that even the company directors were not shown the details of the transaction. One director said, "If this was such a great deal for the State why wasn't the detail given to us? Where is the evidence? I do not think it exists." I say to the people of New South Wales: If you support the Labor Party, electricity prices will go up, up, up.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn members that some of them may be directed to leave the Chamber early.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Their gentrader transactions lost billions of valuable dollars—

**Ms Kate Washington:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129, relevance. The question related specifically to Liddell Power Station. The Opposition wonders what the Government's position is on that.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier is being relevant to the question. That is all I can require of her.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** When we came to government, because of the public outcry over the appalling record of Labor's electricity transactions there were a number of inquiries. As members might recall, the Government appointed the highly regarded the Hon. Brian Tamberlin to conduct a special commission of inquiry into those failed gentrader transactions.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Cessnock will cease interjecting. The member for Maroubra will cease interjecting.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. These are separate questions. We want to know whether the Government is going to nationalise something it just privatised.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Apart from the dodgy members of the Labor Party, nobody supported those gentrader transactions. In fact, when the special commission of inquiry was held the Hon. Brian Tamberlin said the following:

The Inquiry does not consider that the objectives of a competitive electricity market or reliability of supply are advanced by maintaining the status quo; that is continued State ownership of more than half of the State's generation capacity or by the continuation of the gentrader agreements.

**Mr Luke Foley:** You talk about anything but your Liddell sale.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The member for Auburn asked a stupid question so he should shut up.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I advise the member for Cessnock that the Premier remains relevant to the question. Although the member may not like it, I have ruled on the matter.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** My point of order is about relevance. However, Madam Speaker, I ask that you direct the Clerk to stop the clock and listen to me for five seconds.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I will hear the member's point of order.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** The Premier is currently talking about power retail; the question was about power generation.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I heard the question. I can only require that the Premier be relevant, and she has been.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** If the Premier is talking about retail, she is not being relevant.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Cessnock may want a specific answer to the question but nothing in the standing orders gives me the power to require the Premier to answer the question specifically. The requirement is simply that the Premier remain relevant to the question. The member for Cessnock knows that.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** On the back of that special commission of inquiry, the report states this recommendation:

[That] Legislation be enacted to enable the Government to offer for sale or long-term lease the Eraring and Delta West generators, which are subject to gentrading agreements, and the Macquarie Generation and Delta Coastal generators;

Based on that expert advice, the Government disposed of Liddell.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members may not want to hear this information. Some Opposition members will not hear it shortly because they will be removed from the Chamber.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The Liberal-Nationals Government had to tidy up the mess left by the Labor Government after the gentrader transactions failed. Labor members have no idea of how to push down prices. I hope they ask me more questions.

**Mr Luke Foley:** Madam Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier has concluded her answer. There is no point of order. The member for Auburn will resume his seat.

**Mr Luke Foley:** I seek additional information. Let us see whether the Premier can speak for two more minutes without once mentioning the word "Liddell".

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

#### REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) (14:30):** My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government delivering infrastructure for regional New South Wales?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:37):** I thank the member for Albury for his question and I commend him for his strong advocacy for his community. I know that our rural and regional communities are benefiting from the Government's strong budget position. Government members appreciate that we need to deliver not only big projects, which make a difference to people across the State, but also local

infrastructure, which makes a difference to people's daily lives. When I became Premier I was very pleased, along with the Deputy Premier and the whole Government team, to emphasise that local infrastructure, especially in rural and regional communities, would continue to be a priority of our Government. Not only are we the party of the worker, the party of households, the party of small business but we are also the party for the regions. The regions can rely on us to deliver for them.

I am proud of the fact that in this year's budget alone 30 per cent of all the Government's infrastructure spending, which amounts to \$9.1 billion, was committed to projects and programs in regional New South Wales. The investment is in schools, hospitals, roads, railways and bridges. This Government is building in our regions and investing in our communities because we appreciate that the regions make such a huge contribution to our State. We owe it to our regions to invest in them. The Government knows that the investment means jobs, jobs, jobs. I am so proud of this Government's jobs record in rural and regional areas of New South Wales. I know that Opposition members are fake when it comes to rural and regional New South Wales. I know that they are fake, and I am happy to highlight some examples. I am proud that this Government has upgraded or invested in more than 100 health facilities in regional New South Wales. The Government already has delivered hospitals in Wagga Wagga, Dubbo, Tamworth, Forbes, Parkes, Bega, Port Macquarie and Byron Central, and there are more to come.

Let us not forget Labor's record in the regions. It was only today that someone in my office gave me a copy of the *Daily Advertiser* from 2009. I have to count the photographs because the list of Labor health Ministers and Premiers kept growing. In 2009 there were six Labor health Ministers or Premiers who promised the Wagga Wagga hospital but not one of them delivered. If I had an updated newspaper, I am sure there would be even more. That typifies Labor's commitment to rural and regional New South Wales. I present exhibit two, which comes from the very popular member for Cessnock. Some members of the House may know that I like to read correspondence that comes from members of Parliament. It can fairly be said that there are very few Country Labor members of Parliament in the Opposition, so the member for Cessnock probably is one of them.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** No. We have about 24.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Okay.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I do not usually highlight correspondence from constituents, but the member for Cessnock wrote to me on behalf of one of his constituents. He referred to needing a dedicated Minister for the Hunter—blah, blah, blah; he went on and on—but the constituent ended up being his electorate officer. Moreover, apparently they had been ringing my office to ask when I would respond to the letter. That was the member for Cessnock's own electorate officer, and he wrote to me about so-called rural and regional issues.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Bankstown will cease shouting across the Chamber. This is not an argument. The member for Prospect will cease interjecting.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I will give the member for Cessnock a copy of the letter at the conclusion of question time. [*Extension of time*]

One would think that Opposition members would care about jobs, hospitals or schools, et cetera, but all we hear about are their short and sharp media grabs. They are fake when it comes to caring about rural and regional New South Wales.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** This Government not only has delivered all the hospitals to which I have referred but in this year's budget alone has also committed more funding for additional hospitals in the Tweed, Albany, Bowral, Cooma, Griffith, Inverell, Macksville, Coffs Harbour, Goulburn, Lismore and Mudgee. That is how a government takes care of the regions. When it comes to road projects, there is not a major highway or local road to which this Government has not given due attention. This Government has made major upgrades to the Pacific Highway, the Princes Highway, the Great Western Highway, the Newell Highway, the Mitchell Highway, the Kings Highway, the Hume Highway, the Cobb Highway, the Silver City Highway and the list goes on.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Members of the Opposition can pretend and fake that they care about rural and regional New South Wales, but they do not. The Government will continue to deliver all those projects and the jobs, jobs, jobs that matter to local families.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Maitland to order for the first time. I call the member for Maitland to order for the second time. If the member for Maitland continues to interject she will be removed from the Chamber.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I suggest that instead of writing letters on behalf of their staff members of the Opposition should get out into the real world.

#### LIDDELL POWER STATION

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) (14:37):** My question is directed to the Premier. Why did her Government sell the Liddell power station to AGL even though the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission warned that AGL could "prematurely retire" Liddell to drive up power prices?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:37):** I note that the Leader of the Opposition took a point of order after I had concluded my previous answer. The shadow Treasurer has asked a question that was similar to the first question. The New South Wales community was so appalled at Labor's actions relating to the gentrader transactions that this Government established a committee of inquiry. If Opposition members think any differently, they really need a reality check.

**Mr Ryan Park:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I point out to the member for Keira that it is very early in the Premier's answer to take a point of order.

**Mr Ryan Park:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question does not refer to something that occurred seven years ago. We are talking about something that occurred recently.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! That is the same argument that was put in relation to the previous question. The Premier is being relevant to the question. I will take no further points of order if the argument is the same.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The Opposition members either do not know the answer or they are embarrassed by the answer. Our actions in relation to Liddell were a direct result of the independent commission of inquiry and the Opposition's failure to ensure transactions.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maroubra, the member for Prospect and the member for Keira will cease shouting at the Premier.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The bottom line is that the Opposition cannot handle the truth. In 2012 the Federal Government inquiry found that the Labor Government's gold plating resulted in price rises of more than 60 per cent.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for The Entrance will come to order. This is not a debate.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The Duffy-Parry report, which was commissioned by the Federal Government, found a series of Labor Government decisions led to a \$3 billion blowout in power company spending and revenue raising. Labor took New South Wales from the lowest electricity bills in the nation to bills that were higher than the national average. That is Labor's record. Those opposite should be reminded of their shameful record. Contrary to their record, the Leader of the Opposition suggested in his reply to the Budget Speech that we should re-regulate the retailers. The Australian Energy Council said that that would do nothing to protect households.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] said it would push up prices. Last year it did a report that said competition in the retail sector is pushing prices down.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Prospect to order for the second time. He will cease his continual interjections. I call the member for Keira to order for the second time. I call the member for Keira to order for the third time. He will cease his continual interjections or he will be removed from the Chamber.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Not only did Labor oversee the worst transactions in the darkest days of our State's history, it also increased prices by more than 60 per cent. We had the lowest prices, and they went to the highest under Labor. But Labor still has no solutions. I suggest that Labor members learn how to run a budget and an economy.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much audible conversation from Opposition members.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** This Government appreciates that households are doing it tough and that is why we legislated that network prices would be lower in 2019 than they were in 2014 when we announced

our poles and wires transaction. We legislated to protect consumers. Labor did not do that. Labor sold the State down the drain to support its union mates and to put them all on boards. Labor pushed prices up.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** In relation to household budgets, when we came to government there was no gas rebate.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The rebates that Labor offered vulnerable families were not enough. We have increased those rebates and when households get their next bills those rebates will be increased by 20 per cent.

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

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Not only are we putting downward pressure on prices and encouraging families to get a better deal, we are doing everything we can to ease the cost-of-living pressures. The mess we inherited has been turned around and we will continue to put downward pressure on prices.

### REGIONAL FREIGHT TRANSPORT

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (14:42):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. What is the Government doing to consult with communities about future freight movements across regional New South Wales; and is the Minister aware of any related matters?

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (14:43):** I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for a great question. I was driving through the member's electorate and it is so busy with getting things done because of our Government and our investments. Whether it is the \$80 million for Gocup Road, which is a big investment in safety, industry, and jobs; the \$50 million Kapooka Bridge; or the intermodal facility. I did not tell the member this, but I nearly missed the plane because I was caught in a traffic jam for 20 minutes because of roadworks and construction at the intermodal. It was a good traffic jam to be caught in, and I made the plane. I am very proud of the member's representations and the work that he does for southern New South Wales. I was driving through the member's electorate because I had just come from the mighty electorate of Cootamundra where I attended an amazing road and transport forum.

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** We had 80 people in the room, including some of the best representatives from the private sector, truckies, businesses, local government, and local councillors.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber for the rest of the day.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** It was a fantastic day of listening, absorbing, and planning for the future for what that electorate needs in terms of better freight opportunities and road transport and all those sorts of things.

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** It is important because by 2031 we predict that freight volumes in this State would have doubled to 794 million tonnes. We need to plan for the future, and it is only our Government that can be trusted to do that work.

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I caught up with the member for Kogarah's old boss the other night. We had a fantastic and intimate dinner with Carl Scully. The information he gave to me that night was just amazing and confirmed everything in his book. There were another 300 people at the concrete and cement association annual dinner.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: I refer to standing orders 73 and 129. It may come as a surprise to the Minister, but her dinner with Carl Scully has nothing to do with regional roads.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat. He should learn the standing orders of the House.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** You have never seen a happier and busier group of people than the members of the concrete association. They are happy, they are building our roads. They are helping to do the work that this State needs, to catch up on what Labor failed to do, as we plan for the future.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: I might want to read this book. She is putting all the spoilers out there.

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** He will send you a copy. He sent me a copy and he even signed it. He is so kind. He was your boss; you must have loved working for him, Minnsy. He is a top bloke. He calls it as it is and he sets the record straight. He is number one.

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

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I thank the member for Kogarah. Yesterday he offered me some advice that the Deputy Premier's figure was wrong and that the 40 per cent in the Grattan Institute report was 40 per cent only to regional roads. I know he was trying to help. We went back and did the research again. The problem is that the Grattan Institute report that he was referring to—

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Point of order: The Minister knows that she should direct her comments through the Chair.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I uphold the point of order. The Minister will direct her comments through the Chair. Members will come to order.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** To put the member for Kogarah's mind at rest, I went back and looked at the Grattan Institute report and the reference to the 40 per cent in country areas. [*Extension of time*]

The report was quoting a 10-year period from 2005 when Labor was in power and when the member for Kogarah was a staffer for Carl Scully. But the fact is that since we came to office in 2011 until today, the Roads budget—I am very happy to have worked for Wal Murray; he did a wonderful job and then those opposite stuffed it up for 16 years—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order: Madam Speaker, I ask you to confirm your earlier ruling about comments being directed through the Chair.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I am sure that the Minister has taken my ruling on board. The member for Kogarah will cease interjecting. Interjections are disorderly at all times.

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY:** I genuinely want to help the member for Kogarah to understand, as a former staffer for a roads Minister, that the Roads budget between 2011 and 2016 has increased by 105 per cent. The fact is that 65 per cent of the Roads budget is being spent in the regions. Regional New South Wales is finally getting its fair share. We are also building public transport in Sydney that is costing exponentially more than when those opposite were in government. Those opposite wasted \$500 million on the Rozelle Metro—an outrageous waste of taxpayer money. We are upgrading the Pacific Highway and the Princes Highway. We are improving the Great Western Highway and spending \$500 million on the Newell Highway. We are fixing the State's roads and improving productivity because we care about this State. Those opposite have no plans and no vision.

#### COOTAMUNDRA BY-ELECTION

**Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn) (14:50):** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier and the Leader of The Nationals. Deputy Premier, given that anti-merger candidates dominated the election for the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, why not hold a plebiscite on the day of the Cootamundra by-election so that residents can determine their future?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (14:51):** It was great that this weekend a range of local council elections were held across the State.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! If the member for Canterbury continues to speak in that offensive tone she will be removed from the Chamber.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** At the election for the newly merged council of Queanbeyan-Palerang, Steve Whan, a former member for Monaro, and Bryce Wilson, a current candidate for Monaro, were at the booth backing the Labor candidates, Brian Brown and his team.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Previously Labor had two if not three councillors, but this morning the second Labor candidate just got over the line with preferences. There has been a swing away from Labor, because Labor is seen as anti-development and anti-community. Voters saw through Labor's lies about what it can deliver for regional communities.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Prospect for the final time.

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The Leader of the Opposition asked about Cootamundra-Gundagai, not Eden Monaro.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maitland did not listen to the question. The Deputy Premier is being entirely relevant. There is no point of order.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Bryce Wilson is president of Country Labor, which is now \$1.68 million in debt. If those opposite cannot run the Country Labor arm of the party, how can they look after regional communities? Country by name and nothing more, is what I say about Country Labor and Bryce Wilson. I have spoken in this House about council mergers. I have said plenty on the record about my position on council mergers and their impact on communities.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will cease debating the issue. The member for Bankstown will come to order.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** At the start of the year I made it clear that mergers would end, because we needed to bring certainty to affected communities. The message from regional communities was that they wanted democracy to be returned to their local government areas. That is why the weekend's elections were so important. The elections were important for the people of Cootamundra, Gundagai, Tumut, Monaro, Myall Lakes and Queanbeyan-Palerang. They want to elect councillors to represent their communities. In elections in my neck of the woods, five councils have been merged into two. No-one protested about the mergers, because the community wants to get on with things. Tim Overall, who was the administrator of Queanbeyan-Palerang, was returned with the largest vote, because he has a positive vision for the community. Councillors who were elected at the weekend to merged and amalgamated councils have an opportunity to lay the foundations for these councils to become the success stories that we believe they can be.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will cease having private conversations in the Chamber.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** The New South Wales Government has allocated between \$15 million and \$20 million to make sure that merged councils are successful across regional New South Wales, on top of the allocation for the Regional Growth Fund.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maitland will come to order. She is very noisy today. I call the member for Maitland to order for the third time.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Councils that have merged were given an additional loading to make sure that they were not disadvantaged. We are now partnering with local government to deliver, because we want to bring certainty of services and investment in infrastructure to affected communities. Most importantly, we want to give those communities a voice, and that is why the council elections at the weekend drew a line in the sand on local government in this State. It is about time we get on with delivering for those communities.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Those opposite have forgotten their time in government, because in 2004 they merged local councils by sending a fax overnight, without warning and with no support. The local council in my electorate, Palerang in the Yarralumla shire, from the moment it was merged was \$1 million in the red per annum. That meant a rates hike and the start of the backlog in infrastructure spending for local government. That is the track record on local government of those opposite. They cannot be trusted, because they do not care about regional communities. Importantly, they cannot be trusted and history tells the story of the difference between what they say and what they do.

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

#### HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (14:56):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research. Will the Minister update the House on the New South Wales Government's record health infrastructure boom across regional and rural New South Wales?

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (14:56):** I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health for the work she is doing across New

South Wales. There is no doubt that the Liberal and Nationals Government in New South Wales is delivering regional health services. It has to be remembered that when we came to government in 2011, more than 50 per cent of the hospitals across New South Wales were more than 50 years old. There had been nothing on Labor's radar for regional health in its 16 years in government, when it did next to nothing across our regions. The member for Cessnock should know that the pink tiles in the hospital in his electorate are a leftover from the Labor Government, but we are fixing them. In the last two months I have enjoyed being out and about in the regions talking to hospital staff in our regional hospitals.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Opposition members will come to order. The Minister is struggling with his voice—not that Opposition members care. They will cease interjecting.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I want to thank hospital staff across the State who make our amazing hospitals work. What did Labor promise and what did Labor deliver? As I said, Labor in government delivered nothing for 16 years. It had another chance in its policy document for the 2015 election. When I read the document I noted that it contained a lot of motherhood statements and a lot of rhetoric, but not much about delivery.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Rockdale to order for the third time. If he continues to interject he will be removed from the Chamber. His behaviour is childish and offensive.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** The entire policy document refers to 13 facilities, as if there were only 13 facilities in the whole of New South Wales. They said they might have delivered 13 projects in New South Wales.

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

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** The number of projects delivered across the State since the Coalition came into government is not 13, not 23, not 33, not 43, not 53, not 63, but 73. We are delivering 73 projects for our health system across the regions.

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

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** In the past few weeks I visited a number of areas. A week or so ago I was in Lismore, together with the wonderful member for Lismore.

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

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I met Elliott, a great kid of about 11 years old who had had his appendix taken out and who opened the paediatric unit. The community was excited about the next stage of the paediatric unit at Lismore Hospital. I visited Coraki. The member for Clarence and I opened the Coraki Campbell HealthOne facility. It is fantastic. On 14 August I was at Dubbo and Mudgee with the great member for Dubbo. There is a \$70.2 million Mudgee Hospital redevelopment on the way. Dubbo Hospital has already had so much work done it is unbelievable.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Bankstown will come to order. Government members will remain silent. The Minister is struggling with his voice.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I am struggling. The Government has announced \$450 million for Maitland Hospital. Even the wonderful Jenny Aitchison said, "Look, I think it's a win on a couple of fronts." That was pretty good coming from Jenny. Professor Brad Frankum, President of the Australian Medical Association, said, "It's good to see the Government is making good on its pledge to upgrade the hospital. We particularly welcome the commitment to a hospital being able to offer a significantly expanded range of services that is essential for the health of the community of Maitland and the surrounding districts." It does not matter where you go, we are doing work. In the past couple of months I have been to the seat of Murray where I had great delight in being part of an announcement for the first stage of a renewal of Griffith Hospital. That is \$35 million coming to Griffith, and more to come after that as we go through the redevelopment.

At the moment, the Government is working on the clinical services plan. The broader planning will be done after that and we will get on with the work. I am also aware that in 2014 there was a \$720,000 upgrade to the maternity department at Griffith Hospital. Only a few days ago I announced \$647,000 for an upgrade of the dialysis unit. The Government has committed to an upgrade of the operating theatre at Temora Hospital. The mayor, Rick Firman, said on behalf of Temora Shire Council and the community, "Please accept our warm thanks for your very strong support for us retaining our hospital theatre services. Your support of our special shire and beyond will never be forgotten, and again I thank you most sincerely." What has Labor promised for Temora? Zip. Not a thing. What has Labor promised for Griffith Hospital? Zip. Not a thing. This is all following on the 73 projects the Government has had underway. [*Extension of time*]

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I will extend the Minister's time even further. I should be surprised that members are amused at the Minister's discomfort, but in view of the behaviour of some members yesterday I am not. The member for Maitland will remain silent. The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Labor promised about 13 projects which it could not have been trusted to deliver. There was nothing for Griffith. I recount to the House the projects that have been delivered since we came to government: \$282 million, Wagga Wagga Rural Referral Hospital redevelopment; \$210 million for Tamworth; \$187 million for South East Regional Hospital at Bega; \$106.7 million for Wollongong Hospital elective surgery unit; \$104 million for Port Macquarie Hospital; \$91.3 million for Dubbo Hospital stages one and two; \$88 million for Byron Central Hospital; \$72.8 million for Parkes Hospital; \$40.9 million for Forbes Hospital; \$41.7 million for the New England and North West Regional Cancer Centre; \$30.5 million for Wollongong Hospital car park; \$14 million for the Illawarra Regional Cancer Care Centre; \$13.2 million for the Gundagai Multi Purpose Service [MPS]; \$12.4 million for Hillston; \$12 million for Peak Hill MPS; \$11.6 million for Woy Woy; \$10.4 million for Goulburn; \$9.3 million for Lismore for the hospital car park; \$9 million for the Dubbo Mental Health Unit; \$8 million for Coffs Harbour Hospital car park; and \$8 million for Lockhart. I am really enjoying this.

I go on: \$8 million for Gulgong MPS; \$6.7 million for Shellharbour ambulatory care expansion; \$3.3 million for the new Albury ambulance station; \$2.5 million for Ivanhoe HealthOne; \$6.7 million for Eurobodalla renal and oncology units; \$19.4 million for Grafton emergency; \$19.6 million for Manilla Multi Purpose Service; \$10.2 million for Werris Creek Multi Purpose Centre; \$37.3 million for Narrabri; \$13.4 million for Gundagai Multi Purpose Centre; \$32.8 million for Central Coast; \$5.7 million for Coffs Harbour; \$10.7 million for Lismore Regional Cancer Centre; \$8.5 million for Bathurst ambulatory care; \$3.7 million for Port Macquarie. I could go on, and I will on the next occasion I am asked. I make it very clear that this Government has committed \$550 million for regional health care. There was no way in the wide world the rotten Labor Government would even have known about the regions, let alone contributed \$550 million. We are on a building blitz and we will continue it for the regions.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I thank most members for their tolerance and patience during that answer, and I thank the Minister. I have my usual lack of respect for those members who thought it was funny.

#### MURRAY ELECTORATE BY-ELECTION

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra) (15:04):** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier and Leader of the Nationals. Will the Deputy Premier confirm that as well as him personally ringing Helen Dalton, on multiple occasions, begging her to run for The Nationals in the days before she announced herself as a candidate for the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in the electorate of Murray, there were also desperate appeals from Fiona Nash, Katrina Hodgkinson, Kay Hull, Susan Ley and Bronnie Taylor—all of which were rejected?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO (Monaro—Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business) (15:05):** Shock, horror! When I became Leader of the Nationals I said it is a clean slate for all and that we would look to the future and set the standards straight for everybody. The Opposition has asked me the question. Let me answer. Shock, horror that I spoke to a former member of The Nationals.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** A member who ran as a Nationals preselection candidate in the seat of Murray. She has been a member of the party.

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

*[The member for Bankstown left the Chamber at 15:06 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]*

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** I spoke to her to let her know that the nominations were open. God forbid that I spoke to a former member. God forbid since becoming the leader that I have written letters to former members of the party encouraging them to rejoin. We know the fight we have ahead, and that is against those opposite. The worst thing that can happen to regional New South Wales is for those opposite to win government in 2019.

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

*[The member for Prospect left the Chamber at 15:07 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]*

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** Many in the Murray region are proud of The Nationals and what we have delivered in the past. I wish Helen Dalton all the best. I do not understand why she would join the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party—a one-issue party. These are the people who want to see more guns on the streets.

They want younger children to have access to guns. The Labor Party supports them and preferences them. I make no apology as the Leader of The Nationals to get out there and to encourage more people to join The Nationals—

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order—

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** —and more women to join The Nationals. What a fantastic preselection for Cootamundra.

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

**Mr Michael Daley:** My point of order is Standing Order 129. What did she say when you rang her? Did she give you any reasons for rejecting you?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** I thank the member for Maroubra. I thought they were supporting the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. I will answer that question. Helen Dalton said to me, "John, I know a little bit about you. People have talked highly about you and the work that you do." And she said, "John, I will work with you but not against you." That is what Helen said. I wish Helen all the best.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Rockdale will cease shouting or he will be removed from the Chamber.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** I wish Helen Dalton all the best running as the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party candidate. She has fallen for that party's con. It says it has done some polling on the back of an envelope that shows she will win if she joins. What about its candidate for Cootamundra? He still has not been elected to council. He is struggling to get on council. He has not achieved a quota to be elected to Hilltops Council. Mr Stadtmiller, the party's prize candidate, has not reached quota to be elected to Hilltops Council. They told him that on their back-of-an-envelope polling 81 per cent of people will vote for the party, the guns party, the hunting party. They conned him. Here is my question to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party: What has it done for education in this State? What have the Shooters done for health in this State? Would anyone trust the Shooters with the Health portfolio? Would anyone trust the Shooters with the Education portfolio? Would anyone trust the Shooters?

**Mr Philip Donato:** Point of order: My point of order is in two parts. The first part relates to Standing Order 75. The name of my party is the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I uphold the point of order. It is the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party.

**Mr Philip Donato:** The second part of my point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister's responses have to nothing to do with the question put to him.

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

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** It was great that two Nationals members were top of the poll in Orange. There was a Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party candidate, but I heard that he was not an endorsed candidate. We know that, unfortunately, the member for Orange has been set up. We voted on an apprenticeship bill and he voted with the Labor Party against the Government.

## REGIONAL SPORT

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (15:10):** I address my question to the Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Keira from the Chamber for the rest of the day under Standing Order 249. He has been called to order three times and he has had five warnings.

*[The member for Keira left the Chamber at 15:11 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]*

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** How is the New South Wales Government delivering for sport in regional New South Wales?

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (15:10):** I thank the member for Tamworth for his question because we know that the people of regional New South Wales love their sport. They also know that sporting facilities and clubs across rural and regional areas are the lifeblood of their communities. There is no doubt that this Government is backing regional New South Wales. At the forefront of that support is the \$1.3 billion Regional Growth Fund. Unlike what happened when members opposite were in government, this Government has not left regional areas behind when delivering funding. The Regional Growth Fund will deliver more than \$100 million to regional New South Wales. The funds will be used to increase the number and type of sporting facilities, to improve sporting facilities, and to

increase participation. Grants will be available to local government, sporting organisations, community-based groups, and educational organisations like TAFE and universities that are working in conjunction with sporting groups.

The Government is building on the great success that it has achieved in regional New South Wales. The member for Tamworth has the Northern Inland Centre of Sporting Excellence in his electorate. The Government is spending \$4 million on that multi-sport facility, which will act as a regional centre of excellence in the north of the State. The world-class racing track at Mount Panorama in Bathurst has been upgraded, and the next big race is happening there in a few weeks. The Winter Olympic Institute of Australia will also be established in northern New South Wales. The Clay Target Association at Wagga Wagga will receive \$5.5 million to open up great opportunities for target shooters across New South Wales and Australia. It will also be an important economic driver in that part of the State.

I recently joined the member for Tweed in his electorate to celebrate the commencement of the expansion of the Surfing Australia High Performance Centre, which will produce the next gold medallist from New South Wales. I was also recently in Griffith with the member for Murray to announce an irrigation upgrade at the local showground, which will provide new opportunities for local sporting clubs. The Government has also supported the Cootamundra Junior Rugby League Club and the Grenfell Rugby League Football Club. The skate park in Yass and the tennis facility in Crookwell have also been upgraded. The Cowra Netball Association has also been a winner. The female junior league tag group in Cootamundra has received support, and the Gundagai rodeo organisers have managed to attract some funding. Community after community is being supported by this Government. It is in a position to provide that support only because this State has a strong economy, which allows for investment in communities and sporting facilities.

It does not stop there. The Old Bar South football ground at Myall Lakes is being upgraded. That is the home of the New South Wales Blues' captain, Boyd Cordner, and it is good to see his home ground receiving support. The baseball facility at Lismore, which is the home of baseball in regional New South Wales, is being upgraded. I congratulate the member for Lismore on securing the necessary funding because he has been a strong advocate for that upgrade. The Government has also provided funding to assist the Singleton Netball Association to attract more female netballers.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order: I cannot find the standing order relating to pork-barrelling.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Swansea to order for the second time. There is no point of order.

**Mr STUART AYRES:** It is called representing your community.

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

**Mr STUART AYRES:** Just because members opposite cannot win a seat in regional New South Wales does not mean they can attack the members who are representing their communities.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will cease shouting across the Chamber.

**Mr STUART AYRES:** The Government continues to support regional sporting facilities by providing \$2.5 million of additional recurrent funding to the 11 regional sporting academies. It is clear that this Government is committed to supporting communities across the State, and no more so than those in regional New South Wales. They are the lifeblood of our communities and this Government stands by them. [*Extension of time*]

The Government is also providing assistance to every family in New South Wales—irrespective of how they vote or their electorate. Every child of school age in this State is entitled to \$100 for participating in sport through the Active Kids Rebate. Members opposite can only dream of that. They have no capacity to manage the economy.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Rockdale will come to order or he will be removed from the Chamber.

**Mr STUART AYRES:** Those opposite spent 16 years wandering around regional New South Wales like the grim reaper, making it hard for sporting clubs to get ahead. Not only is this Government lowering the cost of the living for families but also it is ensuring that mums and dads have an extra \$100 in their pocket to encourage their kids to join a local sporting club. If members opposite do not like it, they can go to their communities and oppose it. If they want to oppose the Active Kids Rebate, I will go to any member's electorate to debate the issue.

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

**Mr STUART AYRES:** I will stand with the member at Katoomba any day. Members can pick any town in New South Wales and I will go there with them to debate the Active Kids Rebate. Members opposite are kidding themselves. The Big Bash is being held at Albury to ensure that both men and women get an opportunity to showcase their skills in regional New South Wales. Given that it is R U OK? Day, I thank the Baggy Blues, those fantastic former New South Wales cricketers who have been travelling across New South Wales running coaching clinics and fundraisers to increase awareness about mental health issues. They are some of the best cricketers that this State has produced over the past 25 years. They may not be in the Sheffield Shield team and they may no longer wear the baggy green, but they are still giving back to the State. That is what sport encourages.

#### **MOLONG AMBULANCE STATION**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (15:18):** I direct my question to the Minister for Health. In March 2015 the Minister's predecessor announced a \$2.5 million allocation for a new ambulance station at Molong after saying that the previous Government did nothing to futureproof ambulance services in its 16 years in government. When will the Minister honour that promise and commence construction of the new ambulance station at Molong?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. The Minister for Health will be heard in silence.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (15:19):** I thank the member for Orange for his question. It is important for any local member to maintain a relationship with the local council and to talk to it about which projects are underway and which are not. As the member correctly pointed out, Molong Ambulance Station has been on the agenda for a while. The former member for Orange and member of The Nationals, Mr Andrew Gee, raised this issue with the Government and lobbied actively for it. The Leader of The Nationals has also spoken to me about the issue. If members of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party are worthy of getting elected then they should be good local members and talk to council.

The Molong Ambulance Station was promised, as the member for Orange correctly pointed out. Obviously he has been reading the press releases, and presumably the correspondence, of the former Nationals member for Orange and has worked out that there was a promise of \$2.5 million. The member for Orange should go down to Cabonne Council. It is a pretty nice, friendly council—they would even be friendly to him. If the member did that he would find out that the development application has already been lodged; it is all there. The member for Orange does not have to ask me about it; he has wasted a question.

**Mr John Barilaro:** But while you are up there.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** But while I am here, I have more to say. Once the council gives approval, we will proceed with construction. I suggest that, instead of wasting his time and asking questions of the Minister for Health that do not need to be asked, the member for Orange talk to Cabonne Council and get it to approve the application. Then we can proceed. It is a good council.

But I did not get to finish my previous answer, so I will now continue listing some of the projects that are currently underway. This is the fun part—the building blitz that is happening in the regions across New South Wales. The member for Lismore will love this next one. He was so excited the other day with that young fellow, Elliott, that we are doing more for Lismore Hospital. Coming down the line is another \$180 million for Lismore Hospital stage 3B because the electors have a good Nationals member who has been advocating for the bush. That is why that is happening. In Dubbo we have \$150 million coming for stages three and four.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will resume his seat. The member for Strathfield rises on a point of order.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about Molong Ambulance Station. I suggest that the Minister has answered the question. Perhaps he should sit down and spare his voice.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! That is up to the Minister. The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. There is no point of order.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** I am into digging and building hospitals everywhere. Tweed Hospital is receiving another \$48 million for a car park and has been promised more than \$600 million for a greenfield site. What a great project that will be. Another \$15 million will go to Port Macquarie for the mental health unit. The Broken Hill Hospital and dental facility will receive \$30 million. Another \$60 million will go to Armidale.

**Mr John Sidoti:** Concord.

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

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Yes, Concord. We have allocated \$2 million for Gunnedah Hospital and \$7 million for Grafton.

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

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Singleton Hospital will receive \$7 million and \$2.3 million will go to Jindabyne HealthOne. This Government is not just funding the big projects. We are not only providing \$600 million there, \$900 million out at Westmead, and more than \$600 million at Blacktown; we are also funding projects all over the place. Ballina District Hospital will receive \$6.3 million. Kempsey Ambulance Station will receive \$3.6 million. We are building across the regions. This Liberal-Nationals Government will continue to do that. Labor would not touch the regions.

### REGIONAL PRISONS

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (15:24):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Counterterrorism, Corrections and Veterans Affairs. How is the Government delivering regional infrastructure and jobs to the people of New South Wales, including the construction of prisons in regional New South Wales?

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT (Baulkham Hills—Minister for Counter Terrorism, Minister for Corrections, and Minister for Veterans Affairs) (15:24):** I thank the member for Clarence for his passionate advocacy for this project, amongst others in his electorate. I start by reassuring the many members opposite who have asked me about the welfare of Eddie Obeid in the past 24 hours. I know that many of those opposite will need to visit him and pay tribute to him because he put them in this place. He will most likely be going to Cooma. The member for Keira has to go and pay his respects. The big question is: Where will Ryan park his car? Like many other members of the Labor Party—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister for Corrections will resume his seat. The member for Strathfield rises on a point of order—although it is rather early in the Minister's answer to do so.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the question.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** The best thing about being Minister for Corrections after 16 years of Labor government is that there is guaranteed growth. The New South Wales Government is reforming our prison system.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** This is embarrassing.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** I note the interjection from the member for Fairfield. I have researched the member for Fairfield. His brother, Peter Zangari, worked for Joe Tripodi. So we have a shadow Minister for Corrections whose brother was a known advocate for Joe Tripodi, who will probably end up in one of the very correctional facilities—

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Strathfield rises on a point of order. The Minister will resume his seat.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I refer to your earlier ruling.

**The SPEAKER:** I ask the Minister to return to the leave of the question.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** Those opposite had a go at the member for Bega and his family circumstances. They had a go at the Treasurer and his family circumstances. But when we highlight a statement of fact—that Zangari and Tripodi go together like guns and cannelloni—they get upset.

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

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Does the member for Fairfield have a different point of order? I have asked the Minister to return to the leave of the question, and I trust that he will do so. Members will not make personal comments.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. I will not make any personal comments. First, the Minister is flouting your ruling.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I said that I have asked the Minister to return to the leave of the question.

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Secondly, his answer is irrelevant under Standing Order 129. Thirdly, under Standing Order 73, if the Minister seeks to impugn my reputation he should do so by way of substantive motion.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Fairfield will resume his seat. There is no point of order. We will not talk about what happened yesterday.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** This Government is spending \$3.8 billion in infrastructure, which will deliver thousands of additional jobs—many of them in the electorate of the member for Clarence. The Government's infrastructure plan will see more than 2,380 jobs created, at least 1,500 of these in regional areas.

*[Interruption]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber. The member for Canterbury will be next.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** I hear the potty-mouthed member for Port Stephens interrupting me. She is Country Labor all the way. Do members know what Country Labor has in Port Stephens? It has 8 per cent of the vote. I think the member for Port Stephens will be a one-term wonder.

**Ms Jodi McKay:** Madam Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I am listening to the answer. I will hear further from the Minister.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** We are recruiting more than 1,400 new custodial officers.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** This is the first person in 150 years to use the f-word in Parliament.

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

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** I hope you do not kiss your mother with that mouth. My goodness! But our prisons need to go beyond simply locking up prisoners.

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There will be no further personal comments about members on this special day—which members are ignoring. What is the member's point of order? I was finding it difficult to hear the Minister because of the level of interjections. I cannot rule on something unless I can hear it. The member for Strathfield took a reasonable point of order and I asked the Minister to return to the leave of the question. I have been listening to the answer and the Minister has returned to the leave of the question. Does the member for Newcastle have a different point of order?

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** Yes.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Port Stephens will come to order. She has no respect for this Chamber.

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** My point of order is under Standing Order 73. The Minister is making improper imputations against the member for Port Stephens. I refer also to Standing Order 59, tedious repetition.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. Members will stop making personal reflections on each other. No member on either side of the Chamber is innocent; I know that because I hear all comments.

*[Extension of time]*

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** This package will see extra community corrections officers. The Government has allocated \$237 million for a package that will reduce reoffending. It will focus on providing intervention and keeping supervision structured. I am pleased to say that the high-intensity program units are already operating, as promised, in Cooma, Wellington and Bathurst. This means that inmates who are serving short custodial sentences of six months or less will receive improved rehabilitation. In Grafton—an important part of the State's correctional system for more than a century—we will see a new prison. A few weeks ago I was in Grafton with the member for Clarence and the Deputy Premier to turn the first sod of the new 1,700-bed Grafton Correctional Centre. This 1,700-bed facility will see the largest prison inject more than \$560 million into the local economy. It will create 1,100 jobs during construction and 600 permanent roles when it is operational.

The Government is delivering in Junee in the Riverina. Junee Correctional Centre will employ 300 additional staff, of which 142 will reside in the local area. Employment opportunities will continue to flourish, and 480 new maximum security beds will be delivered in Junee. This Government is investing in infrastructure

in June. We are also actively rehabilitating inmates in the region. As I have said previously, I want all inmates in New South Wales literate, rehabilitated and reintegrated into society.

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

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** As I said yesterday, it gives me great joy to advise the House that, with the conviction of Eddie Obeid, the taxpayers of New South Wales will see \$280,000 in legal costs returned. This will go back to the taxpayers of New South Wales. That money will be spent on schools and hospitals.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I hope that the member for Swansea has a serious point of order—unlike her previous points of order.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** I always look forward to the last question on Thursday.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the Clerk to stop the clock. What is the member's point of order?

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** I was going to ask: Can we please bring back Robbo?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. I remind the member for Swansea that she is on three calls to order.

**Mr DAVID ELLIOTT:** He has been off his food today but he will be back; do not worry. I am delighted with the Government's attitude towards Corrections, and I am delighted to see that this money is being spent. [*Time expired.*]

#### **MOLONG AMBULANCE STATION**

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (15:32):** I have additional information in relation to the question that was asked of me by the member for Orange with regard to the ambulance station at Molong. I have been advised that the development application has been approved. That is the Government working well in the regions.

#### *Committees*

#### **COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES**

##### **Reference**

**Mr KEVIN CONOLLY:** As Chair, in accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services has resolved to conduct an inquiry into support for new parents and babies in New South Wales, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

#### *Petitions*

#### **PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

##### **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**.

##### **Mandatory Preschool Vaccination**

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly reject any amendments to the Public Health Act 2010, received from **Mr Thomas George**.

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

##### **Out-of-home Care Allowance**

Petition requesting that the out-of-home care allowance be reinstated to kinship families, received from **Mr Tim Crakanthorp**.

*Committees***COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE****Report: 2017 Review of the Annual Reports of the Advocate for Children and Young People and the Children's Guardian**

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

**Pursuant to standing order debate postponed.**

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (PAC)****Report: Examination of Auditor-General's Performance Audit Reports July 2015-January 2016**

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

**Mr BRUCE NOTLEY-SMITH (Coogee) (15:35):** Today I speak on the Public Accounts Committee report titled, "Examination of the Auditor-General's Performance Audit Reports July 2015—January 2016", which was tabled on 12 September 2017. This is the third report of the Public Accounts Committee's performance audit review program to be tabled in the Fifty-sixth Parliament. Performance audits are conducted by the Auditor-General to review whether New South Wales Government agencies are spending taxpayer money efficiently, effectively and economically, in accordance with statutory requirements. One of the ways the Public Accounts Committee exercises its oversight role is to follow up the recommendations made by the Auditor-General to agencies in its performance audit reports to ensure that agencies have responded appropriately to the Auditor-General's recommendations.

As part of this follow-up, the committee questions agencies on measures they have taken and, if considered necessary, conducts public hearings to gather additional information by examining agency representatives. The process has proven to be an effective means of testing action taken on performance audits and maintaining a high level of scrutiny of the agencies under review. Nine performance audits were examined by the committee during this inquiry and, after considering agency responses to each audit, the committee determined that four performance audits had been completed satisfactorily, with the agencies concerned fully implementing the Auditor-General's recommendations. These were audit reports into Sydney metropolitan bus contracts, community housing, activity-based funding and public sector management reforms.

Additionally, the committee sought further clarification on aspects of agency responses to two performance audits—namely, government assistance to industry, and mental health post-discharge care. After receiving additional details regarding the action taken to satisfy Audit Office requirements, the committee is satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken. The committee did not consider that recommendations contained in three of the other performance audit reports had been addressed fully. To conduct a more detailed examination of these reports, the committee held a public hearing on 22 May 2017 to seek further information. The audits examined at the public hearing were into identifying productivity in the public sector, transferring out-of-home care to non-government organisations, and the Albert "Tibby" Cotter Walkway.

The committee found that the responsible agencies had implemented measures to address a majority of the Auditor-General's recommendations. However, after further examination, the committee made four additional recommendations for two of the performance audits: targeting the measurement of productivity and setting of performance targets in the public sector, and implementing national policy and guidelines for Alliance Contracting for large infrastructure works. The first set of recommendations addresses past deficiencies in defining and setting productivity targets in the public sector. The committee notes that there is ongoing work that departments must undertake to further understand what productivity means within the context of their agencies and how this can be measured.

While acknowledging the complexity of productivity measurement, the committee supports the work of NSW Treasury in assisting agencies to define and measure productivity. This work is essential to improve performance throughout the sector to benefit the people of New South Wales in the more efficient delivery of government services and programs. The committee's final report relates to the Albert "Tibby" Cotter Walkway, which crosses Anzac Parade at Moore Park. This was, at the time of construction, a controversial infrastructure project with identified shortcomings in delivery. The end results were extensive design changes and a substantial increase in costs. The audit report noted that neither Transport for NSW nor Roads and Maritime Services was able to provide adequate justification for the construction of the walkway or its tight deadline, adding \$10.6 million to its initial \$25 million estimated cost of construction.

The committee has recommended that in order to ensure improved delivery processes, the Government should implement the National Policy and Guidelines for Alliance Contracting, as recommended in the January

2012 New South Wales Commission of Audit Interim Report on Public Sector Management. This should help clarify the requirements for projects such as Albert Cotter Bridge to ensure proper accountability and transparency. I thank the Auditor-General, Ms Margaret Crawford, and the staff of the Audit Office for their cooperation with this inquiry. I also thank my fellow committee members and the committee secretariat for their assistance during the inquiry process and in the preparation of this report. I commend the report to the House.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (15:40):** It is a privilege to comment as Deputy Chair of the Public Accounts Committee on the Examination of the Auditor-General's Performance Audit report. The Public Accounts Committee plays a key role in public sector accountability. The committee examines the Government's use of resources and the financial operations of State agencies. I commend the chair for his leadership of the committee and for bringing these matters before the House today. I will expand on a section of today's report: chapter two—Identifying productivity in the public sector. The audit examined specific areas of activity within the New South Wales Government to determine if information collected allowed for adequate monitoring and reporting of productivity. The portfolio and program areas included Education, Health, Transport, and all activities within the NSW Police Force, the Department of Justice and the local court.

The report notes that the audit determined that the NSW Police Force has the capacity and available data to report on both productivity and efficiency trends. There have been relevant NSW Police Force productivity and efficiency indicators available in the Report on Government Services. The audit established that the NSW Police Force currently reports on sufficient indicators to be able to adequately measure and report on both productivity and efficiency in a relevant and useful way. It goes without saying that this is a classic example of not only the good work of the NSW Police Force in relation to its frontline activities, but also its ability to provide efficient and effective services as a government agency.

The Auditor-General noted that it was determined from the audit that while the Department of Justice had the ability and available data to track basic productivity and efficiency trends in the local court, there was no capacity to develop a more detailed and substantial assessment of these trends. Witnesses from the NSW Police Force gave evidence about the difficulties in measuring productivity for proactive policing. The committee explored these targets and determined how such outputs are measured within the NSW Police Force. Witnesses from both the NSW Police Force and Treasury stated that the financial management transformation being undertaken across the New South Wales Government recognises these complexities and looks at a diverse range of performance measures to fully understand and increase productivity.

Recommendation No. 2 on page 10 of the report indicates that the committee recommends that the Department of Justice formalise its processes for measuring productivity in the local court. This includes determining data collection needs for developing a methodology to analyse productivity and efficiency trends. Like the chair, I commend the Auditor-General on the work done and commend the other members of the committee.

**Report noted.**

## **LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 42/56**

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

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (15:44):** I take the opportunity to speak about the Legislation Review Committee's digest No. 42 for the Fifty-sixth Parliament. Over the break, the committee reviewed a number of bills that were introduced in the sitting week commencing 8 August 2017 and reviewed a number of regulations, most of which were uncontroversial. I turn to some of the key issues that emerged from the committee's review of the bills. One of the bills reviewed in this week's digest, but which has already been passed, amended the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. The bill established independent planning panels across councils in the Greater Sydney region. These panels will have the power to assess a wide range of development applications [DAs]. The bill required panel members to disclose certain pecuniary interests that they may have in a DA. The panel could then still choose to allow that member to decide the DA and take part in deliberations.

I note that the relevant provision has since been amended. However, the committee was concerned that there was no guidance in the bill as to how this wide discretion should be exercised. For example, the wide nature of the power could result in an unreasonable trespass on the rights of interested parties, including members of the community. Those parties rightly expect a DA to be considered on its merits by individuals who are not financially interested in the outcome of the DA. Under the bill, councils could also oust a member of a panel at any time, for any reason, without notice. Such a power could be exercised for political reasons, such as to frustrate the progress of a DA. For this reason, the wide nature of this power may be problematic.

I turn to the Public Health Amendment (Review) Bill. A number of the proposed provisions trespass on a patient's right to confidentiality or a person's liberty and freedom of movement. However, the committee thinks that most of these trespasses are justified in the circumstances. They strike an appropriate balance between protecting the rights of the individual and the health of the public. As an example, I draw Parliament's attention to proposed section 62 in the bill. That section allows some doctors to order the detainment of people with a category 4 or 5 condition or a "contact order condition". Category 4 conditions include typhoid and SARS. A "contact order condition" includes bird flu.

A person is described as having a contact order condition only when they have been exposed to that condition and, because of the way they behave, may then be a risk to public health. Previously, the power to detain was limited to those with a category 5 condition, being HIV or AIDS. This is a big change. However, the bill contains safeguards, including that the doctor must be satisfied that detaining that person is the most effective way to protect public health. The public health orders can be reviewed by a tribunal and in some cases the order will expire after three business days unless the tribunal has received an application for the order to be confirmed. For these reasons, the committee makes no further comment.

The Sydney Public Reserves (Public Safety) Bill 2017 was also reviewed by the committee in this digest. That bill also has been passed. The committee was concerned by the broad application of some of the bill, including that it could apply to any person using a public reserve. The bill also provided that a police officer may seize or remove any item of personal property from a public reserve. The police officer can then decide to either return, dispose, or impound the item. The bill did not provide guidance as to when an officer should return, dispose or impound a person's property. This risks unduly encroaching on a person's right to possess personal property, and perhaps requires some clarification. Under the bill, police are also permitted to give directions to a group of persons. Importantly, certain groups are excluded, including those who may be involved in an industrial dispute or authorised demonstration or protest. That concludes my remarks on this digest for this week. I thank the committee staff and members for their assistance. I commend the digest to the House.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:49):** On behalf of the Opposition I contribute to the take-note debate on the Legislation Review Digest No. 42/56, dated 12 September 2017. The committee considered five bills and three regulations. We commented on all the regulations and four of the five bills. I will highlight the comments made in relation to the Sydney Public Reserves (Public Safety) Bill 2017. The bill authorises police officers to give directions to persons occupying the Martin Place Reserve to remove or remedy the interference or unlawful occupation, and authorises police officers to seize and remove tents, goods and other things for that purpose. Members will remember the bill was declared urgent and passed by both Houses on 9 August 2017. The bill is now an Act. The committee had a number of concerns with the bill. We found that a number of items in the bill trespass on personal rights and liberties. The committee noted that the bill can be applied to any person using a public reserve or the presence of a person in a public reserve. The committee felt that this is a broad definition that may encompass many ordinary uses of a public reserve and that this may encroach on a person's right to access and use public space. The committee drew this concern to the attention of Parliament.

The committee also noted that the bill provides that a police officer may seize or remove any personal items from a public reserve, and provides police with the discretion either to return the items to the person they were seized from, to dispose of the items or to impound them. This potentially encroaches on a person's right to personal property, particularly as the bill does not outline what considerations must be taken into account before a police officer decides to dispose of or impound the property, rather than returning it to the person from whom it was seized. The committee also drew this to the attention of the Parliament.

The committee also noted that the bill permits police officers to give directions to a group of persons, which potentially encroaches on the common law right to freedom of assembly. The committee acknowledged that section 11 excludes certain groups of persons, including in relation to an industrial dispute and any authorised demonstration, protest or procession. However, the committee was concerned this still captures a broad range of activities related to freedom of assembly and, by extension, freedom of association. This was triggered by the decision by a group of homeless people to assemble in Martin Place Reserve as a place of refuge. The committee referred this to the Parliament for its further consideration.

The committee noted that the regulations may prescribe a code of practice relating to the exercise of police powers and the rights of persons to whom directions are given under the Act. The bill is not clear as to what these powers or rights include. The committee referred this lack of clarity and lack of parliamentary scrutiny to the Parliament. The committee noted that the bill contained inappropriate delegations and insufficiently subjects the exercise of legislative power to parliamentary scrutiny. The report contains a number of adverse comments on a bill that was passed by this Parliament without adequate scrutiny.

**Report noted.**

*Matter of Public Importance***BUSHFIRE RISK MANAGEMENT**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (15:53):** Get Ready Weekend is fast approaching and is the NSW Rural Fire Service's [RFS] campaign to meet local firefighters from more than 500 brigades who will be conducting a range of events and activities across New South Wales to help communities prepare for the upcoming fire season. I am sure that members thank RFS volunteers who protect communities. Fires are raging around New South Wales today. Get Ready Weekend is on 16 and 17 September and residents throughout the State are encouraged to attend local events. Over Get Ready Weekend, local firefighters will be able to discuss an individual's personal risks and advise how they can best protect themselves and their home from fire. I advise residents to participate and to thank our brigades for their work.

Getting ready for the bushfire season is easier than one would think, with lots of little things to do now that will make a huge difference during a bushfire. One of the most important things we all should do is to take the time to converse with everyone in our homes about precisely what should be done in the event of a bushfire. It may alarm members to know that during bushfires, 90 per cent of the homes that are destroyed have come under attack by burning embers that are capable of travelling many kilometres from the fire. This means that even those who do not live in close proximity to the bushfire are still at risk. We all need to be prepared, especially residents of the urban fringes of Sydney. That is why it is so incredibly important for everyone to be prepared and have a bushfire safety plan to reduce the risk to our families and our homes.

I highly recommend everyone to look at the NSW Rural Fire Service website for additional information and to see where events are going to be held locally. This information can be found at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) or by simply googling "NSW RFS Get Ready brigade locations". There are four simple steps to get ready for bushfire season: discuss, prepare, know and keep. Step one is to discuss what to do if a bushfire threatens your home. Many households find that having a discussion over dinner works best as everybody is together and focused. The second step is to prepare the home for the bushfire season. There are simple things people can do around their home to prepare it for a bushfire, like keeping the grass low and having a cleared area around the home. Step three is to know the bushfire alert levels, which is really important. If there is a fire in the area, people will find its alert level on the NSW RFS website and in the "Fires Near Me" app. It is important that people keep track of the alert level so they know what they should do. Step four is to keep all the bush fire information numbers, websites and smartphone app nearby. In a bushfire, it is important that residents stay up to date on conditions in their area.

If residents and their homes are well prepared, they stand a far greater chance of surviving a bushfire. It is not a game and there is no time for complacency. Every member in this place would agree that our local RFS volunteers have a tremendous job ahead of them this fire season. I wish our emergency services personnel and volunteers all the very best in the lead-up to this fire season and extend my sincerest appreciation to those who will be giving their all and putting their lives on the line to protect our communities over the coming months. I encourage everyone here today to spread the word about Get Ready Weekend in their communities and encourage their constituency to get prepared for the impending fire season. Remember, 20 minutes is all it takes to get you and your family prepared.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:38):** I thank the member for Fairfield for bringing forward this matter of public importance. This is an important time for people across the State to get ready for the upcoming bushfire season. A number of our communities have been affected by bushfires in recent weeks. The NSW Rural Fire Service is organising Get Ready Weekend 2017 and is inviting everyone in the community to meet local firefighters from more than 500 brigades, who will be conducting a range of events and activities across New South Wales to help to prepare for the bushfire season. Where people live is critical in determining their level of bushfire risk, and researchers have found that burning embers are the cause of around 90 per cent of homes destroyed by bushfires.

Embers can travel many kilometres and even if people live well away from the bush they can still be at risk. That is why Get Ready Weekend is so important. It allows local firefighters to get together with the community, discuss personal risks and how people can best protect against that and save their homes from fires. Getting ready for the bushfire season is easier than people think. People can do lots of little things in advance to make a difference during a bushfire. One of the most important things is to ensure that everybody in the home is having a conversation about exactly what they will do in a bushfire. Working together we can all help to make our communities safer this bushfire season.

I echo the advice of the member for Fairfield in recommending that people start to put together bushfire survival plans for their homes. If people act in advance they can prepare themselves, their families and their properties. The NSW Rural Fire Service has events happening across New South Wales. They are recommending that people work with their neighbours and talk about the fire risk in their local area and what they can plan to do

if there is a fire. They suggest that people organise fun get-togethers and street parties to try to encourage awareness and conversations about this risk. There are many different ways people can get ready and prepare for bushfire season. Some of it can be quite easy, regardless of where people live in the State. Little things can make a significant difference during a bushfire.

Once a bushfire survival plan is prepared, leaves, sticks and other materials that could burn should be cleared from gutters and gutter guards fitted. Anything that is overhanging the home should be pruned. Leaves and litter should be raked up and firewood moved away from the home. Lawns should be mowed and the garden well maintained. Things that can burn, such as flammable liquids, should be kept in an enclosed area, not in the open. There should be a good hose that can reach every corner of the home. If there is a water tank, a pool or a dam, residents should ask the local rural fire service for a static water sign so firefighters know there is another water source on the property. It does not take long to undertake these simple steps and it always makes a difference. This Get Ready Weekend is a great start to help people become better prepared for bushfires. The next step is action.

I join the member for Fairfield in thanking the volunteers in the NSW Rural Fire Service and all emergency services personnel for the work they do and will continue to do in the upcoming bushfire season. Bushfires are occurring in New South Wales now. I send my thoughts to the families and the people in the communities who are affected by those fires. I recognise my local Federal member of Parliament, Tony Abbott, who is a volunteer for the NSW Rural Fire Service. We all know he has been out this week fighting bushfires to protect our local communities. I thank him, along with everybody else who is working so hard in this area. I again thank the member for Fairfield. I hope everyone will get ready and get involved in Get Ready Weekend 2017.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (16:02):** I thank the shadow Minister for Emergency Services for bringing this matter of public importance to the attention of the House. It is incredibly timely given the ferocious damage and heartache that we saw in the electorate of Cessnock as two major bushfires ripped through Richmond Vale and Black Hill. Thankfully, there was no loss of life or property. Get Ready Weekend is a tremendous reminder to our local communities, not just in the electorate of Cessnock but across the State. It is particularly important for those in bushfire prone areas, those bordering on some of the beautiful flora of our State, to prepare for the coming summer. Given that we have had one of the driest winters on record it is important that every person, every household and every community is prepared for the coming bushfire season. Being prepared will go a long way to protecting households and lives if that emergency arrives.

Local volunteer firefighters will be out in force across New South Wales this weekend hosting events and activities that will help prepare people to reduce the bushfire risks around their properties. The advice will be that taking the time to trim overhanging trees and shrubs around the house, ensuring there is a cleared area around the home, removing materials that are fuel for fires, and clearing the guttering and preparing hoses that reach around the home, can go a long way towards reducing damage. Given that there was no loss of homes, no loss of life and no loss of private property in yesterday's fires at Richmond Vale and Black Hill in the electorate of Cessnock, it is safe to say that the property owners in those areas were most probably well prepared and well aware of the dangers faced. They had obviously taken the necessary precautions.

I offer my thoughts and sympathy to the hardworking volunteers of the Richmond Vale Rail Museum. They were the hardest hit in yesterday's fires. It is clear that the heritage-listed site run by volunteers has suffered more than \$1 million in damages, including the destruction of the historic railway artefacts. There is no doubt though that it could have been much worse if it had not been for the actions of our volunteers firefighters, and our thanks go out to them. Apart from the rail museum damage, we were indeed lucky that the Richmond Vale and Black Hill bushfires did not destroy much, much more. The unfortunate reality is that the electorate that I serve is prone to bushfires. More than 80 per cent of the electorate is made up of State forest and national park. In recent years we have become all too familiar with the distinctive smell of gum leaves burning, the plumes of dark smoke on the horizon and the eerie sound of sirens blaring in the distance as our firefighters go to work. This is part of life in rural and regional New South Wales. Unfortunately, last summer the Cessnock electorate experienced countless bushfires. It is a timely and good reminder and the message of the NSW Rural Fire Service needs to be heeded—prepare, prepare, prepare. I thank the member for Fairfield for bringing this matter of public importance to the House.

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:05):** By leave: I make a contribution on this matter of public importance, Get Ready Weekend. This is particularly appropriate when there are bushfires raging all over regional New South Wales right now. In my area on Tuesday a section 44 was declared in the area of Nabiac Aerodrome and Tuncurry. Over the past several weeks brigades from all over the Mid-Coast Council area have been called to Bulahdelah, Nabiac Aerodrome Road, Dargavilles Road, Rainbow Flat, Mt George, Tuncurry and Kiwarrak State Forest, to name just a few. To have 10 brigades called out at the same time shows the intensity of

the fires that they have been facing. Often one or two brigades are called out but to have 10 brigades called out at a time is not a regular occurrence.

I thank all those brigades because they not only turn out to fires but also turn out to motor vehicle accidents, house fires and community events. Last Sunday I hosted the Prostate Cancer Family Fun Day. It was great to see Green Point brigade turn out there, even though they had already attended a fire that morning, returned to the station and washed and polished the truck to bring it out for the public display at that event. I also congratulate Kam Baker, who is the Mid-Coast District Rural Fire Service Superintendent. He was part of an Australian first, a team of 100 specialist firefighters who in August were deployed to Canada to assist in fighting wildfires across that country. He helped coordinate efforts in fighting substantial forest fires. His call-up is recognition of the high regard in which our firefighters are held internationally and it is a testament to their training and professionalism. I can attest to the training and professionalism of our Rural Fire Service across regional New South Wales. There are more than 70,000 volunteers. It is one of the biggest volunteer organisations in the world. I take my hat off to them.

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (16:08):** In reply: I acknowledge the contributions made by the members representing the electorates of North Shore, Cessnock and Myall Lakes regarding Get Ready Weekend. All three members know full well the sacrifice that is made and the great work that is done by local volunteers and personnel, as well as the impact of fire on communities. The member for North Shore spoke about some strategies in communicating what to do if people live near bushland, or even further afield, in order to make sure that homes are well kept and that any combustible material is well away from their homes. The member also spoke about good ideas regarding barbecues, which is important. I must refer to her comment about having a good hose handy. We must ensure that those hoses are not needed to fight a fire around our homes.

The member for Cessnock spoke about the fires in Richmond Vale and Black Hill over the past 24 hours. Fortunately there have been no losses, particularly homes, in the community. However, he was saddened by the fact that the Richmond Vale Rail Museum has suffered \$1 million worth of damage. Of course, 80 per cent of his electorate is covered by beautiful bushland and forests. The member for Myall Lakes knows about the impact of bushfires in his community. He also spoke about brigades turning up not only to fires but also to community events to slave over a hot barbecue or directing traffic. He pointed out that volunteers also provide assistance at motor vehicle accidents. In fact, they are the first responders at motor vehicle accidents in rural and regional areas. I encourage everyone to get involved in Get Ready Weekend, to visit their local Rural Fire Service brigades and to offer their thanks and friendship to the wonderful volunteers who put their lives on the line to keep us safe.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** I compliment the member for Fairfield for drawing this matter of public importance about Get Ready Weekend to the attention of the House. It is almost 10 years ago that I lost my home to a fire, although it was not a bushfire. It is one of the most traumatic experiences one can endure. The Speaker's assistant Joe Andrade lost his home in a bushfire. Rural Fire Service volunteers attended the fire at my home. They fight fires other than bushfires and they do a phenomenal job in my electorate and across the State. I compliment them on a job well done.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

### **LOWER MID COAST RUGBY UNION GRAND FINAL**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:12):** I inform the House of the greatest of battles, fiercer than the battle of Glen Trool and more vicious than the Battle of Blackwater. I speak of the Lower Mid Coast rugby union grand final, a battle between the mighty Forster Tuncurry Dolphins and the courageous Wallamba Bulls. With 80 minutes on the clock, the Dolphins took the field to retain the crown for a fifth year. However, for the boys from Wallamba celebrating their tenth year in the competition it was time. This was going to be the year of the Bulls. It was a great game of rugby, with Bulls Lee McDonald and Paul DeSzell getting across the line and Dolphins Matt Nuku and Jonathon Paff responding in kind. Goals from Matt Nuku and Chris Tout saw both teams locked. However, this was to be the year of the Bulls, and at fulltime it was the Bulls 15 over the Dolphins 14. Congratulations to the coach Lee Sullivan, Arthur Chapman, Matt Morris and the Hessings.

### **FATHER RODE SABAH SITO ORDINATION**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (16:13):** On Friday 1 August 2017, I had the great pleasure of attending St Thomas the Apostle Cathedral in Bossley Park for the ordination and celebration of the Eucharist and a large feast for Father Rode Sabah Sitto. The official ordination was conducted under the guidance of His Grace Archbishop Amel Shamon Nona. The ordination was very well attended and included my colleagues the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Luke Foley, MP, and Dr Hugh McDermott, MP, alongside Father Rode's family, community leaders, local residents and parishioners to congratulate and welcome him into the community. It is great to see a young priest taking on the mantle of priesthood in the local Chaldean church. It was heartening to see Father

Rode receiving much support from so many seminarians who will take on the call of service in the future. Congratulations Father Rode. I have no doubt that he will work tirelessly and contribute greatly to the Fairfield community.

#### **POLISHED MAN CAMPAIGN**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:14):** I draw the attention of the House to an important initiative that will take place this October. The Polished Man campaign raises awareness and funds for children who have suffered physical and/or sexual abuse. It all starts with painting a fingernail. The campaign asks men to paint one fingernail for the month of October. That nail leads to a conversation, that conversation inspires a donation, and that donation provides for prevention and protection. On average, 90 per cent of all sexual violence against children is perpetrated by men. The Polished Man campaign raises funds to assist organisations, including the Australian Childhood Foundation and World Vision Australia. The campaign, now in its fourth year, has raised more than \$1.6 million to help fund trauma prevention programs for children who have suffered or who are at risk. I congratulate Elliot Costello, the chief executive officer of the social enterprise group YGAP, who is the founder of the Polished Man movement, as well as my good friend and Polished Man ambassador Anna Heinrich on her effort in bringing attention to this important campaign.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! I remind visitors in the gallery, who I understand are here for a debate on a petition, that no recording devices, cameras or mobile phones, are allowed in the gallery. I ask that they turn off mobile phones and do not attempt to record any of the proceedings of the Parliament.

#### **TRIBUTE TO DAVE EDMOND**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (16:15):** The Lake Macquarie community is very proud of its returned service men and women, and none more so than Dave Edmond of Wangi Wangi. The Vietnam veteran was recently awarded life membership of the National RSL. That is a fitting tribute to a man who served his country valiantly not only as a rifleman but also in peacetime service to his community. Mr Edmond returned from Vietnam on HMAS *Sydney* in December 1969. He did not join the RSL until 1997, but he has spent the past 20 years providing support to other returned service men and women. He was awarded his life membership, somewhat appropriately, on Vietnam Veterans' Day before a large crowd at Wangi Wangi RSL Club. Mr Edmond is currently the senior vice-president of Wangi Wangi RSL Sub-Branch, having previously served as president and secretary. In his role as president of the Newcastle district of RSL sub-branches, he presides over 22 other sub-branches. Dave Edmond is a highly respected member of the local community. I welcome this opportunity to acknowledge his efforts in the Parliament and thank him for his commitment and service to the community.

#### **KINGS LANGLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) (16:16):** I acknowledge the incredible work of Kings Langley Public School, a great local school in my electorate of Seven Hills. The school was established in 1981 and is led by a fantastic principal, school captains Alex Bezkorovainy and Ashleigh Williamson, and vice-captains Harrison Hutton and Scarlett Cascio. I also acknowledge the many teachers who educate and inspire the 700 students of the school. I acknowledge in particular the school's Australian Football League [AFL] team, which made history recently by being the only Sydney metropolitan team to make the grand final of the State cup knockout of the Tony Lockett Shield. Kings Langley Public conceded only six points in its four preliminary round matches. What a fantastic feat. Unfortunately, the defending champions, Deniliquin South Public School, defeated the Kings Langley team 38-3. The coach and teacher, Mr Matthew Figures, said his side demonstrated great sportsmanship despite the loss. I offer my best wishes for the rest of the 2017 school year and congratulations to the school's tremendous AFL team.

#### **TRIBUTE TO NORMAN LEONARD BOSWORTH**

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (16:17):** It is with sadness that I acknowledge the passing of Norman Leonard Bosworth, who was well known to many in the Cabramatta community. Norm was a proud foundation member of the Cabramatta Rugby League Club. He was held in high esteem by family, friends and the community. Norm loved to have a pleasant chat and he was not afraid to ask the difficult questions. He kept a smile on his face and always gave positive words of encouragement to our younger members. I acknowledge both Pam and her late husband Norm's tireless contribution to the Cabramatta community and to the Labor Party. Norm was a tireless worker for local Australian Labor Party candidates and members of Parliament for many decades. He had a strong sense of social justice and was always fighting hard to improve the lives of working people. One could not find a prouder citizen of Cabramatta. Norm Bosworth will be sadly missed. I offer my condolences to his devoted wife of 57 years, Pam, his children, his four grandchildren, the wider Bosworth family and their friends.

### YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:18):** I acknowledge the outstanding leadership of four young women in my electorate of North Shore: Maeve Ryan and Kate Morel from Monte Sant'Angelo Mercy College, and Bethan Allen and Bella Whitton from Queenwood School for Girls. Earlier today these four year 11 students attended a Young Women's Leadership Seminar held here in Parliament House, gaining the opportunity to hear from female members on becoming a member of Parliament, on challenges they may have faced in reaching this goal, and on the role of a member of Parliament. They heard about and discussed women in politics, public life and leadership roles in the community. Initiatives like these are integral to fostering, supporting and encouraging tomorrow's leaders. The four young North Shore women who visited Parliament today are just that: tomorrow's leaders. I also acknowledge the leadership and guidance of the principals of Queenwood and Monte Sant'Angelo Mercy College, Elizabeth Stone and Nicole Christensen. They are fostering upstanding young leaders, and that starts with role models such as these fine principals and, indeed, the principals of all schools in the North Shore community.

### VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC COMMEMORATION SERVICE

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (16:19):** I recognise the Victory in the Pacific commemoration that was held on 14 August this year at Cabravale Park, Cabramatta. This commemoration has been conducted at this place for more than a decade. A number of clubs and organisations are responsible for the event. They now include the Cabra-Vale Diggers Group; the City of Campbelltown Returned Servicemen's League [RSL] Sub Branch; Canley Heights RSL Sub-Branch; Harbord Diggers RSL Sub Branch; Ingleburn RSL Club Ltd; Ingleburn RSL Sub Branch; the City of Liverpool RSL Sub Branch; Merrylands RSL Sub Branch; Mounties Group; Smithfield RSL Sub Branch and City of Fairfield RSL Sub Branch. This most recent event also included a flyover by a Royal Australian Air Force [RAAF] Hercules. I acknowledge the contribution of a constituent of mine, John Baron, and the other members of the Victory in the Pacific Committee for the work they do for this commemoration.

### SOUTH COAST GROUP 7 GRAND FINAL

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:20):** Congratulations to the Kiama Knights and Jamberoo Superoos who will battle it out in the South Coast group 7 grand final this Sunday 17 September at Collegians Sports Complex. The first grade game will kick off at 3.00 p.m. We have a proud rugby league history in this region. Many former greats come from my electorate, including Mick Cronin, Rod Wishart, Shaun Timmins, the Morris brothers and the Sims brothers, all notable football players. This local derby between Jamberoo and Kiama is a fantastic chance to celebrate the players, coaches, volunteers and supporters who are the heart and soul of our local group 7 rugby league competition. May the best team win this Sunday afternoon. As members can surely appreciate, as both teams are from my electorate, I will be barracking for them both. The mighty Gerringong Lions, winners of back-to-back premierships in 2015 and 2016 also will be playing in the reserve grade grand final against the Kiama Knights. I am sure that they will beat any team that the member for Wollongong can put forward on any day of the week.

### TRIBUTE TO SHAUN OLIVER

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong) (16:21):** Sunday was a warm, sunny spring day in Wollongong. It encouraged a number of people to visit Wollongong's beaches. It also prompted Shaun Oliver, a visitor to our region, to go for a walk along the beach. Mr Oliver saw a group of children getting into trouble in the water. He jumped to their rescue and sadly was swept out to sea. He was pulled to shore by a group of police officers. Unfortunately, he could not be revived. Mr Oliver leaves behind a wife and three young children. I am pleased to see that the Illawarra has got behind them by raising nearly \$200,000 so far to support the family. As his brother Nathanael said:

He was faced with the terrible decision when he heard the cries for help and, without a thought for his own safety, launched himself into the water.

Tributes have flowed to Mr Oliver. On behalf of a community that he was not part of but nevertheless leapt to the rescue of, I give thanks to him today. I extend my condolences and those of my community to Carla and to Shaun's children.

### ULLADULLA HIGH SCHOOL EXCELLENCE AWARD

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (16:22):** I am proud to inform the House that at yesterday's Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Schools, Ulladulla High School received excellence awards in three of the six categories. Ulladulla High School mathematics teacher Janelle Collins, whom I have known for a long time, received the Minister's Award for Excellence in Teaching for championing a maths pedagogy that led to improved numeracy results for year 9 in the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy and improved Higher School Certificate results in maths.

Ulladulla High School student Ava Del Tufo received the Minister's Award for Excellence in Student Achievement. Out of 170 students, Ava placed in the first five rankings for all her subjects. The school also received the Secretary's Award for Outstanding School Initiative for their authentic deep project learning, which integrated sport and context-based courses such as robotics into the timetable and ultimately improved students' attitudes towards their school and education. Having worked as a teacher at Ulladulla High School for more than 26 years, I am thrilled to see that the school has been recognised for its passionate commitment to creating an optimal and enjoyable learning environment to the benefit of both students and staff.

#### **BILL TURNER CUP AND TROPHY FINALISTS**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (16:23):** I commend Whitebridge High School and Hunter Sports High School as finalists in the Bill Turner cup and trophy challenge. The Bill Turner Cup and Bill Turner Trophy are a knockout-style soccer competition for male and female school teams aged 15 and under. Each year more than 400 schools from New South Wales, Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria compete in the contest. This is a particularly noteworthy achievement as this event is one of the largest team sports competitions in the world. Around 800 teams participate each year. I was proud to accompany Whitebridge High School team captain Dylan Newbold and Hunter Sports High School team captain Jess Davis at the cup and trophy finals lunch at Speers Point. Congratulations to all teams who participated in the cup and trophy, particularly Hunter Sports High School's female soccer team who were runners-up.

#### **PS4 PLAYSTATION 4 NATIONAL PREMIER LEAGUE YOUTH GRAND FINAL**

**Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence) (16:24):** I congratulate the three Clarence Valley boys who were part of a history-making team that recently won the PlayStation 4 [PS4] National Premier League youth grand final in their first season of the competition. Jarrett Power-Casson, Charlie Kelly and Myles Hartmann have shown that hard work, dedication and commitment to their chosen sport pays dividends. I also congratulate their parents on their dedication in ensuring that the boys were able to travel to their games and training sessions. The families have made a huge commitment. It was common for these boys to travel to a game from as early as 3.30 a.m. and not get home until after midnight. Congratulations on a great result.

#### **RAYMOND TERRACE DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAM**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:25):** The community of Raymond Terrace has come together again to make a real difference to people's lives. Di Ball from the Wairoonga Aboriginal Corporation had a dream, and it was turned into reality by John Chambers and members of the Raymond Terrace Rotary Club. Their efforts saw the recent launch of the Raymond Terrace Driver Training Program. This program will allow young adults who may have struggled otherwise to gain their driver licence. Public transport in Raymond Terrace is limited, so a driver licence can mean the difference between getting and keeping a job or losing one.

I thank Kloster Ford and general manager Brad Heuchan for literally giving the program wheels. I thank Port Stephens Local Area Command, under the leadership of Superintendent Wayne Humphries and Inspector Tony Townsend, for not only providing support but also providing 17 police officers who have volunteered as mentors. I thank Port Stephens Council's Lisa Lovegrove, Kyle Loades from National Roads and Motorists' Association, the Police Citizens Youth Club, the Raymond Terrace Men's Shed, the State Emergency Service, and local driving schools Angels and Two Hands on the Wheel. I also thank first-time mentee Kieren Moorley. Thank you one and all.

#### **LINDFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL CELEBRATION**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (16:26):** Multiculturalism is one of the great strengths of my electorate of Davidson. The 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics census reported that around 40 per cent of Davidson residents were born overseas. It is a wonderful privilege for both young and old to be able to recognise and enjoy our diversity as a community. Last Thursday I was delighted to travel all around the world while staying within my very own electorate at Lindfield Public School. The 776 children of Lindfield Public School celebrated "Around the World in 30 Classrooms".

Amongst the students, 45 per cent are from a non-English speaking background and 45 languages are spoken at home. Each classroom presented artworks and cultural displays from a particular country. Each student visited the creations of other classes and had a personal passport stamped in each classroom's country. The students also enjoyed Chinese, flamenco, hip hop and Bollywood dance performances organised by the Cultural Infusion Performance Group. It was a fun, interactive learning experience for the school community. I congratulate all involved, including principal Megan Lockery, Robyn Scott and her partnerships committee, the teachers and the delightful students.

### MAITLAND FIRST FEMALE MAYOR

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:27):** Yesterday for the first time since 1863 and since the establishment of Maitland, we elected our first female mayor. Not only did we do that, we doubled the number of female representatives. In 2005 when the Hunter Women's Network was established by Vicki Woods, Bronwyn Ridgway, Katie Brassil and me, there were no women in State government, two women in local government and no women in the Federal government representing our city. We now have women as mayors, councillors, State members and Federal members. Women are winning in Maitland. I pay tribute to all of the hardworking members of the Hunter Women's Network who have worked across party lines to achieve this. I also pay tribute to the great Australian party of the workers, the Australian Labor Party, for preselecting a female mayor for Maitland.

### JERSEY DAY

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Castle Hill—Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services) (16:28):** On Friday 1 September, schools and workplaces across Australia allowed students and employees to wear their favourite sporting jersey to show support for the Donate Life network, which began a conversation with their friends and families about organ donation. Jersey Day was inspired by the story of local resident Nathan Gremmo who was tragically lost in an accident in May 2015. Nathan's family chose to give the gift of life to others to honour the legacy of his generous personality. Nathan's organ donation saved the lives of six people, including five young adults and a baby.

Through the tragedy and the organ donation process, the Gremmo family has campaigned for all Australians to discover the facts about organ and tissue donation, to decide about becoming a donor, to register as an organ donor online and to discuss their decision with the people close to them. Through this advocacy, Jersey Day was created. It is a day to raise awareness about organ donation and create an opportunity for loved ones to have a conversation and let their donor decision be known. I congratulate the Gremmo family on their dedication in promoting organ donation through this annual awareness day. The true hero in this story is Nathan. Just hours before his death, he wrote on his Instagram account, "You only live once but if you do it right once is enough."

### WESTCONNEX

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (16:29):** Communities along the proposed WestConnex route continue to be ignored when it comes to the basic mitigation measures that might make their lives more bearable. The Sydney Motorway Corporation has confirmed it will build a solid five-metre noise wall between the Wattle Street construction site and adjacent houses on Walker Avenue, Haberfield. While these residents welcome any measure that might assist to mitigate the considerable noise and disruption from WestConnex, their requests for a transparent panel at the top of the wall to allow sunlight into their homes and gardens has been ignored.

At the same time residents on Dalhousie Street and Waratah Streets, Haberfield, have been notified that massive seven-metre electronic signs will be erected in close proximity to homes and to Dobroyd Point Public School. The need for these signs completely undermines the Government's argument that WestConnex will reduce local traffic, particularly in streets around local schools. It is clear the Government has refused to engage with the community. After all, these are the people who know their suburbs best. I commit to continue to fight alongside each and every one of them every day to mitigate the worst impacts of WestConnex.

### SURF LIFE SAVING AWARD RECIPIENT MICHAEL BONNICI

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (16:30):** I acknowledge Michael Bonnici of Alford's Point, who has been awarded both the Young 2017 Sydney South Region Volunteer Award and the overall regional winner's award for his contribution to Surf Life Saving NSW. Michael has a passion for volunteering and has devoted many hours a week to lifesaving. He has been a member of Wanda Surf Life Saving Club since he was six years old and at the age of only 17 became one of the youngest captains in the club's history. Michael is now 19 and during the past lifesaving season, led several significant rescues. Michael truly embodies our shire spirit of volunteering, dedicating his time to a number of other voluntary organisations, including the Red Cross, the Cancer Council's Relay For Life and Tradies Schools for Cambodia. I extend my warmest congratulations to Michael on this well-deserved award and thank him for his invaluable contribution to our community.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** Order! Business is interrupted for discussion on the petition signed by 10,000 or more persons. I advise members that there are 12 minutes of community recognition statements remaining post this discussion. I further advise members that the way the member for Castle Hill read his community recognition statement is not the way it should be done in this House.

*Petitions***COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES PRIVATISATION****Discussion**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) (16:32):** I speak on behalf of more than 10,000 people who have signed a petition against this Government's relentless privatisation of community infrastructure resources in this State. I recognise the dedicated health workers, union members, activists and concerned residents from the Maitland electorate in the gallery today. They have travelled all the way from Maitland to tell this Government one thing: We want a fully public new Maitland Hospital and we want it now. Our community has waited six years while this Government has sat on its hands, making promise after promise. We have had constant backflips, broken promises and obfuscation. In 2011 the Government promised a John Hunter-sized hospital of around 650 beds. The Government failed to admit that it would close down the existing Maitland Hospital, another 200 beds, and it failed to admit that it wanted to make it private. But we kept asking the questions.

In 2015 the Government admitted that the hospital would be half the size of the John Hunter Hospital and that the Government would contribute only \$400 million to that hospital, and that the existing Maitland Hospital would close. In September 2016 the then health Minister—who refused to meet with me on the 13 occasions that I requested a meeting; she never met with me while I was in this place—admitted that the Government would privatise five hospitals in New South Wales—Goulburn, Bowral, Wyong, Shellharbour and Maitland. The Government announced that it would finally commence construction of the new Maitland Hospital in 2018—more than seven years from the date of the initial promise. Since that time the Government has bowed to public pressure on the privatisation of some of these hospitals. The former Health Minister backflipped on the Goulburn Hospital before she retired from this place. To his credit, Minister Hazzard has been more attentive to the voices of our community. Earlier this year, he came to Maitland Hospital and he actually invited me to attend a meeting with staff. He has met with me on a number of occasions to discuss the project.

We have won some battles. We have won \$500 million to go towards that hospital, which this Government was never going to promise. The Minister acknowledged the desperate need of our growing community—the fastest-growing community in New South Wales—by promising that the Government would start construction before the end of this year. Indeed, just last week, the plans for the enabling works were announced on the agenda of the Maitland traffic committee. They were pulled at the last minute, but I have every faith that the Minister will put them back on the agenda shortly. Unfortunately, the Minister has not been able to wrest any more money out of the Government coffers from that so-called big budget surplus the Government keeps crowing about—the \$4.5 billion.

**Ms Kate Washington:** The rivers of gold.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** The Government says there are rivers of gold flowing from the sale of our assets. The \$50 billion or more of community assets that the Government has sold will never come back up the M1, where they belong—to our port and our services. A \$534 million public hospital has been promised to the Tweed community. A reporter from the *Maitland Mercury* asked me today, "Is this type of issue occurring in your electorate because it is a Labor-held seat?" I say, with a heavy heart, that I think that no-one would ever stoop that low. The Minister is not in this place right now to hear this discussion. He has a sore throat—I will grant him that—but perhaps if he had not taken seven minutes to answer a dorothy dixer he could have saved his voice and faced up to the people from Maitland.

In response to a question about why Lismore was getting \$180 million for a stage 3 upgrade he said that it was because Lismore had a good Nationals local member. I have had many meetings with the Minister. He has told me that he thinks I am a good Labor member for Maitland. He thinks I will be there for a few terms to come. In particular communities in this State it looks as though his Government is pork-barrelling with respect to the sick and dying, and the health of the poor. If that is the case, it would be the lowest and most despicable form of pork-barrelling that I have ever seen. We keep having discussions and the Government keeps telling us that we should let the issue rest, because this will be just like the Calvary Mater hospital. This is nothing like the Mater. NSW Health has admitted that it is not like that. This is not a not-for-profit, nice charity. This is a private hospital by another name. The Opposition rejects it because we want our hospital to be public.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) (16:36):** It gives me great pleasure to make a contribution to discussion on this petition. I welcome to the gallery members of the Maitland community. I will speak a lot more positively than the current member for Maitland, and remind people that the \$450 million that is committed to the new Maitland Hospital was secured by the former Liberal member Robyn Parker.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Why haven't you built it?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Swansea will come to order.

**Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN:** This is all good news. The existing Maitland Hospital is a busy hospital providing a wide range of medical, surgical and emergency services to the lower Hunter community. The New South Wales Government has been investigating the option of working in partnership with non-government hospital providers to build and manage the new Maitland Hospital.

The Minister for Health announced in July of this year that the new Maitland Hospital will proceed as a partnership with a not-for-profit provider. This is exciting news. If those in the gallery are worried about staffing I will talk about staffing. Since the 2012-13 financial year there has been a 13.7 per cent increase in staffing in the Maitland Hospital, which shows that the Government is fully committed to making sure the health requirements of the Maitland and lower Hunter areas are met. It is exciting that a new hospital will be built with an investment by the Government of \$450 million, which will, potentially, be combined with funds from a successful not-for-profit provider to deliver a greater range of health services in Maitland.

The New South Wales Government has carefully considered the not-for-profit option to ensure that it provides the best possible health outcomes for the community. This approach is being considered where it will deliver a greater and more extensive range of health services. The new Maitland Hospital will remain as part of the Hunter New England Local Health District and the local public hospital network. The local health district will identify the services that need to be provided and the potential future operator will be required to respond directly to this identified clinical need. There will be no cherry-picking of services offered. Nothing is being sold off or given away. The Government will continue to own the land and the impressive new facilities that will sit on it. And, of course, public patients in Maitland and the Lower Hunter will not be disadvantaged in any way. The community will continue to access the health services they need when they need them.

These services will be delivered in a brand-new world-class facility that is designed specifically to meet the needs of patients, clinicians, and the people of Maitland and the Lower Hunter. Free public health care will continue to be available at the new Maitland Hospital, just as it is at the existing Maitland Hospital. The Government cannot be clearer about that. By definition, local health districts are local, so they know their communities and know the clinical needs of today and the emerging health needs of future growing communities like Maitland and the Lower Hunter. If we are serious about developing a sustainable, high-quality health system that is fit for generations to come, we need to press on with our work to make the most of the public funds committed to these projects.

Work will commence on the new Maitland Hospital, with early works starting by the end of the year and construction beginning next year. We are set to deliver a world-class facility for the people of Maitland and the Lower Hunter. Since 2011, the figures stack up for the commitment of the Liberal-Nationals Government in New South Wales. Some 6,700 new full-time equivalent nurses have been employed since we came to government. Clearly, the fact that there was a significant increase since 2011 shows that the former Government let our health services run down over 16 years. We are determined that we will make up the gap that Labor left and will build health facilities for our future.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) (16:41):** I contribute to debate about the future of the new Maitland Hospital on behalf of the people in my electorate of Port Stephens and, as shadow Minister for the Hunter, on behalf of the people of the Hunter. They will depend on this new public Maitland Hospital, which ought to remain public for decades into the future. While the new Maitland Hospital will no doubt deliver health services to the good people of Maitland, it will also be the go-to hospital for the people of Port Stephens and surrounding communities. It will also relieve pressure on the John Hunter Hospital and the Mater Hospital, which needs to happen so that the whole Hunter community will be able to access the public health services that they deserve.

First, I thank all those people who took the time to sign the petition. I thank and welcome everyone who is in the gallery today for making the effort to be here, to have your voices heard and to make clear to the Government exactly what Maitland's message is. That message is: We want a public Maitland Hospital, and we want it now. With 10,000 signatures, this petition sends a very strong message to the Premier and health Minister, who has chosen not to be here today. It is a message that my good friend and colleague the member for Maitland, Jenny Aitchison, has been shouting for a long time now—in fact, I think she shouts it in her sleep. She has been an indefatigable fighter for this hospital for so long. Everyone is sending the same message; the member for Maitland is simply giving voice to the message that the community sends her every single day.

The Government needs to understand the message from the member for Maitland and the Hunter community that we do not want a public-private partnership [PPP] or a not-for-profit [NFP]. An NFP is not the Mater; it is a flawed model for a hospital. We want a fully public hospital because that is what the community deserves. Why should Maitland and its surrounding areas be the only place without a public hospital? The

Government is proposing to close the Maitland public hospital and give public money to a non-government provider to do its job. This flawed healthcare model is deeply unpopular. The Government has abandoned plans in Goulburn, Bowral and Wyong. The Government must listen to the thousands of voices represented by this petition and scrap the unfair plans to privatise Maitland Hospital. I congratulate everyone involved in the community campaign: Your voices have not been ignored on this side of the House. I welcome the involvement of the Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation of NSW, the Nurses and Midwives' Association, Maitland Community Unions Alliance and Unions NSW. The Treasurer stands in this place and beats his chest about having a budget surplus, while the Government fails to meet its basic obligation to deliver quality public health care.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD (Wakehurst—Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research) (16:45):** I thank both members who have spoken in this debate and the member for Maitland for bringing the petition to the House. I apologise to those in the public gallery for not being present earlier. I was downstairs presenting awards for excellence to nurses from across New South Wales. I hear the commitment from Labor members. I point out to members in the Chamber and to people in the public gallery that the Government has committed \$450 million to the development of a new hospital for Maitland. It is serious about that. The land has been purchased and set aside; it is full steam ahead. While I respect both members who have spoken in the debate, we must separate the politics from the reality. Labor had the opportunity two years ago to disclose how much money it would commit to the hospital if it came in government. I have the document, and I am happy to send it to anyone who is interested.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Maitland will cease interjecting.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** Labor does not mention Maitland. It mentions a range of other places such as Byron Bay, Singleton, Ballina and Grafton—but not Maitland.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** Order! The member for Port Stephens will cease interjecting.

**Mr BRAD HAZZARD:** The Government is committed to building a hospital. The local member has offered some positive words. The member walks the fine line between recognising people's concerns while understanding that \$450 million is a huge commitment to Maitland Hospital and the rebuild—and that is on top of the land. The Government wants to give the community the best possible facilities. Initially, I looked at the public-private partnership model, because that is what I have in my area and everybody loves it. It has produced a bigger hospital than was anticipated. In the Maitland area it was determined that a public-private partnership would not work.

The member for Maitland spoke about the rate of private health cover in the area, and that was one of the driving forces that caused the Government to reconsider a public-private partnership. It is looking at the not-for-profit sector. We seek to value-add and to provide care. I have been to the hospital, spoken to the staff and conveyed to them my concerns to ensure that conditions are looked after and that they have the right to come back after a year if they do not like working in the system. I will continue to do what I can for the community. It is not helpful for members to withhold the complete truth about this issue. [*Time expired.*]

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** I seek leave to contribute to the debate.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** The member for Swansea seeks leave to make a contribution. Is leave granted?

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** I do not have a problem with it; it is worthy of debate. I ask the member for Swansea to be considerate of the broader issues. I apologise that I must leave the Chamber to present the awards.

**Leave granted.**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:48):** By leave: I thank the Minister. It is nice to have someone with maturity in the House.

**Mr Brad Hazzard:** That is age. I am worn out.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** We call it wisdom, Minister. I congratulate everyone for being here today. It is no small feat to collect 10,000 signatures. I particularly thank the member for Maitland for her advocacy on behalf of her community. As the member for Port Stephens said, there is no greater fighter in this place than the member for Maitland. She is justified in her action because she is protecting the public health system in this State, particularly for those people she represents in Maitland.

The Minister said we should not play politics on this issue. We do not play politics on health. The Labor Party is the architect of public health in this country, and we are proud of that. We fundamentally believe in a public health system. That is why we stand up for our communities and their public hospitals. We fundamentally

believe in public health and we never, ever waver from it. It is offensive that the Minister thinks members of the Labor Party are playing politics because we have always supported public health. We do not believe that people should only get the health care that they can afford; we believe that they should get the health care that they need, health care that is delivered by the great staff in our public hospitals, many of whom are members of the Nurses and Midwives' Association. Services in public hospitals are also delivered by support staff, many of whom are members of the Health Services Union.

We see privatisation as a slippery slope to the Americanisation of our public health system. We are not going to cop it. Instead, we are going to stand up for our communities every day of the week. That is our guarantee. The Government has flip-flopped, as everyone knows, on the decision to privatise five hospitals. Government members in question time announced that they would privatise five public hospitals in this State, which flabbergasted us. They have backflipped on three of those, but they still have not backflipped on Maitland. As the member for Maitland said, that is unfair and unjust. There is no justification for the hospital in Maitland not being a public hospital.

Labor knows that the best hospitals in this State are our public teaching hospitals. That is why we are committed to our public health system, just as members of the community are. I applaud community members for being present in the gallery for this debate. I know it is a big deal to come to Sydney from Maitland: I am a member from the Hunter. I acknowledge my Central Coast colleagues, members of the unions and community members—I know Mary Yeager from Unions NSW is here—for the wonderful work they have done in support of our campaign. I urge them to stick with it, because we will be right there with them. At the end of the day, I look forward to cutting the ribbon for the opening of the public hospital at Maitland.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I thank members of the community in the gallery for being well behaved. The discussion for the 10,000 signatures petition having concluded, community recognition statements will now be resumed.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **PARAROOS AWARD RECIPIENT JAMES TURNER**

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (16:52):** I draw to the attention of the House the achievements of James Turner of Diamond Beach. I have previously spoken of James' success as part of the ParaRoos in the International Cup. James started with Foster-Tuncurry Athletics as an eight-year-old, and at the age of 15 he joined the middle-distance running program of the Hunter Academy of Sport Athletes with Disabilities. In August 2016 it was announced that he had been selected to represent Australia at the 2016 Summer Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro in the 800 metre event, which he won in a world record time. In December 2016 he was named Australian Paralympic Rookie of the Year. James was awarded Athletics Australia 2016 Male Para-Athlete of the Year and in 2017 was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for services to sport. I am pleased that James was able to join me as a guest presenter at the 2016 Myall Lakes Community Awards. Last month at the World ParaAthletic Championships in London, James once again won gold for Australia in the 200 metres. He went on to win gold in the 400 metres and 800 metres. The British press proclaimed, "A star is born" in reporting that "Turner makes it look easily—absolutely dominant". James is studying a bachelor of mechanical engineering at the University of Wollongong. I borrow a line from the great Peter Allen: "No matter how far or how wide he roams, James Turner will always call Myall Lakes home."

#### **EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron) (16:53):** I pay tribute to the incredible bravery of the fine citizens who rescued a couple from their burning home in the early hours of the morning of 30 August 2017. Chief Inspector Brenton Charlton of NSW Police Rescue was driving to work when he noticed a property on Unwins Bridge Road in Sydenham was alight. Chief Inspector Charlton kicked down the door and, with the assistance of passers-by Lachlan Kirwan of Earlwood, Christopher Gaffaney of Frogmore, Stephen Tucker of Moorebank, and Melanie Beattie of Sydenham, was able to drag the couple from their collapsing home to safety. Miraculously, the couple were unharmed but for minor smoke inhalation. They owe their lives to the courage and tenacity of these four ordinary citizens who, having no regard for their own safety, plunged headfirst into a burning building to rescue complete strangers. This House commends these five everyday heroes.

#### **HOLIDAY COAST CREDIT UNION**

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (16:54):** It was a privilege to celebrate the Holiday Coast Credit Union, serving the community for 50 years, with members of the Hastings community at a special dinner at the Wauchope RSL Club. Guests included the board members, past and present staff and their partners, as well as representatives from the Hastings Co-Op, which formed the credit union in 1967. Board chairman Jeff Pattinson acknowledged the pioneers, the prior chairman, directors and staff for

their commitment to and support of the credit union and its building. As a member-owned financial cooperative, it has a focus on supporting the community in which members live. A cake decorated with the words "50 years" was cut by founding member Mary Gill; the earliest starting staff member, Julie Pitt; the longest serving staff member, Brad Hinton; the Chief Executive Officer Neville Parsons; and Chairman Jeff Pattinson. It was a fitting occasion for a wonderful community organisation that has served the Hastings Valley and beyond with pride.

#### **TRIBUTE TO ALBERT JAMES LOVERIDGE**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale) (16:55):** I pay tribute to the incredible life and achievements of Albert James Loveridge, who passed away peacefully last Thursday evening at the age of 93. Bert was a true legend in the St George community. He served as a director of the Georges River Sailing Club for 43 years, was a longstanding member of the St George Leagues Club for more than 60 years and played in the St George President's Cup in his younger days. Bert also held a life membership to the Ramsgate-Sans Souci Branch of the Australian Labor Party. In 1977 Bert was awarded the Queen's Fire Service Medal. In 1996 he received a tribute from the Prime Minister for his service during World War II, and in 2006 he received the New South Wales Premier's Award for his service to clubs, community and fire brigade. It was 54 years ago that Bert and a few of his friends built his house, which still stands on the corner of Russell and Clareville avenues, which is down the road from where I grew up. Sans Souci grew around Bert and not many major projects in the area were achieved without help and support from Bert. I have appreciated Bert's wisdom, kindness and wise counsel over the years. The entire Labor family and the St George community are poorer for his loss. Rest in peace Bert.

#### **COMMUNITY HEALTH ORGANISATION AWARD RECIPIENT CHARLES FREW**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) (16:56):** I pay tribute to Charles Frew of Pymble, whose charitable fundraising activities have been extraordinary for the better part of 30 years. He has energetically supported several community health organisations and touched the lives of many individuals. He was recognised for his service with an Order of Australia Medal in 2015. His volunteer work began with CanTeen in 1991. Charles subsequently focused on raising awareness of bowel cancer, including through the work being carried out by the Royal North Shore Hospital. Since 2006, Charles has been a director of Bowel Cancer Australia where he has contributed to development and funding and steered the inaugural "It's Crunch Time" campaign.

Charles has connected regularly with workplaces and community groups as the coordinator of the Healthy Communities program. He has also lectured on bowel cancer awareness to companies of all sizes and has visited prisons throughout the country to deliver his important message about this insidious disease. However, Charles' community involvement extends beyond raising awareness of bowel cancer. He has been involved with cystic fibrosis services, Pollie Pedal, the Westmead Children's Hospital and many other organisations as a fundraiser and supporter. Charles Frew is one of Ku-ring-gai's quietly influential citizens whose positive impact has been, and continues to be, immeasurable.

#### **OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE PRIMARY SCHOOL SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:57):** On 7 September I was honoured to attend the sixtieth anniversary mass for Our Lady Queen of Peace [OLQP] primary school in Greystanes. OLQP was founded in 1957 with the generous support of the Carmelite Fathers, the Sisters of Mercy and the local community, which was then mostly comprised of Maltese migrants. The original school was named Saint Simon Stock Primary and was situated in a building that doubled as a church on weekends. During the 1960s Greystanes flourished with market gardens, which made way for housing development. Consequently, school enrolments increased rapidly and a new building program was initiated, with the first new school building opening in 1970. In 1972, the school was renamed Our Lady Queen of Peace. Today, the school is the biggest primary school in the Diocese of Parramatta, with 850 students from kindergarten to year 6. I make special mention of 94-year-old Frank Cefai, who built the school, as well as hundreds of homes in Greystanes, and attends mass at OLQP every day. I have no doubt that OLQP will flourish for another 60 years. Congratulations to principal Michael Hopley and the entire OLQP school community.

#### **SHOALHAVEN GOURMET MUSHROOMS**

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (16:58:0):** I have spoken many times in this Chamber about the amazing produce, seafood, wine and restaurants of the South Coast. Today I acknowledge the Termeil-based business Shoalhaven Gourmet Mushrooms and congratulate it on taking home first prize at the Illawarra and South Coast Business Awards in the Fresh Food category.

The small business and farm was established eight years ago by Michelle and Gary Akers and has been expanding ever since. Their award-winning mushrooms, which have won in three different categories at the Sydney Royal Easter Show, are supplied to markets and restaurants from Kiama to Canberra. With two sheds housing eight growing rooms, the farm can produce a tonne of mushrooms a week. Shoalhaven Gourmet

Mushrooms can boast that its produce is stocked at establishments such as Tallwood and Banisters in Mollymook, the Pier in Batemans Bay and even the Lodge in Canberra. I commend this local business for the quality of its produce, for its vision and hard work and for its promotion of the South Coast and what it has to offer.

#### **WESTPAC RESCUE HELICOPTER SERVICE PATRON CLIFF MARSH**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (16:59):** It was an honour to be invited to the official opening of the aptly named Cliff Marsh, OAM, Operations Room at the new Westpac Rescue Helicopter base in Pelican last month. Cliff Marsh, who was there at the inception of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service, dedicated 42 years of his life to it. He was chairman of the board for 25 of those years. Whilst Cliff retired in May this year, he clearly still maintains his unwavering community spirit, continuing his involvement in the role of patron. The incredible lifesaving work of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service simply cannot be measured. Every successful rescue means someone's loved one goes home, and that is priceless. I take this opportunity to thank Cliff for his hard work in our local community, and the incredible contribution he has made over the past four decades. He really is a treasure to our community.

#### **AUSTRALIAN BRAVERY AWARD RECIPIENT CONSTABLE KAREN LOWDEN**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:00):** I recognise Constable Karen Lowden from Harbourside Local Area Command, who last night received an Australian bravery award. The Star of Courage was awarded to Constable Lowden for her role dealing with the 2011 collar-bomb scare in Mosman. She was one of the first officers at the scene of the now infamous ordeal and remained with the woman at the centre of the situation until specialist bomb mitigation officers arrived—all during the real threat of a tragic explosion. This award presented to Constable Lowden is just one in a string of awards she has received as a result of her courage, and was presented alongside the Group Bravery Citation given to a group of 15 officers who responded to the hoax. The courage, selflessness and dedication of every member of our NSW Police Force is simply incredible, and the exemplary character of policemen and women such as Constable Lowden and all of the members of Harbourside Local Area Command is testament to the entire force. Thank you, Karen, and congratulations on this much-deserved award.

#### ***ALI'S WEDDING OPENING NIGHT***

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury) (17:01):** I recently attended the opening night of the film *Ali's Wedding*. I loved every minute. It is a film we can all relate to. It is a true story, an Australian story and a multicultural story. It is an amazing film that I encourage everyone to watch. The film has received rave reviews. It is breaking down cultural barriers. It is funny and yet sad, it is emotional, it is about family, it is about us, it is about people we know, it is about our neighbours. It is our story. Congratulations to Osamah Sami, the lead actor and one of the writers, and veteran writer Andrew Knight. It is great to see our multicultural stories being told on the big screen and receiving rave reviews. Congratulations to everyone involved in this film, including all the actors and Osamah Sami. I call on Screen NSW and the New South Wales Government to invest additional funds to support our young filmmakers.

#### **CENTRAL COAST FREE TRADE DAY**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:02):** It was great to see so many tradespeople and companies helping Central Coast residents on the inaugural Free Trade Day held last month. The program, which was the brainchild of local electrician Ryan Wilson from Terrigal Electrical, has helped more than 60 households free of charge. Those people would not usually be in a position to undertake essential work around their homes due to financial hardship or a physical disability. This event was organised in less than 18 days and attracted national recognition from the Channel 7 *Sunrise* program. Ryan said that he wanted to give something back to the community and hopefully change people's lives for the better. This initiative shows that when the community comes together on the Central Coast we can accomplish great things for those in need. Once again, congratulations to Ryan Wilson from Terrigal Electrical for his great initiative, and we look forward to the second annual Free Trade Day.

#### **INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS CONTENDER EDWARD PARKER**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation) (17:03):** Today I recognise the outstanding achievements of Edward Parker, a 15-year-old athletics champion from Berowra. Edward has autism, severe processing disorder and severe adaptive processing disorder. However, he has not let any of this quell his passion for sport. Edward has qualified to compete in the Intellectual Disability Athletics Championships in Bangkok. This was after smashing six of his personal bests at the Australian National Athletics Championships in March in the under 16 para men's event and taking home seven medals. This feat in itself is extraordinary and showcases Edward's pure determination, talent and hard work. Edward has set a goal of making it to the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. He is definitely on his way to achieving this with his inclusion in the world

championships in Bangkok. Representing one's country in sport is a rare opportunity, and I congratulate Edward on his remarkable achievements and wish him all the best on this wonderful journey.

#### **CENTRAL COAST SURF LIFE SAVING AWARDS**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) (17:04):** I recently attended the Central Coast Surf Life Saving Awards of Excellence, where we recognised the incredible work that our volunteer surf lifesavers do at our beaches on the Central Coast. In particular, I recognise Lakes Surf Life Saving Club, which had an excellent year. This season, Lakes Surf Life Saving Club saved seven lives, provided first aid to 264 people and prevented another 150 from getting into difficulty in the surf. The members' hard work and dedication meant that there were no drownings this season. Building on the success of last season, Lakes also continued its second year of Little Nippers, teaching vital surf safety to three- to five-year-olds. Lakes Surf Life Saving Club also contributes to the community beyond the waves and the beach. It provided water safety and general assistance during community-run events such as the Budgewoi Triathlon, and conducted education and information stalls at local shopping centres. This community outreach and support by Lakes Surf Life Saving Club has resulted in more than 100 new families joining the club. Well done.

#### **LIFELINE HARBOUR TO HAWKESBURY**

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (17:06):** Today being R U OK? Day makes it all the more appropriate to acknowledge the wonderful work of Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury, which is based in my electorate at Gordon and operated by its outstanding chief executive officer, Wendy Carver, and her dedicated team. Lifeline performs a valuable service and enjoys tremendous support in our community. That was evident at the 2017 Lifeline Gala Ball held last Saturday 9 September. This year the event also celebrated the Lifeline Centre's fiftieth anniversary. It was a very special evening that featured an address from Kathy Kelly. The Premier, who gives a wonderful level of support to these sorts of activities, and I attended this event.

Unfortunately, there is more work to be done than ever before with suicide prevention and crisis support, so the more than \$200,000 raised for Lifeline's vital 24-hour services at the gala ball was crucial. Early intervention is the key to saving lives. Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury offers many local services which provide critical support to our local community on the north side of Sydney, particularly in Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby. The funds raised from the event will help run its large suite of face-to-face counselling services and support group programs. Thank you, Lifeline, and well done.

#### **CITY OF LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:07):** Today I acknowledge the City of Liverpool and District Historical Society. The society conducts an annual lecture named the Ward and Olive Havard Memorial Lecture. Its fifty-first annual lecture was held on 26 August at the Liverpool Library. Ward Havard was the society foundation president and Olive was subsequently a president as well. Both were active members of the Royal Australian Historical Society. This year's guest speaker at the Liverpool annual lecture was Eric Sidoti. He has been director of the Whitlam Institute since 2007. The topic of the talk was Whitlam 101—this year being the 101st anniversary of that man's birth.

Eric was introduced by the current member for Werriwa, Anne Stanley, in the presence of a previous member for Werriwa, Laurie Ferguson. I enjoyed pointing out that the electorate office that has been in my name for more than 20 years was once also Gough's. A lecture about Gough was entirely appropriate for the Liverpool Historical Society. He was known personally by a large number of the people in the room. His presence in Liverpool was always significant. I acknowledge the extraordinary work of the society's president Glen op den Brouw and the vote of thanks on the day by society vice president Elaine McVicker.

#### **BRAVERY MEDAL AWARD RECIPIENT CONSTABLE TIMOTHY DUFFY**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (17:08):** I congratulate Senior Constable Timothy Duffy, who yesterday was a well-deserving recipient of a Bravery Medal from Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove. The Bravery Medal recognises acts of bravery by members of the community who selflessly put themselves in jeopardy to protect the lives or property of others. Senior Constable Duffy was awarded this medal after responding to a report of an armed assailant at Nepean Hospital who had taken a staff member hostage. The assailant had also fired a weapon, injuring Acting Sergeant Luke Warburton and a member of the hospital staff. Senior Constable Duffy then acted without hesitation and without consideration for his own safety, taking hold of the pistol and then placing his fingers around the trigger and slide to prevent the gun from being fired as the assailant repeatedly pulled on the trigger. The assailant was subsequently disarmed and arrested.

Senior Constable Duffy has also been awarded the Commissioner's Valour Award for his actions. He is a great example to all for his professionalism, selflessness, dedication and sacrifice in the face of danger. Senior Constable Duffy's actions are testament to the continued excellence of members of the NSW Police Force, who protect our community with great dignity. He is an excellent role model and I commend him for his service to my community and to this great State.

*Private Members' Statements*

**TRIBUTE TO ESTHER JOAN QUINLIN**

**Mrs MELINDA PAVEY (Oxley—Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight) (17:09):** I speak with a heavy heart in acknowledging the incredible life of Esther Joan Quinlin nee Scott, born on 27 December 1941 in Kempsey. She was the only child of Alfred and Rita Scott, both from Bellbrook Aboriginal Reserve, where she was raised and always called home. I will not use my words; I will use the words of her grandson, Vincent Scott Junior, who in front of thousands of people from the Macleay community gave the most inspiring eulogy about his beautiful grandmother whom he called "Mum":

At a very early age mum had two children. Her first child was born at Kempsey Hospital (she gave her the name Corrallee LiHian Scott) now known as Elizabeth Miller. Elizabeth was taken by the Aboriginal Protection Board not long after birth. Mum and her mother (Rita) did not get to hold or kiss her baby. Elizabeth was removed from her family and it would be some 45-50 years later that Mum would finally be reunited with her daughter that she longed to hold and comfort. I remember when Mum and her husband (George Quinlin-Dad) informed all the family that they had located Elizabeth, although the pain and nerves was still evident in mums eyes, we could see the joy that she had that her oldest child and her would be reunited. The day that we all got to meet my aunty Liz was a special day, a day that our family will always hold special in our hearts.

Mums second-child was my father Vincent or as everyone knows him Sonny. Vincent Richard Scott. I remember mum telling me that because the Aboriginal Protection Board took away her eldest daughter she was afraid that they would come and take away her only son. Mum gave her son to her parents (Nanna Rita and Bubba AJ). Vincent would grow up calling his grandparents Mum and Dad, and that was accepted by all the community on Bellbrook Aboriginal Reserve.

Growing up on Bellbrook Mission, life was hard for Mum and her family. Her father and uncles worked hard in the bush, clearing land, ringbarking, digging out lantana bush and small trees with only hand tools. ...

Bellbrook Aboriginal reserve also had a school, some teachers were good and some were not so good. One teacher and his wife really made an impression on mum, a Mr and Mrs Ellem. Mum only went to grade 6, her education was important to her. She asked the Mr Ellen, "I just want to learn, can you learn me how to read, write and spell". Mum always wanted to thank this teacher and she got to meet him several times before she passed away, he was 93 years of age the last time she seen him. Mum always made sure I had a good education and always wanted her family and grandchildren to use education as a tool to improving their lives.

Time constraints will not allow me to read the entire eulogy, but Vincent went on to say:

History would repeat itself in 1977, my parents Sonny and Christine, had me. Their first son. However, I got pretty sick in the early stages of my life, Dr's didn't think I would make it. It was at this time my parents thought that it would be best to give me to Mum and Dad as they were Christians and a Christian lifestyle, diet and upbringing would be better for me. Plus my mother Christine seen that Mum and Dad was lonely and giving me to them would make their world. That decision must have been hard for my parents, but a decision that I truly am grateful for and I can't thank them enough for making that hard choice. It must have been hard for my father to give up his only son.

In closing mums love of education was important to her; her love of our Dunghutti language, working closely with Aunty Caroline Bradshaw, and Aunty Gladys Quinlan, teaching younger and older people our language will be her legacy to our community. However, more important is her love of Jesus, she loved teaching her grandchildren and other children the many different songs she taught in Sabbath School.

We will all miss that smile, we will all miss knowing we could call on you for anything. Vincent is a community leader and Esther was extremely proud of him. She was grandmother to 21 grandchildren and one great grandchild. She was also a beautiful artist. I am blessed that she gave me one of her artworks. She had a glorious smile, she was warm and she was engaging. She was also a leader of the Macleay Valley community. When she passed away she was in a car and had two young children in the back. She was on her way to an Aboriginal elders class to teach the Dunghutti language. She was a leader and she was so loved, which is evidenced by the thousands of people who attended the funeral. I thank her for her generosity of spirit, for her stories and for what she has done in our wonderful community. Murrungbu Balu. We will miss you, Aunty Esther.

**JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH COUNCIL**

**Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (17:14):** Today I inform the House of the departure of Father James McCarthy from John the Baptist Parish, Bonnyrigg Heights, after two short years. Father James is a young and energetic parish priest who has reinvigorated the parish community with his warm and pleasant nature. He is a true gentle giant. As a result of Father James' enthusiasm, many young parishioners have started to return to the parish. He has truly been a breath of fresh air with an incredibly successful approach to his ministry—an approach that is needed during this difficult time for the Catholic Church.

As is the norm with many things in life, change is unfortunately met all too often with resistance. Since joining John the Baptist, Father James has rolled up his sleeves, got stuck in and begun doing what any determined parish administrator should do. He started by addressing and resolving the issues affecting the parish and commenced working on solutions. On behalf of the parish, I commend Father James for the long-term vision he

has mapped out and for taking the initiative to make John the Baptist parish better for parishioners in the future. I truly believe that Father James had a firm understanding of the changing demographic in the area, and he realised that the church's community has been continually expanding at a rapid rate.

Back in 2010, when I was a member of the Parish Council, we commissioned a survey to be completed by parishioners. The results of the survey clearly indicated that the youth needed to be brought back into the fold. It was identified that the present church building was not able to fulfil the pastoral and spiritual needs of the community. Over the years it has been clearly identified that the parish is facing numerous challenges; however, no clear solution had ever been suggested until Father James arrived.

Father James moved on this issue by proposing a positive plan for the spiritual and financial needs of the community. The positive proposal included a preschool containing a before- and after-school centre, conversion of the current church into a reception hall with an industrial kitchen, the introduction of a permanent cafe and, last but not least, the construction of a new fit-for-purpose church building. Each of these proposals made a lot of sense and gave our parish a bright outlook for the years to follow. These plans would help to encourage the local community to engage with John the Baptist while securing financial viability to allow for the construction of the new church.

This proposal was widely welcomed by the parish and would be welcomed in our community, which continues to grow as more young families move into the neighbouring suburbs of Abbotsbury, Bonnyrigg Heights, Cecil Hills, Edensor Park, Elizabeth Hills and Green Valley. The proposal would, in effect, welcome and nurture the community through its spiritual journey and futureproof the parish for the influx of new parishioners over the years. It is truly sad to see Father James leave John the Baptist. His departure is so impacting on many parishioners that they have set up a dedicated Facebook page called "John the Baptist Supports Fr James". This was a most unusual move for any Catholic Church community; however, it clearly illustrates the high regard in which Father James is held in the parish community, and the respect and appreciation the community has for his dedication, guidance and ministry.

The community was so upset at the news of his departure that a petition was started to keep Father James. The petition was signed by more than 1,200 parishioners. The general feeling of parishioners was that their concerns were not addressed by the church hierarchy. I have since received correspondence from parishioners regarding the lack of consultation with them while detailing how they felt as though they were not worthy of being listened to. Many parishioners have said to me that they believe Father James was a victim of vexatious complaints. A few of the comments that were directly relayed to me include one from a parishioner who commented:

It's typical of the Church, move the victim on while protecting and keeping the perpetrators around.

Another parishioner stated:

If this petition was presented by a parish in the Eastern Suburbs the hierarchy would open their doors and speak to the petitioners. Another person said, "They want us to sign a petition about the Assisted Dying Bill, yet they refuse to address our petition." These are a few of the numerous complaints I have received regarding this matter. I wish Father James all the best in his future endeavours. On behalf of the parishioners, I thank him from the bottom of our hearts for his kindness, dedication and guidance over the past two years. Father James, your contribution to the parish will never be forgotten and things will never be the same without you at the helm.

#### **PENRITH VALLEY SPORTS FOUNDATION AWARDS**

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (17:19):** The Penrith Valley Sports Foundation held an event in my electorate last week. I had the pleasure of attending and helping the foundation celebrate the outstanding achievements of many members of our local sporting community. The event was emceed by former Penrith sports star, current Australian Diamond and vice-captain of the NSW Swifts netball team Paige Hadley. We also heard from Madeleine Edmunds and Sarah Hawe from the Hancock Prospecting Women's National Training Centre for Women's Rowing, which recently relocated to Penrith on a full-time basis. Madeleine and Sarah shared insights into their daily training and their hopes for the World Cup in Florida and the next Olympics. Former Wallaby Julian Huxley told his inspirational story of being diagnosed with brain cancer, his return to playing rugby and his transition to his role as head coach of the Penrith Emus.

Highlights of the night were the announcement of the Junior and Senior Sportstar of the Year and the announcement of the Jim Anderson Memorial Award. The Administration Award was won by Natalie Bradbury, president of the St Clair Hawks Cricket Club. Her biggest impact on cricket has been in the area of female participation. Natalie was instrumental in the creation of the inaugural all-female competition, the Thunder Girls League, which was the first junior all-girls competition in New South Wales. The All Abilities Award was won

by Sarah Keenehan. Sarah has just returned from the World Dwarf Games in Canada, where she won six gold medals in swimming, a silver medal in soccer and a silver medal in track and field. Sarah is now in training for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics.

Coach of the Year was Jaqua Heddle, head coach of the Panthers Under 20 Netball team. That team was inaugural premiers in the new Premier League Competition, which is conducted by Netball NSW. The award for Referee of the Year was given to Emma Kocbeck from Nepean Soccer. Emma has been selected in the National Talent Pool and recently returned from the National Training Centre challenge, where she was named referee of the tournament. The Under 19 Mens Softball Team won Team of the Year. The team won the grand final for the second year in a row and was undefeated throughout the season. The Volunteer of the Year award went to Ryan Knowles, who has served hockey for more than 30 years.

I was delighted to see Doug Hayne being awarded the Jim Anderson Memorial Award. The Jim Anderson Memorial Award is awarded to a person who has made a significant or exceptional contribution to the development of sport in the Penrith Valley region. Doug contributed to sport not only as an athlete but also as an administrator with the Wallacia Golf Club, then with the Nepean Golf Association and then as secretary and executive member of the Penrith Valley Sports Foundation for 15 years until his recent ill-health forced his retirement. I am proud that Doug was able to take over from me as the secretary of the Penrith Valley Sports Foundation. I personally know that Doug and his wife, Glynis, are incredibly committed to our Penrith community.

Undoubtedly the two major awards of the night were the Junior Sportstar and Senior Sportstar awards, selected from the monthly winners throughout the year. The winner of the Junior Sportstar award was Hannah Darlington. Hannah was recently selected for the Indigenous cricket squad, which will tour England later this year. The competition was intense. Many of the monthly winners have competed in national competitions or represented Australia at overseas competitions, and they all deserve congratulations. The 2016-17 Rising Star was Jack Benson, who is part of the State swimming program. The Senior Sportstar award contenders comprised a star-studded field of athletes who have excelled in rugby league, netball, Australian Football League, cricket, baseball, golf and basketball. The worthy winner was basketballer Tahlia Tupaea, who plays for the Sydney University Flames and who was drafted in 2017 to the Minnesota Lynx in the Women's National Basketball Association [WNBA]. Tahlia joins Paige Hadley as the only athletes to have won the triple crown of the Penrith Valley Sports Foundation Awards: Rising Star, Junior Sportstar of the Year and Senior Sportstar of the Year.

I congratulate all the winners and nominees and also the foundation on its fantastic work in promoting and recognising sport across the Penrith community. I also recognise the various award sponsors who supported the evening: Panthers Leagues Club; St Mary's Leagues Club; Penrith Gaels Club; Penrith City Council; Bateman and Battersby Lawyers, Nepean Swimming and Fitness, Penrith Lakes Development Corporation, Penrith Junior Rugby League; Complete Recruitment Solutions; and Summer Sportswear. As someone who was part of the inaugural Penrith Valley Sports Foundation, I continue to attend these awards each year and I am astounded by the success of the athletes in the Penrith community.

### **BURRILL LAKE CAUSEWAY**

**Ms SHELLEY HANCOCK (South Coast) (17:24):** For almost 25 years the residents of Burrill Lake and the southern Shoalhaven have campaigned for the causeway crossing at Burrill Lake to be replaced. The first causeway across the lake was a timber bridge constructed in 1889. In 1958, a 55-metre, low-level concrete bridge was constructed to replace the timber structure. Many may say this bridge has contributed to the siltation of the lake and the inundation of low-lying areas in times of heavy rainfall, causing road closures, delays and many other problems. Lobbying from local community members to mitigate the siltation and other problems began as early as the 1970s. Calls at least remove to the causeway, which was seen as the root cause of the problem, came to a head in 1993 when hundreds of residents blocked the Princes Highway in protest against a decision not to install at that stage a piers bridge across the lake.

The current bridge, which forms part of the Princes Highway, the key transport corridor on the South Coast, is now nearly 60 years old. It is used by more than 8,000 vehicles a day, with the figure rising to more than 11,000 at peak times of the year. Recent assessments found that while the existing bridge is structurally sound and safe to carry traffic, it would require significant maintenance in the next five years to ensure its longevity. The costs and benefits of various maintenance options were considered against replacing the old bridge. However, none was found to improve the bridge's flood immunity.

I am pleased to inform the House that after securing \$58 million in funding from the New South Wales Government in 2016, fulfilling a 2015 election commitment, the Burrill Lake Bridge replacement project is quickly approaching completion and the new bridge is set to officially open to traffic by the end of this month. Terrific progress has been made on this project after works commenced in April 2016, and it is expected to be

fully completed in early 2018. As I say, it will open to traffic at the end of this month. The community has been heavily involved during the consultation and design stages, providing invaluable feedback as to the features of the project, including the new bridge and surrounding areas. I congratulate Roads and Maritime Services and the contractors for the way in which they have communicated with the community during this difficult process. Once the works are fully complete, we will see not only improved road safety and flood immunity but also improved urban design, landscaping, and local street and bus stop access and noise minimisation.

The new 290-metre bridge has been built to a one-in-100-years flood level and includes three-metre wide pedestrian and cycle paths spanning the lake on a new alignment east of the existing bridge. New roundabouts have been installed on either side of the crossing, linking with local roads and the Princes Highway, to improve traffic flow and safety. Pedestrian paths are also being installed underneath both ends of the bridge. There are five highway crossing points for pedestrians, the number of parking spaces close to nearby shops has increased, and navigation markers on the new bridge have been installed to improve boat safety. This project is more than just a bridge. Additionally, the public amenities in Lions Park at the lake have been upgraded. A new facility has been constructed which is more accessible and which includes a lift and change facility with an adjustable table and hoist for disabled people.

Once traffic has been diverted to the new bridge, work will begin on removing the existing causeway and old bridge and creating a fishing platform and the southern foreshore park. It will be fantastic. I am also pleased to inform the House that in only one week I will join with the community for the Burrill Lake Bridge Open Day to walk across the new bridge. The community has watched as this bridge has been built, and it is only fair that they get a chance to walk across it before we see vehicles on it. I am looking forward to that event which is being held on 23 September between 10 and 12 o'clock. The bridge replacement has been an ongoing issue for the local community; they waited for decades for something to be done by a former government. Nothing was done and no support given in 2015 for the current structure, no support whatsoever. It is fantastic to see that within just two years this whole bridge package is almost complete and that attention has finally been given to the southern Shoalhaven from the New South Wales State Government.

I am proud to have helped to deliver this important infrastructure. I was pleased to welcome the then Minister for Roads and Freight Duncan Gay to turn first sod a couple of years ago. Here we are, almost close to completion, thanks to a multi-million dollar investment by the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government. I reiterate my congratulations to the staff of Roads and Maritime Services, who have been fantastic in the way they have been working with the community. Their contractors have welcomed questions from members of the community. Their patience during this construction has been fantastic. I congratulate everyone involved. I will see everybody on 23 September.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans):** I am sure the Parliamentary Secretary and the member for South Coast will have a wonderful day.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (17:30):** Last Saturday, the voters of Cumberland and the City of Parramatta gave their verdict on this Government's disastrous council amalgamations process. As expected, they hate it—the swings against the Liberal Party were massive, especially in the former Holroyd Council area and the parts of Parramatta City Council area the Liberals did not want. At every step along the way, the Government ignored the public, pre-empted the outcomes of consultation, and rammed this decision down everyone's throat to get a permanent stranglehold on Parramatta's lord mayoralty. The result is the most complex and one of the most hated amalgamations, creating Cumberland City Council. This ridiculous gerrymander took Granville out of Parramatta, to be replaced with Beecroft. Even this could not protect the Liberal majority in Parramatta, where they won only six of 15 spots on the new council.

And even in the former Auburn council area—a council most people were happy to be rid of—the Liberals could not increase their vote. In the suburb of Auburn itself, in the South Granville ward, they may even miss out altogether. If the rorted amalgamations process was not enough to ensure a Labor victory on Saturday in Cumberland, we also had the ridiculous new M4 toll and the associated traffic chaos because no-one is using the M4 anymore. Poor Gerard and Flory Pinto! They and their neighbours cannot even get out of their driveways. They are parked in by the choked-up rat run in their street.

Everyone hates this toll—even the Liberal Party booth workers in Granville. But this Government shamelessly thinks it can spin its way out of the issue, claiming at first that it was not possible to tell if fewer people were using the M4 tollway, even though it was obvious to all. Now the Government says it is giving people choices—the choice between wasting money or wasting time. The road does not even go all the way to Strathfield, and even though the Government promised to widen it to four lanes from Parramatta to Strathfield, the last two kilometres are still only two lanes wide. It is a con and it is a rip-off, and the people of Western Sydney know it.

Then there was the rehashed plan to close our pools. The previous Holroyd Council considered closing Wentworthville and Guildford pools to create a giant aquatic wellness centre at Merrylands pool. The backlash was enormous, and the council backed down. Ross Grove even did a backflip, fully clothed, into Wentworth pool when the council caved in. But as soon as the accountable elected councillors were gone, pool closures were back on the agenda and the community was furious.

**Dr Geoff Lee:** This is supposed to be a positive community statement.

**Ms JULIA FINN:** It is very positive—the Labor Party smashed you. This all happened because Liberals hate public outdoor swimming pools. Again, hundreds of people signed petitions to keep Wentworth pool—known as Wenty pool—and Guildford outdoor pools open, and the administrator backed down, promising a referendum on the pools instead. That is a step up from the City of Parramatta situation, where the pool is gone for good, for no good reason. That was a decision made by this Government with the help of its administrator, yet again trashing everything in the path of its overdevelopment agenda. A stadium had to be built over the pool, otherwise a high-rise building could not be built over the car park. And where is the replacement pool going? The odds-on favourite is the Parramatta High School oval.

How did the Cumberland pool referendum go? In full knowledge of the level of pool subsidy across the city, three-quarters of Cumberland residents voted to keep, to upgrade and to maintain their five pools—the opposite of what this Government wanted. I particularly commend Grant Hansen and Councillor Lisa Lake for their long and tireless advocacy to save Wenty pool. Running Cumberland Council will be a challenge—it looks as though it has been set up to fail, with no large industrial or commercial rate base like the adjoining City of Parramatta, and five swimming pools and two public golf courses. But the Labor Party is ready and has community support.

As for the Cumberland election results, there were double-digit swings to Labor across the new council, and Labor may well win nine of the 15 spots on Cumberland Council. The Liberals might still be reduced to four. Congratulations to George Campbell, Glenn Elmore, Steve Christou, Lisa Lake, Greg Cummings, and Glen Richardson on their elections. Ola Flamed, Suman Saha and Kun Huang have probably been elected also, and did an amazing job in their local campaigns. They all worked so hard. Because of their efforts and because of the contempt the Berejiklian Government has for the people of Western Sydney, a Labor victory was never in doubt.

**Mr STUART AYRES (Penrith—Minister for Western Sydney, Minister for WestConnex, and Minister for Sport) (17:34):** I take this opportunity to respond to the member for Granville, who clearly gave the House incorrect information about the Parramatta pool. The Government has committed \$30 million to the development of a brand new world-class Parramatta pool as part of an aquatic centre that is being delivered in partnership with the City of Parramatta Council. That development was announced by me as well as by the member for Parramatta. We probably will see between \$50 million and \$60 million invested in Parramatta. The idea that the pool is not being replaced is simply wrong. If the member for Granville is opposed to the M4 toll, she should promise her community that she will remove it.

## WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP FORUM

### CAMP LIONHEART

**Dr GEOFF LEE (Parramatta) (17:35):** I congratulate Our Lady of Mercy College [OLMC] Parramatta and Principal Stephen Walsh on hosting a successful inaugural Women in Leadership Forum, which was a great opportunity for students to hear about the experiences and the insights of four well-known women. Head girl Dunya Vasic and assistant head girl Emily Dwyer did a fantastic job introducing and thanking the speakers: media personality Samantha Armytage, Shadow Minister for Human Services Linda Burney MP, author and passionate Parramatta advocate Felicity Castagna, and senior lecturer Dr Yijiao Jiang. The event was attended by past and present students, staff, and families, along with the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta, and students and staff from several other schools.

It was not surprising that OLMC initiated this forum. The school has been inspiring students for almost 130 years. OLMC Deputy Principal Marie Wood said that speakers touched on similar themes about the importance of being true to yourself, of believing in yourself, of never giving up, and of living your life with courage and confidence. In his introduction, Mr Walsh said that women have made a significant contribution to the development of Parramatta and Western Sydney. From the Burramattagal women of the Darug Nation, the Sisters of Charity in 1837 and eventually the Irish Sisters of Mercy in 1888, these women were pioneers. Even though they faced significant challenges, they were always able to make real differences in the lives of others in the community in which they lived.

The principal also said the forum was an important opportunity to acknowledge the future role of women in our society and the need to help to improve career progression for women to help them manage the challenges of career and life, for the community to stand up for equality in work and play, and to develop greater opportunities for women to lead in both the public and private sectors. After the forum where speakers gave their speeches, the audience was invited to ask questions. Questions came from parents, students, ex-students, and Sister of Mercy Mary-Louise Petro, RSM, who is a congregational leader of the Sister of Mercy Parramatta. I commend OLMC for its ongoing dedication and commitment to empowering students to make a real difference to the future of our world.

In October Camp Lionheart will be hosting a charity dinner. This important event raises much-needed funds to provide recreation and respite for children with acquired brain injury and other children assessed by the Kids Rehab team as benefitting. Funds raised will go to the annual Camp Lionheart, which is run by the Kids Rehab department at the Children's Hospital at Westmead. The two-day camp provides fun-filled experiences for about 20 children aged between seven and 12 years of age. I acknowledge the contribution made by Sigrid Rottmann, her late partner, Michael Maughan, and the Carlingford-Dundas Lions Club, Dundas Lions to Camp Lionheart. For Sigrid Rottmann, this has been a very personal journey. Her own son, Daniel suffered from an acquired brain injury. She spent long hours in hospital, including in Westmead Children's Hospital, where she joined the parent advisory committee.

When the camp lost its funding in 2000, Sigrid Rottmann readily took on the challenge to raise the necessary fund for future camps. She and her fellow Lions have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars. However, there is never enough money and there will always be more children who would benefit from this experience. Therefore, I wish Camp Lionheart all the best for a very successful charity dinner on Friday 13 October at the Castle Hill RSL. While Camp Lionheart is now a separate entity, many current Carlingford-Dundas Lions members continue to make significant contributions, including president Kasturi Wren, past president David Evans, treasurer Peter Deane, and Sigrid Rottmann, who is vice-president of Camp Lionheart. Anyone interested in finding out more about this wonderful charity event can visit [camplionheart.org.au](http://camplionheart.org.au).

### COFFS HARBOUR DEVELOPMENT

**Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour) (17:39):** This evening I speak about an issue that has divided the Coffs Harbour community. On 7 May 1987, the Commonwealth Government sold 8.532 hectares of land to the Coffs Harbour City Council. There is a covenant on the land, which states:

(b) ... so as to bind its successors and assigns in title hereby covenants with the Commonwealth of Australia that the land shall be used, developed or improved by or on behalf of the council exclusively for cultural or civic purposes or associated tourist purposes. For the purposes of this clause the expressions:

...

- 1) Arts and crafts gallery, display areas and related workshops.
- 2) Library.
- 3) Civic and community centre.
- 4) Senior citizens centre.
- 5) Theatre and/or cinema.
- 6) Tourist information and promotions centre.
- 7) Museums.
- 8) Music education centre.
- 9) Open space and amenity areas together with necessary roads and services.
- 10) Education facilities.

It could also include:

- 1) Low impact sporting facilities such as a bowling club.
- 2) Bookshops.
- 3) Arts and crafts shops and music shops.
- 4) Restaurants, cafes or taverns.
- 5) Theatre or cinema.
- 6) Radio studio or other media facilities.
- 7) Visitor and tourist accommodation and ancillary facilities.
- 8) Necessary roads and services.

## 9) Convention facilities.

Clearly, under that covenant the land must be utilised for civic space and a cultural centre. The site is about 800 metres from the centre of town. The council recently passed a motion to progress a \$35-million civic centre in Coffs Harbour, which is to incorporate a new art gallery and a library. The motion also referred to "new council chambers". I put it to the council and the public that we do not need new council chambers; in fact, the council chambers in Coffs Harbour are magnificent. The council said it had looked at 11 sites, but all of them were in the city centre. The council did not consider the City Hill site. Money has been set aside for this project for years. I could speak on this topic for five hours, not merely five minutes. In fact, the council set aside \$5 million and my wife served on one of the committees that raised funds for the project, as did a number of notable people within the Coffs Harbour community.

In recent years the council has imposed a rate increase to improve the city centre. It has admitted that the funds raised through that rate increase have not been spent on what the civic centre advisory committee suggested they should be spent on. So the council must repay money that it has taken from that account. I wonder how the council will ever repay \$35 million when it has had to increase rates to improve the city centre. I visited the council the other day and I believe its streetscape plan is achievable and commendable. But it is ludicrous to spend \$35 million replacing the current library and art gallery—which need to be replaced—and building essentially new council chambers. Many others agree with me.

I have asked that the \$250,000 the council has set aside for a feasibility study in the city centre and the \$75,000 it has set aside for a feasibility study on City Hill be combined. The council should do a compare-and-contrast exercise to ensure that we get what the people need. I believe the opportunities to develop City Hill are second to none. There was a huge general rates increase—it hit my hip pocket as well as that of every other ratepayer—and a city centre rates increase simply to balance the books. Yet the books this year show an \$8 million deficit. The council must investigate the matter. That is what the community requires. I implore the councillors, who have been on council only for a short time, to have regard to the historical nature of the site and to consider providing the city with a cultural centre that will incorporate an art gallery, an entertainment centre and a library—although I would be happy for the library to be expanded into the old Coffs Harbour art gallery, which would provide the necessary facility.

The council claims the development will improve business in the city centre, but it is already there. If it is already there, how will it improve business further? I implore the council to undertake the compare-and-contrast exercise, and I ask the people of Coffs Harbour to think very carefully about whether they want to incur a \$35 million-plus debt. We all saw what happened with the Glasshouse in Port Macquarie.

### TRIBUTE TO CHARLES DOWNEY HARDY

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (17:44):** On Wednesday 6 September a very important event occurred in Wagga Wagga when a famous former senator was finally laid to rest. The remains of one of Wagga Wagga's most famous sons, former Senator Charles Hardy, were finally interred at the Wagga Wagga Lawn Cemetery. In a special ceremony, the remains of the man—whom many dubbed the Father of Wagga Wagga and who died more than 70 years ago—were laid to rest. Senator Hardy's grandson, who is also called Charles, said the family had long wanted to bring the remains of their grandfather back to Wagga Wagga. He said:

While my Father was alive he made repeated written requests to have both his Father's remains returned to Wagga and to have his personal effects returned. On every occasion these requests were refused.

The family attended the autobiographical release of my grandfather in the Senate in Canberra. My father, accompanied by his brother and myself, asked then Senator Kim Beazley to have his father's file released and we were told that the file was marked never to be reopened.

Charles Downey Hardy was born in 1898 and died in 1941. He was a timber merchant and politician. He was born in Wagga Wagga, the son of Charles Hardy Snr, contractor, and his wife, Mary Alice. The Hardy family was well known in the Riverina. The first Charles Hardy had settled in Wagga in 1862 and established the firm C. Hardy & Co., which supervised the construction of many public buildings and bridges across New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. On 2 January 1917, at the age of 18, he enlisted as a sapper in the Australian Imperial Force, serving in the 1st Pioneer Training Battalion and the 1st Field Company, Australian Engineers.

In the course of the Second World War, he was asked by then Prime Minister McFadden to take charge of the coordination of works undertaken by the Royal Australian Air Force. During this time he was also seconded by the Department of Defence to assist with researching—spying—on behalf of the Government. A very high-ranking representative from the Department of Defence and a pilot accompanied him on this secondment. While returning from either Papua New Guinea or the north, the plane in which they were travelling crashed into the bed of the Cohen River in the early hours of 27 August 1941. Unfortunately, both the pilot and the defence representative were burnt in the crash. Mr Hardy was thrown clear, but did not survive. Mr Hardy said after

reading an eyewitness account of the crash some eight years ago in the Cohen that his grandfather had black-and-white aerial photos of the Japanese landing both men and stores in the Gulf of Carpentaria. This was after the Japanese had invaded Singapore in July 1941. To place this in context, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 and, if this is correct, it means that the Japanese had already invaded Australia.

The family want to thank the Hon. Wayne Swan, the Hon. Warren Snowden and Wing Commander Lara Gunn, Deputy Director Strategic Issues Management, for their assistance in making their father's wishes a reality and for bringing their grandfather home. Senator Hardy was a very accomplished person in his brief life. His career accomplishments include being Leader of the United Country Party from 1915 to 1938. During the Great Depression he organised a necessity drive to distribute money, clothing and food to the needy of Wagga Wagga. He was appointed to the Federal Senate and served from 1935 to 1938. He was also heavily involved with the Country Party administration and growth. He was founder and president of the Employers Federation in 1927. He and a number of others were apparently instrumental in pushing for the Snowy Mountains Scheme, on which construction began in 1949, some time after his death.

As Parliamentary Secretary for the Centenary of Anzac, and Veterans Affairs, I acknowledge the Hardy family's great contribution to Wagga Wagga during the time they have lived in the town. I thank them for their involvement in the Wagga Wagga community. Many of the iconic buildings that the Hardy family built still stand today. I am pleased that, finally, Charles Hardy has been returned to the soil of Wagga Wagga, where he was born.

### ST GEORGE COMMUNITY HOUSING

**Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) (17:49):** I report to the House the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the tenancy arrangements for Mr Nawaf Al Ghaleb and his family and the unconscionable and unsatisfactory behaviour of St George Community Housing. Mr Al Ghaleb is my constituent. St George manages the tenancies of a block of units in the Liverpool central business district in which Mr Al Ghaleb lives. Mr Al Ghaleb lives in the subject unit with his wife and four children, aged 11, 9, 6 and 1½. He and his family have lived there since 2013. About 18 months ago, another tenant moved into a nearby flat. According to Mr Al Ghaleb, that new neighbour has made living conditions for the Al Ghaleb family incredibly unpleasant. Loud penetrating thumping noises occur at all hours of the day and night and the Al Ghaleb family cannot get proper sleep. In Mr Al Ghaleb's words, "A jail would be better than his unit." The situation has worsened recently and Mr Al Ghaleb's children have now become the victims of some unpleasant behaviour, which has been reported to the Liverpool police.

Rather than taking matters into his own hands or retreating into bitter resignation, as many people do in these circumstances, Mr Al Ghaleb proceeded to properly utilise the system of redress that existed for him. St George has not coped well with someone behaving as properly as Mr Al Ghaleb. He lodged an application with the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT]. Mr Al Ghaleb was the applicant and the respondent was St George Community Housing. This is not always how disputes between neighbours are resolved, but it is a proper and correct use of the available structures to resolve a problem. Prior to lodging the application, Mr Al Ghaleb had raised the issue numerous times with St George Community Housing. Clearly it did not resolve the problem or comply with its own responsibilities. That left Mr Al Ghaleb with no option but to take other steps, so he lodged the application with the NCAT. On 28 October 2016 the matter came before the NCAT. On that day, there was agreement between Mr Al Ghaleb and St George Community Housing. As part of that agreement, Mr Al Ghaleb withdrew his application. Before tribunal member Mr G. Sarginson, the NCAT recorded an agreement order on 28 October, which stated:

The tribunal notes the agreement of the parties to resolve the dispute as follows:

- a) the landlord will transfer the tenant Mr Al Ghaleb after 4 February 2017 to the Liverpool surrounding area that suits the tenant's needs in accordance with the tenant's pathways application.

Paragraph (c) stated:

The landlord will issue the tenant with a written formal apology to the tenant with regards to the time it has taken to resolve this issue.

This sounds like a happy ending to an unhappy and distressing story. St George conceded that Mr Al Ghaleb was in the right. Moreover, and most importantly, it promised to move him to alternative premises as he requested. Obviously the next question is: What has occurred in the 12 months since St George Community Housing made this promise to my constituent? The melancholy truth is that nothing has happened. Despite its solemn promise made to the tribunal, St George Community Housing has not relocated Mr Al Ghaleb. We have to wonder what high-octane cocktail of arrogance and stupidity has motivated St George Community Housing. It is not only that it gave a commitment to Mr Al Ghaleb which it then broke, it also made this promise to the tribunal and it is

recorded in the tribunal's order. Why does it think it can treat the tribunal with such contempt? Why does it think it can lie to the tribunal? Does St George Community Housing think it is above the law?

This is not the sort of behaviour that the former Department of Housing would have been foolish enough to entertain, regardless of the claims that were made against it. If St George Community Housing did not propose to relocate Mr Al Ghaleb, it should have told him and the tribunal, but it did not. As time went by, Mr Al Ghaleb became more distressed and concerned that nothing had happened. He sought advice from his local member of Parliament and had a meeting with me on 10 July. I was astonished to see the commitment that St George Community Housing had made to the tribunal and that nothing had occurred for many months. I wrote to St George Community Housing on that day and politely inquired whether it had honoured the agreement with my constituent that was recorded by the tribunal. The chief executive officer of St George Community Housing, in classic bureaucratic obfuscation, replied by completely ignoring the issue of why it gave a commitment to the tribunal that it will not honour. A response from the relevant Minister two months after my representations aped the reply from St George Community Housing.

Mr Al Ghaleb continues to try to get St George Community Housing to honour its promise. It told him to search for private housing, which it would then lease. In one instance, he found a place and told St George Community Housing. After a little while, he inquired what was happening and was told by St George Community Housing that it was just about to sign the documents for this property. He checked with the real estate agent handling the property and found that, contrary to what St George Community Housing had told him, it was already being leased to someone else. If St George Community Housing could not relocate him, it should not have said that it would, especially to the NCAT. Its behaviour is disgraceful.

### MANLY ELECTORATE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:54):** I update the House on a number of initiatives being delivered by this Government to improve the reliability, accessibility and availability of public transport for the commuters of Manly. It is great to see one of those commuters in the gallery, my brother Tom. Tom catches the ferry to and from Manly every day and he works very hard. No doubt he will be very pleased to hear of not one, not two, not three, not four, but five major wins for the commuters in the electorate. In my inaugural speech in this place I said I would "speak up for the thousands of Manly families who deserve continued improvements in public transport and roads." I will outline five wins for commuters in the electorate of Manly.

First, there is the new fast ferry service between Manly and Barangaroo, operating Monday to Friday every 30 minutes during peak hours. The service launched last week and I am pleased to have been on the maiden voyage from Manly to Barangaroo at 6.45 a.m. This new ferry service, operated by SeaLink, has delivered 2,000 seats for commuters during peak hour, five days a week. That means 2,000 people who ordinarily may have used their cars now have the option to get from Manly to Barangaroo in 30 minutes door-to-door.

Secondly, I am thrilled to have secured Manly as one of eight locations across New South Wales for the trial of on-demand bus services. This trial is innovative and forward thinking. It will provide a new level of service to people in suburbs like Curl Curl, Freshwater and Manly Vale, who need reliable access to major transport hubs like Warringah Mall to connect with the B-Line or to Manly Wharf. Thirdly, there is free parking for commuters. People using public transport will be able to use their Opal card to access 24-hour free parking at B-Line bus stops. The parking stations also have space for bikes and are designed to make it easier for people to "turn up and go" on public transport. The free parking will help to ensure that more car spaces are available each day for customers travelling on public transport.

Fourthly, I was joined by the Minister for Transport, the Hon. Andrew Constance, to launch the "tap and go" capability on the Manly Ferry service. This allows people to use their credit card to tap on instead of needing to buy an Opal card. This increases efficiency and accessibility for ferry users. Fifthly, there is the B-Line itself. The buses have arrived and are being tested. The 38 new double-decker buses demonstrate the Government's real commitment to public transport for commuters in Manly. Not only are the buses new, but there are also significant road improvements along the B-Line route, including new turning lanes, indented bus bays and extended tidal flow lanes. These are designed to ease congestion and to improve the reliability of all bus services, with work already underway in some areas along the corridor of Military Road.

Finally, there is the Beaches Link tunnel. Attacked by those opposite, the Beaches Link tunnel will provide my community with much-needed traffic relief and, most importantly, will be a key feature in the future success and capacity of public transport solutions on the Northern Beaches. It presents an opportunity to not only cut travel times but also connect cycleways and walking tracks by giving local roads back to local traffic through smart design backed by my community. I have also spoken passionately in this place in support of the trial of autonomous vehicles. Autonomous vehicles represent an exciting development for more efficient, cleaner and safer travel.

On their own, these projects will not be the silver bullet for traffic and congestion challenges facing commuters of Manly. However, the innovative approach and integrated nature of these projects will deliver significant improvements in the day-to-day lives of my constituents, and ultimately that is my single aim. Let there be no mistake, it is not Labor, The Greens or the Independents who are the champions of public transport for the commuters of Manly; it is the New South Wales Liberal Government. Project by project it is delivering reliable and accessible services that will ensure that more people can make use of public transport in Manly when they need it.

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (17:58):** I am very impressed with the work ethic and achievements of the member for Manly, who has been here such a short time. Too often we hear members from the other side whinge about services, but there is a message in this: Do what the member for Manly is doing. Work hard, lobby and be polite, and they will get the services for which they advocate. The member for Manly is a breath of fresh air in this Parliament. I have been here a very long time, as Mr Temporary Speaker knows, and I have seen a lot of members come and go. The member for Manly has a great future. He has been burning the candle at both ends and working hard for his community, and that is a strong message that members on the other side should note. That is how members get things done in both Opposition and Government, by working hard and lobbying, as the member for Manly has done.

### SCHOOL OPAL CARDS

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown) (17:59):** It was pleasing to hear those comments by the Parliamentary Secretary because I am about to lobby for some public transport in the electorate of Charlestown.

**Mr Daryl Maguire:** Fantastic.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** As parents we want peace of mind that when our children leave for school in the morning that they will arrive safely. This comfort has not been afforded to at least three families in my electorate after their appeals to the Minister for Transport for subsidised School Opal Cards for their children were rejected. I was first contacted by the Douglas family in early June. They were frustrated that their appeal for a School Opal Card for their nine-year-old daughter had been rejected for a fifth time, despite her older brother having one. Transport for NSW remains adamant that there is a safe walking route between the family home and the primary school, despite their daughter having to cross busy Kahibah Road and Wallsend Road.

Kahibah Road has been deemed too unsafe for a pedestrian crossing by Lake Macquarie City Council because of the high volume of traffic, especially during the morning and afternoon peak periods. How then can Kahibah Road, which is also called Wallsend Road, be safe for a nine-year-old child to cross? Bureaucrats in Transport for NSW have made the effort to send Google maps screenshots of a walking route, together with their opinion of where it would be safe to cross. This may look safe on Google maps from the comfort of a ministerial office but, having lived in the area for many years and used the road frequently, I can assure the Minister that Kahibah Road and Wallsend Road are not safe for young children to cross in peak traffic times. The department has also been keen to point out that there are refuges on the road. Those refuges do not change the fact that this crossing is on a blind corner, at a busy three-way intersection, that causes drivers enough confusion during peak traffic times without having to watch for young children crossing.

The Forster family has also sought help from my office, in another appalling case of their eight-year-old son being deemed ineligible for a School Opal Card by Transport for NSW. Again, the department claims to have found a suitable walking route. This "supposed suitable walking route" is another example of how out of touch the department is with local conditions. The suggested route has no footpath along the Pacific Highway and no pedestrian lights at the suggested six-lane road crossing. The noise and traffic congestion on this busy intersection of the Pacific Highway and Northcott Drive is overwhelming for an adult, let alone a small child. The intersection has also been identified as a dangerous location by the NSW State Government Black Spot program, due to the high number of accidents that occur there. Again I ask how can this be considered safe for a child?

The Browns are the third family to have been appalled to learn their eight-year-old daughter has also been refused a School Opal Card. In 2013, when the Browns' son commenced year three, the family successfully applied for a School Opal Card on the grounds that the route was unsafe to walk due to no footpaths and narrow verges that cars parked on, forcing him to walk on the road, which had severe blind crests. In attempting the same process for their daughter four years on, their application was denied. The conditions along this road have not changed one iota since their son's successful application. I have met with Mr Brown on site and walked the route his daughter must travel to get to school. Again, I can assure the Minister that it is unsuitable for anyone to traverse, let alone a child. Buses and trucks regularly drive along the route, and council allows parking on the footpath due to the narrowness of the streets in the area, making it extremely difficult for pedestrians. How can this walking route be considered dangerous for one child and safe for another?

Our community knows only too well the devastation caused by tragic road accidents. Transport and Road Safety Research, University of New South Wales, highlights how children who are still developing have cognitive limitations—for example, children's peripheral vision has not fully developed, making them unable to process and react to the full range of activity in a traffic environment. This means children are unable to cope with sudden changes in the environment, are easily distracted, and tend to focus on only one aspect of the complex roadway environment. It is troubling that Sydney bureaucrats with no local knowledge and understanding are making these important decisions based on Google maps. No young child should have to navigate and negotiate their way to school through major intersections and highways. I invite the Minister for Transport to come to Charlestown and challenge him to show me where and how it is safe for these young children to get to school.

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (18:04):** I thank the member for Charlestown for drawing the attention of the House to this issue. I ask that she provide me with copies of her correspondence with the Minister and/or Transport for NSW on behalf of the three families so that I can examine it.

#### MANNING BASE HOSPITAL

**Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (18:04):** I congratulate the Manning Base Hospital and the doctors, nurses and ancillary staff on their hard work and success in the care and support that they provide to the Myall Lakes-Mid North Coast region. The Bureau of Health Information has today released its Healthcare Quarterly report, which shows how public hospitals and ambulance services in New South Wales performed in the April to June quarter of 2017. The report shows that more than 660,000 patients presented to a New South Wales public hospital emergency department, which is an increase of 4.2 per cent compared to the same quarter last year. The report also indicates that there were 7,397 emergency presentations to the Manning Base Hospital for the quarter, which is an increase of 8.3 per cent. The hospital has more than 30,000 presentations a year, and total presentations increased by 9.7 per cent compared to the same time last year.

Dr W. Edward Deming said, "In God we trust. All others must bring data." That is my challenge to those who seek to tear down the great work of our hospital and the three-stage redevelopment that was planned in 2013 by The Nationals and Hunter New England Health. Members opposite should stop the scaremongering and join me in praising the efforts of the hospital staff, Hunter New England Health and the Government for their combined efforts in ensuring great healthcare for the residents of Myall Lakes.

The Government has allocated more than \$20 million for stage 1 of the hospital redevelopment, and that includes a multi-deck car park to accommodate the increased demand for parking at the campus. Construction has now begun on a purpose-built oncology and renal dialysis centre on High Street. The past three Coalition budgets have allocated \$1.3 million for planning. In addition, \$10 million was allocated to the hospital in last year's budget, and \$9.8 million was allocated in the 2017-18 budget. I will continue consulting with the community, Hunter New England Health and the medical professionals at Manning Base Hospital about the planning of stage 2 of the redevelopment, and I will fight to secure the funding for continued redevelopment and improved infrastructure.

I will provide some comparisons of the activity in the last quarter at the Manning Base Hospital with what happened in 2010. Emergency presentations have increased by more than 2,000. The ninetieth percentile median time to start treatment was 18 minutes under this Government and 27 minutes under the Labor Government. At the triage three level, the figure was 88 minutes under this Government and 121 minutes under the Labor Government. For elective surgery, this Government has achieved the target benchmark of 100 per cent for all urgent, semi-urgent and non-urgent cases. I am pleased that tomorrow I will be opening the new palliative chairs that have been provided using the more than \$11,000 provided by the Minister for Health. The number of overdue elective surgery patients has significantly decreased from 2,657 in December 2009 under the Labor Government to 210 in June 2017 under this Government. We are now meeting elective surgery target benchmarks 99.8 per cent of the time. Under the Labor Government that figure was 89 per cent.

The Hon. Walt Secord denigrates this Government by saying that it has not allocated appropriate funding to the Manning Base Hospital. It has received more than \$20 million in the past three budgets. He also said that we have reduced services, including ear, nose and throat [ENT] services. There was no ENT specialist in 2011 when this Government was elected, but there are ENT specialists now. Sure, we need more, but we have gone from none to having some. The Hon. Walt Secord spoke about oncology. There was no oncologist—there never had been an oncologist. Now we have an oncologist who has been there for several years. A second one starts in January next year and we are building a new oncology unit. Any way one looks at it, we are delivering for that hospital. I commend and congratulate staff.

**Mr DARYL MAGUIRE (Wagga Wagga) (18:09):** I thank and congratulate the member for Myall Lakes and, indeed, the community on the advancements they have made in the provision of health in that area, particularly in palliative care. Attacks by members in the other place on hardworking staff, nurses and doctors are causing angst in the community. That is sad when these nurses are giving their best in sometimes difficult

circumstances. There is no doubt that this Government has invested many millions of dollars in improvements that are there for all to see. As a local member I know that the scurrilous attacks that are being made by others are having a detrimental effect on those hardworking nurses, doctors and administrators who provide wonderful services in hospitals across New South Wales.

#### **NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:10):** Tonight I inform the House about a significant win for my local community with changes to the B-Line bus project, which will save the Cremorne town centre city-bound bus stop. This is an issue I have championed alongside my constituents since my election as the member for North Shore. I am humbled and grateful to have had the opportunity to work with so many dedicated community champions to fight for and to deliver this key local priority. Special recognition must be made of Vasilli Karellas, Cremorne IGA supermarket owner and chairman of the centre's body corporate; Genevieve Kearney, owner of Cremorne Town Centre Pharmacy; Peter Twiney, who has provided us with his traffic expertise; and John Lucas, who have all been involved in the core team of community representatives, residents and business owners and have contributed to petitions to secure this compromise to retain the bus stop. They should all be proud of this victory.

I received a lot of correspondence about this issue and I spoke to many of my soon-to-become constituents while I was campaigning to become the member for North Shore. I heard from people like Catherine Mulcahy, Mark Mathot and Paul Arkell, who expressed concern about the removal of the bus stop because that would jeopardise the local Cremorne shopping centre precinct and would make catching public transport to this area more inconvenient, particularly for elderly people in our community who rely heavily on this service and on the centre's facilities.

I heard from residents like Francis O'Rourke, who expressed concern about the closure of Cabramatta Road and the proposed abandonment of pedestrian fences, both of which have been addressed alongside the bus stop win. I have also spoken to organisations and key businesses that played an invaluable role. The Neutral Bay Chamber of Commerce, most notably, worked closely with the transport team and spoke to me and the Minister for Transport, advocating for the local community and business owners in the Neutral Bay area of the B-Line project.

Significant changes were also made in Neutral Bay, with the proposed closure of the right-hand turn off Military Road into Ben Boyd Road being abandoned. This change ensures that we have greater safety on our back streets in Neutral Bay and better safety for Neutral Bay Public School because trucks trying to deliver to the local shopping centre will not need to use our local roads. We have also seen additional changes, as I mentioned, to the Cremorne town centre stops. Not only have we saved the city-bound bus stop, which was to be decommissioned and moved about 100 metres up the road to enable the B-Line infrastructure to be built, but also, after a huge effort by local residents and business owners and some consistent advocacy to Transport NSW, a compromise was reached whereby the new stop will be used only during peak hours, and the Cremorne town centre stop will remain in use for the remainder of the day outside peak hours. This outcome is a huge win for the local community. A number of important changes have also been made to the project, including ensuring that the Cabramatta Road exit onto Military Road is no longer closed.

Those who live in my community are aware of the significant challenges of heavy traffic every day on the North Shore, particularly along Military Road. Even more challenging is the traffic that spills onto our local streets through rat-running. I have spoken to a number of residents who are worried that Spencer Road and Holt Avenue will become choked with more rat-running if the access to Military Road from Cabramatta Road is closed. I have also heard significant amounts of feedback regarding the risk of getting deliveries into the town centre and of trucks that are unable to turn around in the town centre. I have passed all of this feedback to the Minister, to his office and to the project team. I thank the community for sharing their views with me. I thank the Minister for making this change, and I thank the project team for working as hard as it could to get the best outcome for the B-Line project, for all users of the project and also for the community in Cremorne.

The B-Line bus service remains a significant approach to addressing the traffic nightmare that is Military Road. There will be one bus every five minutes during the peak period. These double-decker buses have a smaller footprint than the current buses and will have a smaller impact on traffic. Infrastructure changes will ensure improved traffic flow, which is important if we are to address the challenges of Military Road and the traffic we all have to suffer on a daily basis. I once more congratulate the local voices of Cremorne residents and business owners who have advocated for this significant win.

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) (18:16):** I have been delighted to stand beside the member for North Shore, including in her successful attempt to win the electorate of North Shore. During that by-election I campaigned with her at the bus stop at Cremorne shopping centre. I remember how she truly listens to people

and is keen to represent the views of all stakeholders in the electorate of North Shore. She has successfully done that in the context of the B-Line bus project, an excellent project that has been made even better through her efforts. Her lobbying and input, particularly with the Minister for Transport, have resulted in a better outcome for traffic, safety and transport convenience. I congratulate her and encourage her to continue in her excellent representation of those in the North Shore electorate.

### **CABRAMATTA CHINESE MOON FESTIVAL**

**Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) (18:17):** I bring to the attention of the House an important cultural event that will take place in my electorate on Sunday 24 September. The Cabramatta Moon Festival is a unique cultural event. It attracts more than 90,000 people each year. Cabramatta will come alive with colour and movement when the community celebrates the Chinese-Vietnamese Moon Festival. The Moon Festival falls on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of the lunar calendar and is said to be the date when the moon shines brightest and wields its most charitable influences on Earth.

An important part of the festival is moon worship. Offerings are made to the Moon Goddess of Immortality, Chang'e. The legend of the Moon Goddess goes something like this: There was a prince named Yi, who was an excellent archer and married to Chang'e. One year 10 suns rose in the sky, which was a disaster for the people on Earth. Yi shot down nine of the suns and left one to give light. As thanks, Yi was given the elixir of immortality. But Yi did not want to be immortal as he did not want to live forever without his wife, Chang'e. Yi gave her the elixir to keep safe. One of Yi's apprentices found out about the elixir and tried to force Chang'e to give it to him, but she refused. Instead, for safety's sake she drank the elixir and flew into the sky. She did not want to be too far from her husband so she chose to live on the moon. Yi was so sad about losing his wife that he put fruits and cakes that Chang'e liked into his garden as offerings to her.

This is said to be the origin of the Moon Festival. All over Asia, people celebrate by making lanterns and eating moon cakes—pastries made with lotus seeds and eggs. The yellow yolk inside the cake signifies the moon. People also perform traditional dances and pass down legends associated with the festival. These legends date back thousands of years. The Moon Festival does more than generate economic buoyancy for the local community, it also promotes our cultural diversity and rich community. For example, it showcases foodstuffs, fabrics and the strong and diverse religious culture. There are many temples and places of worship in the local community.

Dami Im will be performing some of her hits live on stage and, of course, we have the annual eating competition, the lion dancing parade in the twilight of the evening and the fireworks display at 8.00 p.m. We celebrate all cultures in Cabramatta, so beside the traditional Asian fare there is Turkish gozleme and pide available, and the Bearded Bakers will be back making their delicious Knafeh. The Moon Festival has a special place in my heart because it celebrates what the Asian community has brought to Cabramatta. I feel very lucky to represent one of the most successful multicultural communities. It is a shining example of how so many cultures can live side by side in harmony, celebrating each other's festivals and milestones and respecting one another's traditions. I encourage everybody to come to Cabramatta on 24 September to experience the Moon Festival. I am sure that once people have come to Cabramatta, they will come back time and time again.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:20 until  
Tuesday 19 September 2017 at 12:00.**